



**FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
MINNA**

**MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES AND CHILDREN,
A CURATE'S EGG; PARENTAL MEDIATION,
THE MOTHER'S MILK**

By

PROFESSOR JUDE TERNA KUR

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Professor of Information and Media Technology

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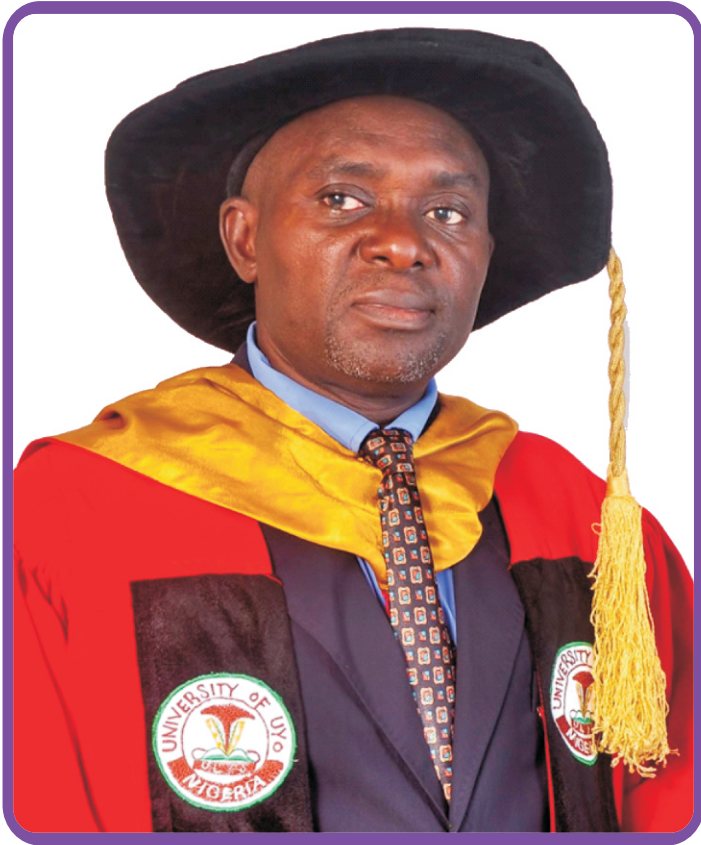
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PROFESSOR JUDE TERNA KUR

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Preamble

I give God the Glory and Honour as I stand before you this afternoon with a heart full of gratitude to Federal University of Technology, Minna to present the 96th Inaugural Lecture of the University. This is the first inaugural lecture coming from the Department of Information and Media Technology (IMT) and the third in the School of Information and Communication Technology (SICT).

Inaugural lecture, they say, is an opportunity given to a newly promoted Professor to show the town and the gown his academic exploits in and out of the University that have earned him the exalted rank of Professor. This is exactly what I intend to do. My job is going to be a difficult one because I will have to break down the complex terminologies and ideas in the lecture (those of us in the gown are used to) to a level members of the town will follow and comprehend without dosing off. I will also not over-simplify issues to the extent that members of the gown do not take me serious and begin to sleep or walk away. It is therefore imperative that I strike a balance by simplifying the lecture in an entertaining and pleasurable manner without losing touch of the seriousness and usefulness of the message to the academic world and the society in general. Please pardon me if am unable to exactly strike this balance. But by the grace of God who has given you the skills of attentive listening, I will not disappoint you for coming this afternoon to listen to me as I share my experiences with you under the title: *Media Technologies and Children, a Curate's Egg; Parental Mediation, the Mother's Milk*.

Let me begin in the spirit of simplifying issues by explaining the meaning of the title of this lecture. The problematic phrases in the title are “a curate's egg” and “mother's milk.” A curate's egg is an idiomatic expression which means the good and bad occurring simultaneously; a mixed blessing. The origin of the

idiom is traced to a cartoon published in the 9th November, 1895 edition of the British magazine *Punch*. The cartoonist, George du Maurier, portrays a curate by name Mr. Jones (a curate is an Assistant Parish Priest) who visits his Bishop, and at breakfast the next morning the Bishop noticed the curate eating a rotten egg and exclaimed: "I'm afraid you've got a bad egg, Mr Jones." The curate responded: "Oh, no, my Lord, I assure you that parts of it are excellent!" (Word Histories, 2017). One wonders how parts of a rotten egg could be excellent. Probably the curate wants to show humility to his Bishop and avoids the impression that a bad egg could be served in the house of a Bishop. A curate's egg in its early usage was a metaphor for a bad situation that someone wants to make it appear good. In its present usage it means something that has both good and bad qualities. In this lecture, a curate's egg thereby means that media technologies have both positive and negative influences on children.

The other problematic term in the title, "mother's milk," means something that is regarded as being absolutely necessary and important or appropriate or the ideal (Fine Dictionary, n.d; 7ESL, 2018). Mother's milk literally is necessary for all new born babies. In the same way, it is used figuratively to mean that it is necessary and important for all – whether good or bad, as expressed by George Bernard Shaw, the Irish playwright, critic, social reformer and political activist: "You cannot have power for good without having power for evil too. **Even mother's milk nourishes murderers as well as heroes**" (Breslin, 2005, p.78). What this means in the context of this lecture is that parental mediation, referred to as mother's milk, is necessary and important in assisting children maximize the benefits and minimize the risks associated with their experience with media technologies.

1. Introduction

As a child growing up in the city of Makurdi, the capital of Benue State, I, like many other children of my time, was a friend of television, cinema and radio. A good part of my daily life was spent with these media technologies to get entertainment. I recall with nostalgia that the attachment to them became so much that it was a source of worry to my parents who used restrictive measures to stop me from getting exposed to the technologies. It was a difficult thing for me to comply with the measures. I would go underground to watch James Bond films, Wrestling and other sports especially soccer, *Sesame Street*, and school debates. The many times I refused to comply, the many times I received the beating of my life mostly from my mother. As I grew older, I realized the media technologies did not just offer entertainment; they also offered educative and informative content that was of value to child educational and moral upbringing. Yet my parents did not see any good in my exposure to content offered by the technologies. For them, these technologies were going to “spoil” me. That was the attitude of many parents at that time.

Later in life, as I pondered on my parents' attitude and actions towards my exposure to the technologies, I became confused; where they doing good or bad to me? My dilemma drew from the reality that media technologies have the tendency to mould and destroy children depending on how the children are guided to use the technologies. Were my parents right or wrong? We shall find out the answer in this lecture.

This childhood seminal experience has remained with me to this moment so much so that it has contributed in shaping my research agenda as a scholar, which focuses on parental mediation of children's use of media technologies. My story this afternoon centres on my exploration of the relationship among

media technologies, children and parental intervention. I wish to, in this lecture, attempt to offer a broad understanding of the concepts of media technologies, children and parental mediation. I will show the mixed influences of media technologies on children, the necessary intervention of parental mediation in children's use of the technologies, and then share with you my novel contributions on the subject matter. Of course like any scholarly work of this nature, I will make recommendations that would (hopefully) contribute to strengthen children's meaningful engagement with media technologies and enhance correct parental mediation approaches for effective results. I will then make a projection of my future research direction.

2. Media Technologies: The Message and the Message

Human communication takes place in at least five contexts – intrapersonal communication, interpersonal communication, small group communication, organizational communication and mass communication. In each of the contexts, communication is seen as a process comprising at least four elements, which are source, message, medium and receiver. All models of communication from the simplest (Linear Model, Interactional Model, Transactional Model, etc) to the complex (Transmission Model, Ritual or Expressive Model, Publicity Model, Reception Model, etc) emphasize this basic process (McQuail, 2010). Central to the process is the element of medium, which is a channel through which a message is transmitted from the sender to the intended receiver.

In mass communication, the channel or medium through which messages are passed from the source to the receivers is called mass medium (the plural is mass media), which is defined to include the mechanical devices that transmit and sometimes store the messages (TV cameras, printing presses, microphones, etc) and the institutions that use these machines to transmit the

message (people, policies, organizations and technologies that are involved in producing and distributing messages to a large, heterogeneous and scattered receivers/audience simultaneously) (Dominick, 2012; Kur & Melladu, 2007).

An important element of mass media is the technologies that drive the communication process, hence the reference to them as media technologies which is sometimes used interchangeably with mass media and media. The importance of technologies in the media stems from the fact that the media cannot do without technology. This idea is illustrated in the works of Marshall McLuhan which contend that technology is the driving force in human civilization. In *The Gutenberg galaxy: The making of typographic man*, McLuhan (1962) contends that the advent of the printed book, made possible by the emergence of the Gutenberg's printing press (technology), extended communication from spoken form to written form, which came with the advantages of precise documentation of communication. In *Understanding media: The extensions of man*, McLuhan (1964, p.8) argues that "the medium is the message." He explains this statement to mean that the medium (which according to him is not restricted to the channel of mass communication, but any technical or technological invention that improves on the capacity of man to perform better, faster, and/or easier, and achieve expected goal without unnecessary physical or mental exertion such as railway, electricity, airplane, cubism, etc) is the extension of human faculty; it helps human beings to do things better than their mere human capacity. He gives an example with the railway to drive home his point. He says the emergence of the railway (medium/technology) did not introduce transportation and movement, but it accelerated the pace of transportation and movement, thereby underscoring the importance of the technology of railway in transportation and movement.

The medium is the message: An inventory of effects is where McLuhan defines medium specifically as a channel of mass communication (McLuhan & Fiore, 1967). The book remains McLuhan's most provoking piece and has been given different interpretations. One interpretation is from McLuhan's son, Eric, who says the word "massage" on the title was a printing error; that his father actually meant "message" (Moemeka, 2007). Another interpretation which sounds more convincing is that McLuhan actually meant what he wrote; the medium is the massage and not message. This perspective draws heavily from the content of the book where McLuhan emphasizes the power of the media to manipulate messages so as to achieve their own desired results. This is the narcotizing effect of the media, a term first used by Lazarsfeld and Merton (1948) to mean that the media often divert our attention and sometimes hypnotize us. In this regard, the media is understood from two inter-related perspectives: (1) as inherent or innate nature of the medium as technology, and (2) as social institutions that manipulate messages to their functional advantage which could be economic, political or both (Moemeka, 2007). Thus, the media are not just made up of technical inanimate equipment, they are also made up of people who work or manipulate the equipment such as engineers, producers, newscasters, reporters and administrators so as to give meaning to the equipment (make the equipment socially functional).

In the present digital age, media technologies are not only applied to mass communication; they are also used in some other contexts of communication (interpersonal, group, and organizational contexts). This is the case with websites, blogs, streaming video and audio, chat rooms, email, online communities, social media and sharing platforms, mobile apps, communication apps such as FaceTime and Skype, etc., DVD and CD-ROM media, virtual reality environments, internet telephony, digital cameras, and digital or computer games, multimedia,

which are referred to as digital media technologies or simply digital technologies. Digital technologies are advancing beyond screen media; some developments in artificial intelligence, internet of things (IoT), machine learning and autonomous technologies are digital technologies. For example, in the world of IoT there is internet of toys, in which toys are connected wirelessly to other toys or databases. There are autonomous technologies which enable children to interact with artificial peers (Gottschalk, 2019a). These are media technologies which take the form of non-verbal communication.

3. Children: Full of Potentials, but Vulnerable; Require Protection and Direction

There is no one acceptable definition of a child; it varies from one society to another along traditional and cultural lines. However, many countries in Africa, including Nigeria, and in other continents have agreed that a child is a person not above 18 years (UNICEF, 1989; The African Child Policy Forum, 2013).

In cognizance of the important place of children in society and the need to guarantee their survival and development in the best possible way, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) has prescribed a code of conduct towards children. CRC is an important agreement by countries of the world who have promised to protect children's rights. It is the most ratified human rights treaty. As at 1st October, 2021, as many as 196 countries of the world, including Nigeria, ratified the Convention. All the 54 articles of the Convention emphasize the need to guarantee children's identity; protect them from danger and harm; guarantee their freedom and privacy; guarantee them good healthcare, clean water, healthy food and safe environment; support poor and special children (refugees, disabled and adopted children); provide them sound education; and protect them from exploitation.

The Child's Rights Act (CRA) in Nigeria has similar prescriptions, since it is a domestication of CRC. CRA has emphasized the priority attached to children: “In every action concerning children, whether undertaken by an individual, public or private body, institutions or service, court of law, or administrative or legislative authority, the best interest of the child should be the primary consideration” (Child's Rights Act 2003, Part 1 [1]). Society should take these and many other laws on child protection and socialization seriously if it is really interested in discouraging children from a culture of bad governance (Kur, 2007; Kur, 2009a), corruption (Kur, Orhewere, & Melladu, 2013), electoral irregularities and violence (Kur, 2003; Kur, 2006; Orhewere, & Kur, 2003), political recklessness and abuse of power (Kur, & Gapsiso, 2012), dysfunctional multicultural practices (Kur, Agudoso, & Orhewere, 2015; Kur, Melladu, & Hassan, 2013) and other anomalies confronting many contemporary societies.

A leading source of information about the situation of children around the world is UNICEF through its publications and reports (<https://www.unicef.org/publications>), which are a product of grounded empirical data, rigorous research and thoughtful analysis. From the publications and reports, it is clear that while some progress has been made in child care and protection in the last 10 years, largely through the efforts of child-friendly organizations (UNICEF, 2019; UNICEF, 2020); there is still a huge gap in addressing the challenges and vulnerability of children. In the area of education, for example, the menace of out-of-school children is still a big challenge, especially to sub-Saharan Africa where Nigeria belongs. UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2019) reports that as at 2018, out of the 59 million out-of-school children of primary school age, 32 million were from sub-Saharan Africa. Nigeria accounted for over 17 million of that

figure, arguably the highest in the world. Most of the out-of-school children in Nigeria are from the northern part of the country, with Kano State having the highest (Erunke, 2020). As at September 2020, 11 states (Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Yobe, and Zamfara), all in North East and North West geopolitical zones of the country, were yet to domesticate the Child's Rights Act (Asim, 2020). Most of the 11 states have serious issues with child care and protection (Connelly & Ikpaahindi, 2016; Rex, 2020; Save the Children Nigeria, 2016).

The foregoing discussion on the code of conduct towards children, which suggests opportunities and challenges of children in society, is necessary in understanding the influence of media technologies on children. A number of studies (Haddon & Livingstone, 2014; Orgad, 2007; Slater, 2002) have shown a strong relationship between opportunities and risks offline and online. In many cases online risk-taking by children is a transfer from offline experiences. The same applies to opportunities. Similarly, the virtual has not replaced the real; rather the virtual borrows from the real, and the real intensifies the virtual. Often times what is learnt online is practiced offline (Bozzola, Spina, Ruggiero, Memo, Agostiniani, Bozzola, Corsello, & Villani, 2018; Gottschalk, 2019; Mboho & Kur, 2005/2006).

4. Media Technologies and Children: A Mixed Blessing

Media technologies have always been an integral part of the lives of children. It began with the popularisation of television in the 1950s and 1960s, which attracted the interest of children so much so that the medium earned the nick name *electronic babysitter*. The story is not different with the emergence of other traditional forms such as film, radio, comics and music, and of recent digital technologies and the internet. On a daily basis, children spend many hours with these technologies. Children are

growing up in an environment that is saturated with new media technologies that strongly capture their attention. UNICEF (2017) observes that in every three internet users, one is a child, and that children under 15 years, in some countries, use the internet 25 times more than adults. A UK study found that 93% of children aged 13-17 owned smartphones and spent about nine hours online daily using them (Logicalis UK, 2016). Ofcom (2019) reports that tablets are the dominant device children use, and that YouTube, online gaming and social media are popular with children. In Nigeria, the story is not radically different. Uzuegbunam (2019) reports that a significant number of children have access to digital technologies, particularly mobile phones and the internet, which they use between 1 and 5 hours a day. They use television, but access it mostly through smartphones. Use of tablets, computers and laptops is not common. The children are socially connected, which is enhanced through social networks notably facebook, WhatsApp, facebook messenger and Instagram. Children's use of media technologies is active, partly dependent on the child's gender, age, and socioeconomic status (SES), and varies by location, equipment, and frequency of use (Scott *et al.* 2019).

Children's experience with media technologies is a mixed bag of opportunities and risks. In terms of opportunities, a number of scholars (Cabello-Hutt, Cabello & Claro, 2017; Kur, 2008; Mboho & Kur, 2005/2006; Mboho & Kur, 2007; Livingstone, Davidson, Bryce, Batool, Haughton & Nandi, 2017; Livingstone, Nandi, Banaja & Stoilova, 2017; Uzuegbunam, 2019) have agreed that media technologies avail children access to global information, education resources, entertainment, social networking, and privacy for the expression of identity. The technologies also give them the opportunity to create and receive content, participate in civic or political activities, respect and celebrate differences, support and promote respect and kindness, build their

confidence and competence, make and sustain friends, develop digital skills relevant for 21st century digital economy, and participate in their peer culture and the wider society. Children's recreational screen time at low levels is linked with lower depression risk compared with no screen time (Canadian Paediatric Society, 2019; Gottschalk, 2019b). Thus, media technologies have indeed contributed to the development process of children by enhancing their creativity, improving their decision-making skills, facilitating efficient learning process in them, and empowering and promoting personal branding, thereby touching their social and emotional lives positively.

Side by side with the opportunities offered by media technologies to children are risks, which are quite many. The more children use media technologies, the greater the range of benefits they acquire and the greater the risks they experience (Garitaonandia, Karrelá & Larranaga, 2019). One prominent risk associated with children's use of media technologies is cyberbullying. While cyberbullying is less common than offline bullying, the experience is disturbing and very harmful mostly when children are the perpetrators and victims (UNICEF, 2017). Closely related to cyberbullying is online harassment, which many times takes the form of sexual harassment (Tartari, 2015), phishing and communication with unknown persons that can open door for grooming or radicalization (Gottschalk, 2019a).

Among pre-school children, use of touch screen media interferes with their learning development. Many hours of television use affect their brain development negatively, and is significantly associated with reduced sleep quality, sleep terrors, nightmares, and sleep talking. Electronic media use in early childhood for many hours (more than 2 hours a day) leads to increased wealth and behavioural problems (Bozzola, *et al.*, 2018).

In a systematic review of published works on the relationship between social media use by children and mental health, Keles, McCrae and Grealish (2020) observed that time spent, activity, investment and addiction to social media are correlated with depression, anxiety and psychological stress. Sexing/sexting, pornography, violence, aggression, dangers in multitasking, privacy concerns and digital footprints, contact with strangers and its adverse consequences, alienation and social exclusion, hate speech, social distrust, identity theft, cyber stalking, online grooming, low self-esteem or confidence, and lack of interpersonal skills are other risks associated with children's use of media technologies, depending on the quantity of use, age and sex of the child, intervention of adults in the use, and the content of the technologies (Allison, 2018; Canadian Paediatric Society, 2019).

Other negative themes associated with children's use of media technologies include drug abuse and alcoholism, vulnerability to online dangers, criminality, sexual promiscuity, indecency in language and dressing, attention problems, digital media addiction, disrespect for law and constituted authority, confusion of reality and fantasy, and wrong values (Lips, Eppel, McRae, Starkey, Sylvester, Parore, & Barlow, 2017; Livingstone, *et al.*, 2017; Okoro, Nwafor, & Odoemelam, 2015). A succinct summary of the benefits and harms associated with children's use of media technologies is presented in Table 1:

Table 1: Classification of online opportunities and risks for children

	Contact: Child as recipient	Content: Child as participant	Conduct: Child as actor
OPPORTUNITIES			
Education, learning and literacy	Educational resources	Contact with others who share one's interests	Self-initiated or collaborative learning
Participation and civic engagement	Global information	Exchange among interest groups	Concrete forms of civic engagement
Creativity	Diversity of resources	Being invited/inspired to create or participate	User-generated content creation
Identity and social connection	Advice (personal/health/sexual, etc)	Social networking, shared experiences with others	Expression of identity
RISKS			
Commercial	Advertising, spam, sponsorship	Tracking/harvesting personal information	Gambling, illegal downloads, hacking
Aggressive	Violent/gruesome/hateful content	Being bullied, harassed or stalked	Bullying or harassing another
Sexual	Pornographic/harmful sexual content	Meeting strangers, being groomed	Creating/uploading pornographic material
Values	Racist, biased info/advice (e.g. drugs)	Self-harm, unwelcome persuasion	Providing advice e.g. suicide/pro-anorexia

Source: Livingstone & Haddon (2009)

Table 1 is a classification of opportunities and risks associated with children's online experience. According to the Table, the opportunities and risks are in three categories – contact, content and conduct. Content opportunity or risk has the child as the recipient, contact has child as the participant and conduct has the child as the actor. Opportunities in children's use of media technologies fall under four themes: (1) Education, learning and literacy, (2) participation and civic engagement, (3) creativity, and (4) identity and social connection. Similarly, risks associated with children's use of media technologies also fall under four broad themes: (1) Commercial, (2) aggressive, (3) sexual, and (4) values. The Table provides examples of each category of opportunity and risk.

Figures 1 and 2 are examples of opportunities and risks associated with children's use of media technologies:



Fig. 1a: Children studying using digital technology.
Source: Gettyimages.com



Fig. 1b: Guided use of computer games increases a child's IQ.
Source: Masterfile.com



Fig. 2a: Addiction to computer game leads to reduced sleep quality.
Source: ca.ctrinstitute.com

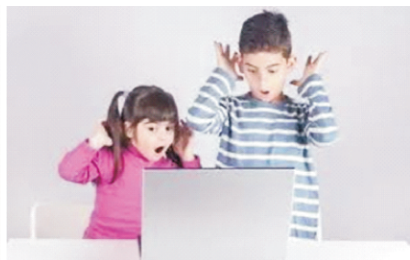


Fig. 2b: Children can be frightened when exposed to aggressive content of media technologies.
Source: Parenting.firstcry.com

5. Parental Mediation: Harnessing the Good and Limiting the Harm

Arising from the backdrop that children's experience with media technologies is associated with both benefits and risks (a curate's egg), there is the need for an intervention to maximize the benefits and minimize the risks. Of all the stakeholders in child development (family, school, religious organizations, the media, peer groups, child policy makers, etc), the family, particularly parents, are in the most advantageous position to intervene with better results; they are the most influential in the task of developing and socializing children (Naab, 2018). There are at least three reasons which account for parents' pivotal role in children's experiences with media technologies: (1) Parents and children have a biological attraction and close proximity. This is a biosocial system intended to assist children respond positively to social demands. (2) As a result of their physical and emotional proximity, parents and children have a common understanding with a view to teaching the child appropriate behaviours that would make him/her and the general society comfortable. This is a motivation for parents to socialize their children by teaching them what is appropriate and inappropriate. (3) Society generally expects parents to take good care of their children and teach them good conduct. Society holds parents responsible when they fail in this role or when their children misbehave (Grusec & Davidov, 2007).

Parents' intervention in children's media use comes under the subject matter of parental mediation, defined as “the degree and manner in which parents intervene in the relationship their children establish with the media” (Aierbe, Oregui & Bartau, 2019, p. 102). It is parents' adoption of diverse practices to manage and regulate children's experiences with the media (Livingstone, Mascheroni, Dreier, Chaudron, & Lagae, 2015). It is parental approaches used in mitigating risks and maximizing

benefits associated with children's media use (Kur, 2009b). It is a specific or new aspect of parenting (Smahelova, Juhova, Cermak, & Smahel, 2017).

The term “parental mediation” was first used in the 1980s following the observed effects of television on children in the United States and the need to intervene in children's use of the medium. The government of the United States gave the task of intervention to parents who were closest to the children (Mendova, 2009). This period marked the birth of parental mediation theory, conceived from the experiences of children's television viewing. A ground-breaking research which contributed hugely in articulating the principles of the theory was conducted by Valkenberg, Krmar, Peeters, and Marseille (1999), and came out with findings which identified three strategies of parental mediation – active (instructive), restrictive and co-use. While active mediation has to do with discussing media content with children, restrictive mediation is about setting rules that control children's use of the media in terms of time spent with the media, location of use, and content use. Co-use suggests that parents and children jointly use the media or parents are around when children use the media (Symons, Ponnet, Emmery, Walrave & Heirman, 2017).

With the emergence of digital media technologies, many of which are different from television, the principles of parental mediation theory, which were based on children's television viewing, were no longer adequate in explaining parental intervention in children's digital media use. Hence, a need to improve on the descriptive and explanatory strength of the theory arose. Clark's (2011) study was handy in this regard. Clark (2011) added participatory learning as a parental mediation strategy in the digital age. Participatory learning is defined as the interactions that take place between parents and

children in relationship with the different forms of digital, mobile, and traditional media. Clark (2011) also explained the three traditional parental mediation strategies (restrictive, active and co-use) to give them relevance in the current digital media landscape and its manifold affordances for mediated communication, interactivity, augmented reality, social networking, immersive virtual environments etc. Livingstone and Helsper (2008) have also suggested four useful parental mediation strategies in the digital age. The strategies are: (1) Active co-use, (2) interaction restrictions, (3) technical restrictions, and (4) monitoring. Of the four strategies, only the last two are actually an addition to the traditional active, restrictive and co-use mediation strategies. Technical restrictions has to do with the use of filters and monitoring software to keep track of children's internet-enabled media use. Monitoring is concerned with parents' constant inspection of children's use of internet-enabled media.

Research into the effectiveness of parental mediation strategies shows that while some of the strategies are effective (Rasmussen, Ortiz, & White, 2015; Walker, Brocato, Carlson & Laczniak, 2018); others are not (Durager & Livingstone, 2012; Sasson & Mesch, 2014; Ybarra, Finkelhor, Mitchell & Wolak, 2009). Evidence from some studies (Livingstone, Mascheroni, Dreier, Chaudron, & Lagae, 2015; Naab, 2018; Symons, Ponnet, Emery, Walrave, & Heirman, 2017) show that some mediation strategies work well on some children in certain circumstances and not on other children in the same and other circumstances. This suggests that the effectiveness of any parental mediation strategy is dependent on the mediation situations, which include mediation actors (parents and children), medium/media involved in the mediation, and environmental issues affecting the mediation actors and medium/media.

6.0 My Contributions

My modest contribution to knowledge on the subject matter under examination is in two thematic areas, which are studies on: (1) children's experiences with media technologies, and (2) parental mediation of children's use of media technologies.

6.1 Media Technologies and Children: A Curate's Egg

6.1.1 *Television violence and children*

An area of children's television use that has attracted public, legislative and industry concern across the world over the years is amount of television violence children are exposed to and its effect on them. Research in this area produced conflicting findings. On the one hand were findings that downplayed the effects of television violence on children (DeFleur & Dennis, 1994). On the other hand were findings that suggested television violence raised rates of aggression among children who were heavy viewers (Dominick, 1996).

Arising from the conflicting results, the fact that these studies were based on the experiences of the Western world which are different from the African experience, and that the existing studies on the subject matter did not include the views of children, Mboho and Kur (2005/2006) embarked on a study of primary school children in Makurdi town, Benue State to ascertain how children of heavy and light exposure to television violence perceive the effects of television violence on them and the world at large. Findings revealed that children who are heavy viewers of television perceive TV violence in a negative light, and those who are light viewers have a positive perception of television violence. Chi-square test analysis supported this relationship, even though a weak one (0.30). Other findings of the study are presented in Table 2:

Table 2: Relationship between children's viewership of TV violence and perception of the world as dangerous and non-dangerous.

TV violence viewed	Perception of the world		
	Dangerous %	Non-dangerous %	Total %
Heavy	51.1	45.9	100
Light	56.1	43.9	100
Total	54.9	45.1	100

Source: Mboho & Kur (2005/2006)

Data in Table 2 reveal that both heavy and light viewers of television violence perceive the world as a dangerous place. These findings imply that heavy exposure to television and televised violence adversely affects the perception of children, and in turn also affects their behaviour negatively, if the argument that perception affects behaviour is anything to go by (Anderson & Ross, 2002).

6.1.2 Television and academic achievement in children

Opponents of television claim that it is a disaster to children's school achievement while the proponents see the medium as a huge contribution to school achievement of children who watch it. Arising from this debate, we (Mboho & Kur, 2007) embarked on a study to determine the influence of television on school achievement among children. The study was conducted on primary school children in Makurdi metropolis, Benue State. Findings were that television has direct and beneficial consequences for children's school achievement, if consciously planned to cater for the interest of children; otherwise, it is a threat to school achievement. Conscious planning of television broadcast in the interest of school achievement presupposes appropriate programming and children's television environment. Programming is appropriate if it focuses on

educative content including school curricular. Children's television environment is appropriate when parents intervene in children's exposure to television, restricting, checking and discussing television content with children.

6.1.3 Television news and children

A general trend of research on the relationship between television and children is that it focuses on fictional-based television content; rarely does it examine reality-based programmes such as television news. To understand the relationship between television news and children, we (Mboho & Kur, 2006) investigated the profile of adolescents who patronize television news. The study was conducted on a population of in-school adolescents in Makurdi town, Benue State. Findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Adolescents' patronage of television news and their demographic and school achievement variables

TV News Exposure	Demographic and school achievement variables									
	Age in years %			Sex %		SES %		School achievement %		Total %
	12-14	15-17	18-20	Male	Female	High	Low	High	Low	
Strongly agree	20	22.7	24.6	22.6	22.6	24.7	21.4	21.1	23.5	22.6
Agree	31	37.5	36.8	44.3	25	39.7	33.3	33.6	39.7	35.8
Undecided	6.7	11.4	7	8.5	9.5	8.2	9.4	6.6	13.2	8.9
Disagree	17.8	15.9	17.5	13.2	21.4	17.8	16.2	21.3	8.8	16.8
Strongly disagree	24.4	12.5	14	11.3	21.4	9.6	19.7	16.4	14.7	15.8
Total	23.7	46.3	30	55.8	44.2	38.4	61.6	64.2	35.8	99.9
Summary of X² test	X ² cal. = 38.30 df = 4 α = 0.05 X ² tab. = 9.49			X ² cal. = 9.9 Df = 4 α = 0.05 X ² tab. = 9.49		X ² cal. = 3.4 df = 4 α = 0.05 X ² tab = 9.49		X ² cal. = 6.7 df = 4 α = 0.05 X ² tab. = 9.49		

Source: Mboho & Kur (2006)

Table 3 suggests that the profile of adolescents exposed to television news most is that they are older, male, and of high socioeconomic status and school achievement. Other characteristics of adolescents who patronize television news found in the study but not shown in Table 4 is that they are also heavy television viewers, have negative attitude to authority and positive attitude to group norms. The study thus concluded that patronage of adolescents' television news in Nigeria is one with a complex pattern of demographic, general television viewing and attitudinal factors.

6.1.4 Media technologies and political socialization of children

For the sustainability of any political system, there is need for political socialization, especially that of children who will take up political roles in the future to keep the system moving. The media constitute the primary source of political information for children and adults (Becker, McCombs & McLead, 1975). On this premise, Kur (2008) embarked on a study of children in Makurdi to determine the contribution of media technologies vis-à-vis other agents of socialization (parents, peers, teachers and religious instructors) to the development of political values in children. Media technologies examined in the study were radio, television, books, newspapers, magazines and home videos.

Findings revealed that frequency of exposure to radio, television and books was associated with development of political values in children while exposure to newspapers, magazines and home videos was not. Association between children's preference for informative content of media technologies and their development of political values was established. Children's strength of ties with parents and peers (and not with religious instructors) was associated with perceived usefulness of media technologies in developing political values. The conclusion

drawn from the study is that media technologies in association with other socialization agents of parents and peers are effective tools of political socialization of children when carefully planned and deployed.

6.1.5 Integrating indigenous communication and media technologies for child moral education: The case of “Tales by Moonlight”

From the backdrop of the strengths and weaknesses of media technologies and traditional transmission of indigenous folklore, some scholars (Ansu-Kyeremeh, 1998; Wilson, 1997) have advocated for integration of the two systems for a more effective message delivery. *Tales by Moonlight*, a children's programme produced and broadcast by Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) Network Service, is an example of the integration of media technologies and indigenous communication. How effective is this techno-indigenous model in *Tales by Moonlight*? To answer this question, Kur and Gujbawu (2007) embarked on an evaluative study to ascertain the effectiveness of *Tales by Moonlight* as a techno-indigenous packaged and delivered children's moral education television programme.

Findings revealed that a lot of children watch the programme (61.8% regularly and 38.2% occasionally). An area of interest to children in the programme is the African folklore content, which includes folk drama, story lines based on African traditional experiences, folk songs, African proverbs, African costumes and other African traditional values. The children were also interested in skills of the presenter and quality of transmission signals. A great majority of the children (72.6%) said they learned a great deal of moral values from the programme, which contributed in shaping their moral lives. The study concluded that aspects of indigenous folklore are capable of imparting moral lessons which in turn shape the moral lives of children.

Media technologies are effective in transmitting the indigenous folklore to a large, heterogeneous and scattered audience simultaneously in a timely manner. The study therefore makes a case for localization of exogenous (Western) media technologies for the development of the African child. This is the use of Western media technologies to encode or articulate the African value system in such a way as to produce a content that is of developmental value to children and at the same time meets the requirement of information dissemination in an information society (swift information dissemination which reaches a large, diverse, scattered, and heterogeneous audience simultaneously).

6.2 Parental Mediation of Children's Use of Media Technologies: The Mother's Milk

6.2.1 *Mediation of children's television use*

Television as noted in this lecture is one of the most patronized media technologies by children. This patronage, as also noted in this lecture, comes with benefits and risks. This double-edge effect of television has necessitated the concern of parents with a view to maximizing the benefits and minimizing the risks. To understand the actualization of this concern of parents, Kur (2011) investigated the motives, strategies and effects of parental mediation of children's television viewing in Benue State.

Findings revealed that a very high number of parents (94.8%) are involved in mediating their children's television viewing. The parents have various motives for mediating their children's TV use, which included preventing children from: (1) losing interest in studies, (2) the adverse effects of television, (3) unhealthy sexual/pornographic materials, (4) television addiction, and (5) learning offensive language. Other findings of the study presented in Figures 3 and 4 revealed that more than half of the

parents used restrictive strategy, which was found not to be as effective as co-viewing and instructive or active strategies which were applied by a comparatively few parents.

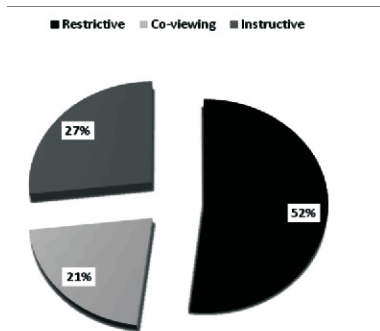


Fig. 3: Parental mediation strategies adopted on children's TV viewing. Adapted from Kur (2011)

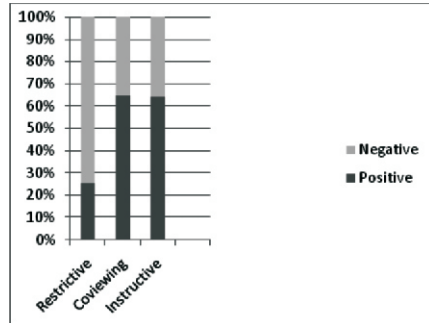


Fig. 4: Influence of parental mediation strategies on children's perception of TV violence. Adapted from Kur (2011)

Another study on parental mediation of children's television experience we conducted (Kur, Orhewere & Agudosy, 2011) was on the relationship between parental involvement and mediation of children's television use. The reality with many Nigerian homes, especially the urban ones, is that parents are not available to their children as they should, a situation that has the likelihood to affect the adoption of parental mediation strategies. Our study explored this scenario with the objective of determining the relationship between parental involvement and adoption of mediation strategies on children's television viewing. Parental involvement was defined as parents' availability and engagement with their children. We measured parental availability in terms of the number of hours parents were accessible to their children in a day. We treated parental engagement as activities parents participate with their children such as recreation, private talks, reading, home keeping, and others.

Findings revealed that parents largely applied restrictive mediation (51.9%). They also applied co-viewing (21.3%) and instructive (26.8%) mediation. Both parental availability and engagement were found to influence the mediation as shown in Table 4 and Figure 5.

Table 4: Parents' time with children and adoption of mediation strategy on children's TV viewing

Parents' time with children (hours per day)	Parental mediation strategy (%)							
	Restrictive		Co-viewing		Instructive		Total	
	Weekday	Weekend	Weekday	Weekend	Weekday	Weekend	Weekday	Weekend
< 1	53.8	70	1.5	0	34.6	30	99.9	100
1	58.7	77.3	13	9.1	28.3	13.6	100	99.9
2	69.6	51.2	11.6	19.5	18.8	29.3	100	100
3	66.7	57.3	13.1	17.3	20.2	25.3	100	99.9
4	28.9	52.6	37.5	22.1	35	25.3	100	100
+4	28.9	40	39.5	29	31.6	31	100	100
Total	51.9	51.9	21.3	21.3	26.8	26.8	100	100

Source: Kur, Orhewere & Agudoso (2011)

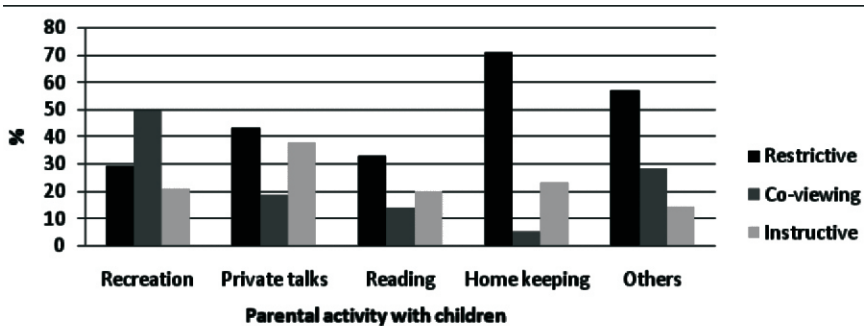


Figure 5: Parental activities with children and mediation strategies adopted on children's TV viewing. Adapted from Kur, Orhewere and Agudoso (2011).

Data in Table 4 suggests that parents who spent more hours with their children in a day adopted co-viewing mediation and those who spent less hours adopted restrictive and instructive mediation strategies. Figure 5 reveals that parental recreation

with children is associated with co-viewing mediation, reading and home keeping activities are associated with restrictive mediation, and private talks is associated with both restrictive and instructive mediation strategies. Inference drawn from data in Table 4 and Figure 5 is that parental involvement with children leads to parents' adoption of different mediation strategies, depending on the level and nature of involvement.

6.2.2 Parental mediation of children's cell phone use

One of the most popular digital media devices used by children across the globe is cell phone. The use of cell phones by children, just like any other media technology, goes with benefits and risks which calls for the attention of parents. Kur and Essien (2014) embarked on a study to explore parental mediation of children's cell phone use in Minna town, Niger State. Findings revealed that majority of the parents (64.8%) said they mediate their children's cell phone use, largely through restrictive approach as shown in Figure 6:

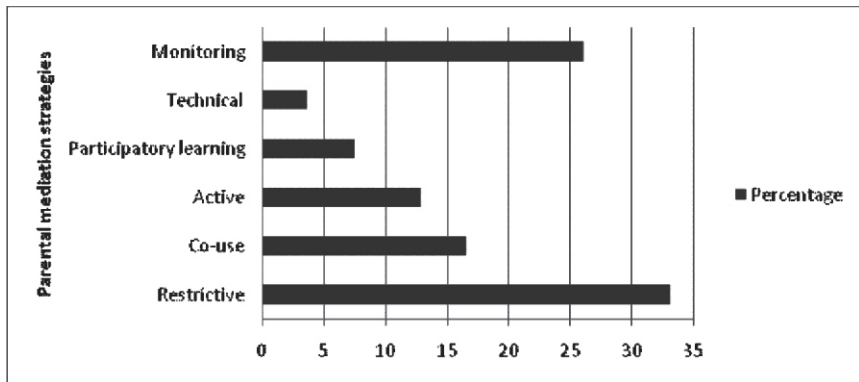


Figure 5: Parental mediation strategies adopted on children's cell phone use. Adapted from Kur & Essien (2014).

From Figure 6, it is evident that the parents studied adopted more of restrictive and monitoring strategies in mediating

children's cell phone use. Other mediation strategies adopted by the parents were co-use, active, participatory learning and technical in that order. It was also found that parents' motives for the mediation were to enhance education (24%) and morality (19.8%) in children as well as prevent bad peer influences (11.8%), sleep deprivation (10.8%), cell phone addiction (8.3%), dating abuses (7.5%), cyber-bullying (6.5%), violence (5.4%), victimization (3.1%), and unnecessary anxiety (2.8%). With the motives for mediation in mind, how effective were the adopted mediation strategies?

Data on the effectiveness of these strategies is captured in Figure 7. According to the data, the most popular mediation strategy among the parents (restrictive mediation) is perceived not to be as effective as the less popular strategies of co-use, monitoring, participatory learning, active and technical. In fact, the least used strategy (technical mediation) is more effectiveness than the largest used strategy (restrictive mediation).

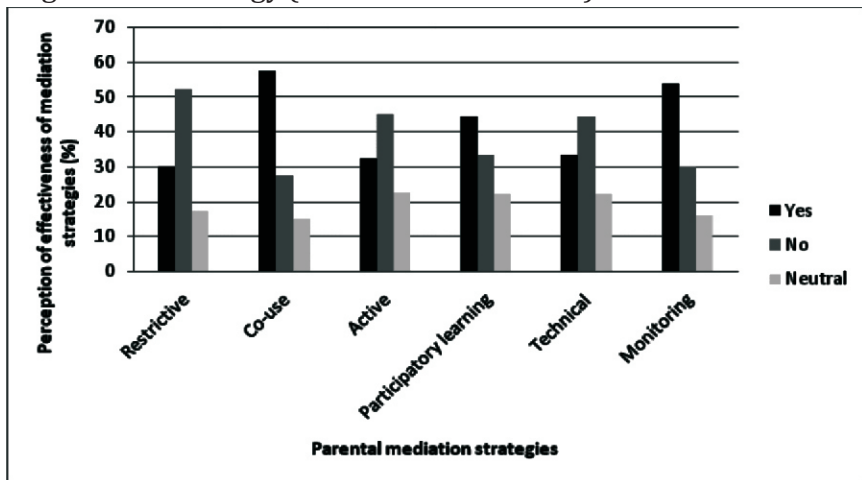


Figure 7: Perception of effectiveness of mediation strategies on children's cell phone use. Adapted from Kur & Essien (2014).

Conclusion drawn from this study was that the popularly used restrictive mediation is not as effective as the unpopular strategies. This suggests that parents adopt mediation strategies on the basis of convenience. Hence, the authoritarian approaches of restrictive and monitoring mediation are preferred over the authoritative approaches of Co-use, active and participatory learning approaches. Authoritative approaches as found in this and previous studies (Kur, 2011; Kur, Orhewere & Agudosy, 2011; Livingstone, Mascheroni, Dreier, Chaudron, & Lagae, 2015; Smahelova, Juhova, Cermak, & Smahel, 2017) are more effective than authoritarian approaches.

6.2.3 Parental mediation and child political socialization

Media technologies portray political images and representations that have both positive and negative implications for political socialization. For children to acquire desirable political socialization from media technologies, they have to be zealously guided in their use of the 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. From this background, Kur, Iorpagher and Melladu (2019) did a systematic literature review on political socialization, children's use of new media technologies and parental mediation, with the objective of proposing a functional approach for mediating children's new media use for political socialization. The result of the review is a proposed model named *A Proposed Model of Parental Mediation of Children's New Media Technologies' Use for Political Socialization* presented in Figure 8:

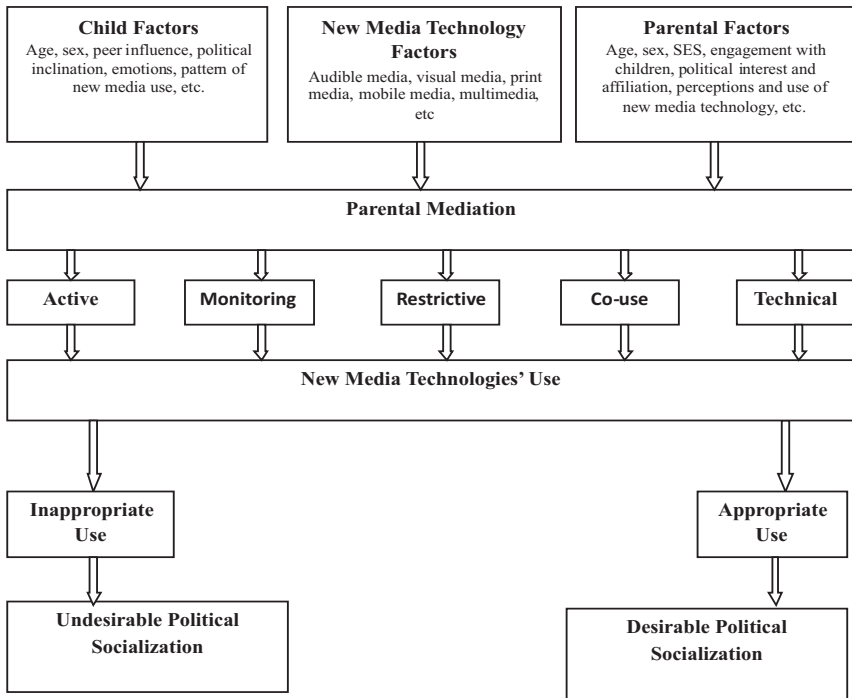


Figure 8: A Proposed Model of Parental Mediation of Children's New Media Technologies' Use for Political Socialization. Source: Kur, Iorpagher & Melladu (2019).

According to Figure 8, 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.

6.2.4 Parental Controls and Mediation of Children's Digital Media Use

Parental controls are online or offline installations, tools or devices (software and filters) used by parents to monitor, track, and restrict children's use of digital media (Ofcom, 2014). These technological tools include those offered by Internet Service Providers (ISP) and Computer Operating Systems as well as programmes installed or downloaded in the household. Parental controls also include browser-based controls like safe search, time-limiting software, You Tube safety mode, and content provider guidance such as pin protected content (Ofcom, 2014).

Most reported research on use of parental controls as a parental mediation strategy was conducted in Western countries with higher experiences of digital technology use, and findings showed that the use of the strategy was low (Ponte, Simoes & Azevedo, 2014). In a few cases it was used, it was found to be effective in addressing concerns of children's digital media use (Donoso, 2014; Kuppusamy, Francis & Aghila, 2013). What is the situation in the developing world, with comparatively lower experiences in digital media use? To answer this question, Kur, Kolo and Iorpagher (2019) studied awareness, attitude and use of parental controls among parents at Federal University of Technology, Minna, Nigeria. Findings revealed low awareness, negative attitude, and abysmally low use of parental controls as shown in Figures 9 and 10:

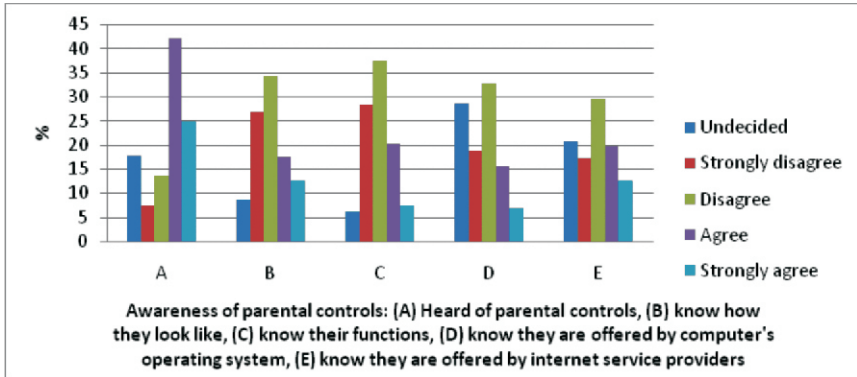


Figure 9: Parents' awareness of parental controls. Adapted from Kur, Kolo & Iorpagher (2019)

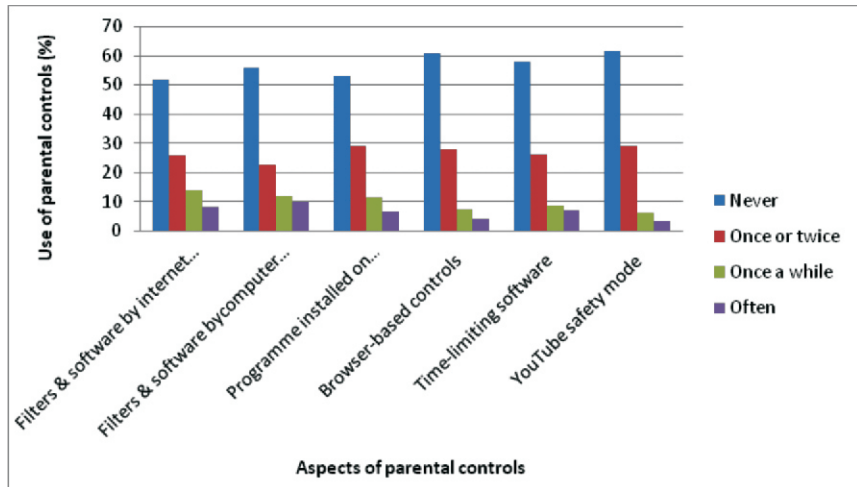


Figure 10: Parents' use of the different aspects of parental controls. Adapted from Kur, Kolo & Iorpagher (2019).

Figure 9 reveals that a large number of respondents (67.2%) have heard about parental controls. However, many of them did not know how parental controls look like (61.4%), functions of parental controls (66%), and sources of parental controls (51.6%). Figure 10 shows that overwhelming majority of respondents said they had never used any aspect of parental

controls. The study concluded that parental controls are yet to be a veritable parental mediation strategy in Nigeria. The strategy is still largely shrouded with inadequate knowledge of what it is, how it works, what it does, and how to use it.

6.2.5 Parental mediation of children's video game use

Video game is a fast growing entertainment industry around the world, and it is very popular with children. Research by Kaspersky (2020) reveals that as many as 85 percent of children in Nigeria play video game, and 55 percent of the parents are concerned with their children's involvement with the games. This concern arises largely from the need to maximize the benefits and minimize the risks associated with children's experience with video games. From the backdrop of this concern, we (Kur, Melladu & Lazarus, 2020) embarked on a study of elite parents in Minna town to ascertain parents' attitude towards children's video game activities and mediation of the activities. Findings suggested that parents had negative attitude towards the “negative” or “undesirable” aspects of video games and positive attitude towards the “positive” or “desirable” aspects of video games. Majority of the parents said they mediated their children's video game activities, using primarily restrictive and active mediation strategies. A few parents used co-play and technical mediation strategies. The study also established a relationship between parental attitude to video games and mediation strategies used on children's video game use; parents with a negative attitude towards video game were more inclined to use restrictive, active and technical mediation strategies. On the other hand, those with a positive attitude towards video game were more at home with co-play mediation strategy. The study concluded that parents' acquisition of high levels of video game literacy and wide and deep knowledge of children's experiences with video game are necessary for meaningful intervention in children's video game use.

6.2.6 Parental mediation of children's risky experiences with digital media

The increasingly ugly scenario of children's risky experiences with digital media (alcoholism and illegal drinking, smoking, ill-treatment, illegal use of drugs, illicit and risky sexual practices, poor sleep quality, sexting, etc) gave rise to this research (James & Kur, 2020). The aim was to ascertain the role of parental mediation in mitigating the ugly experiences. The study was conducted on academic and non-academic staff of Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai who were parents. Findings revealed that restrictive and active mediation were the predominant strategies used to mediate children's risky experiences with digital media. These strategies were found to be more effective than the strategies minimally used (technical and co-use mediation).

7. Conclusion

The argument in this lecture is that children's experience with media technologies is associated with risks and opportunities (a curate's egg). To ensure media technologies play a meaningful role in the lives of children, there is the need to minimize the risks and maximize the opportunities. Parents are the most appropriate agency to discharge this task, even though other stakeholders in child development too have a role. Parental intervention in children's use of media technologies is known as parental mediation (the mother's egg). There are a couple of parental mediation practices which are broadly categorized under five approaches – restrictive, active, co-use, technical restrictions and monitoring mediation.

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 (which centre on parents, child and media technologies factors) before adopting the strategies.

Findings of our research into the field of parental mediation in Nigeria, reviewed in this lecture, suggests that parents largely use restrictive strategies in mediating children's use of media technologies, which produce little or no positive result. A few parents use the most promising strategies of active and co-use mediation. Technical mediation which appears to produce positive outcomes in the digital age is largely unknown to the parents, not to talk of using it. Similarly, evidence shown in this lecture suggests that parental motive for mediation is largely to prevent children's negative experience with media technologies; and not to assist them maximize the opportunities presented by media technologies. Overall, therefore, this lecture has delivered a strong case for appropriate parental mediation deficit in Nigeria.

8. Recommendations

- i. The government and other stakeholders in child development and parenting should embark on conscious awareness campaigns on the important place of parental mediation in child development. The awareness campaigns should strongly emphasize the different approaches to parental mediation, the situations under which to deploy the approaches for effective result, and strengths and weaknesses of the approaches.
- ii. As a follow-up to the first recommendation, it is instructive to introduce or develop parental mediation curriculum in higher educational institutions. Treating parental mediation as a topic in family mediation or

parenting curriculum is not enough. Parental mediation curriculum will not only promote children's responsible experiences with media technologies, but will position them as active participants in a digital economy, which is the yearning of Nigeria and the entire developing nations of the world.

- iii. There is a grave need for informal and semi-formal parental mediation education to complement the formal education emphasized in the second recommendation. Governmental policies and political will are required to encourage conscious and deliberate planning and administration of the education.
- iv. There is the urgent need for parents to quickly migrate to the digital age. Parental knowledge and acquisition of digital technological skills is a necessary tool for meaningful parental mediation. Children, as digital natives, have high and complex understanding and manipulation of media technologies. Parents' knowledge and skills in manipulating the technologies should also be high to be able to intervene meaningfully in children's experience with the technologies.
- v. Since parental mediation is an aspect of parenting, it is a worthwhile idea for parents to strive to acquire the generally acceptable parenting skills which focus on: (1) Acceptance of and involvement in children's lives to establish emotional connection with them, (2) general control of children to promote more mature behaviour, and (3) some level of autonomy to children, depending on the age, to encourage self-reliance. Parents who utilize these skills in parental mediation record huge successes.

9. My Future Research Agenda

My Chairman, distinguished ladies and gentlemen. My contributions on the subject of parental mediation of children's experience with media technologies so far have largely been an attempt to understand the prevailing situation of the subject

matter in Nigeria. My next research focus will be an attempt to contribute more directly in the practice of parental mediation. In this regard, I hope to engage in strategic awareness campaigns with a view to educating and promoting the practice of parental mediation among parents. It is also my hope to work towards assisting to build the capacity of parents to engage more meaningfully in the practice of parental mediation of children's encounter with digital media. In doing this, I shall focus more on parents of children in the rural areas and those of low socio-economic status. This is because media technologies' risks are associated with these categories of children more than those in the urban areas and of high socio-economic status.

One area of parental mediation research that is yet to be visible in Nigeria is that which focuses on toddlers, yet there are an increasing number of cases of toddlers' use of media technologies, especially the screen media. The use has implications and consequences for child development. This calls for intervention. What is the role of parents in toddlers' use of media technologies? It is my hope to attempt an empirical answer to this question, and add to the understanding of the implications and consequences of parental involvement and intervention in toddlers' experiences with media technologies.

Technology is dynamic and advancing with high speed. Thus, the concept of emerging technology is a prevailing phenomenon in the field of media technologies. Emerging media technologies will likely bring new fascinating experiences to children, which will require adjustments in parental mediation approaches. This requires research in the field of parental mediation to keep abreast with emerging media technologies and changes in the consumption pattern of the technologies by children. This is exactly what I hope to do so as to continue to remain relevant and valuable in the research area of parental mediation.

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“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits” (Psalm 103:1&2). A number of persons have contributed immensely towards my academic career. First, in a special way, I am deeply indebted to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Guda Iyolnyion Kur. They did everything possible to give us, the children, a sound moral and academic education. They did this at the expense of their comfort and good livelihood. May God continue to keep and strengthen them, and give us, the children, the wisdom and strength to continue to take good care of them in their old age.

My parents gave birth to eleven of us (1. Mr. Martin Terver Kur, 2. Prof. Jude Terna Kur, 3. Mr. Paschal Dooyum Kur, 4. Mrs. Apollonia Ngunyi Mange, 5. Mrs. Juliana Mbasen Jiagwei, 6. Mrs. Clementina Mbawuese Ushir, 7. Mrs. Margaret Ngodoo Terkula, 8. Mr. Leo Terseer Kur, 9. Miss. Angela Iveren Kur, 10. Mrs. Susana Mcivir Onyebuchi, and 11. Mr. Paul Iorwuese Kur). By the grace of God all the eleven are alive and doing great. Each of my ten siblings along with their wives and husbands as the case may be has been supportive and caring towards my education and career. I thank them and pray God to continue to give us the grace of unity, love, peace and divine protection.

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BRIEF PROFILE OF THE INAUGURAL LECTURER

Professor Jude Terna Kur was born to the family of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Guda Iyolnyion Kur on 20th June, 1974 at Tse Dumegu village of Mbageva Clan (Ighorov Council Ward) in Ipav District, Gboko Local Government Area, Benue State. He is the second child in a family of eleven children – five males, six females.

Jude had his early education at Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) Primary School, Demekpe, now LGEA Science Primary School, Demekpe, which he completed in 1983, and the prestigious Mount Saint Gabriel's Secondary School (1983 – 1988) all in Makurdi, Benue State. Under the tutelage of the legendary Very Rev. Fr. Angus Fraser, C.S.Sp of blessed memory, his principal at Mount Saint Gabriel's Secondary School, Makurdi, the young Jude felt the call of God to be a religious priest in the Roman Catholic Church. He joined the religious Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Holy Ghost Fathers), a Congregation Fr. Fraser himself was a member. He had pre-novitiate training at Spiritan Postulate House inside the premises of St. Mary's Catholic Church, Yola Town, Yola, Adamawa State in 1989. The same year, he proceeded for a yearlong novitiate formation and vocation discernment at Spiritan Novitiate, Ejisu, Ashanti Region, Ghana. At Ejisu, after prayerful meditation and contemplation as well as spiritual counseling from his Novice Master and Assistant, Rev. Fr. Declan Dorr, C.S.Sp and Rev. Fr. Dermot Forkin C.S.Sp respectively (all of blessed memory), he came to the conclusion that he had no vocation neither as a religious nor a priest. Thus, in July 1990 he left the Novitiate and returned to Nigeria to move on as a lay faithful.

Back to Nigeria, he commenced the study of media and communication. First, he went to University of Jos where he obtained a Diploma in Mass Communication (Upper Credit) in 1994. The same year he gained admission to University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri, Borno State. He graduated in 1998 with a Second Class Upper Division in Mass Communication. Between February 1999

and February 2000, he embarked on the mandatory one year National Youth Service Corpse (NYSC) Scheme at Enugu State where he worked as a classroom teacher at Community Secondary School, Ohodo, Igbo-Etiti Local Government Area.

Soon after the NYSC Scheme, he enrolled for higher studies at University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), Enugu State, where he graduated with a Master of Art (M.A.) Degree in Mass Communication, with specialization in Electronic Media in 2002. He worked as a part-time classroom teacher for three years at Community Secondary Schools at Ohodo and Aku and Girls Secondary School, Aku all in Igbo-Etiti Local Government Area of Enugu State. In 2005 he commenced doctoral studies at the Department of Communication Arts, University of Uyo. He graduated in 2010 with a Doctor of Philosophy Degree (PhD) in Mass Communication.

Professor Kur started a lecturing career in the Department of Mass Communication, Anambra State University (now Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University), Uli, Anambra State as Assistant Lecturer in 2005. He rose steadily to the rank of Lecturer I in 2009. He left Anambra State University and joined the services of Federal University of Technology (FUT), Minna, Niger State in 2011 as a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Information and Media Technology, School of Information and Communication Technology. He was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor in 2015 and Professor of Information and Media Technology in 2018.

Prof. Kur has served the University in several capacities. He is the current Head of the Department of Information and Media Technology, a member of Appointments and Promotions Committee (A & PC), and University Seminar and Colloquium Committee. Other positions of responsibility he has held in the University include: Deputy Dean, School of Information and Communication Technology (2012 – 2016); Member, Postgraduate School Board (2012 – 2016); Member, University Examination Misconduct Committee (2015 – 2019); Member, Professional/Academic Board, Centre for Disaster Risk Management and Development Studies (CDRM &DS) (2012 – 2016); and Member of several ad-hoc committees.

Outside University responsibilities, he served as a member of the Benue State Transition Committee in 2019. He was the Chair of the Information and Communication Technology Sub-Committee of the Transition Committee. He is a Trustee of Jemgbagh Aid Association (a socio-cultural organization) and a think-tank of Tiv Community Association (TICA) all in Minna, Niger State.

As an academic, Professor Kur has contributed to manpower development. He has successfully supervised over 100 undergraduate projects and several master's and doctoral dissertations and theses. He has served as external examiner at undergraduate and postgraduate levels to several universities. He is on the editorial board of several journals and has reviewed manuscripts for several local and international journals.

As a researcher, Professor Kur has completed several researches. He has more than 60 peer reviewed papers published in refereed journals, book chapters and conference proceedings, and has attended and presented papers in over 50 local and international academic conferences (on and off the shore of Nigeria).

Professor Kur is a member of several professional associations which include: African Council for Communication Education (ACCE), Nigeria Chapter (where he served as Assistant Coordinating Secretary between 2013 and 2017); Society for Peace Studies and Practice (SPSP); Nigerian Association for Educational Media and Technology (NAEMT); East Africa Communication Association (EACA); International Research and Development Institute (IRDI); and World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology among others.

Prof. Kur is happily married to Mrs. Monica Nguwasen Kur and the marriage is blessed with two children – Shimasur Modestus and Wanger Angelo. His hobbies include reading, writing, taking photographs, joking, acting and washing dishes.