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Impact of Parental Mediation on Parental Awareness of Adolescents' Online Activities: Findings from a 3-Wave RI-CLPM

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Project PARKA

Parental Knowledge of Early Adolescents' Online Social Lives: The role of Parental Mediation

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Why parental awareness/knowledge?

- Awareness/knowledge of adolescents' whereabouts, activities and relationships is linked to adolescents' positive psychosocial adjustment (Kerr et al., 2010)
 - Well-established research stream on both predictors and outcomes
 - Parenting predictors: parental warmth, behavioral control (as opposed to psychological control), parental solicitations, effects through children's disclosures (e.g., Liu et al., 2020)
- Less empirical findings about „online“ knowledge and its predictors
- Parental mediation as domain-specific parenting practice (Clark, 2011) that could increase parental knowledge
 - **Active mediation:** discussions with children about their online activities, active encouragement and explanations
 - **Restrictive mediation:** rules limiting ICT usage
 - **Monitoring:** keeping an oversight of what children do online (e.g., checking who the child communicate with online, what they share)

„Online“ knowledge

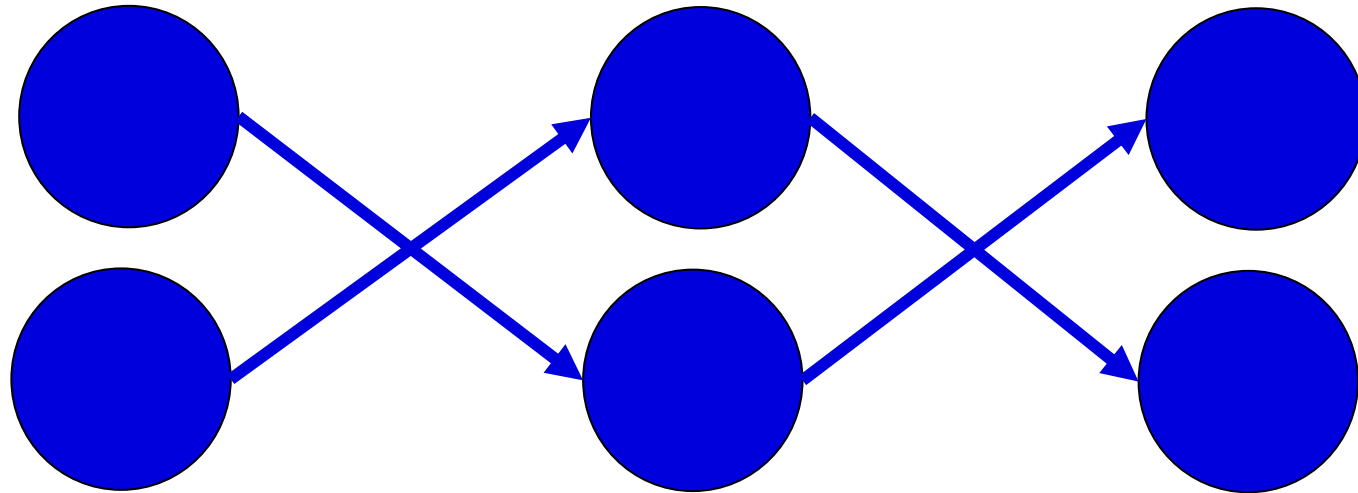
- Two ways of measuring it:
 - Perceived knowledge
 - Comparisons of parents' and children reports (typically on risky activities)
- Parents tend to underestimate or over-estimate:
 - The time adolescents spend online (Barlett & Fennel, 2018)
 - Children's engagement in risky activities/experiences (Barlett & Fennel, 2018; Caivano et al., 2020, Geržičáková et al., 2023; Sorbring & Lundin, 2012; Symons et al., 2017)
 - Under-estimation seems more common than over-estimation

Parental mediation and knowledge

- Some studies examined it, e.g.:
 - Active mediation increased perceived knowledge, restrictions, supervision and co-use did not (Symons et al., 2017)
 - Active mediation increased perceived and „objective“ knowledge, restrictions neither, monitoring increased perceived knowledge, but not objective knowledge of summed score of online risks (Geržičáková et al., 2023)
 - Active mediation increased parental knowledge of adolescents‘ sexting among older (15-17), but not younger (12-14) adolescents, monitoring decreased it, and restrictions increased knowledge among younger, but not older adolescents (Stanić, 2024)
- I.e., inconsistent patterns, but large variation in examined risks, and some methodological limits (sample sizes, cross-sectional data)

Our study

- Parental mediation as potential knowledge-generating practice
- But also parental knowledge as potential driver for changes in parental mediation
- Possible bi-directional effects → longitudinal study



Method

T1	T2	T3
N = 2,500	N = 1,660	N = 1,102

- 3-wave study, collected 6-months apart, 2021-22
- T1: 2,500 adolescent-parent dyads, adolescents 11-16 years old
- Quotas:
 - Proportional: parental education, region, and municipality size
 - Balanced: adolescents age and gender
- **Data from parents**, T1 age $M = 42.98$, $SD = 6.07$, 63.96 % women

Measures

– Parental mediation:

- all subscales measured with 5-point Likert scales (1= Very untrue of me, 5 = Very true of me)
- EFA + CFA on randomly split sample → dropped two crossloading items → longi invariance on metric level

– Active mediation, $\omega = .77-.79$

- 3 items, e.g. „I encourage him/her to explore and learn things on the internet“ (Livingstone et al., 2011)

– Restrictive mediation, $\omega = .81-.82$

- 3 items, e.g., „I limit the time he/she can spend online“ (ad hoc, inspired by existing scales)

– Monitoring, $\omega = .91-.93$

- 5 items, e.g., „I check the website he/she visits“ (ad hoc, inspired by existing scales)

	T1		T2		T3	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Active Mediation (1-5)	3.95	0.82	3.93	0.84	3.87	0.86
Restrictive Mediation (1-5)	3.35	1.1	3.31	1.09	3.2	1.12
Monitoring (1-5)	3.31	1.06	3.25	1.05	3.12	1.1

Measures

– Parental perceived knowledge

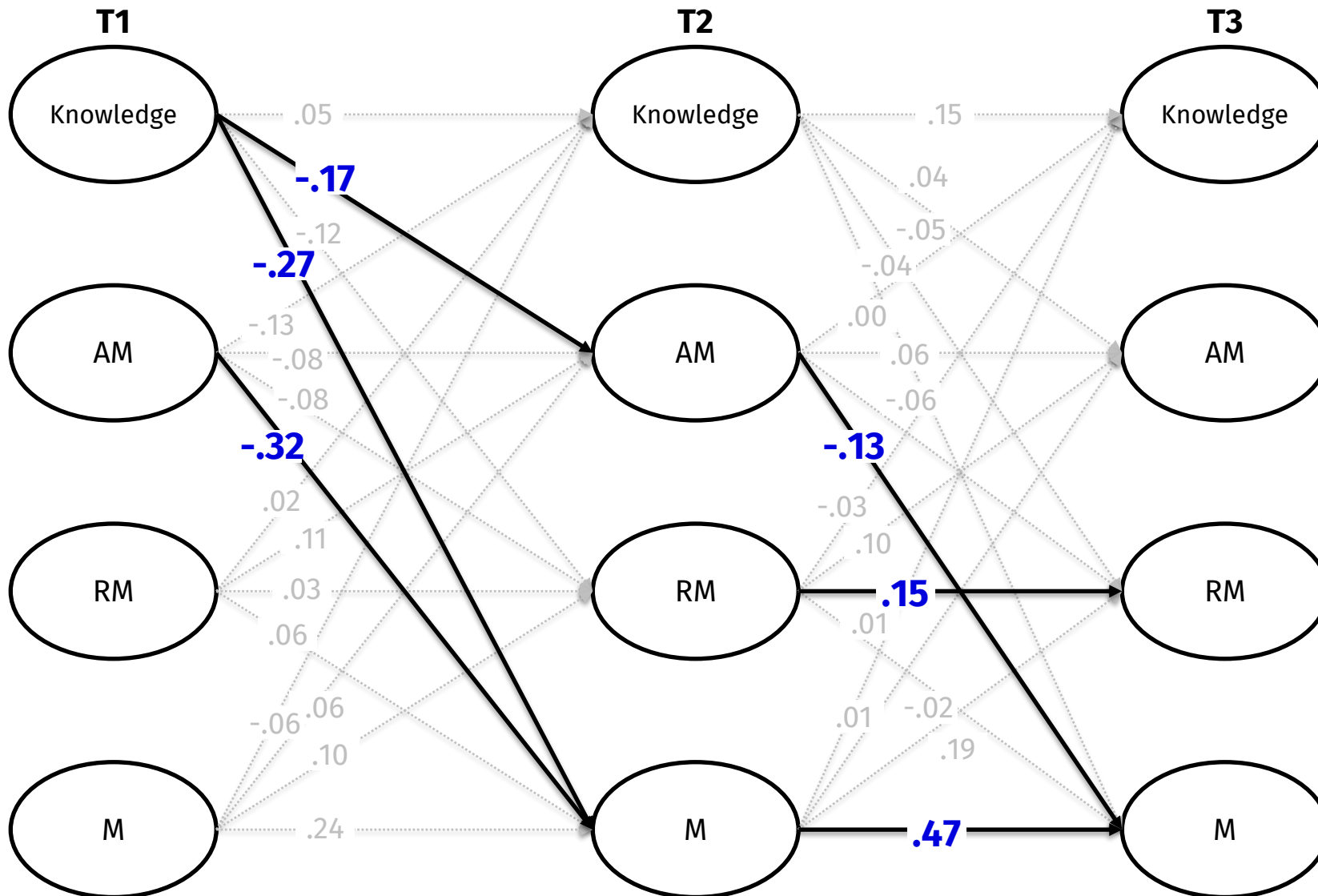
- 1 item, „How much do you know what this child is doing on the Internet?“ (1 = nothing at all, 2 = a little, 3 = enough, 4 = really a lot)

	T1		T2		T3	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Knowledge (1-4)	2.64	0.75	2.59	0.73	2.5	0.76

Analysis

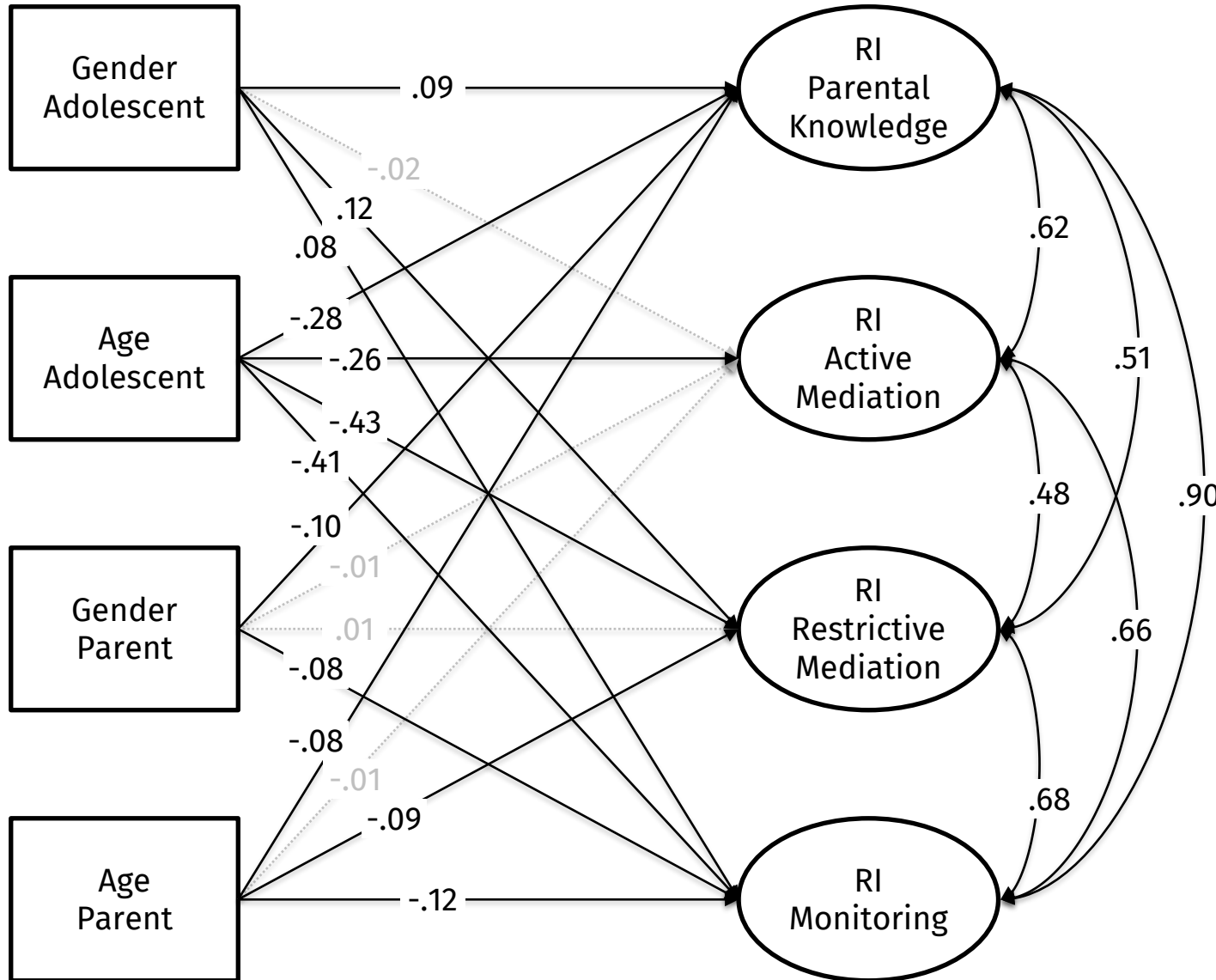
- RI-CLPM with WLSMV
- Age and gender (both parents‘ and adolescents‘) as time-invariant predictors

Results: within-person part



- Not much stable results
- Parental knowledge decreases engagement in active mediation and monitoring (T1→T2)
- No effects from parental mediation to knowledge

Results: between-person part



– Demographics:

- Less knowledge reported for older adolescents and girls
- Less knowledge reported by older parents and (step)fathers

– Parental mediation:

- Knowledge positively correlated to all PM strategies, especially monitoring
- All PM strategies correlate to each other

Discussion

- Parental mediation is associated to knowledge cross-sectionally, but does not seem to work as knowledge-generating practice longitudinally
 - However, knowledge and all PM strategies are closely related, especially when *perceived* knowledge is assessed
- Knowledge as a driver for changes in parental mediation (active, monitoring, not restrictions)
 - Higher knowledge → less engagement in PM
 - But probably depends of what they know → potential different effect in case of problematic experiences versus non-problematic ones

Thank you for your attention

Parental Knowledge of Early Adolescents' Online Social Lives: The role of Parental Mediation (PARKA)

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Bivariate correlations (1st wave)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 - Parental Knowledge							
2 - Active Mediation	.39***						
3 - Restrictive mediation	.38***	.46***					
4 - Monitoring	.60***	.55***	.67***				
5 - Adolescent Gender	.06**	-.03	.07***	.00			
6 - Adolescent Age	-.24***	-.21***	-.36***	-.23***	.01		
7 - Parent Gender	-.12***	-.04	-.05*	-.01	.06**	.07***	
8 - Parent Age	-.14***	-.06**	-.16***	-.18***	.03	.27***	.19***

Note. Pearson correlations, mean scores for scales