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Phenomenon of Sharenting in Slovak Parents

KLJUČNE BESEDE: *tveganja spletnega vedenja, družina, deljenje vsebin, družbeni mediji, pedagogika*

POVZETEK – *Študija se osredotoča na naraščajoči pojav starševske delitve vsebin na spletu. Podatki v raziskavi so bili pridobljeni z metodo strukturiranega intervjuja. Raziskovalno populacijo je sestavljalo 11 anketirancev, deset žensk in en moški, katerih povprečna starost je bila 35 let. Vsi anketiranci so starši otrok, starih od 2 do 25 let, in uporabljajo družbena omrežja, na katerih so vsaj enkrat delili vsebino o svojih otrocih ali mladostnikih. Raziskava je edinstvena v svojem fokusu, saj je na Slovaškem premalo raziskav na to temo. Rezultati naše raziskave so pokazali, da starost staršev ne vpliva na pogostost ali obliko deljenja. Rezultati raziskave kažejo, da starše pri deljenju vsebin o svojih otrocih vodijo predvsem osebne preference. Večina staršev meni, da je deljenje vsebin o svojih otrocih na družbenih omrežjih naraven del njihovega življenja. Ugotovili smo, da so starši zaskrbljeni, ker ne vedo, komu je skupna vsebina na voljo. Tveganji, povezani z deljenjem vsebin o otrocih na družbenih omrežjih, ki ju zaznavajo starši, sta predvsem zloraba fotografij in ugrabitev otrok. Večina staršev obvesti svoje otroke o tem, katere vsebine o njih želijo deliti.*

KEYWORDS: *risky online behaviour, family, sharenting, social media, pedagogy*

ABSTRACT – *The study focuses on the growing phenomenon of parent sharenting. The research data was obtained by using a structured interview method. The research population comprised 11 respondents, ten females and one male aged AM = 35 years. All respondents are parents of children between 2 and 25 years old, who use social networking sites and have at least once shared content about their children or adolescents in an online social networking environment. The research is unique in its focus, as there is a lack of research on the topic in Slovakia. The results of our research have shown that the age of parents does not influence the frequency or form of sharenting. The research results suggest that parents are mainly guided by personal preferences when sharing content about their children. Most of the parents consider sharing content about their children on social media a natural part of their lives. We found that parents are concerned about not knowing who can access the shared content. The risks associated with sharing content about children on social media perceived by parents are mainly misuse of photos and child abduction. Most parents inform their children about what content they want to share about them.*

1 Introduction

The term sharenting was coined by combining the English words *sharing* and *parenting*; the content of the term can be expressed as online sharing parenting. The term *sharenting* was first used by Steven Leckart in 2012 in his article *A Child Without Facebook*, where he defines sharenting as the habit of parents sharing a lot of information and photos of their children online (Leckart, 2012). According to Kopecký and Szotkowski (2018), sharenting represents a form of digital parenting (involving parenting practices to support and regulate children's activities in digital environments).

Setting up a prenatal account for an unborn child on a social network can already be considered unregulated sharenting. The first shared photo of the baby is often the first

image from the ultrasound. The first photo is followed by the so-called *gender reveal*, or gender unveiling, where parents reveal the gender of their baby, pregnancy photos of mothers, first photos from the maternity ward, and everyday photos of babies, their progress or milestones (Kopecký et al., 2022). Repeated sharing of content that provides detailed information about the baby or shares content of an intimate nature about children can also be considered unregulated sharing.

As a result of unregulated sharenting, several risks arise, forming the basis of a negative impact towards both the subject and object of the content sharing, such as:

  □ invasion of privacy, personal intellectual property – the sharing of a lot of detailed information by a parent about a child, whether in the form of photographs, videos or text posts through social media, invades children's privacy (Brosch, 2018);
  □ the digital footprint (AVG, n. d.; Kopecký et al., 2022);
  □ online aggression directed at a child or adolescent. According to Brandova and Stískalová (2022), it includes calling a child names or similes.

In some cases, the activity of sharenting by a parent may even have an impact bordering on a group of interrelated acts of a criminal nature, namely:

  □ stalking (cyber stalking);
  □ cyberbullying (Brandova & Stískalová, 2022), bullying by peers;
  □ victim profiling;
  □ social engineering;
  □ digital child abduction (O'Neill, 2015);
  □ identity theft begins with, as Kopecký et al. (2022) states, parents creating their children's online identities without their consent;
  □ the dissemination of content of an intimate nature and its subsequent misuse on child pornography websites (Otero, 2017);
  □ sexual abuse of a child.

Sharenting is a modern worldwide phenomenon on social media and has been gaining momentum in recent years, according to statistics, as documented by the following overview of research and studies.

In the Slovak Republic, pilot research on the prevalence of risky use of online digital devices – sharing during family time – was conducted (Šimšíková & Nosáľová 2023). This showed the presence of sharenting in Slovak households among 16 out of 18 parents. In the Czech Republic, the issue of sharenting was addressed by Kopecký et al. (2022) in the research report *Sharenting in Czech Parents* (research report).

Further, for example, research focusing on mothers with children under two compared the online digital footprint of children in ten countries, namely the USA, Canada, European countries, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. The research found that 81% of children under the age of 2 have a digital footprint in the form of photographs. This compares to 92% in the USA and 73% in the five European countries studied (AVG, n. d.). Worrying findings came from the research conducted by *The Parent Zone* with 2,000 parents, which found that parents shared approximately 195 photos of their children per year in 2015 (Nominet, 2015), with this number rising to 300 photos over the course of the year (Nominet, 2016). Comparable research was conducted in Poland,

where a sample of 168 Facebook profiles of parents of children under the age of eight found that out of a total of 25,727 photos shared on parents' profiles, 75.5 % of the photos were images of children. Thus, on average, each parent shared 116 photos of children over a three-month period (Brosch, 2016). For example, research by Kopecký et al. (2022) conducted in the Czech Republic and published in a research report titled *Sharenting among Czech Parents*, which focused on parents' sharing of sensitive children's content online and parents' perceptions of parents of children under the age of 18, found that 69 % of the 2,481 respondents shared content about their child online (Kopecký et al. 2022). Parental awareness of the phenomenon of sharenting was the focus of a team of Turkish researchers (Doğan Keskin et al., 2023). In a scientific study entitled *Sharenting Syndrome: An Appropriate Use of Social Media* (Doğan Keskin et al. 2023), they reported the findings of a research with 427 respondents aged between 18 and 65 years old who are users of social networking sites, namely that 45.9 % of the respondents first shared information about the baby during the mother's pregnancy and 39.8 % of the respondents shared content about the baby during the baby's first days/weeks after birth. Generation X, Y, Z and Alpha are labels for different age groups with distinctive social features. Each of these generations has evolved in different times and circumstances and, therefore, has different views, attitudes, expectations and ways of interacting and living in society. Generation X is also referred to as the lost generation. These are people born between 1965 and 1980. Mostly, therefore, these are our parents. They were the ones who grew up at a time when the culture was changing, and society was trying to get over the shock of the 1960s. These people remember growing up without the Internet and cell phones. Generation Y are referred to as millennials (those born between 1981 and 1996). These people have been exposed to the Internet and technological advances that have brought new communication methods during their teenage years. Generation Z is the digital generation born between 1997 and 2010 to 2012. This generation grew up with the Internet, social media and smartphones. They have experienced something completely different from previous generations, which has also influenced them quite a bit. They are young people who are aware of the advantages and disadvantages of the digital world and are trying to use technology to their advantage. They are interested in a responsible approach to life and in protecting the environment. Generation Alpha represents the youngest generation, born from 2011 to 2013. They are today's young children and primary school pupils who are growing up in a digital world and have been dominated by technology since birth.

A secondary cause of the existing and increasing cases of the negative impact of sharenting is the absence of privacy protection for the individual. The risk dimension of activity-sharing is that the child is often not notified of activities related to their person by the parent and, due to their young age, the child is often not yet sufficiently aware to give permission to the parent based on a critically inferred decision or to prevent them from taking actions regarding their person. For these reasons, sharenting takes on the character of a new form of risky online behaviour (ROB) in the family.

Parents, particularly mothers, share photos of their children on social networking sites without setting up a private account or routing to a private audience (Kopecký et al., 2022). Thus, the primary cause of the absence of child privacy logically stems from a human source – the level of awareness of potential risks and consequences on the part of the parent, which represents a concurrent cognitive level – knowledge of risks

and consequences. Following this, the parent's level of digital competence regarding the adequate provision of a social network account is also considered. A set of preventive recommendations from parents and children in the Slovak Republic in the direction of eliminating sharenting was provided in the research (Šimšíková & Nosáľová, 2023).

2 Research Methodology

Characteristics of the research population

In the research, we consider a deliberate selection of respondents, determined based on the following criteria (relevant features) (Gavora, 2008): parents who have one or more children under the age of 18 years, and social network users who have shared or are sharing content about their children on social media in the past or present.

Table 1

Demographic characteristics and selected characteristics of the research population – respondents

Respondent's ser. number	Gender	Age	Family members	Age of child / adolescent	Social media used	Number of friends / followers
R1	female	45	father, mother, 2 children	5 years 8 years	Facebook	234 friends
R2	female	32	father, mother, 1 child	3 years	Facebook Instagram	1 452 friends 356 followers
R3	female	28	father, mother, 2 children	4 years 7 years	Facebook Instagram	approx. 600 friends up to 100 followers
R4	female	32	father, mother, 2 children	8 years 9 years	Facebook Instagram WhatsApp	250 friends more than 150 followers
R5	female	45	father, mother, 1 child, 2 adolescents	5 years 19 years 25 years	Facebook Instagram WhatsApp	290 friends 55 followers
R6	female	29	father, mother, 2 children	8 months 2 years	Facebook Instagram	560 friends 1500 followers
R7	female	39	father, mother, 2 children	7 years 9 years	Instagram	approx. 27 000 followers
R8	female	30	father, mother, 2 children	5 years 9 years	Facebook Instagram WhatsApp Viber	approx. 200 friends approx. 300 followers
R9	female	28	father, mother, 1 child	2 years	Facebook	approx. 500 friends
R10	female	33	father, mother, 1 child	1 1/2 years	Facebook Instagram WhatsApp	approx. 1500 friends approx. 6700 followers
R11	male	46	father, mother, 1 child	3 years	Facebook WhatsApp	approx. 7000 friends

Thus, the sample research population consisted of a total of 11 respondents, ten females and one male, aged AM =3 5 years, min = 28 years, max = 46 years. The respondents come from the Banská Bystrica, Bratislava, Trnava and Žilina regions, i.e. different parts of Slovakia. All respondents are parents of children from 2 to 25 years old.

Characteristics of the research methodology

We applied empirical qualitative research as our method. This procedure is directed more towards understanding and comprehension of the situation because it is carried out in the natural environment in which a particular person lives and operates.

The topic of the research was the use of social media by parents.

The research problem was the perception of the risks of sharenting among parents of children and adolescents in the Slovak Republic. The research aimed to identify and analyse the intensity of sharing content related to children, the current state of Slovak parents' awareness of the risks of sharenting, and whether parents' age impacts the intensity of content shared about their children on the Internet.

Based on the research objective, we identified the research questions. Concerning objectives 1 and 2, we set the research question:

□ *RQ 1: How does the frequency and form of sharenting differ between different generations of parents?*

□ *RQ 2: What factors influence parents' decision to share information about their children on social media?*

Concerning objective 3, we set 2 research questions:

□ *RQ 3: What is the level of awareness of Slovak parents about the risks of sharenting?*

□ *RQ 4: What are parents' attitudes towards protecting their children's privacy online?*

3   Methods of Collecting, Analysing and Processing Meanings

For the research, we applied the constant comparative method. "In it, the researcher does not set a hypothesis at the beginning of the research. The researcher collects data on all the cases, sorts them and looks for common elements among them." (Gavora, 2008)

For our research purpose, we used the structured interview method. The advantage of the structured interview is a high degree of uniformity at the stimulus material level and a more precise possibility of interpersonal comparison. We conducted the structured interview after obtaining informed consent for the research and instruction on audio recording. We asked respondents a total of 20 questions.

Following the procedure recommended for collecting and processing qualitative meanings, the interviews were recorded and then transcribed from the audio recording into text form.

Table 2

List of categories of meaning

|		
RQ1: **Shared content** **on social media**	How information is shared on social media	Facebook; Instagram; WhatsApp; Messenger; Viber
	Frequency of sharing	story an average of 7 times per week; 1–10 posts per month; 4–5 photos per month; 1–4 posts pre year; I do not add content on a regular basis
	Type of shared content	4x – photos; ultrasound photos (prenatal development of the baby); photos of children; baby photos; photos of babies playing, playing sports, learning; photos that cannot be identified; 2x – names of children; 2x – child's birth data; baby's weight and measurements after birth; personal data except name; 6x – videos (videos of children playing, playing sports, learning); experiences; 3x – trips, travels, family holidays; 2x – family celebrations; other content about your children
RQ2: **Condition** **for sharing**	Reasons for sharing	memories; to help and encourage others in the child's fight for life; being asked by another person or institution (hospital); a good signal when we see how we have progressed in these three years; a way of showing pride in children; to boast about our children; to make ourselves visible; sharing our lives; sharing trips, events, competitions
	Opinion on sharing	very reticent; open; dissatisfied; cautious; neutral
	Experience with sharing	no experience with sharing; 2x has no personal experience of abuse; 2x has no negative experience; 3x positive experience – people get to know me and see it positively; we hear from parents whose children have the same history as us and they write to us saying that our story helped them not to give up; encouragement and inspiration from others, so there's the super added value of social media; forwarding photos of children to friends in the family
RQ3: **Consent to** **sharing**	Parental consent	spouse consents; school has consent; other family members are prohibited; I don't forbid older children, they share if they want to; I do not agree
	Reasons for agreeing/ disagreeing	it can be dangerous; as a parent, I am responsible for my child and I don't know friends or followers on social media; because I don't like it; representational purposes; bragging, sharing their experiences and adventures
	Child's consent	I show my children the photos I post; we haven't thought about that yet; 2x we didn't inform the child, only when the child is older
RQ4: **Security and** **perception** **of risks**	Security settings	2x password login; login with email; two-step/multi-step (login); security settings on incognito tab
	Visibility of shared posts	3x public profile; 2x private profile; 4x private profile shared only to friends; my community; friends or family
	Perception of risks	4x showing concern, fear; that photos may be recognised, misused; 3x photos misused, downloaded, spread further; artificial intelligence as a risk; 3x no perception of any risk

Analysis and processing of meanings

After the interviews were conducted, the analysis of the research material – the interview recording – followed the processing procedure of Gavora (2007):

☐ From the meanings obtained from the audio recordings of the interviews, we created a transcription into a text document in Office Word. For a more efficient and faster transcription, we used the subscription services of the website transkrpitor. com, which transcribed the audio recording into a text document. We then checked the transcripts for accuracy while noting areas that represented "word wool".

☐ This was followed by an active, multiple recursive and critical reading of the interviews to learn the transcripts (the interviewees' responses), understand them better and, consequently, code the meanings efficiently.

☐ In the next step, we proceeded to coding. We identified the meaning categories we sought based on the research questions. We named the obtained categories with appropriate terms to convey their content and colour-coded the identified categories in the text document using the colouring method. By adding a comment, we marked the category name for better clarity. In relation to the extracted categories, we extracted the resulting subcategories.

Diagram 1

Meaning categories and subcategories
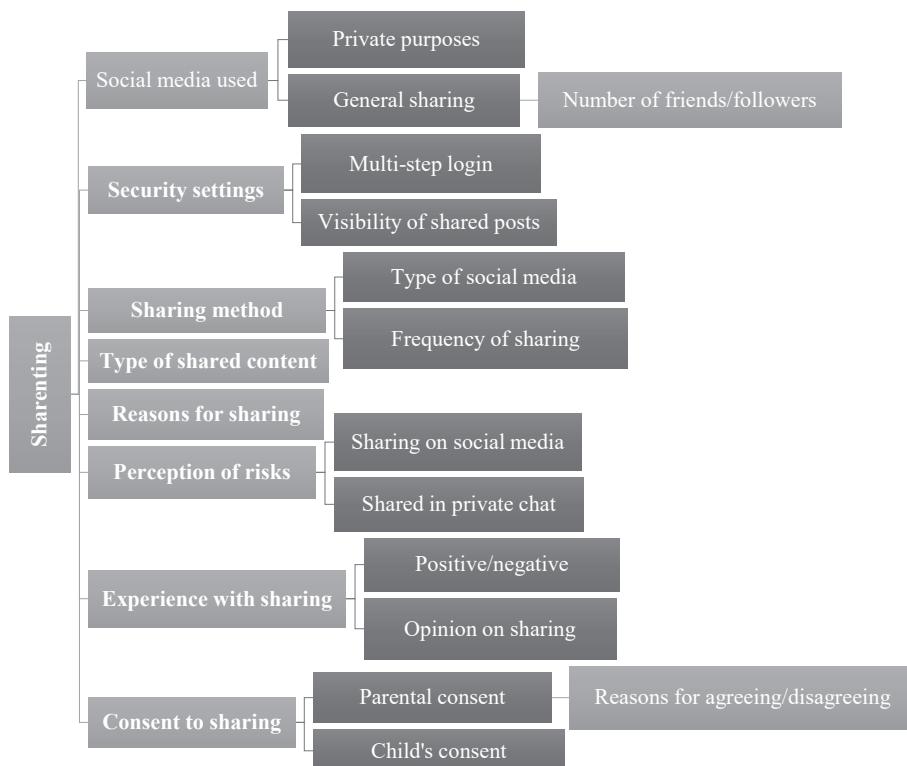
☐ This was followed by creating a list of meaning categories. We processed this list into a spreadsheet in Office Excel. We created a separate workbook for each respondent in which the table was created. We labelled and coloured the categories in one column and then listed the respondents' responses related to the respective category. This step also involved re-reading the interviews to add categories for overlooked respondents' answers or to delete irrelevant answers that we had assigned to categories (Table 2).

☐ Once the meaning categories and subcategories were identified, we determined the relationships between them based on the contexts that we visually represented, provided in Diagram 1.

☐ After open coding, we implemented axial coding in order to search for relationships and formulate more abstract categories, followed by selective coding (Gavora, 2007).

Diagram 2

Selective coding model
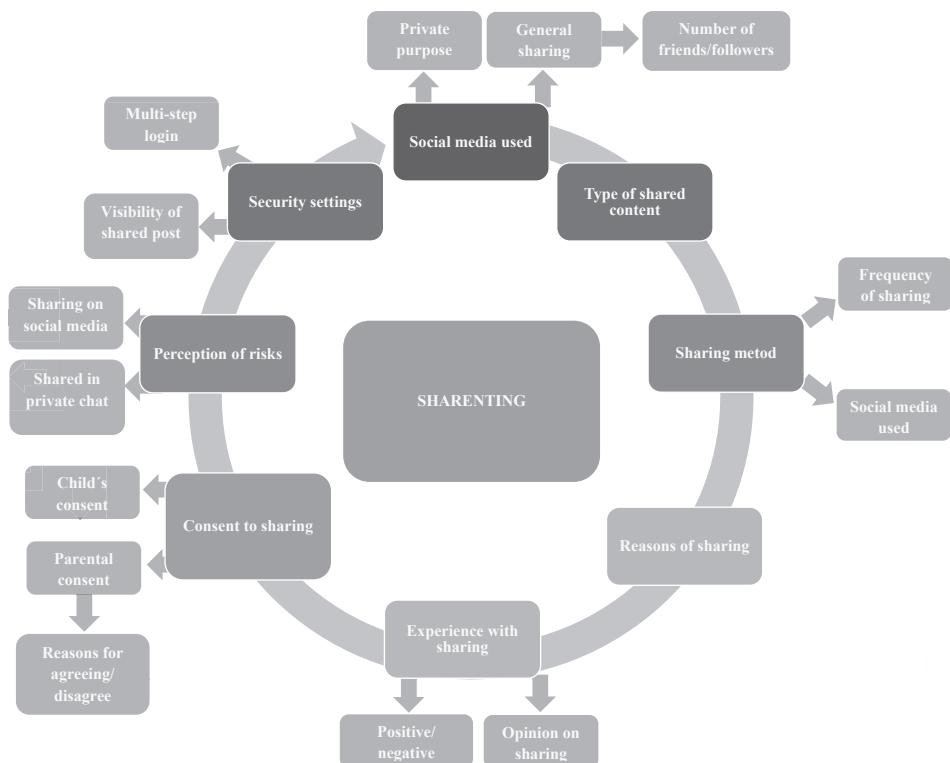
Research findings show that parents often do not perceive all the potential risks associated with sharing content about children on social media. On a positive note, some parents perceive a need to inform their children about sharing content about them. For younger children, parents are also considering the possibility of informing their children about the content they plan to share.

Diagram 3

Paradigmatic model of axial coding
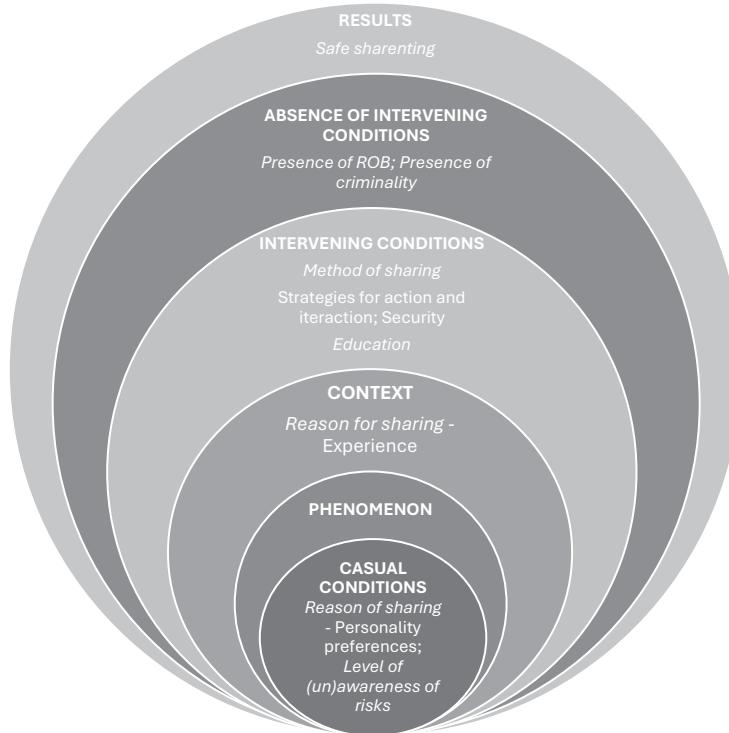
Another beneficial finding of our research is that parents seek to choose the content they plan to share on social media. This content is predominantly photos and videos that do not contain nude images of children or images from which a child can be identified. A negative finding is that parents often do not have secure profiles and share content about children with a wide audience.

Our research also found that only half of parents use multi-step login security, which can allow more tech-savvy individuals to access all the information shared. This information can be shared on parents' profiles and in private chats. In light of these findings, it is advisable to promote parental awareness by informing parents about the risks associated with sharing or educating them about digital skills so that they are equipped to prevent negative online experiences.

4   Discussion

To begin with, we focused on sharenting from the perspective of demographics. In order to identify the presence and characteristics of sharenting in families in the

Slovak Republic, we surveyed the following through question *RQ 1: How does the frequency and form of sharenting differ between different generations of parents?* We found no significant difference between the groups of respondents aged between 28 and 35 years and those aged between 35 and 46 years at AM = 35 years, i.e. generations X and Y, concerning the impact on the frequency of sharing content about children. The frequency of content sharing by parents varies. Some parents post a story an average of 7 times per week; further, 1–10 posts per month, 4–5 photos of children per month, or 1–4 posts per year. There was also a statement that a parent does not post content regularly. We note that parents' age does not affect the frequency of respondents sharing content about their children.

Indeed, social media is becoming a kind of photo album of the 21st century, where we can find different photos or videos together. Sharenting is primarily carried out by parents on social media such as Facebook and Instagram, where a mix of sharing both posts and stories is used. Within private chats it is mainly Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp. Kopecký and Szotkowski (2018) report that 59.84 % of parents surveyed post content about their children within private chats.

Based on the findings, we can conclude that even the form of sharenting by parents is not conditioned by the respondents' age.

This finding aligns with several international studies that found no significant relationship between parental age and the intensity of sharenting. For instance, a Turkish study (2022) involving 411 parents reported no statistical association between age and either sharenting frequency or form. Similarly, Ranzini et al. (2020) in a UK-based study with 320 parents of children under 13 found that digital habits and peer-network influence were stronger predictors than age.

On the other hand, contrasting results are evident in other contexts. An Italian study published in the Italian Journal of Pediatrics (Conti et al. 2024) found that sharenting was significantly more common among parents under the age of 35, with 35 % of them beginning to share within the first 6 months of the child's life. Likewise, data from the Pew Research Center (Auxier et al., 2020) showed that parents aged 18–49 were considerably more active in sharenting than those over 50.

Interestingly, more recent Italian data from a 2024 pilot study also revealed that sharenting practices were widespread even among parents over 45, challenging the notion that this is a behaviour exclusive to younger generations. Therefore, it is not age alone but rather a combination of digital literacy, social platform preferences, and personal motivations (such as validation and memory storage) that appears to drive sharenting.

Based on the findings, we can conclude that even the form of sharenting by parents is not conditioned by the respondents' age.

This conclusion adds to the growing body of evidence suggesting that parental age is not a universal predictor of sharenting behaviour. Instead, factors such as social media usage intensity, gender, and cultural norms may play more prominent roles. These insights may help shape more inclusive and age-sensitive media literacy interventions and parental guidance strategies.

In relation to the implementation of sharenting, we investigated the following in the context of research question *RQ 2: What factors influence parents' decision to share*

information about their children on social media? We found that the factors that drive parents' attitudes towards sharing content about their children on social media include:

☐ Subjective motives, largely axiological in nature – in all cases, parents reported capturing various special or everyday moments, of which they wanted to be reminded. The motive may be, for example – for representational purposes – to show off the child. This is consistent with the findings from Walrave et al. (2023), who noted that millennial parents are driven by the desire to document milestones and perform identity work while still aiming to protect their child's privacy.

☐ The attitude influenced by the ongoing hybrid processes in people's lives, i.e. the mixing of the physical and digital worlds, *phygital experiences* – they also apply these processes to children. Parents consider children part of their lives; it comes naturally to them not to separate them even from their lives on social media. For example, they share their experiences and adventures and whether they like the content. According to Conti et al. (2024), parents perceive digital sharing as a natural extension of family life in the digital environment, often not distinguishing between physical and virtual spaces when it comes to parenting.

☐ Outreach and getting collective psychological support from other online users and the online community about specific needs and specific life situations, such as maternal health and premature babies: a mother of a premature baby shares her own story, stating that sharing with mothers supports her not to feel alone and to manage her life situation better. A consistent finding is provided by the research from *C. S. Mott Children's Hospital* (2015), in which 72 % of respondents cite gaining collective support and feeling that they are not alone in the situation as a reason for sharing on social media (Clark et al., 2015). This aligns with Ranzini et al. (2020), who emphasized that emotional support and peer validation are significant motivators for sharenting, especially in emotionally demanding parenting contexts.

☐ Level of digital skill – the respondents expressed a rejection of sharing content about their child, implying that higher digital skill leads to greater awareness of Internet users and online behaviour. Analogously, Píšová (2021), in a study focusing on parental technoference, points out that educated parents are closer to digital technologies, have more insight into digital technologies and are more interested in how to raise a child. This is in line with the findings by Kumar and Schoenebeck (2015), who found that parents with higher digital literacy tend to be more cautious about oversharing and better understand long-term privacy implications. Similarly, Autenrieth (2018) highlights that digitally skilled parents often engage in reflective practices, including considering consent and digital footprints. The findings by Emmerová et al. (2023) highlight instances of students sharing teachers' photos without consent, which they classify as a form of digital aggression. Although their study focuses on the school environment, the insights are applicable to sharenting, where similar breaches of privacy can occur, this time by parents. The authors emphasize the importance of ethical ICT education, which supports the conclusions of this study regarding the need for preventive measures and media literacy in the context of digital parenting.

☐ Perceptions of safety and danger of content. Studies such as Blum-Ross and Livingstone (2017) indicate that parents are constantly negotiating between the benefits of sharing and fears related to data misuse, online predators, or reputational risks for

their children. Higher awareness of these risks correlates with more restrictive sharing behaviour.

□ A co-factor, and thus a latent reason for parents to share content about their children online, is the invisibility of consequences; this is confirmed by the research of Kopecký et al. (2022).

Regarding the factors, we were also interested in the parents' experience (positive or negative) of sharing content about the child online.

□ Ten out of eleven respondents expressed a positive experience, and one had a negative experience, which encourages the practice of sharing on social media.

□ Parents do not have negative experiences when sharing content about children online, which may indicate safe content sharing (selection of appropriate content, extent of sharing for audience, appropriate privacy).

□ Connecting with the online parent community is perceived positively.

Next, we focused on the connections to safe parenting behaviour and securing shared content online. Based on *RQ 3: What is the level of awareness of Slovak parents about the risks of sharenting?* we measured the cognitive level – awareness of potential risks, perception of risks related to sharing content about their children on social media and in private chats, and perception of the consequences of unregulated sharenting. Parents' perception of risks related to the object of content sharing – children – is individual, with parents holding attitudes ranging from not being aware of the risks to having an attitude based on awareness of the potential risks. The parents' experience of risk primarily influences risk perception. We observed several ambivalent attitudes of parents:

□ They do not perceive risks when sharing in private chats.

□ They do not perceive risks and are not concerned about sharing content about their children as they do not share inappropriate content such as body nudity or facial detail, which was reported by 36.36 % of respondents. An analogous attitude was reported by the respondents in the *Sharenting Syndrome research: An Appropriate Use of Social Media* (Keskin et al., 2023) and 31.2 % of the respondents in Kopecky's research (2022).

□ The view that there is no real threat, as the media tend to provide information in an exaggerated (emotionally tinged) form.

□ They perceive and know the risks, but do not specify them further. Approximately 45.45 % of parents clearly perceive the risks of sharenting; among the main perceived risks associated with sharing on social media, parents mentioned child abduction, harm, and misuse of photos or videos in the form of unauthorised use of content. At the same time, parents also perceive a threat when sharing content in private chats. A similar finding is provided by the research of Kopecký et al. (2022), where 41.2 % of parents report concerns about the misuse of sharing content about their children.

A second but equally important level is the perception of risk related to content sharing – the parent sharing content about the child. Sharenting can impact the quality of the child's interpersonal relationship with the parent who shared content about the child online.

Related to risk awareness as cognitive knowledge is the conative attitudinal level. With regards to this, the intention of RQ 4 was to find out: What are parents' attitudes towards protecting their children's privacy online? Parents' permission to agree or disa-

gree to share content about their child online varies depending on the purpose of the content sharing or the status of the parent:

☐ Parent's disapproval of sharing content about the child – the reason given was concern about the reach of the content to an unknown audience and the responsibility that the parent bears, which implies the existence of parental awareness of the risks associated with sharenting.

☐ A prohibition of sharing for family members or absolute disapproval about sharing with others.

☐ The parents did not consider the need for consent.

☐ Parents reserve the right to share content about their child due to their status.

☐ Consent is given after the spouse (or partner) agrees to share content about the child.

☐ Consent provided to schools and other institutions that children attend.

☐ In 80 % of the respondents, the parents ask for consent from the child, whereby the child is informed about the content about them that parents wish to share online. Compared to the Czech research (Kopecký et al., 2022), only 21.2 % of parents inform children about the content they share and ask their opinion. These results are echoed in the findings of Blum-Ross and Livingstone (2017), who observed that parental approaches to privacy vary widely, ranging from restrictive gatekeeping to permissive attitudes where children's voices are overlooked. The study emphasized that although some parents demonstrate a high level of privacy awareness, many still struggle with the ethical dilemma of informed consent, particularly in relation to younger children.

☐ Parents permit older children to share content. Moreover, findings by Lipu and Siibak (2019) suggest that while many parents acknowledge the importance of children's digital rights, they often underestimate their child's autonomy in the digital space. Parents tend to take more protective stances only as children get older and begin actively participating in content creation.

In the context of giving consent, it should be noted that by sharenting, a parent touches on the area of law and rights. There is a conflict of interests between parents' rights to freedom of speech and self-expression and children's rights to privacy when they are young and vulnerable. Children have a legal or moral right to control their own digital footprint (Steinberg, 2017).

Concerning the agency component of parental behaviour, we were subsequently interested in parents' protective security strategies when using online devices. To protect online digital devices, parents use security to log in to accounts such as email and social media, most commonly in the form of *password login, email, two-step/multi-step authentication, or setting up security on an incognito tab*.

On Facebook, they use the security level of *sharing for all friends*. On Instagram, half of the parents have an unsecured account, i.e. at the *public profile level*, where the general public can access the shared content. The number of friends and followers ranges from 1.5 thousand to 27 thousand people, i.e. a wide audience.

According to the research by Kopecký and Szotkowski (2018), 59.84 % of parents surveyed posted content about their children in private chats. Our research shows that all parents surveyed used the sharing option, as mentioned above. Choosing with whom a parent shares content about a child makes them feel more protected.

The possibilities of the social educator towards preventing sharenting.

Regarding the safety and perception of the risks associated with sharenting risks, we concur with the research finding of Šimšíková and Nosáľová (2023), stating that sharenting is present in the lives of many parents. We note that parental awareness of the pitfalls of sharenting is insufficient. The parent represents the primary institution responsible for caring for the child and ensuring their safety in every aspect of life, including online digital devices (Kollárová, 2023; Dulovics, 2023). For the interaction between the pupil's family and the social educator concerning the phenomenon of sharenting, we find opportunities within the activities of the social educator, as presented in the model by Šmída and Blábolilová (2023), which are communication and information, counselling, education and awareness-raising, preventive action, reinforcement of motivation, pedagogisation of the environment, or conflict resolution. After conducting the interviews with the parents, we further remained in free discussion with several of the parents regarding sharenting and other risks. Based on these unplanned additional short interviews, which represent a form of education, we perceive that they can equally contribute to the understanding of the challenges and risks associated with sharenting. These findings align with those of Kumar and Schoenebeck (2015), who observed that although many parents believe they are acting in their child's best interest, they often lack awareness of the long-term implications of digital footprints and privacy loss. Parents tend to underestimate the potential for identity theft, photo misuse, or the psychological impact on children as they grow older. Similarly, Choi and Lewallen (2018) argue that while sharenting may appear harmless, it can inadvertently expose children to various forms of digital risk, including data profiling and online exploitation. The authors emphasize the role of digital literacy and parental education as key mechanisms in mitigating such risks.

Strengths and Limitations

The research belongs to the pilot research projects under the conditions of Slovakia. With our research, we can contribute to the development of existing research on sharenting in Slovakia and open a discussion about this current social phenomenon, which is becoming more and more widespread. We hope that our work will be an inspiration and stimulus for other researchers and experts to devote themselves to the phenomenon of sharenting. The limitations of the research are the lack of domestic literature and the uneven representation of respondents by gender and age.

5 Conclusions, Implications and Future Directions

Sharenting has yet to receive sufficient theoretical and empirical attention in Slovakia. The issue of sharenting is not sufficiently treated in Slovakia. The theoretical study aimed to show the presence, frequency and form of sharenting between two generations of parents in the Slovak Republic. We focused on different aspects of sharing content

about children on social media, such as reasons for sharing and parents' behaviour (cognitive and conative level) regarding the risks and safety in relation to the implemented sharenting – level of awareness and attitudes towards children's privacy protection. Based on the findings regarding sharenting, we express the validity and importance of the parents' responsible approach to sharing content about their children online. The research conclusions can be applied for further questionnaire research within the framework of national research, with an emphasis on demographic variables or the type and structure of the family.

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Fenomen "sharentinga" pri slovaških starših

Študija Fenomen "sharentinga" pri slovaških starših obravnava vsakdanji, a premalo raziskani pojav deljenja vsebin o otrocih na spletu, ki ga avtorice umestijo v slovaški kontekst ter povežejo z vprašanji zasebnosti, varnosti in odgovornega starševstva v digitaliziranem življenju družin. Izvirni prispevek je dvojne narave: na eni strani prinaša strnjeno predstavitev pojma in tveganj sharentinga (od ultrazvočnih posnetkov, razkritij spola, prvih fotografij iz porodnišnice do niza "mejnikov" otroštva), na drugi pa predstavlja empirični kvalitativni vpogled v ravnanja, motive in dileme enajstih staršev iz različnih regij Slovaške.

Sharenting, fenomen, ki izhaja iz združitve angleških besed "sharing" (deljenje) in "parenting" (starševstvo), se je v zadnjem desetletju uveljavil kot sestavni del vsakdanjega življenja mnogih staršev. V slovaškem kontekstu pa gre za tematiko, ki kljub svoji nujnosti in družbeni pomembnosti ostaja še vedno premalo raziskana. Predstavljena študija je kvalitativna raziskava, osredotočena na preučevanje stališč staršev, njihovih vedenj in dojemanja tveganj v povezavi z deljenjem vsebin o otrocih na družbenih omrežjih. Cilj raziskave je bil opredeliti oblike in pogostnost sharentinga med slovaškimi starši, analizirati njihove motive, stopnjo ozaveščenosti o morebitnih tveganjih ter načine varovanja zasebnosti otrok v digitalnem okolju. Vzorec je obsegal 11 udeležencev (10 žensk in 1 moški) v starosti od 28 do 46 let (povprečje 35 let), ki so starši otrok, starih od 2 do 25 let. Vsi so aktivni uporabniki družbenih omrežij in so vsaj enkrat delili vsebine, povezane z njihovimi otroki. Raziskava je potekala s pomočjo strukturiranih intervjujev z identičnim naborom 20 vprašanj, odgovori so bili posneti, prepisani, analizirani in obdelani z metodo odprtega osnega kodiranja.

Rezultati kažejo, da med starši ni pomembnih razlik glede intenzivnosti ali oblike deljenja glede na starost, torej ne obstaja pomembna razlika med generacijo X in Y. Starši delijo predvsem fotografije in videe otrok, opise skupnih doživetij, trenutke s praznovanj rojstnega dne in druge družinske trenutke na platformah, kot so Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp in Messenger. Vendar se razlikujejo glede na stopnjo zavedanja o morebitnih posledicah in v uporabi varnostnih nastavitev – nekateri imajo javne profile s stotinami ali tisoči sledilcev, drugi zasebne račune s strogo določenim dostopom.

Med pogostejšimi razlogi za deljenje so želja po ohranjanju spominov, izražanju ponosa na otroke, deljenju veselja z bližnjimi ali pomoči drugim staršem prek avtentičnih

zgodb. Pomemben delež vprašanih priznava, da je deljenje postalo naravni del njihove spletne identitete, pri čemer so otroci pogosto videni kot njena neločljiva sestavina.

Vprašanje soglasja otrok za objave se je izkazalo za kompleksno; večina staršev starejših otrok navaja, da jih obvestijo ali pridobijo njihovo soglasje, medtem ko pri mlajših otrocih te potrebe ne čutijo, kar kaže na generacijsko in razvojno razliko v razumevanju pravice do zasebnosti.

Glede dojemanja tveganj so starši izrazili raznolike poglede: nekateri se bojijo zlorabe fotografij, spletnega nadlegovanja, lažnih profilov ali kraje identitete, drugi pa dojemajo tveganje kot minimalno ali ga sploh ne zaznajo. Očitna je bila razlika med starši z višjo digitalno pismenostjo, ki pogosteje navajajo konkretna tveganja in uporabljajo kompleksnejše varnostne strategije, ter tistimi, ki svoje spletno vedenje opisujejo kot intuitivno in manj premišljeno. Prav tako je prisotno zmanjšano zavedanje tveganja, saj številni starši menijo, da ker doslej ni bilo negativnih posledic, njihovo ravnanje ni tvegano.

Nekateri udeleženci priznavajo, da nimajo dovolj znanja o nastavitvah zasebnosti na družbenih omrežjih ali da pri deljenju ne upoštevajo širšega občinstva, ki lahko vidi njihove objave. Z raziskavo je bila odkrita tudi potreba po ozaveščanju o pravnih vidikih deljenja vsebin o otrocih; mnogi starši namreč niso vedeli, da ima otrok pravico nasprotovati objavi svojih podatkov oziroma da mora biti njegovo soglasje primerno njegovi starosti in razumevanju. Ugotovili smo, da so starši pripravljeni deliti tudi preventivne in izobraževalne vsebine (npr. izkušnje z boleznimi, zdravstvenimi zapleti), vendar niso vedno sposobni presoditi, ali vsebina presega mejo dostojnosti ali intime.

Ključno spoznanje raziskave je, da se pozitivne izkušnje z deljenjem pogosto dojemajo kot potrdilo o varnosti te prakse, kar lahko vodi v podcenjevanje resničnih groženj. Prav odsotnost takoj vidnih negativnih posledic pri starših ustvarja vtis, da je tveganje zgolj teoretično. To nakazuje potrebo po ciljnih preventivnih ukrepih, vključitvi medijev in dvigu digitalne pismenosti. S pedagoškega in sociološkega vidika je nujno vključiti tematiko sharentinga v delo socialnih pedagogov, šolskih psihologov in drugih strokovnjakov, ki delajo z družinami. Ti lahko prek delavnic, pogovorov, svetovanj ali izobraževalnih programov staršem pomagajo razviti bolj zavesten pristop in spoštovanje otrokove pravice do digitalne samostojnosti.

V prihodnje bi bilo smiselno razširiti raziskavo na večjo populacijo in uporabiti kvantitativne metode, ki bi omogočile identifikacijo korelacij med demografskimi spremenljivkami in konkretnim vedenjem. Priporočamo tudi izvedbo longitudinalnih študij, ki bi spremljale vpliv deljenja na odnos starš-otrok, identiteto otroka in njegovo prihodnjo digitalno angažiranost. Tematika sharentinga ni zgolj vprašanje tehničnih nastavitev zasebnosti, ampak predvsem vrednot, odgovornosti in odnosa do zasebnosti drugih – tudi najmlajših, ki se še ne morejo sami zaščititi. Raziskava poudarja pomen ravnovesja med starševsko svobodo in spoštovanjem otrokovih pravic v digitalnem okolju. Rezultati študije predstavljajo pomemben prispevek k pedagoškemu, psihološkemu in sociološkemu diskurzu o odgovornem digitalnem starševstvu ter postavljajo temelje za nadaljnja interdisciplinarna, aplikativna in zakonodajna prizadevanja za zaščito otrok v spletni dobi.

Rezultati prav tako kažejo, da je v številnih primerih odločanje o deljenju bolj intuitivno in čustveno kot reflektivno in odgovorno. Z vzgojnega in socialnega vidika

raziskava poudarja potrebo po ciljno usmerjenem ozaveščanju s poudarkom na digital-nem starševstvu. Predlagamo vključitev problematike sharentinga v programe medijske vzgoje, delo šolskih psihologov in socialnih pedagogov ter v širše strategije digitalne vključenosti in zaščite otrok. Hkrati priporočamo ponovni razmislek o zakonodajnem okviru, ki bi bolje ščitil pravice otrok v povezavi z njihovo spletno podobo, zlasti v pri-merih, ko gre za dolgotrajno digitalno izpostavljenost brez njihove vednosti ali soglas-ja. Na koncu lahko ugotovimo, da sharenting kot običajen del starševske komunikacije na družbenih omrežjih prinaša ne le priložnosti za gradnjo odnosov in izmenjavo izku-šenj, temveč tudi nove etične in varnostne izzive, ki zahtevajo strokovno, izobraževalno in družbeno pozornost.

V kontekstu širjenja digitalnih tehnologij se odpirajo temeljna vprašanja o pravici otrok do lastne digitalne identitete, o mejah starševske avtoritete v spletnem prostoru in o potrebi po skupnem oblikovanju norm za odgovorno vedenje v kibernetskem okolju. Pri tem je pomembno upoštevati tudi glas otrok samih – raziskave kažejo, da števil-ni mladostniki nekatere objavljene vsebine ne dojemajo kot primerne ali ustrezne ter kasneje doživljajo občutke sramu, zadrege ali izgube zaupanja. Študija zato poziva k sistematičnemu razvoju etične kulture digitalnega starševstva, kjer bosta samoumevna tako tehnična zaščita podatkov kot tudi spoštovanje dostojanstva, individualnosti in avtonomije otroka.

Interdisciplinarno sodelovanje strokovnjakov s področja pedagogike, psihologije, socialnega dela, prava in informacijskih tehnologij naj vodi k pripravi praktičnih pri-poročil, metodoloških priročnikov in ozaveščevalnih kampanj za starše in šole. Prav tako je smiselno podpreti razvoj tehničnih rešitev (npr. opozorilni sistemi pred objavo vsebin, interaktivna soglasja za otroke, starejše od 12 let, digitalni arhivi z nastavlje-no dostopnostjo), ki bi staršem pomagale ravnati bolj odgovorno brez občutka, da se morajo odločati zgolj intuitivno. Posebno pozornost zahteva tudi preprečevanje t. i. sekundarnega deljenja – situacij, v katerih druge osebe prevzamejo vsebino, ki so jo objavili starši, brez njihovega soglasja, kar močno zmanjša nadzor nad tem, kje in kako bo vsebina uporabljena. Digitalno okolje je dinamično in ima nizko stopnjo pozabe, kar poudarja pomen premišljenega odločanja že pred samo objavo.

V okviru raziskave smo prepoznali tudi potrebo po nadaljnjih študijah, osredotoče-nih na stališča otrok do spletnega deljenja njihovega življenja ter na medgeneracijsko komunikacijo o digitalnih temah v družinah. Ti vidiki lahko pomembno vplivajo na to, kako bodo otroci dojemali ne le svojo zasebnost, temveč tudi zaupanje do staršev in okvir vrednot, ki si ga oblikujejo v odnosu do tehnologije. Glede na hiter tehnološki ra-zvoj in vse večje število otrok, ki odraščajo v digitalnem okolju, sharenting postaja ne le vprašanje individualnih odločitev, temveč kulturni fenomen, ki oblikuje podobo otroštva v 21. stoletju. V tem kontekstu je nujno, da družba – vključno z institucijami, kot so šole, mediji, lokalne skupnosti in tehnološke platforme – posveti pozornost tveganjem, pa tudi potencialu, ki ga digitalno starševstvo prinaša. Odgovoren pristop k deljenju vse-bin o otrocih lahko okrepi vezi, spodbudi medsebojno razumevanje in gradi skupnost, če so pri tem spoštovane meje dostojanstva in varovanja. Ta študija zato ne prinaša le opisnih ugotovitev o aktualni situaciji na Slovaškem, temveč tudi poziv k nadaljnjim raziskavam, družbeni razpravi in oblikovanju praktičnih priporočil, ki bodo odražala spreminjajoče se potrebe otrok in staršev v digitalnem svetu.

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