

New Media Technologies and Political Socialization of Children: The Exigency of Parental Mediation

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Abstract: The monumental spread and extensive use of new media technologies (mobile phones, tablets, social media, blogs, video games, and internet generally, etc) among children in the present era of information society has some serious implications for child political socialization. New media technologies are capable of influencing children to inculcate the right political attitude and disposition; they are also a source of negative political attitude and disposition in children. How can children utilize new media technologies to maximize the right political knowledge, attitude and values, and mitigate the negative ones? This paper, a library research, attempts to answer this question by focusing on the role of parents in mediating children's use of new media. It proposes a 10-point parental mediation approach. This approach is illustrated using a proposed model called: A Proposed Model of Parental Mediation of Children's New Media Technologies' Use for Political Socialization. According to this model, parents should consider child, parents, and new media technologies' factors in determining choice of mediation strategies (active, co-use, monitoring, technical, and restrictive) to use on children's use of new media technologies. When this choice is appropriate, the result is desirable political socialization of the child; but where the choice is inappropriate, undesirable political socialization of the child is the case. The paper recommends that the proposed parental mediation approach should be subjected to empirical test to verify the authenticity of the assumptions made in the approach.

Key Words: Children, New Media Technologies, Parental Mediation, Political Images, Political Socialization.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The mass media are generally associated with political socialization of children; they are influential in creating political awareness, and in changing political attitudes and behaviour (Adoni, 1978; Buckingham, 2009, 2010; Kur, 2008; Lila, 2014; Moeller & Vreese, 2013; Rubin, 1978, 2009). Media influence on political socialization of children is more perverse and dominant in the present age of new media technologies. This is due largely to the great impact of new media technologies on the lives of people especially young folks (Friedman & Friedman, 2008; Ok, 2011). New media technologies constitute a powerful conduit of political information and a significant public sphere where citizens (including children) "express and exchange political ideas; raise funds; and mobilize others to vote, protest, and work on public issues" (Kahne, 2014, p.3). This form of political engagement has benefits as well as potential threats to the process of political socialization in children. How do children maximize the benefits and mitigate the risks associated with new media political communication for a meaningful political socialization? This question constitutes the focus of this paper.

There are various approaches that facilitate children's use of new media technologies for political socialization. However, the one that concerns parental intervention in children's use of the technologies is the focus in this paper. Hence, the objective of this paper is to propose a parental mediation approach in children's effective use of new media technologies for desirable political socialization. Past studies on parental mediation did not focus on child political socialization as a motive for parental mediation; rather they focused on other motives such as improvement in child school performance; prevention of children from road injuries, cyber-bullying, sexual harassment, exposure to inappropriate media materials, being victims of crime, getting into trouble with the police, and alcoholism (Donoso, 2014; Kur, 2009; Livingstone, Olafsson, O'Neil, & Donoso, 2012). This paper is an attempt to situate the need for child political socialization as a motive for parental mediation of children's use of new media technologies.

New Media Technologies

There are many definitions of new media as there are different perspectives of the concept. Some of these perspectives identified by Friedman and Friedman (2008) include the web 2.0 perspective, the old vs. new perspective, the historical perspective and the five C's (communication, collaboration, community, community, creativity, and convergence) perspective. Conceptualization of new media technologies in this paper draws from all the above mentioned perspectives. This is so because all the perspectives contribute in explaining new media technologies as facilitators of the process of communication, which is a major concern in this discourse.

From the backdrop of the foregoing, McQuail (2005) explains new media to mean the connecting of information and communication technologies (ICT) with their associated social context in a manner that brings together three elements: technological artifacts and devices; activities, practices and uses; and social arrangements and organizations that surround the devices and practices. Kur and Essien (2014) however fault McQuail's conception, saying that even the old media (traditional radio, television, newspapers and magazines) can be defined as such. Hence, to appropriately conceptualize new media as distinct from old media, its basic characteristics must be taken into consideration. These characteristics identified by McQuail include: interconnectedness, accessibility to individual users as senders and/or receivers, interactivity, multiplicity of use and open-ended character, ubiquity and delocatedness and convergence. New media, sometimes used interchangeably with digital media and multimedia, refers to forms of technological applications that transfer information through digital techniques, computerized systems or data networks (Agudoso, 2015). New media are communication technologies that combine computers and telecommunication technologies for the purpose of disseminating information to a large heterogeneous audience regardless of time, space and distance (Ikpe & Olise, 2010).

In the present era of information society, new media technologies are applied in almost all areas of human endeavor including the field of human communication, which is the concern of this paper. Technologies that make up new media are very diverse – some specific to certain fields and others overlapping into many other fields in application. Examples of new media technologies applicable in the different areas of communication (broadcasting, advertising, relationship marketing, niche marketing, public relations, human resource management, journalism, entertainment and all other areas that are directly or indirectly a constituent of social communication) abound. Some of the examples compiled from the works of Anderson, *et al* (2015), Feldman (1997), Fenton and Hansen (2004), Friedman and Friedman (2007), Gane and Beer (2008), Kahne (2014), and Shirk (2011) include:

1. **Wikis:** Online resources which give the freedom to users to edit and add content. Examples are Wikipedia, Wikidot and Wetpaint.
2. **Virtual Reality Worlds:** This is a computer simulated virtual world presented on a computer monitor as a three-dimensional environment. Its purpose is for users to inhabit and interact through graphical avatar representations of themselves. Examples are *Second Life* and *Zwinky*.
3. **Photo Sharing:** This new media technology allows users to view, upload, comment on and share digital photos. Examples include *Flickr*, *ImageShack*, *Photobucket*, and *Picturetrail*.
4. **Blogs:** Also called weblogs, blogs are a kind of online journals.
5. **Microblogs:** These allow a user to send short character information updates as well as follow the updates of friends. Twitter is an example.
6. **Digital Storytelling:** It is the combination of text, still photographs, video clips, audio, graphics and interactivity presented as news or entertainment on a website in a non-linear format in which information in each medium is complementary, not redundant. It is also called multi-media storytelling.
7. **Video Sharing:** This technology allows users to upload videos and view uploaded video free. YouTube is an example.
8. **Mechinima:** This technology aids the making of real movies in a virtual world. It makes use of real life tools and techniques and it is shot in a 3D virtual reality world.
9. **Data Sharing:** This is a web technology that allows users to discover, read, organize, and share valuable data and information on the internet. Some data sharing tools like *Pageflakes* offer free services which include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Message board, blog and hundreds of RSS feeds.
10. **Social Networks:** These are sites that enable users to create their profile, set up formal connections to people they know, communicate and share information. Examples of networking sites are Facebook, Myspace, LinkedIn, etc.
11. **Conversion Tools:** These are web technologies that convert texts, videos, audios, and documents from one form to another. For example, there is Vixy which converts YouTube videos to QuickTime playable MP4 files.
12. **Social Bookmarks:** These are sites that allow users to add, categorize and manage social bookmarks for storing, sharing, and discovering web pages. Examples are *del.icio.us* and *furl*.

13. **Podcasts:** A podcast is an audio archive that listeners retain to listen to at their leisure. It is generally in MP5 format which you can receive automatically from the internet to your computer, smartphone, ipad, and MP3 player.
14. **Content Sharing:** This is a web application that facilitates the sharing of content in the form of news, video, image and podcast. This application has no editors; users collectively determine the value of content.
15. **itunes:** These are online music stores where users visit to buy or rent music, TV shows, audiobooks, ipod games, movies and download podcasts. Amazon, Rhapsody and Napster are other stores that sell music online.
16. **Google Tools:** These are the many applications produced by Google to facilitate knowledge sharing. Some of the tools are Google Search, Google Trends, Google Clock, Google Toolbar, and Google Language Tools.
17. **Rich Media:** Also referred to as interactive media, Rich Media make use of enhanced technologies like flash, shockwave, Java, Javascript and DHTML to create web advertising content that is interactive, and allows active participation by consumers in a website audience.
18. **Writing Communities:** These are a group of community of low-cost, on-demand publishers who make it easy to disseminate information and ideas readily, rapidly and repeatedly online.
19. **Internet Calling:** This online technology is like the telephone, but adds video to the two-party audio chat. It also enables multi-party conferencing. Skype and Yahoo Voice are examples of internet calling.
20. **Digital Scrapbooking:** This has to do with the creation of visual layouts for the preservation of memories. The creation is brought about by the use of computer and graphic software. On the visual layout are pasted photos on paper, hand-written journal notes, and embellishment objects (such as digital photos, clip art, and graphic textures) and memorabilia (such as stickers, buttons, and ribbons). Digital scrapbook layouts can be printed such as album or left as computer files shared via Web pages or email software.

Children use these new medium technologies and are in one way or the other affected by them. These technologies thus have a socializing influence on children. Since political content is disseminated and filtered through these technologies (Collazo, 2015; Lee *et al*, 2012; Lengauer & Johann, 2013; Moeller & de Vreese, 2013), political socialization is one influence these technologies have on children.

Political Socialization of Children

There are a variety of definitions of political socialization, many of which point to a direction that political socialization, although a lifelong process, begins with the child. Moeller and de Vreese (2013, p.311) observe notably that “the most important period for socialization is childhood and early adulthood.” Zurick (1966), one of the earliest scholars of political socialization, examined various definitions of the concept existing by 1966 and came to the conclusion that manifestations of political socialization are apathy (psychological detachment from the political system built on feeling of futility and inability to participate politically in order to promote some sort of change) and efficacy (a dimension of high to low involvement in political life). The genesis of these manifestations, according to Zurick, “are found in childhood experiences” (p.4). Gimpel, Lay and Schuknecht (2003) define political socialization as the process by which the new generations (children) are initiated into a political system so as to acquire the knowledge, values and attitudes that will contribute to strengthen the political system. Similarly, Singh (2013) sees political socialization as a political learning process that commences from childhood and continues to adulthood. According to Singh, it is a stage that witnesses the germination of attitude towards authority, obedience, resistance, cooperation, and aggression in children. In their expatiation of the concept, Nalbantoglou, Kyridis, and Tsioumis (2015) explain political socialization as the process of inculcating values and ideas of citizenship in children so as to enable them (children) function effectively in the political system as children and later in life as adults.

Two main types of political socialization exist in literature – direct or manifesto and indirect or non-manifesto (Owen, 2008; Sobir, 2014; Wessa, 2012). Direct political socialization encompasses political information, values, feelings and their extension. Indirect political socialization takes the mode of transference, apprenticeship, and generalization. Transference has to do with the transfer of values and thoughts of a person to another person. Apprenticeship is the acquisition of knowledge of the habits of behaviour favourable to political activities. Generalization, on the other hand, refers to the inferences derived from social values and political aims. These two main types of political socialization take place in adults as well as children.

Of the four primary agents of socialization (family, school, peers, and mass media), the mass media, particularly new media technologies in the present technological age, are by far the most influential in child political socialization. Children in the digital technological age have a closer attachment to new media technologies than the other agents of socialization (Kahne, 2014; Okoro, Nwafor, & Odoemelam, 2015). Also, new media technologies generally influence children more than the other agencies of socialization. What

political images do new media technologies portray? How do these images influence children? These questions are the thrust of the next section of this paper.

Political Images in New Media and Influence on Child Political Socialization

New media are associated with enormous freedom to the extent that any person with access to the technology and has the technical-know-how could disseminate almost any kind of content without hindrance. As a result, images and portrayals in the new media reflect the good, the bad, and the ugly. This is also the case with the positive and negative political images and representations portrayed in the new media. From the positive side, mention is made of the generally accepted notion that new media have had great influence on political communication, especially during elections (Abubakar, 2012; Agboola, 2013; Ijeh, 2013; Sauter & Bruns, 2013). One often cited example to buttress this notion is the first and second terms election campaigns of the American President Barack Obama, which were largely based on the use of new media technologies (Riaz, 2011; Rutledge, 2013). In many African countries, including Nigeria, elections since 2007 have extensively made use of new media technologies as a way of assuring and expanding political and public sphere, thereby advancing participatory democracy. Another positive representation of politics in new media technologies is the richness and diversity of political information the media provide. Auvinen (2012, p.6) writes in this regard that with the new media “users are no longer dependent on a single source for their news and other data any more, but can flexibly use several different media side by side.” Similarly, new media are omnipresent (no hiding place), they have speed, and with them, users assume multitude roles. All these enrich political communication.

On the other hand, there are negative political images and representations featured and spread by new media technologies. To some extent, political information disseminated through new media technologies has moved from objectivity to subjectivity. A case in point was the rumour across different social media platforms that President Barack Obama was a Muslim. Even though this was a false rumour, about 20 percent Americans believed it (Auvinen, 2012). New media technologies have facilitated or added impetus to political conflict and violence. This was the case with the political violence that erupted during the December 2007 general elections in Kenya (Riaz, 2011). New media technologies are channels through which existing stereotypes about political actors and groups are reinforced or new ones created. Facebook depicted President Barack Obama and his wife Michelle Obama in 2011 – 2012 as evil, animalistic, and social deviants (Moody, 2012). Hate speech is also a prominent feature of new media representation of politics. In a study of verbal terror in Nigerian online news reader comments, Ende and Dzukogi (2012) found that online media platforms (new media) are avenues for verbal attacks; readers use terror language in making comments on political discourse. Donald Trump, an aspirant in the 2016 US Presidential election is extensively making use of social media to provoke opponents. Trump said online that Clinton’s aid and wife of perv sleavebag Anthony Wiener, Huma Abedin, is “a major security risk as a collector of info.” What Trump is doing is what Kalpokas (2016) describes as radicalization of political views, and it is unhealthy for the political system because it generates resentment against certain groups.

The foregoing images and representations of politics in the new media, especially the negative ones, are a subtle way of writing the narratives of political experiences. Children exposed to new media political portrayals see politics as a positive experience if the portrayals are positive and a negative experience if the portrayals are negative. For children to view politics from the positive, which is a disposition that leads to desirable political socialization, they need to be zealously guided in their use of new media technologies – what they grab, how they grab it, when they grab it, what they don’t grab, and why they don’t grab it. This calls for parental mediation.

Parental Mediation of Children’s New Media Technologies’ Use

Works of early scholars on parental mediation (Nathanson, 1999; Valkenberg, Krcmar, Peeters, & Marseille, 1999; Waren, 2005) have provided a basis for a clear-cut definition of the concept. In this regard, Adrianus (2015, p.9) defines parental mediation as “parents’ active role in managing and regulating children’s experience with media, primarily television.” Kur (2011) sees the concept as parents’ attitude and approach to their children’s media use with the intent of mitigating undesirable effects on the children. For Schaan and Melzer (2015, p.59), it is “parents’ proactive attempts aimed at (a) fostering positive media effects, and (b) preventing negative media influences on children and adolescents.” The latter definition is the most appropriate and suitable in the discourse of this paper.

There are three primary strategies of parental mediation. These strategies are developed based on parental mediation research focusing on traditional media, particularly television, and include: active (instructional), restrictive, and co-use parental mediation strategies (Kur & Essien, 2014; Kur, Orhewere, & Nyam, 2015). While active mediation is defined as parent-child discussion of media content, restrictive mediation involves parents’ rule-making on children’s media consumption. Co-use has to do with parent-child shared set of motivations for media use. With the advent of new media technologies, research on parental

mediation extended its focus to new media technologies. Here, two additional parental mediation strategies have been developed – technical mediation and monitoring mediation. Technical mediation, also called parental controls, is the use of filters and monitoring software to keep track of children’s use of digital or internet-enabled media (Kur, Orhewere, & Nyam, 2015). Other researchers have identified other parental mediation strategies such as active-co-use, interaction restriction, and participatory learning (Clark, 2011; Livingstone & Helsper, 2008). These strategies are actually not different from the traditional three mediation strategies (active, restrictive and co-use); active co-use is a combination of active and co-use strategies. Interaction restriction is a combination of active and restrictive strategies while participatory learning is more of active mediation strategy.

How can parental mediation intervene in children’s use of new media technologies to bring about the desirable child socialization? A look at existing research findings on parental mediation will provide ideas that will suggest the answer to this question. A large portion of research findings on parental mediation show that active mediation strategy is the most effective in mediating children’s media use experience in many circumstances. This is followed by co-use strategy. Rasmussen, Ortiz, and White (2015) found that active parental mediation of pornography reduced negative indirect effects of exposure to pornography and prevented future pornography use by children and adolescents. Vaterlaus, Beckert, Tulane and Bird (2014) found that both parents and adolescents see monitoring (33%) and active (26%) mediation strategies as the most effective in adolescent interactive technology use. Kur (2009) studied parental mediation of children’s television viewing in Benue State and came up with findings that co-use (64.4%) and active (64.1%) mediation strategies are the most effective.

Findings from a number of studies reveal that restrictive mediation strategy is not effective enough in mediating children’s use of the media. In a few cases it was found to be effective, it was adopted on children less than seven years old (Panet, 2014). For technical mediation, studies (Daud, Omar, Hassan, Bolong, & Teimouri, 2011; Donoso, 2014; Strider, Third, Locke, & Richardson, 2012) have found that it is an ideal strategy in promoting children’s positive use of new media, but its actual use is hampered by certain challenges which include: parents’ little or no awareness of the strategy; parents’ little or no knowledge of how to utilize the strategy (parental controls); perceived complexity of the strategy; children are too young or too old for parental controls to be used on them; parental controls limit adult use of media technology by preventing access to certain adult sites and slowing computers down; children can always beat parental controls; parents feel by using parental controls on their children, they are having lack of trust on them; technical mediation can turn to parental stalking; parents’ less extensive knowledge of children’s new media technologies’ use; parents’ fear of provoking conflicts with their children; and parental controls may not work well within the dynamics of some families (parents may not feel they have control over their children).

Livingstone, Mascheron, Dreier, Chaudron, and Lagae (2015) in their study of parental mediation of children’s use of digital media focused on parental factors of income, education and parenting style. They found that: (1) for lower income, less educated families, digital device ownership at home is relatively high, parents use more of restrictive mediation, and there is high respect for parenting values; (2) for lower income, more educated families, there is a mix of both media-rich and media-poor in digital device ownership, and active mediation is the case more than other mediation strategies; (3) the higher income, more educated families are associated with an approach of expressive empowerment in parenting values and use of diverse mediation strategies. The inference drawn from the findings is that socio-economic status (SES) (education and income) as well as parenting style influences mediation practices and beliefs. Those parents in low SES use more of restrictive mediation while those in high SES use a variety of mediation strategies. In terms of parenting style, parents who hold onto authoritarian style adopt more of restrictive mediation while those who are faithful to authoritative style use more of active and co-use mediation strategies. Parents who believe in permissive and uninvolved parenting styles use a variety of mediation strategies. Kur (2009) also came up with similar findings in terms of relationship between parenting style and parental mediation strategies.

Another study on parental factors in parental mediation (Nikken, & Haan, 2015) found that parents with positive and negative perception of children’s use of new media technologies believe in the efficacy of parental mediation more than parents with neutral perception of children’s use of new media technologies. The study also found that parents of older children (ten years and above) who are highly skilled in digital media use and engaging more in social media use experience difficulty at parental mediation. It is also clear from the study that parents consult both professional and non-professional (family) sources on issues of parental mediation. However, when the parents experience challenges in their mediation attempt, they turn more to professional sources for advice.

Still on parenting factors in parental mediation, findings by Benrazavi and Teimouri (2014), Ko, Choi, Yang, Lee, and Lee (2015), and Kur (2011) suggest that parents’ availability and engagement with their children have a strong correlation with co-use and active mediation, but not with restrictive, technical and monitoring mediation strategies. This shows that parental engagement with children is a strong factor in successful mediation using active and co-use approaches. Kur (2009) found that the kind of activities parents are engaged

in with their children determine the mediation approach. Parents who carry out intimate activities with their children such as recreation, reading and domestic chores adopt more of co-use and active mediation. Those parents who engage their children in private talks and other non-intimate activities use more of restrictive mediation on the children.

Child factors are also of great concern in the adoption and effectiveness of parental mediation strategies. Studies by Jago, Wood, Zahra, Thompson, and Ebire (2015), Kur (2009), Panek (2013), Sasson and Mesch (2014), and Schaan and Melzer (2015) identified a number of factors in this regard, which include: sex, age, amount of exposure to media content, child media content preference, child perception of media content, self control, and peers' approval. Regarding sex, mediation is more effective with girls than boys, and more of co-use and restrictive on girls than boys. In terms of age, parents adopt more of co-use mediation on younger children (5 – 9 years) and more of restrictive and instructive mediation on older children (above nine years). On amount of media use, parents adopt more of restrictive mediation on children with high level of media use and more of active and co-use mediation on children with low level media consumption habit. For content preference, parents adopt co-use and active mediation strategies on children with preference for "harmless" media content, and restrictive mediation on children who patronize "harmful" media content. With regards to children's perception of media content, parents adopt co-use and active mediation strategies on children who perceive media content in a positive light. For children who perceive media content in a negative light, parents adopt more of restrictive measures in mediating their media use experience. In terms of self control, parents use restrictive approach in mediating children low in self control. For those children high in self control, parents use active and co-use on them. Concerning peer influence, parents use technical, monitoring, and restrictive mediation approaches on children with strong peer group ties. Parents adopt co-use and active mediation on children with less peer group cohesion.

A Proposed Parental Mediation Approach

On the basis of the foregoing review of empirical studies on parental mediation, this paper makes the following proposal with the hope that it will enhance children's experience with new media technologies for the purpose of political socialization. This proposal takes into cognizance child, new media technologies, and parent factors:

1. Parental mediation of children's use of new media technologies is necessary in facilitating media-induced child political socialization. In doing so, the mediation has to be consciously planned with the motive of facilitating political socialization of children.
2. Parents have to develop wide and deep interest in both new media technologies and politics to be able to effectively mediate children's use of new media technologies for political socialization. Interest in new media technologies should include knowledge of actual use of the various new media technologies, especially those used by children.
3. Active and co-use mediation strategies are the most effective in mediating children's use of new media technologies for political socialization. This is not to say the other parental mediation strategies are not effective; they are in certain circumstances at certain times with certain children. For example, technical, restrictive, and monitoring mediation strategies are effective on younger children (1 – 6 years) who are still not responsible enough to appreciate the value in active and co-use mediation strategies.
4. Parental mediation strategies that are authoritative in nature are more result-oriented in achieving child political socialization than those oriented towards authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved parenting styles.
5. Parents have to understand children's pattern of use of new media technologies (types of technologies they use, amount of time they spend on the technologies, content they prefer and patronize, etc). This is necessary for them to determine the most appropriate mediation strategies that are result-oriented.
6. Parents should have good knowledge of the types of peer relationships their children keep. This knowledge is vital in decisions on the most appropriate mediation strategies to adopt on children's use of new media technologies for political socialization.
7. Parents have to be available to and engaged with their children in day-today family activities. This facilitates result-oriented mediation approach. Availability and engagement with children create a cordial relationship between parents and children, which is a fertile ground for active and co-use mediation strategies to thrive. Where it is inevitable that parents are not physically available and engaged with their children as it is the case with many parents in the contemporary society, they can still be available and engaged with their children in virtual terms using new media technologies. This in itself promotes co-use mediation.
8. Parents should understand the emotional state of their children at various times. Children's emotion dictates their pattern of new media technologies' use and perception. This knowledge is helpful in suggesting appropriate parental mediation strategies.

9. Parents should understand the political inclinations and leanings of their children. Children’s political inclinations and leanings dictate their political reasoning. This political reasoning is reinforced by their use of new media technologies, as explained by the theory of selectivity processes (selective exposure, selective attention, selective perception, and selective retention).
10. Parents have to know the types of new media technologies their children use. There are different categories and types of new media technologies (as discussed somewhere in this paper), which offer different experiences to children. This knowledge is imperative in determining appropriate parental mediation strategies.

The above 10-point parental mediation approach to children’s use of new media technologies for political socialization is illustrated using the proposed model called: *A Proposed Model of Parental Mediation of Children’s New Media Technologies’ Use for Political Socialization*, presented in Figure 1 below:

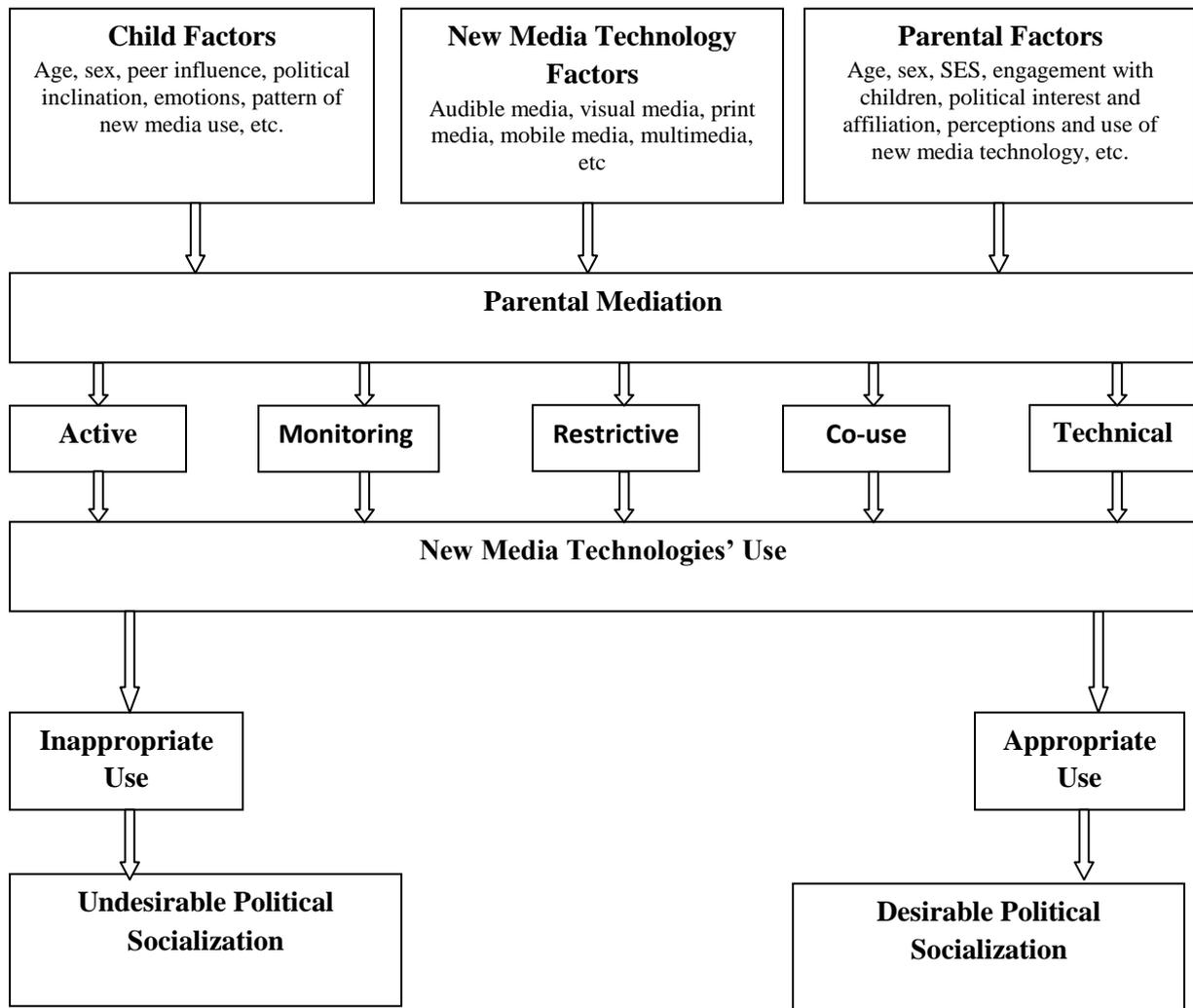


Figure 1: A Proposed Model of Parent Mediation of Children's New Media Technologies' Use for Political Socialization

According to Figure 1, the proposed parental mediation approach takes into cognizance three categories of factors, namely, child factors, new media technologies’ factors, and parental factors. These factors collectively suggest a strategy or a combination of strategies (active, co-use, monitoring, restrictive, and technical mediation strategies) in mediating children’s use of new media technologies for political socialization. The strategy or a combination of strategies adopted by parents to a large extent determines whether children will use new media technologies appropriately or inappropriately for political socialization. Where children’s use of

the technologies is appropriate, the result is desirable political socialization; where the use is inappropriate undesirable political socialization becomes the case.

II. CONCLUSION

This library research proposes a parental mediation approach for intervention in children's use of new media technologies for the motive of achieving political socialization in children. A justification for this proposed approach lies in the reality that children's use of new media technologies has grown widely and deeply, and that the technologies portray political images and representations that have both positive and negative implications for political socialization. To sustain the positive implications and mitigate the negative ones, an intervention in children's use of new media technologies is imperative. Among the primary agencies of socialization, parents are a crucial catalyst in this intervention.

To place the discourse of the paper in perspective for proper comprehension, the paper conceptualizes new media technologies, political socialization, and parental mediation. The paper has also identified the nature of political images and representations portrayed in new media technologies, which are both positive and negative to the process of political socialization.

The 10-point parental mediation approach proposed is explained using a proposed model called *A Proposed Model of parental Mediation of Children's New Media Technologies' Use for Political Socialization*. The model illustrates that the proposed parental mediation approach takes into consideration three categories of factors – child, new media technologies, and parent factors. From the insight of the three categories of factors, parents should adopt an appropriate mediation strategy or a combination of strategies from among the popular parental mediation strategies (active, co-use, monitoring, restrictive, and technical). If the adopted strategy or a combination of strategies is appropriate, the mediation leads to desirable political socialization; otherwise, undesirable political socialization is the case.

It is therefore concluded that parental mediation of children's use of new media technologies for political socialization should be a conscious effort with the primary motive of ensuring children's use of new media technologies in a way to inculcate in the children the right political knowledge, attitude, and values. The most appropriate and effective parental mediation strategies are those that are oriented towards authoritative parenting (active and co-use mediation strategies). Other strategies inclined towards the other parenting practices (authoritarian, permissive and uninvolved) such as monitoring, restrictive and technical mediation strategies could be appropriate and effective in very specific situations. Parents have to understand these situations before adopting the strategies.

The research presented in this paper is wholly qualitative in nature, and made use of only secondary data. There is the need to test the assumption made in the proposed parental mediation approach. This test should incorporate both qualitative and quantitative research designs. This triangulated approach (qualitative and quantitative) should be able to control intervening variables that may be within the child, new technologies, and parent factors as well as the prevailing political system. These intervening factors have the tendency to mislead and hamper the effectiveness of the proposed parental mediation approach if not controlled.

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