

Media Education and Its Role in Protecting Children from the Risks of the Digital Environment: A Field Study on a Sample of Parents of Students at Mohamed Cherif Ben Akcha Middle School in Ain Oussera

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Abstract:

This study examines the role of media education in protecting children from digital risks from the perspective of parents of students at Mohamed Cherif Ben Akcha Middle School in Ain Oussera. It addresses the challenges resulting from the growing use of digital media and its impact on family socialization.

The study adopted a descriptive case study approach and used semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of **30 parents**. It focused on parents' awareness of digital risks, their media education practices, and the role of these practices in protecting children.

The findings revealed a considerable level of parental awareness, particularly regarding digital addiction and inappropriate content. Parents mainly relied on dialogue, guidance, and rules regulating digital media use, although they faced challenges such as rapid technological development and limited technical knowledge.

The study concludes that media education is essential for protecting children from digital risks and that its effectiveness depends on continuous guidance, preventive practices, and stronger cooperation between families, schools, and relevant institutions.

Keywords: Media Literacy, Parental Role, Digital Environment Risks, Child Protection.

1-Introduction: Over the past decades, the world has witnessed rapid developments in information and communication technologies, making the digital environment an essential part of everyday life, particularly for children and adolescents. Although this environment provides numerous opportunities for learning, access to knowledge, and communication, it also involves a range of risks, such as exposure to inappropriate content, cyberbullying, digital addiction, privacy threats, and the spread of misinformation.

In response to these challenges, media education has emerged as a modern approach aimed at developing children's ability to engage with digital media in an aware, critical, and responsible manner. It focuses on strengthening skills of understanding, analysis, and informed choice rather than relying solely on restriction or prohibition.

The family also plays a fundamental role in this field, as it is the primary institution of socialization. Parents contribute to guiding their children and accompanying them in their digital practices through dialogue, supervision, and the establishment of rules for technology use.

Accordingly, this study seeks to examine the role of media education in protecting children from the risks of the digital environment by identifying the perceptions and practices of parents of students at Mohamed Cherif Ben Akcha Middle School in Ain Oussera.

2- Research Problem: The digital environment has become an essential part of children's lives, offering opportunities for learning and communication while also exposing them to risks such as inappropriate content,

cyberbullying, digital addiction, and privacy violations. In this context, media education can help parents guide their children toward safer and more responsible digital media use.

Accordingly, this study addresses the following question:

What is the role of media education in protecting children from digital risks from the perspective of parents of students at Mohamed Cherif Ben Akcha Middle School in Ain Oussera?

3- Research Sub-Questions:

- a. What is the level of parents' awareness of the risks of the digital environment that their children may be exposed to?
- b. What are the main media education strategies adopted by parents to guide and support their children while using digital media?
- c. To what extent do parents' media education practices contribute to reducing their children's exposure to the risks of the digital environment?

4- Research Objectives: This study aims to:

- a. To identify the level of parents' awareness of the risks of the digital environment that their children may be exposed to.
- b. To examine the media education strategies adopted by parents to guide and support their children.
- c. To identify the extent to which media education practices contribute to protecting children from the risks of the digital environment.

5- Concepts and Terms of the Study:

5-1 Definition of Media Education: Media education is a term composed of two words: education and media.

It is the translation of the English term **Media Education**, which refers to education about media. Some researchers also consider it closely related to **Media Literacy** (Ben Lagha & Salamen, 2019, p. 64).

Media education plays an important role in addressing the influence of media on our lives, as media today represents a powerful force capable of shaping individuals' values, beliefs, attitudes, and ideas in various aspects of life. Therefore, media education primarily aims to prepare individuals to understand media culture, enabling them to select appropriate and beneficial content and to interact with media in an effective and informed manner (Al-Hamdani, 2015, p. 89).

Media education is the process aimed at equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to understand media, analyze and critically evaluate its messages, distinguish between accurate and misleading information, and use media in a conscious and responsible manner. This, in turn, enhances their ability to participate effectively in society (Rashwan, 2015, p. 25).

In this study, media education refers to the educational practices adopted by the parents of students at Mohamed Cherif Ben Akcha Middle School in Ain Oussera to guide their children toward the conscious, responsible, and safe use of digital media through dialogue, advice, supervision, rule-setting, and awareness of digital risks.

5-2 Definition of the Role of Parents: The concept of role refers to the set of behaviors, functions, and duties expected from an individual according to their social position within a group or society. It represents the practical expression of the rights and responsibilities associated with that position (Badawi, 1993, p. 395).

In the family and educational context, parents or guardians are responsible for the care, upbringing, supervision, and protection of the child. In the Algerian context, the family is considered the natural environment for the child's development, while parents bear primary responsibility for the child's protection and socialization (Jaafar, 2023, p. 297).

The role of parents refers to the educational and social responsibilities carried out by fathers and mothers in caring for, guiding, supervising, and protecting their children.

In this study, the role of parents in media education refers to the practices adopted by the parents of students at Mohamed Cherif Ben Akcha Middle School in Ain Oussera to guide and support their children's digital media use through awareness-raising, dialogue, supervision, and rule-setting, with the aim of promoting responsible use and reducing digital risks.

5-3 Definition of Digital Environment Risks: The environment refers to the external conditions and influences that affect human life. With the expansion of digital technologies, these technologies have become an important part of the social environment, particularly for children, who are among the most active users of new technologies (Boudour, 2022, p. 541).

The digital environment refers to the space in which information is accessed, processed, and exchanged through digital technologies. It includes digital networks, content, applications, connected devices, artificial intelligence, virtual and augmented reality, and other technologies that facilitate interaction and access to digital information and services (Boufalga, 2023, p. 90).

In this study, **digital environment risks** refer to the set of problems perceived by the parents of students at Mohamed Cherif Ben Akcha Middle School in Ain Oussera as potential threats to their children while using digital media. These risks include digital addiction, exposure to inappropriate content, cyberbullying, communication with strangers, and privacy violations.

5-4 Definition of Child Protection: Child protection: Child protection refers to the measures and practices aimed at safeguarding children's safety, rights, and well-being through prevention, guidance, supervision, and intervention when necessary. It also involves protecting their physical, psychological, and educational development from potential risks, with the family and parents playing a central role, particularly within the digital environment (Jaafar, 2023, p. 297).

In this study, child protection refers to the educational and media-related practices adopted by parents to guide, supervise, and support their children's digital media use, raise their awareness of potential risks, and promote safe and responsible use of the Internet and digital platforms.

6- Methodology and Study Procedures:

6-1 Research Method: This study adopts the descriptive research method, as it is appropriate for examining parents' perceptions and practices regarding media education and digital risks within the family. It enables the researcher to study the phenomenon in its natural context and to collect data on parents' awareness, guidance strategies, and practices related to safe and responsible digital media use.

The descriptive method was applied within a case study framework, focusing on parents of students at Mohamed Cherif Ben Akcha Middle School in Ain Oussera in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon within its social context.

The descriptive method aims to describe and interpret existing conditions, practices, and relationships among phenomena (Al-Fawwal, 1982, p. 151; Morsi, 1978, p. 96). It also involves collecting, classifying, and analyzing data in order to draw relevant conclusions about the research problem (Salatna & Al-Jilani, 2004, p. 167).

6-2 Type of Study: This research is classified as a case study, focusing on the perceptions and practices of parents of students at Mohamed Cherif Ben Akcha Middle School in Ain Oussera regarding media education and child protection in the digital environment.

This approach was selected because it allows for an in-depth understanding of parents' experiences, guidance practices, and responses to digital challenges within their real-life social context.

The purpose is not statistical generalization, but rather a detailed and contextualized understanding of the role of parents in media education and in protecting children from digital risks.

6-3 Research Population and Study Sample: A research population refers to a group of individuals who share common characteristics relevant to the research topic (Angers, 1996, p. 146).

In this study, the research population consists of parents of students at Mohamed Cherif Ben Akcha Middle School in Ain Oussera, as they are directly involved in guiding their children's use of digital media and developing their digital awareness.

Given the case study design, a purposive sampling technique was adopted. This non-probability method involves selecting participants according to their relevance to the research objectives and does not aim at statistical generalization (Al-Hassan, 1982, p. 52). Purposive sampling also allows the researcher to select participants who can provide information relevant to the phenomenon under investigation (Imad, 2008, p. 52).

Accordingly, a purposive sample of 30 parents was selected, taking into account diversity in gender, age, educational level, occupation, and number of children.

The purpose of the sample was to obtain varied perspectives and an in-depth understanding of parents' awareness, practices, and experiences related to media education and digital risks.

6-4 Data Collection Tool: This study used the interview as the main tool for collecting field data, as it is an effective method for obtaining information from individuals and social groups (Bouhouche & Al-Dhunibat, 2007, pp. 75–76).

An interview guide was developed for parents of students at Mohamed Cherif Ben Akcha Middle School in Ain Oussera, based on the study objectives and research questions. It included open-ended questions organized into four main themes:

Theme One: General Information and Parents' Experience with Digital Media

This theme aimed to identify the general characteristics of the participants, including gender, age, educational level, occupation, and number of children. It also explored the nature of the family's relationship with digital media and the patterns of children's use of these media.

Theme Two: Parents' Awareness of Digital Environment Risks

This theme examined parents' perceptions of the widespread use of the Internet among children and their level of awareness of risks associated with the digital environment, such as digital addiction, cyberbullying, inappropriate content, and privacy violations. It also explored the sources from which parents obtained information about these risks.

Theme Three: Parents' Media Education Practices within the Family

This theme focused on the various strategies and practices adopted by parents to guide and support their children in their use of digital media. These included family dialogue, setting rules for use, supervision, and teaching children the basic principles of digital safety.

Theme Four: The Role of Media Education in Protecting Children from Digital Risks

This theme addressed parents' evaluation of the role of media education in promoting the safe and responsible use of digital media. It also explored the family practices they considered most effective for protection, the difficulties they encountered, and the suggestions they proposed for strengthening media education within the family.

In designing the interview guide, particular attention was given to ensuring that the questions were **open-ended and non-leading**, allowing participants to express their experiences and perceptions freely. This approach helped generate rich qualitative data suitable for thematic analysis and consistent with the objectives of the study.

6-5 Data Analysis Method: The field data collected in this study were analyzed using **thematic analysis**, as this approach is well suited to the interpretation of interview data. Participants' responses were transcribed and organized according to the main themes of the study, after which recurring ideas and themes related to parents' awareness of digital risks, media education practices, and their role in protecting children were identified.

The analysis process involved several stages:

- ✓ Careful reading of participants' responses in order to gain an overall understanding of their content.
- ✓ Coding and classifying the data into thematic categories related to the research questions.
- ✓ Identifying the main patterns and general trends in parents' responses.
- ✓ Interpreting the findings in light of the theoretical approaches adopted in the study and relevant previous research.

Frequencies and percentages were also used to organize the data and facilitate the presentation of certain sample characteristics and response patterns. These were used as descriptive indicators only and not as a basis for statistical generalization, given the case study design and the limited sample size.

7- Analysis and Discussion of the Results:

7-1 First Theme: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample: The demographic characteristics of the sample help explain factors that may influence parents' attitudes and practices regarding media education and children's digital use.

Regarding age, parents aged 35–45 years represented the largest group (53.33%), followed by those over 45 years (30%) and those under 35 years (16.67%). This indicates that most participants belong to an age group actively involved in family responsibilities and children's daily supervision.

In terms of educational level, 40% had a university education, 30% secondary education, 20% middle-school education, and 10% primary education. This suggests that most participants have a medium to high educational level, which may support better understanding of digital risks and more informed parental guidance.

Regarding family size, 60% had two to three children, 23.33% had more than three, and 16.67% had one child. Larger families may provide parents with broader experience, but may also make digital supervision more challenging.

For occupational status, 46.67% were public-sector employees, 23.33% self-employed, 16.67% retired, and 13.33% private-sector employees. Professional activity may increase exposure to digital technologies but may also reduce the time available for direct supervision.

Concerning digital media use within the family, 46.67% described it as daily and intensive, 40% as normal and need-based, and 13.33% as limited. This confirms the strong presence of digital media in family life.

The most commonly used digital media among children were social media (33.33%), followed by entertainment media (30%), educational media (20%), and instant messaging applications (16.67%).

Overall, the findings show that digital media are strongly integrated into family life and that parents' demographic characteristics may influence their awareness of digital risks and their methods of guidance. This reinforces the importance of media education based on dialogue, awareness, and responsible digital use.

7-2 Second Theme: Parents' Awareness of the Risks of the Digital Environment:

Parents' awareness of the risks associated with the digital environment is a key element in understanding the role that the family can play in protecting children from the negative uses of technology. With the rapid pace of digital transformation, families are no longer confronted only with the challenges of traditional upbringing; they are also required to understand a new environment characterized by constant change and multiple sources of influence.

Consequently, parents' digital awareness has become an essential condition for the effective performance of their educational role.

The findings indicate that **60% of parents** consider digital media to be useful tools, provided that appropriate guidance and support are available. In contrast, **30%** believe that digital media combine both positive and negative aspects, while only **10%** perceive them primarily as a source of risk.

These findings suggest that parents' attitudes toward technology are no longer based on rejection or excessive fear, but have become more balanced and realistic. Most parents recognize that digital media offer positive opportunities related to learning, access to information, skill development, and communication. At the same time, they acknowledge that such media may become a source of various risks in the absence of adequate parental guidance.

This finding can be interpreted through the **socialization approach**, which considers the family to be the primary institution responsible for shaping children's values and behaviors. However, the emergence of the digital environment has required families to redefine their traditional roles. Socialization no longer takes place solely within the family environment, but is increasingly influenced by multiple digital spaces that expose children to new models, values, and forms of behavior.

The results also reflect a transition from a model based on restriction and strict supervision toward one based on guidance and support. This is consistent with the principles of media education, which emphasize that protecting children does not necessarily mean distancing them from technology, but rather developing their ability to use it consciously and critically and enabling them to distinguish between beneficial and harmful content.

The findings further show that **50% of participants** have a moderate level of knowledge about digital risks, while **40%** demonstrate a good level of knowledge. Only **10%** reported having limited knowledge.

These results indicate that parents generally possess an acceptable level of awareness of the various risks associated with the digital environment. However, this awareness differs in terms of depth and analytical capacity. Awareness of the existence of risks such as digital addiction or inappropriate content does not necessarily mean that parents possess the skills required to address these risks or develop effective prevention strategies.

From this perspective, the findings may be interpreted through the media education approach, which distinguishes between technical ability to use digital media and broader **media competence**. An individual may be able to operate digital devices and platforms while still lacking more advanced skills, such as critical thinking, media-message analysis, understanding the purposes behind digital content, and protecting personal privacy.

The proportion of parents who demonstrate good knowledge of digital risks also reflects the presence of a group that has begun to recognize the importance of media education within the family. This may be associated with factors such as educational level or professional exposure to technology. In contrast, the proportion with limited knowledge indicates the persistence of a digital gap between the rapid development of technology and the ability of some parents to keep pace with it.

In this context, a number of previous studies addressing family life in the digital age emphasize that one of the main challenges lies in the gap between the parental generation and the digital generation. Children often grow up in an environment that is more closely connected to technology than that experienced by their parents. This highlights the need for awareness and training programs directed at families in order to strengthen their capacities in the field of media education.

Regarding the main digital risks identified by parents, **digital addiction** ranked first at **80%**, followed by **exposure to inappropriate content** at **15%**, while **communication with strangers** accounted for **5%**.

These findings show that parents' main concerns are related to the behavioral and psychological effects of excessive technology use rather than to technology itself. Digital addiction has become one of the most noticeable concerns for families because of its potential impact on time management, family relationships, academic performance, and children's daily activities.

The high level of awareness of digital addiction also suggests that parents have observed the changes introduced by smartphones and digital platforms into their children's lifestyles. Repeated screen use has become part of everyday life and may shift from a tool for entertainment or communication into a difficult-to-control behavior when clear rules and supervision are absent.

This result can also be interpreted through the perspective of **parental mediation theory**, which suggests that the role of the family should not be limited to restricting screen time or banning particular applications. Rather, it should focus on developing an educational relationship based on dialogue, explaining risks, and teaching children how to manage their relationship with technology.

The findings also indicate that the most frequently observed effect among children was **excessive smartphone use**, reported by **63.33% of parents**, followed by its **impact on study and concentration**, reported by **46.67%**.

These results show that the most visible concern in family experience relates to the influence of digital use on the organization of children's everyday lives. The smartphone is no longer merely a communication tool; it has become a multifunctional space combining communication, entertainment, gaming, and access to information. This makes regulating its use more difficult than regulating traditional forms of media.

From the perspective of the sociology of the family, the spread of digital media has contributed to reshaping family relationships. Children increasingly have access to private spaces within the virtual world, which may sometimes reduce direct forms of family interaction. As a result, families are required to develop new forms of socialization based on dialogue and participation rather than relying exclusively on supervision.

The relationship between digital use and reduced concentration and academic performance further demonstrates that the problem does not lie in the presence of technology itself, but rather in the nature and patterns of its use. Balanced use may support learning, whereas unregulated use may lead to negative consequences.

Regarding parents' sources of knowledge about digital risks, the findings show that **personal experience** ranked first at **53.33%**, while schools and specialized training programs accounted for only limited proportions.

This finding indicates that parents' digital awareness is shaped primarily through everyday practice and direct family experiences rather than through organized awareness programs or formal training.

This situation reflects the limited contribution of educational and media institutions in supporting families in dealing with the challenges of the digital environment. It also highlights the need to strengthen cooperation between families and schools through awareness campaigns and training sessions on safe Internet use and methods of protecting children from digital risks.

Moreover, reliance on personal experience alone may restrict parents' knowledge to the risks they directly observe within the family, whereas new and evolving digital risks often require more specialized and continuously updated knowledge.

The findings also reveal that **60% of parents** believe that their children have only partial awareness of digital risks and still require guidance, while **23.33%** consider their children to have a good level of awareness.

This result reflects parents' recognition of the distinction between being able to use technology and being aware of how to use it responsibly. Children may possess advanced technical skills in using applications and digital platforms, but this does not necessarily mean that they are able to assess risks or make responsible decisions within the digital environment.

At this point, media education becomes particularly important as a means of developing informed digital users who are capable of critical thinking, self-protection, and respect for ethical principles in their use of technology. Based on the findings of the second theme, it can be concluded that parents possess a considerable level of awareness of the risks associated with the digital environment. However, this awareness still needs to move from simply recognizing the existence of risks toward developing practical strategies for addressing them. Most parents now appear to understand that technology is not inherently harmful; rather, the main concern lies in the absence of guidance and in unregulated use. Therefore, strengthening media education within the family is essential for helping parents fulfill their evolving role in protecting children and in promoting a more balanced relationship with the digital environment.

7-3 Third Theme: Parents' Media Education Practices within the Family:

This theme is one of the most important dimensions of the study, as it moves beyond measuring parents' awareness of the risks of the digital environment to examining their actual practices in guiding and supporting their children while using digital media. Media education is not limited to awareness of risks; rather, it is reflected in a set of everyday family practices aimed at building a balanced relationship between children and technology.

The findings indicate that **46.67% of parents** associate media education with guiding children toward the appropriate use of digital media, while **30%** relate it to supervision and monitoring, and **23.33%** focus on protection from risks. These findings suggest that the concept of media education is gradually moving beyond the traditional approach based on restriction and control toward guidance and support. This can be interpreted through the socialization approach, which emphasizes that families adapt their educational practices in response to the transformations brought about by the digital environment.

The results also show that **dialogue and discussion** are the most commonly adopted practices, accounting for **70%**, compared with **20%** for giving advice and **10%** for restriction and prohibition. This reflects a shift toward educational practices based on trust and mutual understanding, which is consistent with the digital parental mediation approach that emphasizes the importance of dialogue and participation in developing responsible digital behavior.

However, the findings reveal that **50% of parents** resort to dialogue when a digital problem occurs, compared with **33.33%** who engage in dialogue on a continuous basis. This indicates that, in many cases, dialogue remains more reactive than preventive. From a media education perspective, regular dialogue is more effective in developing critical thinking and helping children recognize potential risks before they occur.

Regarding the regulation of digital media use, **setting time limits** ranked first at **66.67%**. This result reflects families' concern with the amount of time spent using digital media. However, media education extends beyond time regulation to include teaching children how to select appropriate content, protect personal data, manage their time effectively, and interact responsibly within the digital environment.

The findings further show that **53.33% of parents** monitor their children's digital use irregularly, while **30%** do so on a continuous basis. This may be explained by family and work commitments, limited technical knowledge, and the digital gap between generations, as children may sometimes possess greater technical skills than their parents.

In the same context, **80% of parents** reported that they do not use technical parental control tools, compared with only **20%** who use them. This indicates that families rely more heavily on dialogue and direct supervision. Although these approaches are important, contemporary media education emphasizes the need to combine dialogue with appropriate technical tools, without allowing technological monitoring to replace awareness and education.

With regard to digital privacy, **46.67% of parents** provide guidance when needed, while **36.67%** do so on a continuous basis. This reflects growing concern about the protection of personal information, although there remains a need to integrate digital privacy awareness more consistently into everyday family practices.

Dialogue is also the most commonly used method for dealing with digital problems, accounting for **60%**, followed by temporary restriction at **23.33%**. This confirms that parents tend to favor discussion and explanation rather than relying exclusively on punishment or prohibition.

The main difficulties faced by parents include the **rapid development of technology**, reported by **66.67%**, and **limited technical knowledge**, reported by **46.67%**. These findings reveal a gap between the rapid evolution of digital media and the ability of some families to keep pace with such developments. This may be interpreted through the network society approach, which highlights the impact of technology on the distribution of knowledge and roles within the family.

Overall, the findings indicate that parents adopt various forms of media education, particularly dialogue, guidance, and the establishment of rules for digital use. However, these practices still appear to be in a transitional stage and are often more reactive than preventive. Therefore, there is a clear need to strengthen parents' digital knowledge and skills in order to develop a family culture based on awareness, participation, and responsibility.

7-4 Fourth Theme: The Role of Media Education in Protecting Children from Digital Risks:

The fourth theme aims to explore parents' perceptions of the role of media education in protecting children from digital risks. Protection is no longer based solely on monitoring, but also on developing digital awareness that enables children to use technology safely and responsibly.

The findings indicate that **50% of parents** believe that the primary role of media education is to develop awareness of the safe use of digital media, while **30%** consider it a means of preventing risks, and **20%** view it as a way of regulating children's relationship with technology. These findings show that parents increasingly perceive media education as a means of developing knowledge and skills rather than merely preventing risks.

The results also show that **63.33% of parents** prefer awareness-raising over prohibition, while **30%** support combining both approaches, and only **6.67%** favor prohibition alone. This reflects a shift from external control toward developing children's capacity for self-regulation and responsible decision-making, which is consistent with the digital parental mediation approach based on dialogue and guidance.

Regarding the skills considered necessary for protection, **digital privacy protection** ranked first at **66.67%**, followed by the ability to distinguish between accurate and false information at **56.67%**. These results demonstrate parents' awareness of the importance of digital security and critical thinking, particularly in the context of the widespread use of social media and the growing diversity of information sources.

Furthermore, **53.33% of parents** reported a clear positive change in their children's behavior after receiving guidance, while **33.33%** considered the change to be limited. These findings suggest that family support based on dialogue and explanation can contribute to improving children's digital behavior. However, media education requires continuity and should not be limited to occasional interventions.

Continuous dialogue ranked first as a means of protection at **60%**, followed by monitoring and supervision at **40%**. This highlights the importance of communication within the family, as dialogue allows parents to better understand their children's digital experiences, while monitoring remains a supportive strategy that cannot be relied upon alone.

The findings also reveal that **83.33% of parents** believe that cooperation between the family, school, and specialized institutions is necessary. This reflects an awareness that digital education is a shared responsibility. In

this regard, **60%** of parents considered awareness campaigns to be one of the most important roles of the school, while **53.33%** emphasized the importance of providing education on the safe use of digital media.

With regard to parents' needs, **63.33%** expressed a need for greater knowledge about the risks associated with modern applications, indicating the existence of a knowledge gap resulting from the rapid emergence of new platforms and applications. In terms of proposed measures, **73.33%** recommended organizing awareness programs, while **63.33%** emphasized the importance of strengthening cooperation between families and schools. Overall, the findings of the fourth theme confirm that media education constitutes an important mechanism for protecting children from digital risks by developing awareness and strengthening their ability to make informed choices, evaluate digital content, and behave responsibly. The results also show that parents tend to favor awareness-raising and dialogue over prohibition. Nevertheless, effective protection requires strengthening parents' digital knowledge, organizing training and awareness programs, and reinforcing cooperation between families, schools, and specialized institutions.

8- Conclusion: This study examined the role of media education in protecting children from digital risks from the perspective of parents of students at Mohamed Cherif Ben Akcha Middle School in Ain Oussera.

The findings indicate that digital media have become an integral part of children's daily lives, providing opportunities for learning and communication while also exposing them to risks such as digital addiction, inappropriate content, communication with strangers, and privacy violations.

The results also show that parents possess a considerable level of awareness of these risks and mainly rely on dialogue, guidance, and rules regulating digital media use. However, limited technical knowledge and the rapid development of digital platforms remain significant challenges.

Overall, media education constitutes an important mechanism for protecting children from digital risks, particularly when based on continuous guidance, dialogue, trust, and the development of critical awareness. Effective protection also requires cooperation between families, schools, and relevant institutions.

9- Recommendations: Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- ✓ Strengthen media education programs in schools to promote safe and responsible digital use.
- ✓ Provide training for parents on digital risks and effective parental mediation strategies.
- ✓ Encourage family dialogue and guidance rather than relying mainly on restriction and monitoring.
- ✓ Raise children's awareness of digital privacy and safe online behavior.
- ✓ Strengthen cooperation between families, schools, and relevant institutions.
- ✓ Promote positive and educational uses of digital media.
- ✓ Conduct future studies with larger and more diverse samples

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