

# Parental Mediation Strategies and Junior High School Students' Online Exposure: Implications for Values Education

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between parental mediation, online content exposure, and values development among Filipino junior high school students. Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational design, 324 Grade 7–10 students from a public high school in Bulacan were surveyed. Findings revealed a significant positive relationship between parental mediation and values development, while online exposure showed a weak but significant correlation. Results highlight the crucial role of parental mediation in adolescent values formation within the digital ecosystem. A Digital Parenting and Values Integration Program is recommended to strengthen active mediation strategies.

**Keywords:** parental mediation, online exposure, values development, junior high school, digital parenting

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

The twenty-first century has witnessed a profound digital revolution that has transformed human communication, education, and social interaction on a global scale. As of 2025, the International Telecommunication Union and UNESCO reported that global internet penetration had exceeded sixty-five percent of the world's population, with adolescents comprising one of the most active user groups. The widespread accessibility of smartphones has significantly facilitated access to online content, creating both opportunities and challenges for youth development. This phenomenon is particularly relevant among junior high school students, who have grown up as digital natives. The internet functions as a double-edged tool. On one hand, it provides access to open educational resources, interactive learning platforms, and intercultural communication that enhance academic engagement (UNESCO, 2022). On the other hand, adolescents are frequently exposed to violent material, hate speech, explicit sexual themes, and disturbing imagery (Ofcom, 2024). Research indicates that repeated exposure to such content may desensitize individuals to violence, normalize aggressive behavior, and weaken empathy (Bushman & Huesmann, 2022), effects that are especially concerning during adolescence, a critical stage in values formation (Crone & Konijn, 2021).

According to Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (2018), individuals acquire behaviors and values through observing models within their environment, including media sources. Exposure to disturbing content may influence adolescents' perceptions of right and wrong, normalize aggression, and diminish moral sensitivity. Repeated exposure may also contribute to desensitization, thereby reducing empathy and compassion (Vossen & Valkenburg, 2022). The World Health Organization has identified harmful online content as a significant threat to the mental health of young people, with studies indicating that approximately seventy percent of young users have encountered online material that they perceived as disturbing or upsetting. Values development refers to the process through which individuals acquire moral principles and ethical standards that guide behavior (Berk, 2022). Adolescence represents a developmental stage characterized by the transition from dependence on parental authority toward the internalization of moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1984). The formation of values is shaped by various social influences, including family, peers, schools, and increasingly, media exposure (Berk,

2022). Traditionally, parents have played a central role in modeling moral standards; however, digital media exposure now increasingly competes with parental influence (Uhls et al., 2022). The amount of time adolescents spend engaging with digital media now rivals, and in some cases exceeds, the time spent interacting with parents, thereby fundamentally altering the dynamics of socialization.

Similar trends are evident in the Philippines. The Department of Information and Communications Technology reported that Filipino adolescents spend approximately six to ten hours daily engaging in online activities, primarily through social networking and video-streaming platforms. The Philippines consistently ranks among the countries with the highest rates of social media usage globally. Local educators have reported a decline in students' discipline, empathy, and respect, with excessive internet use identified as a contributing factor to the normalization of deviant behaviors (Almerino et al., 2020). Teachers have also observed increased instances of disrespect, emotional insensitivity, fascination with violent humor, and weakened moral discernment among students. Furthermore, the United Nations Children's Fund has documented that Filipino children face substantial online risks, including exposure to violence, exploitation, and other harmful content that may adversely affect their development.

Parents likewise encounter difficulties in supervising adolescents' digital behavior. Many lack familiarity with contemporary online platforms or underestimate the potential risks associated with harmful content (Stoilova et al., 2023). Time constraints and technological limitations further contribute to inadequate parental monitoring (Iqbal et al., 2021), resulting in prolonged screen exposure and reduced family communication (Liu et al., 2023). This supervision gap often leaves adolescents navigating digital environments with limited adult guidance, thereby increasing their vulnerability to harmful online content and problematic internet use. Parental mediation, which includes supervision, guidance, and open communication, plays a crucial role in mitigating the negative effects of media exposure (Collier et al., 2020). Active parental monitoring and discussions concerning digital ethics enable adolescents to critically evaluate online content (Livingstone et al., 2021). Consequently, understanding the relationship between parental mediation and values development within the Philippine context is essential for designing effective interventions that support Filipino families in the digital age.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Research Design**

The research design used in this research is descriptive-correlational research with quantitative approach to know the relationship between parental mediation, exposure to online content and values development among junior high school students. The research was quantitative type because the data that the research wanted to obtain to measure the variables objectively was in numerical form and the research wants to analyze the relations among the variables using standard instruments and appropriate statistical techniques. This method was found appropriate as it enabled the systematic measurement of constructs with validated scales and statistical analysis to verify the hypotheses tested in the study. The descriptive component was used because the aim of the study was to identify and describe the existing levels of the key variables: perceived level of parental mediation (restrictive, enabling/active, and observing strategies), level of exposure to online content (recommender algorithms, confirmation bias, and cognitive dissonance), and state of values development (personal, environmental, and behavioral factors) among the students who took part in the study. The correlational was used because the study aimed to determine if there was a significant relationship between these variables and the environment and/or the response of the participants were not manipulated, specifically whether parental mediation demonstrated a significant relationship with values development, and whether exposure to online content demonstrated a significant relationship with values development. The rationale for this design is based on the research objectives: to describe phenomena as they occur in nature and to investigate relationships between phenomena or variables without trying to establish cause/effect by manipulating factors. Based on the nature of the research questions that include "how many variables can be described" and "is there a significant relationship", it is found that the descriptive-correlational approach is the most appropriate approach because it can describe the description of multiple variables and test the hypothesized relationship statistically. Besides, the quantitative approach allows obtaining data from a sufficiently large population, which increases the ability to generalize the results of the study to the population of junior high school students in similar contexts.

## Research Locale

The study was conducted at Bajet-Castillo High School, a public secondary school located in Longos, Pulilan, Bulacan, Philippines. This institution was selected as the research locale due to its accessibility to the researchers, its representative nature as a typical public high school in Bulacan serving a diverse student population drawn from surrounding communities of varying socioeconomic backgrounds, and the willingness of the school administration to participate in research activities that could benefit their students. The school serves students from Grades 7 through 10 in its junior high school program, with class sizes typical of Philippine public schools. The community surrounding the school includes families engaged in various occupations including agriculture, small business, and employment in nearby industrial and commercial areas. Many parents work outside the home, which may affect their availability to supervise their children's online activities. The digital infrastructure in the area includes mobile internet coverage that enables student access to social media platforms, video streaming services, and online gaming, consistent with national patterns of high social media usage among Filipino youth. These contextual factors make Bajet-Castillo High School an appropriate setting for investigating how parental mediation strategies relate to students' online content exposure to their values development.

## Instrument of the Study

This study utilized a structured researcher-made questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument, carefully designed to quantitatively measure the three principal variables: Parental Mediation Role, Exposure to Online Content, and Values Development. The instrument was developed through a systematic process beginning with an extensive review of relevant literature and existing validated instruments, including the EU Kids Online Questionnaire (Livingstone et al., 2011), the Child-Parent Relationship Scale, and established frameworks on values and character formation. The final instrument consisted of four main parts. Part I gathered demographic information including age, grade level, sex, average daily time spent online, most frequently used websites, and primary device used. Part II measured adolescents' perceptions of their parents' mediation strategies using 15 items across three dimensions: restrictive mediation (5 items), enabling/active mediation (5 items), and observing mediation (5 items). Part III measured exposure to online content using 15 items across three dimensions: recommender algorithms (5 items), confirmation bias (5 items), and cognitive dissonance (5 items). Part IV assessed values development using 15 items across three dimensions: personal factors (5 items), environmental factors (5 items), and behavioral factors (5 items). The questionnaire employed a four-point Likert scale with the following values and interpretations: 4 = Very Often/Always, 3 = Often, 2 = Sometimes/Rarely, and 1 = Never. The four-point scale was chosen to avoid a neutral midpoint, forcing respondents to indicate a direction of response. The questionnaire was prepared in English with some items translated into Filipino to ensure clarity and comprehension for all respondents. The questionnaire underwent content validation by five expert validators from the fields of values education, educational research, child development, and assessment. Validators evaluated each item for relevance, clarity, appropriateness for the age group, and freedom from bias. Based on validator feedback, items were revised, reworded, or removed as necessary. For reliability testing, the questionnaire was pilot tested on 50 junior high school students not part of the main study sample. Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, yielding the following values: Parental Mediation scale ( $\alpha = 0.87$ ), Exposure to Online Content scale ( $\alpha = 0.84$ ), and Values Development scale ( $\alpha = 0.89$ ). These values exceed the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating good internal consistency.

## Data Collection Procedure

The data gathering process followed a structured step-by-step sequence to ensure reliability and accuracy. First, the researchers obtained permission from relevant authorities at Bulacan State University, including the College of Professional Teacher Education and the research adviser. Second, a formal letter of permission was submitted to the school principal and head teacher of Bajet-Castillo High School to seek approval for the conduct of the study. Third, the study protocol was submitted for ethics review to the Bulacan State University College of Professional Teacher Education Research Ethics Committee, receiving ethics clearance on December 19, 2025. Fourth, consent forms were distributed to students and their parents or guardians. Parents or guardians were asked to sign and return the consent form if they agreed to allow their child to participate. Students whose parents provided consent were then asked to provide their own assent. Only students with both parental consent and student assent were included. Fifth, an instrument validation was conducted by some individuals that is relevant

and important for testing the validity of the instrument, to identify confusing items, and test reliability. Based on pilot test feedback, minor revisions were made. Sixth, for actual data gathering, stratified random sampling was used to select 324 respondents. The questionnaire was administered during class hours with teacher permission. Before answering, researchers explained the purpose of the study and provided detailed instructions. Respondents were given 30 to 45 minutes to answer in a quiet, supervised environment. Researchers remained present to answer questions. Seventh, after collection, questionnaires were checked for completeness and accuracy. Questionnaires with excessive missing data were replaced with responses from alternate randomly selected students. Eighth, data were encoded and organized using Microsoft Excel, with a second researcher independently verifying a random sample of 10% of entered data to check for errors. All data were stored securely on password-protected computers with access limited only to the research team and will be deleted 2 months after the study is conducted.

## Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques appropriate for quantitative research. First, descriptive statistics, specifically the mean and standard deviation, were computed for each variable and its indicators. The mean indicates the average response for each item, while the standard deviation measures the dispersion or variability of responses around the mean. The following mean range interpretation was applied for the four-point Likert scale: 3.26-4.00 (Very Often/Always), 2.51-3.25 (Often), 1.76-2.50 (Sometimes), and 1.00-1.75 (Rarely). This scale was applied in analyzing all three variables. Second, to examine relationships between key variables, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used. Pearson correlation quantifies the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two continuous variables. The correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) ranges from -1.00 to +1.00, where a positive value indicates that as one variable increases, the other tends to increase. The strength of correlation was interpreted as:  $r$  between 0.00 and 0.19 (very weak or little or no correlation),  $r$  between 0.20 and 0.39 (weak or low correlation),  $r$  between 0.40 and 0.59 (moderate correlation),  $r$  between 0.60 and 0.79 (strong correlation), and  $r$  between 0.80 and 1.00 (very strong correlation). Analyses were conducted using the Social Science Statistics online platform, which computes the  $r$ -value and significance value ( $p$ -value). All statistical tests were evaluated at a 95% confidence level, meaning a  $p$ -value less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis. For research question six regarding the program to strengthen parental mediation, qualitative analysis of the findings was used to synthesize recommendations based on the statistical results and theoretical framework, identifying patterns and themes to formulate program recommendations.

## Ethical Considerations

The researchers adhered to strict ethical standards throughout the research process. Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from relevant authorities at Bulacan State University and Bajet-Castillo High School. The study received ethics clearance from the Bulacan State University College of Professional Teacher Education Research Ethics Committee. Informed consent was obtained from both students and their parents or guardians. Because the study involved minors, both parental permission and child assent were required. Consent forms were written in both English and Filipino. Parents or guardians were given sufficient time to read and understand the consent documents and were encouraged to ask questions. Students whose parents provided consent were then asked to provide their own assent voluntarily without pressure. Participants were clearly informed that participation was completely voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without negative consequences, including any effect on their grades. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained. No identifying information such as names or student numbers was collected on questionnaires. Each questionnaire was assigned a unique code number, with the code key stored separately from the data. All responses were treated with full respect and used solely for academic purposes. Data were securely stored: paper questionnaires in a locked filing cabinet accessible only to the research team, electronic files on a password-protected computer with encrypted backups. Only research team members directly involved in data analysis had access to the data. The researchers ensured that all instruments and questions would not cause emotional or psychological harm. Questions were phrased sensitively, and no questions asked about illegal activities or self-harm. If any participant showed signs of distress, researchers were prepared to stop the session and refer the student to the school counselor. The researchers attempted to contact original authors of existing instruments to request permission but did not receive responses; therefore, a researcher-made questionnaire was developed using existing materials

only as references, consistent with fair use for educational research. Any potential conflicts of interest were transparently disclosed, and researchers took steps to mitigate biases by using standardized instruments, following systematic sampling procedures, and reporting all results objectively regardless of whether they supported the hypotheses.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Results

Research Question 1: How may the perceived level of parental mediation among junior high school students be described in terms of restrictive mediation, enabling/active mediation, and observing mediation?

The first research question aimed to describe the perceived level of parental mediation across three dimensions. Data were collected using 15 items measured on a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Rarely/Never) to 4 (Very Often/Always).

Table 9 presents the descriptive statistics for restrictive mediation based on five indicators.

Perceived level of Parental Mediation: RESTRICTIVE

| Indicators                                                                                        | Mean        | SD          | Description   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| My parent(s) and I are always arguing with each other over my internet use.                       | 2.07        | 0.71        | Rarely        |
| I easily become angry at my parent(s) when they stop me from using my phone or computer.          | 1.84        | 0.76        | Rarely        |
| I feel my parent(s) treats me unfairly when they make rules about what I can watch and do online. | 1.54        | 0.83        | Rarely        |
| I see my parent(s) as a source of punishment when it comes to my online activities.               | 1.60        | 0.85        | Rarely        |
| I stay angry and resistant after my parent(s) disciplines me for something I did online.          | 1.55        | 0.75        | Rarely        |
| <b>Overall</b>                                                                                    | <b>1.72</b> | <b>0.78</b> | <b>Rarely</b> |

SD- Standard Deviation

The overall mean score for restrictive mediation was 1.72 (SD = 0.78), falling under the descriptive category "Rarely" and interpreted as a moderate level of restrictive mediation. This indicates that students experience restrictive parental practices occasionally but not frequently. Individual item means ranged from 1.54 to 2.07, demonstrating variability across different aspects of restrictive mediation. The highest mean was observed for the indicator "My parent(s) and I are always arguing with each other over my internet use" (M = 2.07, SD = 0.71), suggesting that disagreements over digital access occur but are not frequent or intense. The lowest means were for feelings of unfairness (M = 1.54, SD = 0.83) and prolonged anger after discipline (M = 1.55, SD = 0.75), indicating that students generally accept parental rules without sustaining resentment or perceiving them as fundamentally unfair. The standard deviations ranging from 0.71 to 0.85 indicate relatively consistent responses across participants.

Table 10. Perceived Level of Parental Mediation in Terms of Enabling/Active Mediation

Perceived level of Parental Mediation: ENABLING/ACTIVE MEDIATION

| Indicators                                                                                                                    | Mean        | SD          | Description   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| I share a warm and affectionate relationship with my parent(s), so I'm comfortable talking to them about things I see online. | 2.78        | 0.99        | Often         |
| If I encounter disturbing content online, I seek comfort and explanation from my parent(s).                                   | 1.8         | 0.88        | Rarely        |
| I spontaneously share information with my parent(s) about the videos, games, and things I find online.                        | 2.19        | 0.99        | Rarely        |
| I try to please my parent(s) by following the advice and values they talk to me about regarding internet use.                 | 3.16        | 0.82        | Often         |
| I openly share my feelings and experiences about what I see on the internet with my parent(s).                                | 2.1         | 0.89        | Rarely        |
| <b>Overall</b>                                                                                                                | <b>2.41</b> | <b>0.92</b> | <b>Rarely</b> |

SD- Standard Deviation

The overall mean score for enabling/active mediation was 2.41 (SD = 0.92), interpreted as moderate. This indicates that active mediation occurs inconsistently, with some students experiencing frequent guidance while others rarely do. Strong scores appeared in indicators related to emotional closeness and value alignment. Students reported sharing a warm and affectionate relationship with their parents (M = 2.78, SD = 0.99), which falls under "Often," and trying to please their parents by following advice and values regarding internet use (M = 3.16, SD = 0.82), also under "Often." These findings indicate that many students feel supported at home and value their parents' guidance. However, lower scores were observed for seeking comfort after encountering disturbing content (M = 1.80, SD = 0.88) and openly sharing online experiences (M = 2.10 to 2.19), both falling under "Rarely." This pattern suggests that while relational warmth is present, conversations specifically about online risks and disturbing content are less common. The standard deviations around 0.82 to 0.99 indicate moderate variability in responses.

Table 11. Perceived Level of Parental Mediation in Terms of Observing

Perceived Level of Parental Mediation: OBSERVING

| Indicators                                                                                                              | Mean | SD   | Description |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|-------------|
| I value my relationship with my parent(s), including when we watch and browse things online together.                   | 2.89 | 0.99 | Often       |
| I beam with pride when my parent(s) praises me for making good choices online and showing interest in my digital world. | 2.89 | 1    | Often       |
| It is easy for my parent(s) to be in tune with what I'm feeling, even when I'm reacting to something on a screen.       | 2.41 | 1    | Rarely      |
| I respond to my parent's look and tone of voice when I'm doing something questionable online, showing we have a         | 3.07 | 0.88 | Often       |

|                                                                                                        |             |             |              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| shared understanding.                                                                                  |             |             |              |
| I copy my parent's behavior and ways of doing things, including how they use the internet responsibly. | 2.44        | 1.06        | Rarely       |
| <b>Overall</b>                                                                                         | <b>2.74</b> | <b>0.99</b> | <b>Often</b> |

SD- Standard Deviation

The overall mean for observing mediation was 2.74 (SD = 0.99), described as "Often" and interpreted as strong. This indicates that students frequently experience parental observation and monitoring of their online activities. Students reported responding to a parent's look or tone when doing something questionable online (M = 3.07, SD = 0.88), the highest among observing indicators. Students also placed high value on their relationship with parents including shared browsing (M = 2.89, SD = 0.99) and felt pride when parents praised good online choices (M = 2.89, SD = 1.00). However, parental attunement to the child's feelings (M = 2.41, SD = 1.00) and copying parents' digital behavior (M = 2.44, SD = 1.06) showed only moderate levels, indicating areas where parental mediation could be strengthened.

**Research Question 2:** How may the students' exposure to online content be described in terms of recommender algorithms, confirmation bias, and cognitive dissonance?

Table 12. Students' Exposure to Online Content in Terms of Recommender Algorithms

Types of Online Contents: RECOMMENDER ALGORITHM

| Indicators                                                                                                              | Mean       | SD          | Description  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------|--------------|
| My "For You Page" on TikTok and similar feeds are mostly filled with entertaining and funny videos.                     | 3.34       | 0.85        | Often        |
| My main feed on Instagram and YouTube consistently shows me content from my hobbies (e.g., gaming, sports, music, art). | 3.38       | 0.83        | Often        |
| The videos and posts recommended to me are very similar to things I have liked and watched before.                      | 2.75       | 0.9         | Often        |
| I frequently see news and political content in my feeds without searching for it.                                       | 2.85       | 0.9         | Often        |
| My feeds often introduce me to new trends, songs, and viral challenges.                                                 | 3.18       | 0.91        | Often        |
| <b>Overall</b>                                                                                                          | <b>3.1</b> | <b>0.88</b> | <b>Often</b> |

SD- Standard Deviation

The overall mean score for recommender algorithm exposure was 3.10 (SD = 0.88), indicating that students "often" encounter algorithm-driven content with a moderate level of impact. Specifically, TikTok "For You Page" and Instagram/YouTube feeds frequently display entertaining or familiar content (M = 3.34, SD = 0.85; M = 3.38, SD = 0.83). Students also often saw recommended posts similar to their previous likes (M = 2.75, SD = 0.90), news and political content without searching (M = 2.85, SD = 0.90), and new trends or viral challenges (M = 3.18, SD = 0.91). These findings suggest that recommender systems consistently shape students' online experiences, reinforcing both familiar and novel content in their feeds.

Table 13. Students' Exposure to Online Content in Terms of Confirmation Bias

Types of Online Contents: CONFIRMATION BIAS

| Indicators                                                                         | Mean        | SD          | Description  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| TikTok is the app I spend most of my time on a typical day.                        | 3.1         | 1.02        | Often        |
| YouTube is the app I spend the most time on a typical day.                         | 2.13        | 0.95        | Rarely       |
| I check Instagram and Facebook more frequently than other apps throughout the day. | 2.9         | 0.98        | Often        |
| I open my most-used app almost automatically when I'm bored and have free time.    | 3.6         | 0.73        | Always       |
| I find it hard to reduce my daily time on my favorite app, even if I try.          | 2.81        | 0.99        | Often        |
| <b>Overall</b>                                                                     | <b>2.91</b> | <b>0.93</b> | <b>Often</b> |

SD- Standard Deviation

The overall mean score for confirmation bias was 2.91 (SD = 0.93), indicating that students "often" exhibit confirmation bias with strong habitual engagement. TikTok emerged as the most dominant app (M = 3.10, SD = 1.02), while YouTube was used less frequently (M = 2.13, SD = 0.95). Students reported opening their most-used app almost automatically when bored (M = 3.60, SD = 0.73), interpreted as "Always" with very strong interpretation. Many students found it difficult to reduce daily time on their favorite app (M = 2.81, SD = 0.99), reinforcing the strong influence of confirmation bias in their digital habits.

Table 14. Students' Exposure to Online Content in Terms of Cognitive Dissonance

Types of Online Contents: COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

| Indicators                                                                                     | Mean        | SD          | Description  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| When I see a news post and video about a topic I disagree with, I quickly scroll past it.      | 3.3         | 0.91        | Often        |
| I have "muted" and "unfollowed" accounts because I didn't like their opinions and content.     | 3.02        | 1.03        | Rarely       |
| I ignore and don't click on social media ads even if they are shown to me repeatedly.          | 3.26        | 1           | Often        |
| There are certain popular apps that I avoid using                                              | 2.78        | 0.94        | Always       |
| When a friend shares something online that challenges my view, I prefer not to engage with it. | 2.84        | 0.97        | Often        |
| <b>Overall</b>                                                                                 | <b>3.04</b> | <b>0.97</b> | <b>Often</b> |

SD- Standard Deviation

The overall mean score for cognitive dissonance was 3.04 (SD = 0.97), showing that students often respond to conflicting online content by disengaging. Students frequently scrolled past disagreeable posts (M = 3.30, SD = 0.91), ignored repeated advertisements (M = 3.26, SD = 1.00), and avoided engaging with friends' challenging views (M = 2.84, SD = 0.97). Even less frequent actions, such as muting or unfollowing accounts (M = 3.02, SD = 1.03), fell under strong interpretation, underscoring that avoidance is a dominant response across different scenarios.

**Research Question 3:** How may the students' values development be described in terms of personal factors, environmental factors, and behavioral factors?

Table 15. Students' Values Development in Terms of Personal Factors

Junior High School Students' Values Development: PERSONAL FACTORS

| Indicators                                                  | Mean        | SD          | Description  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| I am happy with the way I look.                             | 2.93        | 0.93        | Often        |
| I know how to regulate my temper.                           | 2.55        | 1.00        | Often        |
| When I am happy I show it.                                  | 3.16        | 0.91        | Often        |
| I like the way I am.                                        | 3.1         | 0.91        | Often        |
| I am easily distracted, I find it difficult to concentrate. | 3.06        | 0.95        | Often        |
| <b>Overall</b>                                              | <b>2.96</b> | <b>0.94</b> | <b>Often</b> |

SD- Standard Deviation

The overall mean for personal factors was 2.96 (SD = 0.94), described as "Often" and interpreted as strong. The highest mean was "When I am happy I show it" (M = 3.16, SD = 0.91). "I like the way I am" (M = 3.10, SD = 0.91) reflected frequent self-acceptance. "I know how to regulate my temper" (M = 2.55, SD = 1.00) was the lowest, indicating challenges in emotional regulation. Students also reported being easily distracted and finding it difficult to concentrate (M = 3.06, SD = 0.95).

Table 16. Students' Values Development in Terms of Environmental Factors

Junior High School Students' Values Development: ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

| Indicators                                                                                              | Mean | SD   | Description |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|-------------|
| Encourages honesty and authenticity when communicating through chats or social media                    | 3.00 | 0.84 | Often       |
| Promotes a positive way of viewing situations                                                           | 2.88 | 0.82 | Often       |
| Teaches self-control in avoiding excessive complaining                                                  | 2.97 | 0.83 | Often       |
| Encourages respect for and consideration of others' ideas                                               | 3.3  | 0.78 | Often       |
| Promotes responsible online behavior by respecting privacy and seeking permission before taking photos, | 3.28 | 0.89 | Often       |

|                                                     |             |             |              |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| recording conversations, or sharing others' content |             |             |              |
| <b>Overall</b>                                      | <b>3.09</b> | <b>0.83</b> | <b>Often</b> |

SD- Standard Deviation

The overall mean for environmental factors was 3.09 (SD = 0.83), interpreted as strong. Respect for others' ideas (M = 3.30, SD = 0.78) and responsible online behavior respecting privacy and seeking permission (M = 3.28, SD = 0.89) showed the highest scores. All indicators fell within the "Often" category.

Table 17. Students' Values Development in Terms of Behavioral Factors

Junior High School Students' Values Development: BEHAVIORAL FACTORS

| Indicators                                                         | Mean        | SD          | Description  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| I am usually on my own. I generally play alone and keep to myself. | 3.19        | 0.89        | Often        |
| I treat people well even if they look different.                   | 3.4         | 0.79        | Often        |
| I am often accused of lying and cheating.                          | 2.37        | 1           | Rarely       |
| I am nervous in new situations. I easily lose confidence.          | 3.06        | 0.96        | Often        |
| I think before I do things.                                        | 3.24        | 0.79        | Often        |
| <b>Overall</b>                                                     | <b>3.05</b> | <b>0.89</b> | <b>Often</b> |

SD- Standard Deviation

The overall mean for behavioral factors was 3.05 (SD = 0.89), interpreted as strong. Students reported treating people well even if they look different (M = 3.40, SD = 0.79), thinking before doing things (M = 3.24, SD = 0.79), and preferring solitude (M = 3.19, SD = 0.89). Being accused of lying and cheating (M = 2.37, SD = 1.00) was rated "Rarely" with moderate interpretation, suggesting that negative behaviors are less prevalent.

## Statistical Analysis Results

**Research Question 4:** Is there a significant relationship between parental mediation role and students' values development?

Table 18. Correlation between Parental Mediation and Values Development

Correlational Analysis as Perceived Values Development

| Variables Correlated                      | r      | Description              | Sig-value | Decision  | Interpretation                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------|--------|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Parental Mediation and Values Development | 0.3476 | low positive correlation | 0         | reject Ho | There is a significant relationship between parental mediation role and values development |

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between parental role and values development

The correlational analysis revealed a low positive correlation between parental mediation and values development, with a computed correlation coefficient of  $r = 0.3476$ . This indicates that as perceived parental mediation increases, students' values development tends to increase as well, though the relationship is modest in strength. The significance value ( $p < 0.001$ ) is well below the conventional threshold of 0.05, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis (H01: There is no significant relationship between parental mediation role and values development). This statistical decision confirms that there is a significant relationship between parental mediation role and values development among junior high school students.

**Research Question 5:** Is there a significant relationship between exposure to online content and students' values development?

**Table 19. Correlation between Exposure to Online Content and Values Development**

Correlational Analysis as Perceived Online Contents Accessed by Junior Highschool

| Variables Correlated                               | r      | Description                | Sig-value | Decision  | Interpretation                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Exposure to Online Contents and Values Development | 0.1595 | little or weak correlation | 0.004     | reject ho | There is a significant relationship between exposure to online contents and values development |

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship between parental mediation role and exposure to online contents

The analysis revealed a little or weak positive correlation between exposure to online content and values development, with a computed correlation coefficient of  $r = 0.1595$ . This indicates a very modest association between these variables. The significance value ( $p = 0.004$ ) is below the conventional threshold of 0.05, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis (H02: There is no significant relationship between exposure to online content and values development). This indicates that there is a significant but weak relationship between exposure to online contents and values development among junior high school students.

## DISCUSSION

### Interpretation of Findings

The findings of this study reveal a complex picture of how parental mediation and online content exposure relate to values development among Filipino junior high school students. The moderate level of restrictive mediation ( $M = 1.72$ ) indicates that parents apply rules and limits occasionally rather than strictly or punitively. This suggests that Filipino parents are neither completely hands-off nor overly controlling regarding their children's digital activities. The low scores for feelings of unfairness ( $M = 1.54$ ) and prolonged anger after discipline ( $M = 1.55$ ) suggest that students generally accept these restrictions without significant emotional resistance. This is an important finding because it indicates that restrictive mediation, when applied appropriately, does not necessarily damage the parent-child relationship or create adolescent reactance. The absence of strong negative emotional reactions suggests that parents may be implementing rules in a fair and communicative manner, explaining the reasons behind restrictions rather than imposing them arbitrarily. This finding challenges the assumption in some Western literature that restrictive mediation inevitably leads to rebellion and secretive online behavior, suggesting instead that the effectiveness of restrictive strategies depends on cultural context and the quality of the parent-child relationship. The relatively low standard deviations (ranging from 0.71 to 0.85) indicate consistent responses across participants, suggesting that these patterns are widespread rather than limited to specific subgroups of students.

The moderate level of enabling or active mediation ( $M = 2.41$ ) presents an interesting pattern that warrants careful interpretation. On one hand, students reported strong relational warmth with their parents ( $M = 2.78$ ) and

indicated that they try to please their parents by following their advice and values regarding internet use ( $M = 3.16$ ). These relatively high scores suggest that the emotional foundation for effective active mediation is present in many Filipino households. Students value their relationships with parents and want to meet parental expectations, which creates a receptive context for parental guidance. The score of 3.16 for following parental advice is particularly noteworthy as it approaches the "Very Often" range, indicating that most students are genuinely trying to adhere to their parents' values. On the other hand, students rarely sought comfort from parents after encountering disturbing online content ( $M = 1.80$ ) and did not spontaneously share information about their online experiences ( $M = 2.10$  to  $2.19$ ). These low scores are concerning because they indicate that when students encounter content that upsets or confuses them, they do not turn to parents as a primary source of support. The gap between relational warmth ( $M = 2.78$ ) and seeking comfort ( $M = 1.80$ ) is nearly one full point on the Likert scale, representing a substantial discrepancy. This suggests that while Filipino parents have established warm relationships with their children, they may not be having specific, targeted conversations about online risks, disturbing content, or digital ethics. Several possible explanations exist for this pattern. Parents may assume that if something were wrong, their children would tell them, not realizing that children often hesitate to disclose negative online experiences due to shame, fear of punishment, or belief that parents would not understand. Alternatively, parents may feel uncomfortable or ill-equipped to discuss sensitive topics like online pornography, self-harm content, or cyberbullying. Parents may also lack awareness of the types of disturbing content their children encounter, underestimating both the frequency and severity of exposure. The implication is that parents may be missing critical opportunities to guide their children through challenging online experiences, leaving adolescents to process disturbing content on their own without adult support or interpretation.

The strong level of observing mediation ( $M = 2.74$ ) indicates that parental monitoring and supervision are frequent and noticeable to students. The high score for responding to a parent's look or tone when doing something questionable online ( $M = 3.07$ ) is particularly noteworthy as it approaches the "Very Often" range. This finding suggests that parents have established non-verbal communication cues that effectively communicate disapproval or concern during online activities. In many Filipino families, non-verbal communication including facial expressions, tone of voice, and even silence carries significant meaning, often more than explicit verbal instructions. The ability to communicate expectations through subtle cues represents a culturally specific form of mediation that may be particularly effective in Filipino households where direct confrontation is often avoided to maintain harmony ("pakikisama"). This finding also suggests that parents and children have developed shared understanding and mutual recognition of boundaries, which reflects positive family communication patterns. However, the moderate scores for parental attunement to the child's feelings ( $M = 2.41$ ) and copying parents' digital behavior ( $M = 2.44$ ) indicate areas where parental mediation could be strengthened. Parents may be watching what their children do online, but they may not be fully understanding their children's emotional reactions to online content. The moderate score for copying parents' behavior is particularly important because Social Learning Theory suggests that modeling is one of the most powerful ways values are transmitted. When children do not observe and imitate their parents' digital habits, parents miss an important opportunity to teach responsible technology use through example.

Regarding exposure to online content, the moderate level of recommender algorithm exposure ( $M = 3.10$ ) confirms that algorithmic curation plays a significant role in shaping what Filipino junior high school students see online. The high scores for entertaining content on TikTok ( $M = 3.34$ ) and hobby-related content on Instagram and YouTube ( $M = 3.38$ ) indicate that students are primarily exposed to content that aligns with their interests and preferences. This is by design of these platforms' recommendation systems, which are optimized to maximize engagement by showing users content they are likely to enjoy and interact with. The moderate scores for seeing similar content repeatedly ( $M = 2.75$ ) and encountering news and political content without searching ( $M = 2.85$ ) suggest that students may be operating within filter bubbles that limit exposure to diverse perspectives. A filter bubble occurs when algorithms show users content that reinforces their existing beliefs and preferences while excluding content that challenges them. This has important implications for values development, as exposure to diverse viewpoints is considered essential for developing tolerance, critical thinking, and moral reasoning. When algorithms consistently show users content that reinforces existing beliefs, students may miss opportunities to encounter perspectives that challenge their thinking and promote moral growth. The standard deviation of 0.88 indicates moderate variability, suggesting that while most students experience algorithm-driven content, the intensity varies across individuals.

The strong confirmation bias scores ( $M = 2.91$ ) reveal that students have developed habitual and automatic patterns of app usage. The finding that students open their most-used app automatically when bored ( $M = 3.60$ ) is particularly striking, as this is the highest individual item mean in the entire exposure scale. This automatic behavior suggests that digital engagement has become deeply embedded in students' daily routines, potentially reducing conscious decision-making about when and how to use technology. When behavior becomes automatic, it bypasses the reflective, deliberative processes that allow for value-based decision-making. Students may find themselves scrolling through social media not because they made a conscious choice to do so, but because the behavior has become a conditioned response to boredom or free time. The difficulty students reported in reducing time on their favorite apps ( $M = 2.81$ ) further indicates that some students may be experiencing symptoms of problematic internet use or digital dependency. While this score is in the "Often" range rather than "Always," it still suggests that a substantial number of students feel they have lost some control over their technology use. The strong cognitive dissonance avoidance scores ( $M = 3.04$ ) indicate that students' primary response to encountering content that conflicts with their beliefs or preferences is to disengage rather than to engage critically. Students reported scrolling past disagreeable posts ( $M = 3.30$ ), ignoring repeated advertisements ( $M = 3.26$ ), and avoiding engagement with friends who share challenging views ( $M = 2.84$ ). This pattern of avoidance is psychologically understandable because encountering information that contradicts our beliefs creates discomfort. However, while avoidance reduces immediate psychological discomfort, it may also limit opportunities for moral growth, perspective-taking, and the development of tolerance for diverse viewpoints. Adolescence is a critical period for developing the capacity to engage with differing perspectives in constructive ways, and habitual avoidance may stunt this development.

Regarding values development, the strong scores across personal, environmental, and behavioral factors ( $M = 2.96$  to  $3.09$ ) indicate that Filipino junior high school students generally demonstrate positive self-perception, emotional expressiveness, respect for others, and prosocial behaviors. The high score for treating people well even if they look different ( $M = 3.40$ ) is particularly encouraging, as it suggests that students have internalized values of respect and non-discrimination despite exposure to potentially harmful online content that might promote prejudice. This finding may reflect the influence of Filipino cultural values such as "pakikipagkapwa" (shared identity with others) and "paggalang" (respect), which emphasize treating others with dignity regardless of differences. The similarly high score for responsible online behavior respecting privacy ( $M = 3.28$ ) suggests that students have internalized norms about digital ethics, including seeking permission before sharing others' content. However, the relatively lower score for temper regulation ( $M = 2.55$ ) and the moderate score for concentration difficulties ( $M = 3.06$ ) indicate areas where students may need additional support. Difficulty regulating emotions and maintaining attention may be related to digital media consumption patterns, as research has linked excessive screen time to attention problems and emotional dysregulation in adolescents. The standard deviations around 0.90 indicate moderate variability, suggesting that while average scores are positive, there is a range of individual differences.

The significant but low positive relationship between parental mediation and values development ( $r = 0.3476$ ) confirms that parental involvement matters for adolescent moral formation. The coefficient of determination ( $r^2 = 0.12$ ) indicates that parental mediation explains approximately 12% of the variance in values development, which is modest but meaningful in social science research where many factors contribute to outcomes. This suggests that while parental mediation is important, it is one of several factors influencing values development rather than the sole or primary determinant. This finding challenges the simplistic assumption that parents alone control their children's values outcomes, instead suggesting that parents operate within a complex ecosystem of influences including peers, school, media, and individual characteristics. The significant but weak relationship between exposure to online content and values development ( $r = 0.1595$ ,  $r^2 = 0.025$ ) indicates that online content exposure explains only about 2.5% of the variance in values development. This finding tempers alarmist claims that digital media is fundamentally corrupting youth values, while still acknowledging that online content does have a measurable, though modest, relationship with values development. The p-values below 0.05 for both correlations confirm that these relationships are statistically significant and unlikely to be due to chance.

## CONCLUSION

### Summary of Major Findings

This study examined the relationship between parental mediation, students' exposure to online content, and values development among 324 junior high school students from a public high school in Bulacan, Philippines. The findings provide direct answers to each research question.

Research Question 1 asked how the perceived level of parental mediation may be described. The findings revealed that restrictive mediation was moderate ( $M = 1.72$ ), applied occasionally without significant emotional strain. Enabling or active mediation was also moderate ( $M = 2.41$ ), characterized by strong relational warmth but limited digital-specific communication. Observing mediation was strong ( $M = 2.74$ ), with students frequently responding to parental non-verbal cues, though emotional attunement and modeling of digital behavior were only moderate.

Research Question 2 asked how students' exposure to online content may be described. The findings showed that recommender algorithm exposure was moderate ( $M = 3.10$ ), with algorithmic curation consistently shaping online experiences. Confirmation bias was strong ( $M = 2.91$ ), with students opening apps automatically when bored ( $M = 3.60$ ) and finding it difficult to reduce screen time. Cognitive dissonance avoidance was strong ( $M = 3.04$ ), with disengagement as the dominant response to conflicting content.

Research Question 3 asked how students' values development may be described. The findings demonstrated strong values development across all dimensions: personal factors ( $M = 2.96$ ), environmental factors ( $M = 3.09$ ), and behavioral factors ( $M = 3.05$ ). Students showed positive self-perception, respect for others ( $M = 3.40$  for treating people well despite differences), and responsible online behavior ( $M = 3.28$ ). However, challenges in temper regulation ( $M = 2.55$ ) and concentration ( $M = 3.06$ ) were evident.

Research Question 4 asked whether there is a significant relationship between parental mediation role and students' values development. The correlational analysis revealed a significant low positive relationship ( $r = 0.3476$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), leading to rejection of the null hypothesis. This indicates that as parental mediation increases, values development tends to increase, though the relationship is modest.

Research Question 5 asked whether there is a significant relationship between exposure to online content and students' values development. The analysis revealed a significant but weak positive relationship ( $r = 0.1595$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ), leading to rejection of the null hypothesis. This indicates that exposure to online content has a measurable but limited association with values development.

Research Question 6 asked what program may be developed to strengthen parental mediation. Based on the findings, a Digital Parenting and Values Integration Program is recommended, focusing on strengthening active mediation strategies, enhancing parent-adolescent communication about online experiences, and equipping parents with digital literacy skills to guide their children's values development.

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