Sharenting: Why Parents Share Their Children' Photos on Social Media?

Sharenting: Ebeveynler Çocuklarının Fotoğraflarını Sosyal Medyada Neden Paylaşır?

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Abstract

Sharenting, which means sharing the photos of children on social media by their parents, has become an important and sensitive issue in the mental health field in recent years. Photographs of children are often shared on social media, even before the child is born. Why mothers share photos of their children on social media, and possible outcomes of sharenting is a matter of curiosity. Various reasons motivate parents to share photos of their children on social media. In this review study, besides the reasons that are frequently prominent in the literature, we briefly delineated the sharenting from the perspective of self-presentation and self-categorization theories, including the perspectives of children on sharenting, the legal process to be concerned, and parents' reasons for sharenting such as social/emotional and psychological support needs. Moreover, parents consider sharenting as a profession or tool to earn money. We also discussed the digital arrogance and narcissistic traits regarding sharenting, expressing emotions and thoughts through sharenting, the dark side of sharenting, and suggestions to parents.

Keywords: children safety, digital harms, sharenting, social media, sharenting parents

Öz

Çocukların fotoğraflarının ebeveynleri tarafından sosyal medyada paylaşılması anlamına gelen sharenting, son yıllarda ruh sağlığı alanında önemli ve hassas bir konu olarak ele alınmaya başlanmıştır. Çocukların fotoğrafları, çocuk doğmadan önce bile sosyal medyada sıklıkla paylaşılmaktadır. Annelerin neden çocuklarının fotoğraflarını sosyal medyada paylaştığı ve bu paylaşımların olası sonuçları ise merak konusudur. Ebeveynleri çocuklarının fotoğraflarını sosyal medyada paylaşmaya motive eden çeşitli sebepler bulunmaktadır. Bu derleme çalışmasında, literatürde sıklıkla öne çıkan nedenlerin yanı sıra, shatentingin kuramsal boyutu olan benlik sunumu teorisi ve benliğin sınıflandırılması kuramı, çocuklar açısından sharenting, sharentingin hukuki süreci ve sosyal/duygusal ve psikolojik destek ihtiyaçları, sharentingi bir meslek olarak görme veya para kazanma, dijital kibir ve narsist özellikler, duygu ve düşünceleri ifade etme aracı olarak görme gibi sharentingin nedenleri de incelenmiştir. Ayrıca sharentingin tehlikeli tarafları tartışılmış ve ebeveynlere öneriler verilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *çocuk güvenliği, dijital zararlar, sharenting, sosyal medya, sharenting ebeveynler*

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Introduction

Sharenting, which is a portmanteau of the words share and parent, is a concept that expresses the sharing of photos of a parent's children on social media (Brosch, 2016). Although this concept comes across as an issue concerning children, it concerns children and their parents. With regards to children, while posing a risk to the safety of children is one of the prominent reasons for concern (Fox & Hoy, 2019), the need to share these pictures can be another cause for concern regarding mothers. Even though sharenting is not intrinsic to only mothers, it has been reported in the literature that mothers share more pictures of their children than fathers (Bartholomew et al., 2012). With the emergence of online lives and social media culture, mothers started sharing details about their lives on social media (Nottingham, 2020); this evolved to include sharing pictures of their children on social media. This situation has become even more common and sharing photos of children at all stages of their lives has become a social norm (Brosch, 2016).

The notion of parents sharing and revealing details of their children's lives on social media platforms is increasing (Broch, 2018). Scrutinizing the details of mothers sharing pictures of their children on social media, different sharing percentages about sharenting behavior can be found in different studies. For instance, in the study by Bartholomew et al. (2012), the percentage of mothers sharing photos of their children was found to be 98% and 84%, according to the results of the C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health (Clark et al., 2015). These studies show that mothers often share pictures of their children on social media.

When the content of these pictures is examined, it can be seen that the pictures are often about the children's first moments (such as the first tooth), family and friends (such as holiday pictures), cute pictures of children, and funny pictures of children (Kumar & Schoenebeck, 2015). Similarly, Brosch (2016) stated that parents generally share pictures of children's daily lives, day trips, and special occasions, such as birthdays. The reasons reported for parents sharing pictures of their children on social media include receiving social support (Bartholomew et al., 2012; Clark et al., 2015; Mc Daniel et al., 2012), staying in touch with family and friends (Duggan et al., 2015), improving parenting skills and exchanging information (Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2017; Maraşlı et al., 2016), gaining social approval (Lazard et al., 2019), validating their motherhood (Pettigrew et al., 2016), and storing memories (Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2017). On the other hand, self-presentation theory and self-categorization theory define why parents share pictures of their children on social media on a theoretical basis.

Self-presentation Theory

Goffman (2009) focused on the context of interaction patterns regarding social environments formed by two or more people. These interactions involve individuals' activities face-to-face, their social status within institutionalized structures, such as school and work, or unusual social events (Bayad, 2016). Although this approach is not internet-technology-based, its context has changed over time. Initially, the approach, which states that individuals perform in their daily life as if it is a play in the theatre, has evolved to encompass the digital world (Goffman, 2009). The approach has become the basis of theoretical studies on how individuals form themselves on social networks. The effect of technology at

this point, on the other hand, is to allow individuals to make alterations to self-presentation and reproduce the desired image. The position of technology at this point is that it allows individuals to change their self-presentation and recreate the images they want (Goffman, 2009). Thus, individuals can become the person they want on social media and project their children to others as they want them to be (Erişir & Erişir, 2019). Technology, which emerged as a communication tool, enables individuals to recreate themselves in this way (Timisi, 2005), also means creating a digital copy of people for individuals (İşman et al., 2016).

When considering social media, Hood (2012) states that "each of us wants a second life" and emphasizes that on social media, individuals live in an online world where they never age or get sick. They have beautiful bodies and live in beautiful homes. There are great differences between someone's self in real life and virtual life. These differences indicate that individuals do not present their current selves online; instead, they present the individuality they want others to see. Therefore, individuals freely create the life they want but cannot live until meeting social media (Morva, 2014). Social media sometimes makes it easy to disclose what individuals cannot do or express in real life. Thus, individuals reveal many issues they cannot do or thoughts they cannot express with the opportunities provided by their computer keyboards (Timisi, 2005). Presenting individuality in daily life forms the substructure of parents' sharing pictures of their children on social media. We thought that these theories are thought to be related to the sharenting phenomenon since the reasons for sharing can be to create a new and unique life, to express thoughts freely, or to present their children in the desired image their children into what the parents want their children to be.

Self-categorization Theory

The "Self-categorization Theory" (Turner, 1985, 1987), which was developed in the 1980s, is based on "social identity" and includes the processes of individuals to define themselves as a member of a social group (Reicher, Spears, & Haslam, 2010). According to Mastro and Kopacz (2006), the essential components of the theory are creating identity and maintaining it. The theory involves the individual perceiving her/himself as a member of a group and predicting intergroup behavior based on her self-perception. Also, the theory involves a relational context that defines an individual as a function of similarities and differences with others. Sharing with others also provides a basis for social action. Meanings associated with any social identity are the product of our collective history and present (Reicher, Spears & Haslam, 2010). In summary, social identity connects us to the social world and corresponds to the need for a 'hinge' between the individual and society.

The theory generally explains the perceptions of human groups and the process of dividing individuals or self into groups (Turner & Reynolds, 2011). The critical point is that the individual evaluates himself as belonging to ingroups or outgroups. The role of social media in this theory is to create a new position to explore existing structures in interpersonal communication. For this reason, the theory has also been examined regarding group identity in online contexts. A current study suggests that 'hashtag' icons (Twitter, 2014), used to categorize keywords and messages from social media users, are a way for individuals to form group identities. In other words, using hashtags in social media posts directs

individuals to become a group on specific issues. Hashtags can be used to build community and provide more descriptions about the photo on Instagram (Highfield & Leaver, 2015). The purpose of the Instagram hashtag may vary depending on the situation; however, since Instagram captions have no character limitations and allow the use of more than one hashtag, one of these hashtags can be defined as the general identifier of that photo (Choi & Lewallen, 2018).

When this theory is evaluated according to today's world, situations such as individuals' using social media for socialization, using hashtags to communicate with people similar to themselves, or being a member of a particular blog or page are ways of communicating within and outside the group. This situation shows that social media tools such as Instagram are also tools for in-group and out-group communication according to the Self-categorization Theory (Choi & Lewallen, 2018).

Sharenting from the in the Perspective of Children

Some studies have reported that mothers are relatively relaxed when sharing pictures of their children on social media. They are not fully informed about the risks related to identifying children's potential identity and safety (Wagner & Gasche, 2018). In contrast, some studies have indicated that parents continue sharing these pictures even though they are aware of the risks (Kumar & Schoenebeck, 2015). The shared pictures of children pose risks for them at many points, such as distorting the notion of privacy, children becoming too comfortable sharing private information or pictures online (Erişir & Erişir, 2019), digital kidnapping (Miller, 2014), future chaos related to the fact that the digital footprints of children are formed by their parents and that they have little/no say over the sharing of their own identities and personal lives (İnan-Kaya & Kaya, 2018), archival of images of children by authorities that accept knowledge as power (Kızılarslan, 2012), and making it easy for pedophiles to contact with reach out to children (Duygulu, 2019). Previous research showed that the range of disclosed information relating to children could be relatively wide, from small life events to complete information about their daily lives, and parents can even reveal their children's embarrassing secrets (Steinberg, 2017; Jomhari et al., 2009; Brosch, 2016). All these behaviors can lead to problems in the children's mental health and safety in the future.

The reaction from children to sharing their pictures by parents has increased in recent years. One out of ten children have asked their parents to delete their photos, whereas 13% of children stated that they feel embarrassed about the pictures that their parents have shared (Family Online Safety Institute, 2015). Moreover, while some adolescents reported feeling embarrassed (Levy, 2017), some reported feeling frustrated (Hiniker et al., 2016) on sharenting. They also stated that sharenting is shameful and unnecessary and do not approve of it (Verswijvel et al., 2019). Since their impression is crucial for adolescents, they indicated that parents should be more thoughtful when sharing things about them on social media and avoid sharing a lot (Ouvrein & Verswijvel, 2019). Some adolescents also reported that since they are also trying to build an image for themselves on the internet, there can be clashes between the pictures their parents share and those they share; consequently, they can get embarrassed. Therefore, they think parents should ask for their permission regarding which platform they will share pictures and with whom they will share (Ouvrein & Verswijvel, 2019). Some adolescents and young

adults in some countries have sued their parents for sharing pictures without their permission (Mitchel, 2019). The first such case was reported in Poland. A father was sentenced to 3 months in jail because he shared an inappropriate picture of his 2-year-old child (the child is naked and holding a beer bottle in their hand in the picture) (Szczurowska, 2017).

Legal Process of Sharenting

There are no laws that directly protect children from sharenting in Turkey, but many regulations focused on protecting children can also be used in the context of sharenting acts. The first of these laws is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Articles 16, 18, 19, and 36). The second is the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey (Articles 41, 42, 50, 56, 58, 61, and 62), and the last is the Turkish Criminal Code (Articles 134, 135, and 136). These articles' standard and child-protecting aspects include that the child's private life cannot be interfered with unfairly. The rights of children are protected by law. The child's best interests must be considered by parents while raising the child. These codes also emphasize the privacy and protection of the child's private life and personal information.

Reasons of Sharenting

When the sharenting literature is examined, it is seen that there are different reasons for sharenting behaviors. Among these reasons, social/emotional and psychological support needs, seeing it as a profession or earning money, digital arrogance and narcissistic traits, and tool for expressing feelings and thoughts stand out as the most common reasons. The reasons for sharenting are discussed below.

Social/Emotional and Psychological Support Needs

The parents share pictures of their children on social media for different reasons. The most apparent reason in the current literature is that mothers need social/emotional, and psychological support in raising babies/children. According to the studies supporting this reason for sharenting, mothers share pictures of their children on social media to gain support from other mothers by interacting with them (Duggan et al., 2015). Thus, parents can gain support for the problems they experience while raising their children (Archer & Tao, 2018; Chalklen & Anderson, 2017; Clark et al., 2015). This support is understood to be required to develop child-care skills (Latipah et al., 2020).

Furthermore, social support has a preventative effect on the mothers' feelings of loneliness (McDaniel et al., 2012). Similarly, it was reported in another study that young parents, in particular, socialize through social media and receive social support from other social media users (Bartholomew et al., 2012). Parents may be trying to gain social approval with their posts (Brosch, 2016), and they try to emphasize to the community that they are good parents (Damkjaer, 2018). Especially mothers whose motherhood is judged and criticized start looking for approval, which they want to gain from their families, from social media. They seek social approval by sharing pictures of their children; therefore, they think they are good parents (Lazard et al., 2019). According to Arıkan and Kahriman (2002), mothers need their partners' approval of their motherhood, especially after the first child's birth.

The adaptation process of mothers sharing their problems with their partners becomes more accessible, and they achieve more satisfaction in their new roles. Thus, sharenting facilitates parents' acceptance and approval of their parenthood (Kumar & Schoenebeck, 2015). When the exact opposite situation is

considered, mothers become unhappy when their need for recognition, approval, and love is not satisfied. One of the most preferred ways to hide unhappiness is by masking it. Therefore, mothers try to form a good and positive impression by sharing pictures of their children frequently as if everything in their garden is rosy, which is the exact opposite. Eventually, they create the life they want but cannot live freely on virtual platforms (Morva, 2014).

Seeing Sharenting as a Profession or Earning Money

Social media mothers share pictures of their children for two reasons regarding their profession. The first reason is to become known in their actual career, and the other is to accept being a social media celebrity as a profession. The social media mothers who want to increase their fame in their professions already have careers. These mothers use a social media name that combines the name of their career and the word 'mom'. It is thought that these mothers try to strengthen their images by sharing pictures of their children, yet they try to include their children in the process (Davidson-Wall, 2018). For example, several accounts can be counted as micro celebrity accounts, with over ten thousand followers, sharing nursing care information (Hearn & Schoenhoff, 2015; Khamis et al., 2017). Educational opportunities are one of the reasons nurses want to become social media celebrities (Kerr et al., 2020). According to the individuals who accept being a social media celebrity as a profession, earning a reputation, then maintaining and directing this is labor (Mavroudis & Milne, 2016). The concept of being a micro celebrity mother/father/family is a presentation technique used by people who use different technologies (blogs and social media) to increase their popularity, who see themselves as a public personality to be consumed by others, who use strategic intimacy to address their followers, and who accept their followers as their fans (Senft, 2008; Marwick, 2016). At this point, the individuals who accept being a micro celebrity as a profession achieve fame and financial gains by using their children (Parsa & Akmeşe, 2019). Parents frequently share images of children with commercial aims, and children advertise products due to their parents' deals (Abidin, 2015). It is widely known that many brands worldwide make trade agreements with children with large numbers of social media followers (Maheshwari, 2019). According to Abidin (2017), micro celebrity parents tend to show their children on social media to support their status or increase their recognition.

Digital Arrogance and Narcissistic Traits

Digital arrogance and narcissistic traits are notions that explain the social media posts of mothers. People on digital platforms usually want to appear perfect and exhibit what is good in their perception. Most social media platforms feed the self and allow individuals to create false entities they believe in or want to become. Accordingly, such aspects of social media feed narcissism from an ontological point of view. Especially, discourse such as "I am perfect, I am the best, and I love myself" brings out people's narcissistic side on social media (Alanka & Cezik, 2016). Social media mothers define themselves as the best, the happiest, and the most "something"; they define their children as the most perfect, the cleverest, and the most well-educated children. This situation is in line with Webb's (2013) opinion, which is that the act of sharenting is narcissistic and exploitative. In this case, the mothers sharing every moment of their lives can be related to focusing on getting social media likes.

According to a study conducted by Cino, Demozzi, and Subrahmanyam (2020), getting 'likes' on social media causes an emotional reaction. This reaction may increase social media use and cause the user to make efforts to get more likes by sharing more pictures. To receive 'a virtual compliment', may cause parents to share more pictures of their children since they know their children will receive compliments. At the same time, it is a way for parents to show that they are proud of their children (Wagner & Gasche, 2018). Similarly, it is also a way of showing that they are proud of their parenting abilities. Hence, one of the platforms where narcissistic individuals are successful in social media (McCain & Campbell, 2018). According to Twenge and Campbell (2009), one of the reasons that narcissistic people thrive on social media is its structure since social media rewards tendencies such as uploading pictures that get many likes or having a great number of friends. Parents' desire to share their personalities and parenting successes can be determined as a way of announcing the admiration they feel for their existence as a mother through social media.

Furthermore, parents think that their children are also perfect along with the parents and feel the need to share this with everybody (Rappoport, 2005). The desire of narcissistic parents to promote themselves on social media transforms into promoting their children on social media after the child is born. Paralleled to everybody has a desire to become a star in the corner of their minds (Twenge & Campbell, 2009), sharing pictures of their children fits with the desire to become famous and well-known.

Expressing Emotions and Thoughts

Although it is not shared often in the literature, a study conducted with Turkish phenomenon mothers (Bekdaş, 2021) shows that photographs of children are often shared to convey the feelings and thoughts of the parents to other individuals. It has been revealed that mothers share their children's photos for reasons such as jabbing at their spouses, writing their political views, and writing ideas about a social event (Bekdaş, 2021).

Dark Side of Sharenting

Sharenting has serious risks, especially for children. However, the most considerable risk is that parents continue to share photos of their children despite knowing the harms of sharenting. Mothers who share pictures on social media continue sharing the pictures of their children even though they are aware of the existence of malevolent individuals on social media. Although the mothers are aware of this, they report that they share inappropriate pictures (naked or half-naked) of their children on social media (Clark et al., 2015). Through these posts, the pictures of children shared on social media can be stolen by pedophilia webpages (Battersby, 2016), making it easy for pedophiles to track down these children and pave the way for sexual abuse (Duygulu, 2019). Others can steal these photos, digital identities can be created for children, and they can be shown as someone else's children (Coughlan, 2018; Miller, 2014), and finally, photos can be used by individuals who collect and sell information to companies with commercial aims (Nottingham, 2020).

In agreement with the reasons for sharenting in the current study, according to C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health, parents are aware that the pictures they share can harm their children's privacy (Clark et al., 2015). According to the same parents, the pictures of their children

might be reposted by others on social media, and the children might feel uncomfortable if they see the shared picture. Kumar and Schoenebeck (2015) reported that when sharing pictures of their children, mothers worry that their children's privacy can be harmed; however, they continue sharing the pictures because of the benefits they gain on social media platforms. Both research findings indicate that parents continue sharing pictures of their children even though they know the possible risks to their children.

Suggestions to Parents

There are different reasons for social media mothers sharing pictures of their children. However, the mothers exhibit a lack of wariness about their children's privacy when sharing (Kumar & Schoenebeck, 2015). Therefore, when the current study findings are considered, some suggestions can be given for protecting the children. The biggest threat from sharing pictures of children on social media is the possible harm that can come from pedophiles (Battersby, 2016). Therefore, parents must be respectful, conscientious, and selective in terms of the private lives of their children when sharing their pictures. They must show empathy towards the current and future feelings of their children. No matter how old a child is, parents must respect their child's wishes if they do not want their picture to be shared (Otero, 2017). According to a study conducted in England, parents ignore privacy when sharing pictures of their children (Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2017). Therefore, individuals that want to post on social media should check their privacy settings frequently (mainly because of updates).

Parents must check who has access to their pictures and be careful about the content of the pictures. They should avoid sharing pictures in which children appear to have behavioral problems or show psychological situations. Furthermore, parents frequently share naked or half-naked pictures of their children on social media (Brosch, 2016). However, these posts pose risks in terms of the privacy of children and so sharing these must be avoided. Since they also risk kidnapping (Steinberg, 2017), information about the location should not be shared. A recent study in Turkey reveals that although the mother does not share personal information directly, the child's personal information can be accessed through the child's photos (Baştemur, Borucu, & Bulut, 2021). Several countries (such as France, Germany, and Austria) are working on policies that enable children to sue their parents when they come to the legal age for sharing their pictures (Chazan, 2016). Therefore, this situation must be considered when sharing pictures. Parents can follow online safety websites that provide hints related to parenthood in the digital world or that make suggestions to parents, teachers, or stakeholders in order to protect children from the harms of the digital world; they can also use applications and programs that send notifications to parents when their children's names are searched for on search-engines (Keith & Steinberg, 2017). Finally, children must be taught about their rights. Thus, their knowledge relates to saying no, knowing what happens when they are hurt, and knowing where to go if they want to complain.

In the era where the question 'Is there sensible sharenting?' is frequently asked, social media mothers are regarded as people who cross the line of sensibility (although there is no apparent limit to the notion of "sensible sharenting"). Although the prominent reasons for parents to share pictures of their children are revealed in the current study, parents must be educationally supported in terms of why they share pictures of their children. In this case, it will be possible to determine the limits of sensible sharenting.

Conclusion

Sharenting, an emerging contemporary construct, has been frequently discussed in recent years, especially regarding children's rights. Sharenting, which can harm the child at many points, has been reviewed in this study, especially in the context of the causes and consequences of parents' sharenting behaviors. Parents, who should be the gatekeepers in protecting children and not sharing their private information with strangers (COPPA, 2012), do not protect their children from online harm (Keenan, 2012) and share their pictures on social media. Parents' sharenting can mean severe risks to the child in the short and long term. When the causes of sharenting are examined, it is seen that the most common reason in the literature is social, emotional, or psychological support. Mothers need social support, approval, and acceptance, especially after childbirth (Archer & Tao, 2018; Chalklen & Anderson, 2017; Clark et al., 2015). Therefore, the psychological needs of mothers must be satisfied in institutions such as psychological counseling centers and community mental health centers.

Yazar Katkısı

Yazarlar eşit oranda katkı sağlamıştır.

Conflict of Interest Statement

 "Sharenting: Why Parents Share Their Children' Photos on Social Media?" "başlıklı makalemiz ile ilgili herhangi bir kurum, kuruluş, kişi ile mali çıkar çatışması yoktur ve yazarlar arasında da herhangi bir çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.

Kaynakça

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Share (paylaşmak) ve ebeveynlik (parenting) kelimelerinin birleşiminden oluşan sharenting, bir ebeveynin çocuklarının fotoğraflarının sosyal medyada paylaşmasını ifade eden bir kavramdır (Brosch, 2016). Her ne kadar çocukları ilgilendiren bir kavram olarak görülse de sharenting hem çocukları hem de ailelerini ilgilendirmektedir. Çocuklarla ilgili olarak, çocukların güvenliği için risk oluşturması önde gelen endişe nedenlerinden biri iken (Fox ve Hoy, 2019), bu resimlerin paylaşılması ihtiyacı anneler için bir başka endişe nedeni olabilir çünkü ebeveynlerin çocuklarının hayatlarının ayrıntılarını sosyal medya platformlarında paylaşmaları ve ifşa etmeleri fikri giderek artmaktadır (Broch, 2018). Bu konuda yürütülen araştırmalar annelerin paylaşım oranları noktasında farklı oranlar verse de (Bartholomew vd., 2012; Clark vd., 2015) araştırmaların ortak noktası paylaşım oranlarının yüksekliğidir. Ebeveynlerin çocuklarının fotoğraflarını sosyal medyada paylaşmalarının sebepleri arasında ise sosyal destek almak (Bartholomew vd., 2012; Clark vd., 2015; Mc Daniel vd.,, 2012), aile ve arkadaşlarla iletişim halinde kalmak (Duggan vd.,, 2015), ebeveynlik becerilerini geliştirmek ve bilgi alışverişinde bulunmak (Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2017; Maraşlı vd.,, 2016), sosyal onay almak (Lazard vd., 2019), anneliklerini onaylamak (Pettigrew vd.,. , 2016) ve anıları depolamak (Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2017) gibi nedenler öne çıkmaktadır.

Çocuk gözünden bakıldığında ise annelerin sosyal medyada çocuklarının resimlerini paylaşırken oldukça rahat oldukları ve çocukların potansiyel kimliklerini ve güvenliklerini belirlemeye yönelik riskler konusunda tam olarak

bilgi sahibi olmadıkları düşünülmektedir (Wagner ve Gasche, 2018) ancak bazı ebeveynlerin ise risklerin farkında olmalarına rağmen çocuklarının resimleri paylaşmaya devam ettikleri görülmüştür (Kumar ve Schoenebeck, 2015). Paylaşılan fotoğraflar ise çocuklar açısından birçok noktada risk oluşturuyor. Bu riskler arasında çocukların kendi mahremiyet kavramını zihinlerinde oturtamamaları ve kendilerinin de çevrimiçi ortamda özel bilgilerini veya resimlerini çok rahat paylaşabilmeleri (Erişir ve Erişir, 2019), dijital çocuk kaçırma (Miller, 2014), gelecekte çocukların dijital ayak izlerinin ebeveynleri tarafından oluşturulması ve kendi kimliklerinin ve kişisel yaşamlarının paylaşımı konusunda çok az söz sahibi olacakları ya da hiçbir söz sahibi olmayacakları (İnan-Kaya ve Kaya, 2018), çocukların görüntülerinin bilgiyi güç olarak kabul eden otoriteler tarafından arşivlenmesi (Kızılarslan, 2012) ve pedofillerin çocuklara ulaşıp iletişim kurmasını kolaylaştırması (Duygulu, 2019) gelmektedir. Çocukların ise sharentingden rahatsız oldukları görülmektedir. Her on çocuktan biri ebeveynlerinden fotoğraflarını silmelerini isterken, çocukların %13'ü ebeveynlerinin paylaştığı resimlerden utandığını belirtmiştir (Family Online Safety Institute, 2015). Utanmanın yanı sıra (Levy, 2017), bazı ergenler ise hayal kırıklığına uğradıklarını ifade etmişlerdir (Hiniker ve ark., 2016). Ayrıca paylaşmanın çok gereksiz olduğunu ve bunu onaylamadıklarını belirtmişlerdir (Verswijvel vd., 2019).

Literatürde öne çıkan sharenting nedenleri arasında sosyal/duygusal ve psikolojik desteğe ihtiyaç duyma, sharentingi bir meslek olarak görme veya para kazanma, dijital kibir ve narsist özellikler, duygu ve düşünceleri ifade etme aracı olarak görme öne çıkmaktadır. Sosyal/duygusal ve psikolojik destek ihtiyaçlarının temeli aslında bebek/çocuk yetiştirme sürecinde annelerin özellikle sosyal/duygusal ve psikolojik desteğe ihtiyaç duymaları ile ilişkilidir. Annelerin çocuklarının resimlerini sosyal medyada paylaşma sebeplerinden biri diğer annelerle etkileşim kurarak onlardan destek almaktır (Duggan ve ark., 2015). Böylece ebeveynler çocuklarını yetiştirirken yaşadıkları sorunlar için destek alabilmektedir (Archer ve Tao, 2018; Chalklen ve Anderson, 2017; Clark vd., 2015). Böylece sharenting, ebeveynlerin ebeveynliklerini kabul etmelerini ve onaylamalarını kolaylaştırıcı bir rol oynamaktadır (Kumar ve Schoenebeck, 2015). Sharentingi meslek olarak görmek veya para kazanma ise annelerin ya mevcut mesleklerinde tanınmak ya da sosyal medyada ünlü olmak istemeleri ile ilişkilidir. Bu annelerin aslında çocuklarının resimlerini paylaşarak kendi imajlarını güçlendirmeye çalıştıkları ancak çocuklarını da sürece dahil etmeye çalıştıkları düşünülmektedir (Davidson-Wall, 2018). Abidin'e göre (2017), mikro ünlü ebeveynler, statülerini desteklemek veya tanınırlıklarını artırmak için çocuklarını sosyal medyada gösterme eğilimindedir. Dijital kibir ve narsistik özellikler annelerin sosyal medya paylaşımlarını açıklayan bir diğer nedendir. Dijital platformlarda insanlar genellikle mükemmel görünmek ve kendi algısında iyi olanı sergilemek isterler. Sosyal medya platformlarının çoğu benliği besler ve bireylere inandıkları veya olmak istedikleri sahte varlıklar yaratma fırsatı sunar. Buna göre sosyal medyanın ontolojik açıdan narsisizmi besleyen yönleri olduğu söylenebilir. Özellikle "Ben mükemmelim, en iyisiyim ve kendimi seviyorum" gibi söylemler sosyal medyada insanların narsist yönünü ortaya çıkarmaktadır (Alanka ve Cezik, 2016). Sosyal medya anneleri kendilerini en iyi, en mutlu, en "bir şey" olarak tanımlarken; çocuklarını en mükemmel, en zeki, en eğitimli çocuklar olarak tanımlarlar. Bu durum Webb'in (2013) sharenting eyleminin narsisistik ve sömürücü olduğu görüşüyle uyumludur. Bu durumda annelerin hayatlarının her anını paylaşmaları sosyal medyadan beğeni almaya odaklanmış olmaları ile ilgili olabilir. Cino, Demozzi ve Subrahmanyam (2020) tarafından yapılan bir araştırmaya göre sosyal medyada "beğeni" almak duygusal bir tepkiye neden olmaktadır. Bu tepki sosyal medya kullanımını artırabilir ve kullanıcının daha fazla resim paylaşarak daha fazla beğeni almak için çaba sarf etmesine neden olabilir. "Sanal bir iltifat" almak amacıyla, ebeveynlerin çocuklarının iltifat alacağını bildikleri için çocuklarının daha fazla fotoğrafını paylaşmalarına neden olabilir. Son olarak duygu ve düşünceleri ifade etme aracı olarak sharentingin yapıldığı görülmektedir (Bekdaş, 2021). Annelerin eşlerini laf çarpma, siyasi görüşlerini yazma, sosyal bir olay hakkında fikir yazma gibi nedenlerle çocuklarının fotoğraflarını paylaştığı görülmektedir.

Sharenting her ne kadar iyi niyetli nedenlerle de yapılıyor olsa da özellikle çocuklar açısından ciddi risk barındırmaktadır. Anneler çocuklarının uygunsuz, çıplak ya da yarı çıplak resimlerini paylaşmaktadır (Clark vd., 2015). Bu fotoğrafların pedofili web sayfaları tarafından çalınabilmesi ihtimali bulunmaktadır (Battersby, 2016). Bu fotoğraflar başkaları tarafından çalınabilir ve çocuklar için dijital bir kimlik oluşturulup bir başkasının çocukları olarak gösterilebilir (Coughlan, 2018; Miller, 2014) ya da fotoğraflar bilgi toplayan kişiler tarafından ticari amaçlı şirketlere satılabilir. (Nottingham, 2020).

Tüm bu bilgiler değerlendirildiğinde ebeveynlere bazı önerilerde bulunulabilir. Çocukların fotoğraflarının sosyal medyada paylaşılması sonucunda oluşabilecek en büyük tehdit pedofillerden gelebilecek olası zararlardır (Battersby, 2016). Bu nedenle anne-babalar, resimlerini paylaşırken çocuklarının özel hayatları konusunda saygılı, vicdanlı ve seçici olmalıdır. Çocuklarının şimdiki ve gelecekteki duygularına empati göstermelidirler. Bir çocuk kaç yaşında olursa olsun, resimlerinin paylaşılmasını istemiyorlarsa, ebeveynler çocuklarının isteklerine saygı göstermelidir (Otero, 2017). Sosyal medyada paylaşım yapmak isteyen bireylerin gizlilik ayarlarını (özellikle güncellemeler nedeniyle) sık sık kontrol etmeleri gerekmektedir. Ebeveynler, resimlerine kimin erişebildiğini kontrol etmeli ve resimlerin içeriğine dikkat etmelidir. Çocukların davranış sorunları var gibi görünen veya psikolojik durumları gösteren resimleri paylaşmaktan kaçınmalıdırlar.