
MEDIA EDUCATION IN A FAMILY

DO PARENTS HAVE ANYTHING TO RELY ON?

Lucie Št'astná* and Radim Wolák

Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Social Sciences, Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism, Smetanovo nábřeží 6, 110 00 Praha 1, Czech Republic

(Received 16 June 2014)

Abstract

The paper focuses on parental mediation and seeks to emphasise the importance of appropriate educational support for parents who would like to prepare their children for the full-valued life in the contemporary 'mediatized' society. The authors proceed partly from a qualitative research (semi-structured interviews) carried out among Czech parents, and partly from the analysis of educational materials available for Czech parents. They attempt to create a basic chart of options in the field of parental mediation which are offered to parents in the Czech Republic. The authors will focus on materials and supports, offered by the Czech media to parents in the field of media education and they will also evaluate, to what extent the realistic parents' possibilities differ from their ideas. Although the presented findings are predicated to the Czech context, the authors try to put the findings into the context and designate the main areas, which, in terms of media educational competences of parents, should be paid the attention to by the researchers.

Keywords: media education, parental mediation, parental education, parental support, information sources

1. Introduction - competence in media education as a prerequisite for the current parenthood?

How to measure up time which children spend with the media? How to be informed about the activities of children on the internet but not to distort their privacy and not to lose their trust at the same time? What is the right time to educate them about the danger of the improper internet contents – if they are exposed to the risk of seeing these contents at an earlier age when a child cannot understand them? Is it necessary to prepare children for a life with the media and teach them to use a computer already at preschool age? Might the child be disadvantaged in a group of peers if a parent is not willing to do it? How could a parent recognize that the child is a victim of cyber bullying? And what should parents do if their child is the aggressor? How to act on the children's wish to

*E-mail: stastnal@fsv.cuni.cz

create a new account on Facebook if they are 10 years old? Should parents be 'friends' with their children on Facebook?

Questions which parents, have to face nowadays, are rather numerous. Most of them are new and we have no clear answers yet. Intensifying massive incursion of new communication technologies into the individual's life and society transforms not only the form of everydayness, frequency and quality of traditional social relations [1], but also has a significant influence on the transformation and dynamics of relationships between family members, creates new family situations bringing new problems as well. Children spend more and more time with media and begin to use them – also thanks to technologies operating with touch displays – at increasingly earlier age.

The media plays the fundamental role in the process of forming one's value system. It tends to dissolve old relationships and traditional values and spreads its own cultural, aesthetic and religious values [2]. The media, as commercial institutions aimed mainly at creating a profit, form and put forward young generation simplified behavioural patterns and personal model leading primarily to imitation of consumer behaviour and to avoid the attitudes to life based on traditional roots values. Parent who tries to educate children according to different value system, moral ideals and faith may discover an important rival in media. World-recognised theologian Tomáš Halík designates the media even as the religion of the contemporary Western world. "The media performs the main aspects of social role of religion – as the power which keeps the society together: influences the way of thinking and the lifestyle of people, offers shared symbols and 'the grand narratives', shapes the network among people, but most of all, it interprets the world." [3] Instructed parent should be able to critically relate to media functioning, to explain children the context of their impact and doubt their role of "arbiter of truth". As Halík draws the attention, the media often takes over the role of religion and acts as the authority also in the domain of ascribing the significance of information [3]. The relationship between religion, media and culture has been intensively examined by researchers during the last decades, inquiries have been aimed, for example, at the context of this relationship and mutual influence of these areas [4].

Equally powerful phenomena of the contemporary world are increasing intergenerational differences in using and understanding the media [5]. Modern media and communication technologies represent a natural environment for children in which they are more knowledgeable than their parents. The conflict between 'digital natives' and 'digital immigrants' is developing [6, 7]. The media play an increasingly important role in a socialization process, which is worrying for present-day parents as their live experience is different. Media education at schools deepens an intergenerational conflict [8]. Children, living with the media in a very close relationship, continue to increase their knowledge and skills thanks to media education and adults remain uninformed 'on the other side'. At the same time, expert studies suggest that raising children to a critical and meaningful use of media is necessary to start up at a very early age and they highlight the important role of the family. It also becomes apparent that if the

school does not have a foothold in media education from a family environment, it may weaken its effect [9]. But how can parents perform the role of an educator as they have a different experience in relation to the media and have no understanding of this field? Parents often sense this conflict and it is difficult for them to deal with the fact that the media are an integral part of children's lives. They fear consequences of such co-existence, they do not know how to talk about their fears with their children and are unable to deal with subsequent problems [10].

Not only for these reasons the need for a systematic preparation for life with media is clearly getting its own way, which establishes itself in form of media education as a part of educational systems all around the world [11], but it aims to develop media literacy as an important competence of a contemporary human. Media education does not become only a part of formal education of children and youth [12], but it is also declared as a major theme of lifelong learning, which also affects adults [<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32009H0625>].

The experts have paid attention to media education and its position in the field of general education for a long time and the interest still clearly shifts to exploring its similarities within lifelong education and family education – in our environment, e.g. Šťastná and Wolák [13], Šed'ová [14], Sloboda [15]. The aim of the text is to contribute to this emerging debate.

2. The project 'Parents, Children, and Media'

Data presented in this paper were identified within the wider research project entitled 'Parents, Children, and Media' which aims to develop the media literacy of parents and the development of tools to help them teach their children to live with the media. The project is divided into three phases in the course of two years.

In the first phase, 64 in-depth interviews with parents of children of different ages were conducted. During the semi-structured interviews there was investigated to what extent the media education is realized in a family, whether and how children are talked to in terms of the media, what educational strategies are selected, etc. The aim was to explore problems and needs parents have in connection with parental mediation. Respondents were selected from different groups in a society in order to create a various sample. The emphasis was given to the age category of children in particular. Four basic categories of parents were created according to the age of their children (pre-school age, children attending first school, upper primary school, and high school), each of these included 16 respondents. The sample was drawn up with the help of snowball technique. Interviews were conducted in places chosen by respondents themselves considering them the most pleasant (most often at their homes or in a café). Usually, only one of the parents of a child was involved in the research.

The second phase involved the review of foreign and Czech methodological and other materials that parents have at their disposal if they wish to educate in the field of parental mediation in their families. The details concerning the review are mentioned in section 4. In the third phase, a suitable publication for parents, based on the data analysis from the first and second phases, will be written.

In this paper, the attention will be paid to individual findings from the first and second phases of the project. Especially the last set of questions, focused on declared parents' media literacy and information sources of a given topic coming to them, will be analyzed from the in-depth interviews with the parents. The questions will also focus on their ideas about the form and content of a potential methodological support for parents. The research, whose results are also presented here by authors, was focused on parents' options available for them in the Czech Republic if they opt for further education in this field. The authors of this paper understand the parental mediation in a family in the context of an overall educational impact of a parent on a child, as a parent's activity with the aim to prepare children for life with media. After introducing basic ways which parents can take, the authors will concentrate on the materials available to parents through the Czech media in detail. Consequently, it will be evaluated whether the real options of parents differ from their ideas which they have presented within the semi-structured interviews.

3. Information resources of parents

Upon closer examination of the ways in which parents learn about issues of media education as a whole, or partial problems and risks that media can pose to children, it is possible to notice two situations which may arise in families. In the first case it is the **unintended information retrieval** which can take several forms. The basic information sources that instruct or offer advice parents in an informal way are presented in Figure 1.

These external factors often cause the parents starts thinking about a specific problem relating to media education in the family. One of the key information resources for parents is an informal conversation with other parents who have either encountered some problem in the given field when rating their children, or who have learned about it in another way. Interviews are primarily conducted from other reasons and on other topics. The internet discussion forums have a similar role. School was also determined as an authority in media education during the interviews by parents. A teacher, who draws parents' attention to the specific problems during the parents' association, can represent the information source or integrates media education into teaching. Parents receive the information more through their children. Another significant authority are experts who are turning to with a different (not media educational) problem (stuttering, child's poor sleep, child's failure at school) by parents, yet they are warned of the negative impact of media on children. Parents can record the information about negative consequences of media use even in the media.

According to the tendency of some parents to underestimate the importance of media education and their lack of interest in further education it seems that unintended information retrieval through above outlined ways is one of the forms how these parents can learn about the issue of media education in a family.

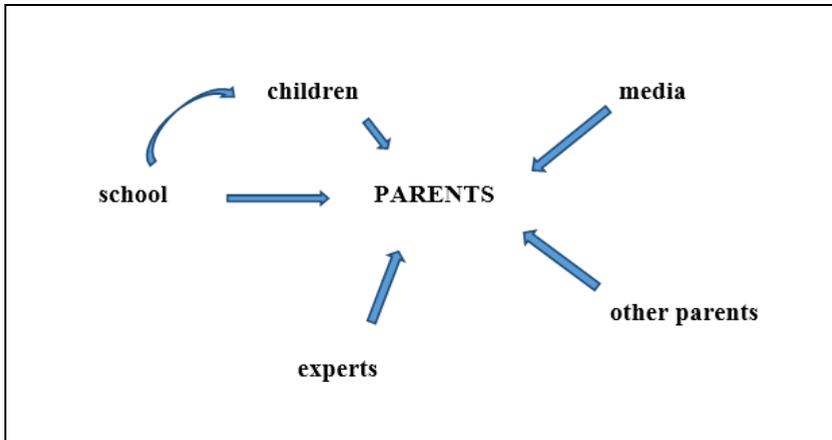


Figure 1. Sources of the unintended information retrieval relating to the issue of media education.

The second case is the **intended information retrieval** in the given field. It is usually based on the parent's own experience with the media behavioural problem or their intuition that their child behaves unpredictably (e.g. spending too much time on the computer or watching TV, they behave more aggressively after playing computer games). Although such behaviour is considered sub-standard, it does not mean that parents perceive it as a problem that should be addressed. The perception of a difficulty of certain behaviour that parents observe with their children varies according to the values that parents profess (e.g. perception of the problematic pornography or publishing sexual themes in girls' magazines by believers or non-believers parents), their way of life (e.g. perception of the impact of advertising on children by parents with a consumerist lifestyle or with an alternative approach to a life), parents' own experiences (e.g. greater vigilance by parents with experience of addiction to computer games, or vice versa trivialization of the problem because the parent was able to settle it by himself), their risks awareness and potential media impacts on children (e.g. a less informed parent does not usually worry about their child as a well-informed one) and other factors. All of these factors act on the parents simultaneously and therefore it is possible to trace such various approaches to solutions of particular problems.

The intended information retrieval relating to the issue of media education in a family requires a certain activity from the side of a parent. The identification of a problem is important and an ensuing consideration whether the parent has got enough information to the solution or not. (Only a few parents in the

reference sample declared willingness to educate in media literacy ‘just so’ – without prior identification of the problem in child care. Such tendency can be seen with particularly conscientious parents who thus sought to prevent future problems, with parents who need the information even from the teacher’s position, or with parents who are interested in the topic of media generally.) In a subsequent scenario, what plays a role is the amount of time, available to the parent, their willingness to further education and reception of new information, perception of the importance of the topic of media education, but also confidence in the solutions to family problems in general. As Šed’ová [16] noted, parental education is something unnatural for some parents. Depending on these factors, parents consequently choose the paths that they set out. The authors are trying to express them schematically within Figure 2.

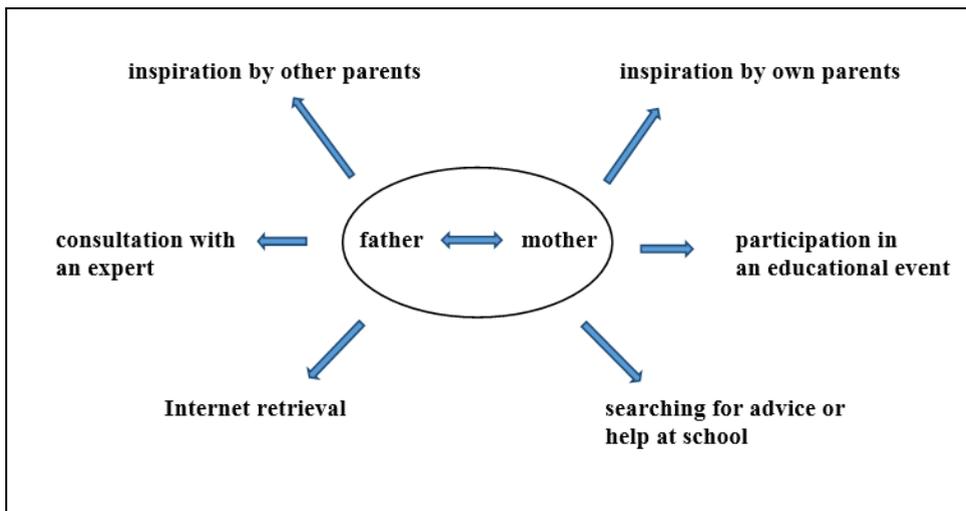


Figure 2. The intended information retrieval relating to the issue of media education.

Parents also choose different combinations of these sources depending on what type of the information source is the most pleasant for them. Intuition plays a major role in solving a specific problem. First and foremost, parents usually consult among themselves and try to solve the problem by communication with their children. (The model captures an ideal form of a family. In fact, there are families, e.g. incomplete, families with shared custody, which do not have this option, or they can use it in a limited way. Even these families were represented in the sample.) They look for inspiration both in other families, and in families in which they themselves grew up. Some parents are turning to query their friends who they consider to be experts on the subject (for example, a police officer, a teacher etc.). There is also a possibility to take part in an educational event that relates to the topic (e.g. a lecture, workshop). However, if the parent was able to solve the given situation in the family, the event should take place just when the problem has occurred. The last option, which is consequently followed by further steps, is searching for available information on the Internet.

For many parents, the Internet means a simple way to get the information. Some of them seek websites directly that focus on media education or professional studies on the topic, others simply enter the keywords, characterizing their problem, into a search engine and then they choose appropriate references according to their own discretion (articles on news sites, in women's magazines, messages on discussion forums, etc.). The Internet options are assorted and what parents choose depends again on many factors. These options are unfortunately denied to those who are computer-illiterate as it was discovered in the interview (they were rarely willing to directly admit such a thing).

4. On the digital trail of materials for parents

In the second part of the paper, the authors will focus on an exploration of the options that are offered to parents through various types of the media. The technique of the Internet search was used. The technique was used in the similar context e.g. by authors of the publication about the intergenerational learning [17]. The authors assumed that most of the materials for parents concerning the education of living with media will have their digital footprint on the internet. The aim was not to provide an exhaustive list of all options but rather to create an overview of the types of materials which are available to an ordinary user. The purpose of the search was to find out whether parents have got the opportunity to learn something more about the issue in particular types of media (books and manuals, television and film, radio, newspapers and magazines, websites).

The authors gathered relevant links using key words entered into the search engine Google which they complemented by references found in other archives. General key words were entered (e.g. 'parents, children, media', 'media influence on children', 'children and media in the family') supplemented by three specific issues mentioned by parents during the interviews ('how to set rules for children when using a computer', 'how to prevent addiction to computer games', 'how to choose a children's magazine'). General keywords were also searched in the archives of internet broadcast on Czech TV, tn.cz, iprima, iradio CRO, in databases of bookshops, library catalogue of Charles University, and the Czechoslovak Film Database. The Newton Database was used for searching materials in newspapers and magazines.

Afterwards, the authors assessed the data collected according to predefined criteria. Materials considered relevant were those which somehow referred to media education in a family or the media. They need not be directed just at parents as there was an effort to capture even more general sources which can serve as an inspiration for parents when upbringing their children. On the following pages, the authors will describe materials they found in order to be confronted in the next section with what surveyed parents have imagined as a support (in the first phase of the project 'Parents, Children, and Media').

4.1. Lovers of books and manuals

For parents, who prefer books and manuals, there are several materials in the Czech Republic that can provide them with information on how to teach children to live with media, respectively, what to be wary of. The vast majority of found titles, intended for parents, were devoted to the topic of safe Internet use. The latest books in this field come from authors Dočekal and Eckertová [18] and Eckertová [19], which are primarily designed for parents of children at the age of 4 to 6 grade of elementary school. Among the found materials there were (apart from books) also electronic publications of non-profit and commercial organizations. In a lesser quantity, there were books focusing on the TV use [20], or the broader issue which is closely related to the media [21]. Another possibility is the fact that a part of a handbook for parents focusing generally on the issue of raising children pays attention to media education in a family. A scarce commodity proved to be the books on how to set overall rules for the use of media in a family, how to talk to children about media and how to teach them to maximize media's potential and minimize the danger threatening them and their relatives. There is, perhaps, only the Czech translation of Buermann [22] designed more for teachers, it does not provide advice for parents.

Parents, who are interested in the topic, can find books on the Internet and bookstores which are not primarily designed for them and do not deal directly with media education, yet they can find information there about the problem bothering them, or they allow them an easier orientation in media issues. A variety of textbooks and methodological guides for teachers of media education, which are often among the first links appearing during the search, can serve as an example. Another source may be non-fiction books explaining the function of media, or manuals for the public promising simple instructions on the use of media. The last, perhaps the least likely option, is the choice of professional literature from the field of media studies and journalism.

4.2. TV viewers and film buffs

Nowadays, a parent, who prefers this way of getting information, does not find a programme in the Czech TV broadcast which is regularly devoted to media education in a family. The last sort of may be regarded an 'edutainment' programme 'Být v obraze' ('Keeping in the picture') broadcasted in autumn 2011 on public television and primarily designed for high-school students, but usable for the whole family [<http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/10214728740-byt-v-obrazem>].

If the parent is actively seeking both in the archive of the Czech television and other publicly available databases, they may discover other inspirational materials, whether for their own education or education of their children. Partial information about parental mediation can be provided by programmes for parents or children that do not primarily focus on the topic, but some of its

episodes are devoted to it. The theme has appeared in two programmes of public television focusing on the topic of family and which were designed for parents, and in several programmes for children of the same TV. A parent can also watch programmes targeted at the general public, whose part is devoted to some form of media education. Besides the others, the programme of public television 'Retro' can serve as an example with some parts dealing with the Internet, advertising, tabloids, TV, and other topics from historical point of view [<http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/10176269182-retro/>].

Similarly, various news and current affairs programmes on the media sector – currently, the Czech TV broadcasts, for example, a magazine '@Online' that maps the Internet dimension of news topics. [<http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/10659215431-online/>] – documentary films about functioning of the media or films processing the topic of media (either based on true events or a fictional scenario) from different points of view are arising from time to time. The parent may also record some reports in television news or current affairs programmes that deal with children's addiction to computers and its consequences.

4.3. Radio listeners

A radio programme offer is even poorer in this respect. It should be noted that it is mainly public radio which can be expected to transmit appropriate programmes for parents or children aiming at media literacy in a family, but even it does not offer such programmes. Some programmes, dealing in some of their episodes with the issue of media education at schools, but not in families, were found.

If a parent digs in the audio archive of the Czech Radio, they do not find too many programmes focused on the media sector. The only show of this kind is 'Media Plus' (since 2012) but it is targeted to instructed audience and focuses rather on discussion about current issues on the media scene [http://www.rozhlas.cz/plus/porady/_porad/101032]. In the individual programme of the national Czech Radio stations there are, from time to time, news or current affairs programmes (discussions or interviews with guests) and some of their parts are devoted to the topic concerning the media sector. In the new public broadcaster for children and the youth, Radio Junior, there are some attempts to advise on terms from the field of media, more precisely two episodes of the programme 'Zapiš si to za uši' ('Don't you forget that') [<http://www.radiojunior.cz/zapis>]. A sort of indications of interest in the field of the media and parental mediation in the radio production are obvious, but this is not an intensive work with the theme.

4.4. Readers of newspapers and magazines

The magazine focused on the topic of media education or parental mediation in the Czech environment is missing. Therefore, parents are likely to encounter the information about media education in a family unintentionally while reading prints focusing on different issues. Articles on media education in a family designed specifically for parents can be found in the magazines for mothers. Parents can learn, for example, how to control user habits of their children in relation to the media within consultative sections for mums. An example might be the magazine 'Betynka' which has contained the text offering parents creative tips on collective television watching [23]. More systematic attention is paid to the topic in professional magazines, mostly educational and computer, whose texts directly target at parents, and in others that are already not designated for them.

News texts for the general public providing information on cases of risk or illegal behaviour on the Internet get to parents through dailies. In most cases, it is only information about the criminal offense lacking a broader context. The texts may alert parents, but also scare them without offering any solutions. In much lesser extent, the articles with some reflection on the facts whether and to what extent children are able to perceive risk communication in social networks appear. Then, of course, there are news texts reporting on news from the media sector.

4.5. Internet seekers

The internet is a place where one can find almost everything. Besides above mentioned materials, there are other options that parents may use in search for advice and information relating to media education in a family. Perhaps the most interesting ones, from this point of view, are specialized websites for parents informing them about sub-themes of parental mediation. The web portal for parents, which despite its name focuses on the issue of television in particular, is 'Children and the Media' [<http://www.detiamedia.cz/>] operated by the Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting, a government body which monitors compliance with the laws of the Czech Republic in the field of radio and television broadcasting. Parents can find there texts about the influence of television on children, possibilities of child protection by law, activities of the Council, as well as counselling for parents.

In recent years, a number of web projects have also been created focusing on child safety on the internet. It is possible to mention, e.g. portals of non-profit organization The National Safer Internet Centre 'Safely online' [<http://www.bezpecne-online.cz/>], 'Help online' [<http://www.pomoc-online.cz/>], or 'Hotline' [<http://www.horkalinkaczi.cz/>] as well as the project 'E-Safety' [<http://www.e-bezpecni.cz/>] operated by Faculty of Education at Palacký University Olomouc. All of them provide necessary information, materials, and instructions for the safe use of Internet by children and adults. The project of

Seznam.cz [<http://www.seznamsebezpecne.cz/>] aimed at preventing the risk communication of children on the internet is also noteworthy. And besides, the most recent feature in the sphere of websites is the project of Scio association which should help parents to familiarize with the number of computer games for children and teens [<http://www.jakouhru.cz/>]. The web has got own rating system for games and it also offers parents a professional estimate of age-appropriateness of the game (for children aged 2-17 years).

Besides specialised websites on the Internet, parents can find a lot of articles on the topic of media education in a family, whether it is a presentation of the results of various studies concerning the media impact on children, media usage by children, or more or less expert advice and guidance to parents. In addition to the established news portals, magazines for women and mothers, such contributions have been found on the websites of various organizations, whether profit or non-profit. They either consider it important to highlight the issue (e.g. non-profit organizations, libraries, or elementary and high schools dealing with media education of children), or they have taken an advantage of attractive subject for building own brand (commercial companies). Both assorted non-professional opinions of individuals on blogs and discussion forums, and more expert views of students and academics in many students' papers and professional articles that are available online, have appeared among the found search results. In addition, links to special applications and software, allowing parental control of children use of a computer, are offered. Consequently, if a parent is to find required information, they must be able to filter it.

5. What support would parents prefer?

The authors of this paper have asked parents in the interviews about their interest in any further education in the field of parental mediation, its eventual form and content. Without any prejudice to the results of the survey to quantify in any way, it seems that most parents want a TV show, a book (manual) and the web resources.

As for the **TV show**, the part of parents has expressed an interest in shorter TV shows for kids that are clearly and attractively designed for small children up to 10 years. The programme should show a certain model situations that may arise, and advice and guidance how to act in such situations. There was also a proposal to create three variants of the educational programme: for children, parents, and teachers which complement each other, or a proposal to create a special channel on Youtube.com that would include entertainment and educational videos on media education for children and parents.

Parents, who prefer **printed books and manuals**, would appreciate if there were a book providing parents basic orientation in media education in a family. The parents are aware that a book has a disadvantage of a content aging compared to the Internet content. Therefore, they propose to create a timeless tool. Some parents would welcome if the topic of media education in a family

were worked out within a wider manual focusing on the education of children generally.

The parents have expressed a great interest in the emergence of a **web portal** which would serve as a guide. On the one hand, it should include advice and tips about media education in a family, literature references, TV shows, or trainings for parents and children. On the other hand, it would serve as a platform for exchanging views and experiences of parents themselves. The parents, who prefer this form of support, have declared that they would use the web mainly in situations when a problem would occur in the family. According to the parents, the advantage is its availability whenever a parent needs something to find out. They also suggest some form of counselling for parents as a part of the web.

In addition to the above mentioned materials on how to teach children to live with the media, arranged by media, a proposal has emerged in order to create a project similar to projects focusing on road safety, or to establish a special media group that children can attend. The more proactive parents, who are compliant with further education, would welcome the opportunity to participate in any **training** or a course that would help them familiarize with the sphere of the media and parental mediation. But they differ whether it should be a course for parents, children, or the whole family. There was also a proposal for the training of seniors of the groups for children, but not training of parents. The parents would like to register their children for such ‘media groups’ led by the seniors. As mentioned earlier, a school may also function as a certain authority for parents in the field of media education. Many parents also lack a greater initiative from the side of school and its collaboration on media education of children. The parents conceive a greater initiative in the field of media education so that the school would deal with the issue both in lessons, as well as out of lessons. Teachers would point out potential problems related to the use of the media by children at parental meetings and a school would organize various seminars and workshops.

As for the content, the parents have mentioned a number of different topics that they would include into a potential educational project (whether in any form). The most frequent questions asked by the parents in this context are:

- How to teach children to filter the information coming to us from the media and assess their reliability?
- How to start using social networks, what to watch out for and how to teach their children to use them?
- How to choose a convenient children’s magazine?
- How to be well informed in the media market which is intended for children (review and overview)?
- What strategy to select in media education – according to how to judge what is bad and what is good, what are the options (parents’ experience with various media, experts’ opinions)?
- How to explain the risks posed by the use of media to children (PC games, TV, internet, and others)?

- How to prevent children from being addicted to various types of media?
- How to regulate the use of media by children when parents are not at home?
- Where and how to get software and applications for parental control of children on the internet and how to use them?
- To what extent is the use of media beneficial for children and when it is harmful?
- How to face a problem caused by a smart phone (inability to control children because of the easy Internet connection wherever with the available wi-fi network)?
- Is there anything the Czech parents have to rely on?

As for media education in a family, there are few publications, electronically available manuals, and web portals for parents in the Czech environment but they are usually related to safe behaviour on the internet. A parent may find hot news from the sphere in the media content, they can watch documentaries and read non-fiction books that deal with some specific aspect of the media functioning. It is not enough to be well versed in the rather complex media world and to create one's own view on media education in a family not at all. But at the same time, the parents have expressed the interest in materials that would provide them with answers to questions concerning more general media education strategy, suitability or unsuitability of restriction to use certain media, the impact of media on children, prevention, etc., besides the risks of the internet communication. At least a part of parents is missing a TV show for children in the Czech media that would explain the basic principles of media to them in a playful way. There is also a lack of books and manuals that would provide parents with the basic information about media education as a whole, communicate advice and tips based on the latest research and experiences of interviewed parents, what ways can solve typical problems and how it can affect. Despite the existence of several successful web projects, the guidepost, referring to other interesting sites, books, films, television or radio programmes and allowing a consultation with an expert and parents' mutual communication, is still missing. The content would have to be updated, regularly maintained, and it would mean the involvement of a number of professional institutions (Ministry of Education, universities and organizations that have already been developing some activity in the field of media education) that supported its operation both financially and substantively.

Relatives and friends, who also have children, seem to be the effective source of information for many parents. Personal or mediated communication with other parents is the most natural way how to solve the problem that has arisen. An inspiration in other families is important for the reason that every family is unique and versatile troubleshooting tips may not always be applicable. Therefore, if some form of media education would hit at least a part of parents, it is possible that the information is then further spread spontaneously from family to family. However, it should be taken into account what Šedřová found [16]. Namely, in some cases parents may not seek advice and opinions of others, but

they can address them in order to confirm the accuracy of the solution to the situation and give themselves confidence.

A positive finding is that a requirement for closer cooperation between family and school has also appeared in this context. So the question is whether a potential initiative could come from the side of school and thus motivate parents and children to the interest in the media and parental mediation (e.g. through joint workshops, seminars, or other projects). Another question is what should be workshops funded from and what institutions should help schools in this respect.

6. Conclusions

The carried out qualitative interviews suggest that the subject of media education is not unknown to parents although most of them would never call it in this way. In the first part of the paper, there were outlined some information sources which supply parents, intentionally or unintentionally, with pieces of information or advice on this topic. Without quantifying the results, it seems that parents are forced to take a stance to this issue because they are confronted with it daily (media household facilities, an effort to adapt the behaviour of the majority society and not to isolate their children). Parents differ in a degree of sophistication of educational media strategy, in the ability to check the compliance with the rules, and self-confidence in whether they act properly and whether their actions will reach a desired effect.

It is desirable to continue in exchanging examples of good practice within the EU which could assist experts in developing a quality support for parents. The authors believe that appropriately designed materials can help bridge the gap between parents and their children caused by the media and its invasion of families. It is also necessary to ask why such materials do not yet exist. The authors suppose that specialists are lacking of relevant practices. It is no coincidence that the supports that arise are often written as an experience of a particular parent (often the author, a layman) without giving theoretical and research context. It is essential that all relevant disciplines (pedagogy, psychology, adults' education) begin to be engaged in the spheres of media education in a family and try to synthesize knowledge on which these pillars will be built. Consequently, these procedures could be integrated into the system of lifelong learning. It is also vital to look for ways how to motivate parents, who do not consider it essential (as revealed by the qualitative studies by the authors of this article), to the interest in the topic.

Acknowledgement

This text was created with a support by the project SVV IKSŽ FSV UK 260 110. Data presented in this paper were identified within the wider research project entitled 'Parents, Children, and Media' supported by the Grant Agency of Charles University in Prague.

References

- [1] W. Schulz, Eur. J. Commun., **19(1)** (2004) 87.
- [2] M. Solík, J. Višňovský and J. Lalahová, Eur. J. Sci. Theol., **9(6)** (2013) 71.
- [3] T. Halík, *Vzdáleným nablízku*, Lidové noviny, Praha, 2007, 181.
- [4] S.M. Hoover and L.S. Clark (eds.), *Practicing religion in the age of the media: explorations in media, religion, and culture*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2002, 367.
- [5] J. Jiráček and H. Pavličiková, *Média pod lupou (Mediální výchova jako téma celoživotního vzdělávání)*, Powerprint, Praha, 2013, 187.
- [6] M. Prenskey, On the Horizon **9(5)** (2001) 1-6.
- [7] M. Prenskey, On the Horizon, **9(6)** (2001) 1-9.
- [8] N. Vrabec, Communication Today, **1** (2010) 82.
- [9] B.E. Pinkleton, E.W. Austin, Y.Y. Chen and M. Cohen, J. Health Commun., **17(4)** (2012) 460.
- [10] E.E. Dennis and E.C. Pease (eds.), *Children and the Media*, Transaction Publishers, London, 2000, 201.
- [11] D. Frau-Meigs and J. Torrent (eds.), *Mapping Media Education Policies in the World: Visions, Programmes and Challenges*, The United Nations-Alliance of Civilizations, New York, 2009, 257.
- [12] D. Petranová, Communication Today, **2(1)** (2011) 66.
- [13] L. Šťastná, R. Wolák and K. Cigánková, e-Pedagogium, **1** (2014) 89.
- [14] K. Šed'ová, *Rodinná socializace dětského televizního diváctví*, Doctoral Thesis, Filozofická fakulta Masarykovy univerzity, Brno, 2006, 210.
- [15] Z. Sloboda, *Mediální výchova v rodině z pohledu české společnosti: dílčí výsledky z výzkumu*, in *Mediální pedagogika v teorii a praxi*, J. Mašek, Z. Sloboda & V. Zikmundová (eds.), PDF ZČU, Plzeň, 2010, 27.
- [16] K. Šed'ová, Studia Paedagogica, **55(12)** (2007) 79.
- [17] M. Rabušicová, L. Kamanová and K. Pevná, *O mezigeneračním učení*, MUNI, Brno, 2012, 210.
- [18] L. Eckertová and D. Dočekal, *Bezpečnost dětí na Internetu: Rádce zodpovědného rodiče*, Computer Press, Praha, 2013, 224.
- [19] L. Eckertová, *Hustej internet*, Petr Prchal, Praha, 2014, 87.
- [20] P. Říčan, D. Pithartová, *Krotíme obrazovku: jak vést děti k rozumnému užívání médií*, Portál, Praha, 1995, 62.
- [21] J. Bakan, *Dětství pod palbou*, Triton, Praha, 2013, 312.
- [22] U. Buermann, *Jak (pře)žít s médii: Příležitosti a hrozby informačního věku a nové úkoly pedagogiky*, Poznání, Olomouc, 2009, 240.
- [23] A. Bartošová, Betyňka, **8** (2013) 96.