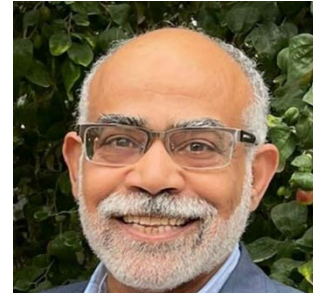




Abdullah Alrebh



Radhi H. Al-Mabuk

Title: How Parents in the Gulf States Can Guide Their Children Toward Healthy Environments in the Social Media World

Abstract:

Children and adolescents spend considerable time surfing and using social media sites. They use the internet for many purposes including to interact with family and friends, access games, watch videos and to blog. Social media sites run the gamut of healthy and unhealthy, safe and unsafe, appropriate and in appropriate content. Parents the world over and in Arab Gulf countries in particular worry about how much time their children spend on the internet. They worry even more about the content that their children knowingly or unwittingly get exposed to. Against the onslaught of social media, parents often wonder about what they can do to guide their children toward proper and safe use of social media sites? An attempt to answer this important question in the context of Arab Gulf countries comprises the focus of this paper. More specifically, the paper will address five interrelated issues: 1) Standards to use to judge appropriateness and safety of content on social media sites children and adolescents in Gulf countries frequent; 2) What is considered to be reasonable time limits that parents need to set on their children's use of the internet; 3) Ways parents can use to guard their children from heavy use and even addiction to electronic gadgets; 4) How working and non-working families in Gulf countries should model self-regulated use of electronic gadget, especially when accessing social media sites, and 5) Insights from sociology and developmental psychology for how parents can protect their children from becoming targets and victims of cyberbullying. The paper will conclude with general recommendations for how parents can authoritatively stay vigilant and monitor their children use of the internet without provoking their rebellion.

Bio:

Dr. Abdullah F. Alrebh is Associate Professor in Sociology of Religion and Sociological Theory at Grand Valley State University. His research focuses on politics, culture, religion, and authority of Saudi Arabia, Persian Gulf, and Islam. He earned a Ph.D. from Michigan State University, East Lansing. During 2015, Dr. Alrebh served as a Visiting Scholar at Michigan State University. He has published a number of articles (peer-reviewed and think tank) spanning several issues pertaining to religious, authority, and education with a primary focusing on Middle Eastern countries in general, and Saudi Arabia in particular. His upcoming book is titled, Saudi Arabia in the Anglo-American Press Covering the Kingdom during the 20th Century. He is the Editor of the Michigan Sociological Review.

Bio:

Radhi H. Al-Mabuk is a professor of education in the Department of Educational Psychology & Foundations at the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, Iowa, a position he has held since 1990. Al-Mabuk received his Ph.D in Educational Psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and his M.S. in Community Counseling from Winona State University, and B.A. in Social Studies Education from St. Mary's University. His areas of expertise include child and adolescent development, human motivation, moral development, and instructional psychology. Dr. Al-Mabuk's current research interests are threefold: comparative education; academic transitions; and psychology of forgiveness and revenge.
