Chapter 7
Is Sharenting Apart From Bullying?
A Perspective Among Parents Towards Their Social Media Activities

Nor Hazlina Hashim
University Malaya, Malaysia

Muhammad Emeer Nor Azhar
University of Malaya, Malaysia

Marshina Juliza Mohd Hasim
University of Malaya, Malaysia

Zaridah Abdullah
Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Pictures, videos, and written information about children have become overwhelmed by digital content on many social media platforms. This phenomenon is known as sharenting. Attitude and trust have been identified as two variables that predict parents sharing behaviour in social media. Results from a survey among 303 parents across Malaysia indicated that attitude and trust are good predictors of parents' sharenting behaviour on social media among Malaysian parents. By applying the theory of reasoned action, this study concludes that parents in Malaysia are willing to disclose much information about their children when they believe there is nothing wrong with sharing that information, especially when they feel proud of their children's achievements. In addition, parents also highly trust that social media users might not misuse information that they share, and they believe the law would protect the information from being abused by users.

INTRODUCTION

Sharing pictures, video, and written information about kids become a typical sight on the social media feed at the current moment. This kind of activities known as sharenting, it's an amalgamation of two words: sharing and parenting (Marasli, Suhendan & Yilmazturk, 2017). The parents are enthusiastic to share and display information, picture, and video of their children on social media platforms (Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2017; Otero, 2017). Albeit there is no big day or special event, but these contents randomly pop up in other users' social media timeline. The social media is usually a forum for parents to express their personal opinions, such as parenting joy or happiness, skills, advice, and sometimes they share how proud and adorable their kid is with online contacts. The digital content could be a family gathering, outing with friends, funny moments, happy moments, daily routine activities, holiday, and a big day like a birthday party (Brosch, 2016; Kumar & Schoenebeck, 2015). Unlike the traditional albums, relatives and friends across the states and worldwide are accessing the moments with the kids using the social media platforms.

The sharenting activities nowadays are getting worse when parents share information excessively (oversharenting) and leave digital footprints about their children on the social media (Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2017; Brosch, 2016; Davidson-Wall, 2018; Kumar & Schoenebeck, 2015). The impact of oversharenting and digital footprints would result in several negative consequences toward the children's future life. As stated in the study by Blum-Ross & Livingstone (2017), the digital footprints would create a permanent record of the presence of children on the internet web. The digital footprints also are known as digital tattoos which portray negative impact to the children, for instance, embarrassment (Brosch, 2016; Hall, 2018; Steinberg, 2017), low self-esteem, depression (Davidson-Wall, 2018), cyberbully (El-saesser et al., 2017b; Martínez et al., 2019), and children identity theft (Fox & Hoy, 2019; Hall, 2018; Mascheroni et al., 2018; Otero, 2017).

According to a study in the Czech Republic (Kopeckya, Szotkowskia, Aznar-Díazb, & Romero-Rodríguez, 2020), parents are abusing their children's rights by using them as commercial tools. Moreover, children are used as an attention magnet to attract new followers, and even as a monetization tool. For instance, Ryan Kaji is the most successful and influential YouTuber. His video mostly reviewing toys and hit more than 20 million YouTube subscribers. This kind of exposure can be seen positive but the videos, pictures, home and living of the kid is being disclosed excessively or over exploit by parents, social media channels and blogs.

In addition to this matter, The DaddyOFive channel can be considered as a worse case of sharenting (Kopeckya et al., 2020). Some of the videos in The DaddyOFive channel were about parents bullying their children by the prank, abuse, lie, and even destroy things. All the reactions of their kids were recorded and posted on the internet. After the controversial issue, the parents had to stop creating a new video for their channel by using the kids as main actors and got probation supervision for 5 years.

In Malaysia context, back in early 2020, an influential cosmetic individual was arrested on charges that he assaulted his adopted daughter (Farik, 2020). In a police report, the housekeeper of the suspect claims that the suspect abused the two-year-old girl. Where the suspect slapped his two-year-old adopted daughter with his hand because he wanted to film the child crying for content for his social media channel. The suspect's Instagram account was riddled with comments by people who demand for clarification. However, the case was classified as child abuse under Section 31(1)(a) of the Child Act 2001.

Nevertheless, we have to admit that sharenting phenomenon is being accepted and integral part of parenthood (Sivak & Smirnov, 2019) and some people are not aware that this is an issue that can affect

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