Evaluation of *Sharenting* Risk Perception among Parents in Selected Urban and Semi-Urban Areas in South East Nigeria

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Abstract

Sharenting is a phenomenon in which parents engage in the act of sharing personal information and updates about their children on various social media platforms and other internet channels. The study focused on the evaluation of sharenting risk perception among parents in selected urban and semi-urban areas in the South-east of Nigeria. The study employed a survey design. Parents resident in South-east Nigeria who are internet users constitute the population of the study. The sample size for this study was 451 respondents. Due to the large nature of the cross-sectional survey population under investigation, the researchers opted for the selection of a manageable and representative sample size that would produce valid and reliable results that could be generalised to other populations by adopting multi-stage sampling. Questionnaire (e-survey) was the instrument used to generate quantitative data for the study. The Facebook communities and WhatsApp groups were used in distributing the e-questionnaire to the parents involved in the study. The quantitative data generated was analysed using frequencies, percentages, and mean scores to answer the research questions. The study found that even though parents engage in sharenting, most of them do so with caution, bearing in mind the privacy and security implications. This study concludes that perceived risks associated with sharenting are the major reason parents exercise prudence in sharing information about their children online. Based on the findings, it was recommended that public awareness campaigns be put in place to effectively communicate the potential risks associated with sharenting and underscore the paramount importance of safeguarding children's online privacy.

 Keywords: Sharenting, Sharenting Risks, Social Media, News Media, Digital Culture

Introduction

The new media has, no doubt, altered the social structure of every human society. It is anticipated that civilizations worldwide are undergoing transformations as a result of the emergence of new media. The phrase "new media" incorporates a wide range of interactive electronic communication methods made possible by digital technologies. This form of media has consistently spread over the global landscape. New media are digital forms of communication and information dissemination, such as social media, mobile devices, the Internet, and digital media platforms (Kelly, Vandevijvere, Freeman, & Jenkin. 2015; Jamil, 2020; Alzubi, 2022; Dhiman, 2023). No doubt, the new media has played a significant role in connecting people from different parts of the world. The advent of new media has enabled individuals to access real-time, interactive, and multimedia content, thus distinguishing it from conventional forms of media, including print, radio, and television (Arango-Forero, & Roncallo-Dow, 2013; Agboola, 2014; Dhiman , 2023). The number of its users is very high, and this includes children and parents who share and learn new things every day on the several platforms powered by new media. Individuals progressively have more access to news through digital media,

smartphones, and other intermediaries, such as social media, to search for, get news, and entertain themselves in the way they form and maintain relationships (Hermida, 2016; Lupton, 2016; Martens, Aguiar, Gomez-Herrera, & Mueller-Langer, 2018; Dihman, 2023). One interesting innovations that came with the new media technologies is the social media which has made human digital socialization attractive, fast and dynamic.

Social media involves digital platforms and online channels that facilitate the generation, dissemination, and engagement with many forms of material while also facilitating social connections between individuals. People now connect easily because of social media. It started as a personal communication medium but quickly gained the attention of businesses throughout the world, prompting the creation of specialised social media departments within many of these corporations (Abeza, 2023). These platforms facilitate the exchange of information, foster collaboration, and enable real-time communication among individuals and organisations. One important thing the social media has done is the radical change in human interaction and socialization. Apart from these changes, the various social media platforms such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, Telegram, Youtube, etc, have continued to grow (Didiugwu, Ezugwu, & Ekwe, 2015).

Over the last decade, social media has grown significantly by increased access globally. People of different ages and races have grown to be active users of social media platforms. The platforms are mainly used to connect with other people around the world, expand and maintain a friendship, and collect and share data. Social media sites have emerged as the predominant medium through which creators of content disseminate their expertise and knowledge across a wide range of domains, encompassing fashion, health, hobbies, daily routines, and product evaluations (Roma & Aloini, 2019; Jun & Yi, 2020; Sreejesh et al., 2020; Zhan, Xiong, & Xing, 2023).This feature enables users to actively participate with material through actions such as liking, commenting, sharing, or other forms of interaction. All these are happening because of internet penetration. For example, the number of social media and social networking sites has grown from just 5 within the last few years to over 215 in 2017. Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Instagram, WhatsApp, Tencent QQ, Wechat, Skype, and Snapchat are the leading social networking sites in the world (Udeze, 2021). Consequently, the advent of social media has brought about significant changes in the way people engage in interpersonal communication, access and engage with news content, and actively contribute to public discourse. The use of social networking services, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, has become prevalent in contemporary society, with a substantial number of individuals employing these platforms to engage with acquaintances, relatives, and coworkers on a global scale (Al Momani, 2020; Zhan, Xiong, & Xing, 2023).

According to Udeze (2021) internet penetration in the world is now very high with over 4.7 billion users, representing 56 percent of the world population. This means that more than half of the inhabitants of the world are connected. If you further subtract the number of very old people and infants from the world population of 7.5 billion, you will realize that almost a very reasonable number of inhabitants of the world is connected to the internet. Nevertheless, the accessibility and minimal requirements of social media platforms enable a wide range of individuals to express their viewpoints and recount personal encounters pertaining to diverse subjects (Zhuang, Zeng, Zhang, Liu, & Fan, 2023). So, the authors go on to say that this kind of open participation leads to an uneven spread of content and information in terms of how good and trustworthy it is.

The influence of technologies in the social circles has created a new generation of populations. Social media has not only changed the way populations behave, it has equally produced new digital parents and digital humans who are guided by digital culture. According to Didiugwu, Ezugwu, and Ekwe (2015), the notion of digital culture pertains to the manner in which technology is influencing and moulding human interactions, behaviours, cognitive processes, and communication patterns within societal contexts. The emergence of a digital culture can be attributed to the pervasive influence of persuasive technology on individuals as well as the consequential effects of disruptive technological advancements. It's applicable to multiple topics but it comes down to one overarching theme; the relationship between humans and

technology. This explains why parents are bringing up their children following the digital culture. The digital culture allows people to share information about themselves and others online, while the old culture guided parents and families to keep certain details away from public scrutiny.

According to Damkjaer (2018), parents' traditional role as guardians of their children's safety is shifting as they are increasingly seen as (potential) violators of their children's rights and well-being due to the prevalence of media and other digital technologies. The social media encourages parents to share pictures and videos of their children online. Some consider such sharing as reckless and dangerous for the child and the family. Therefore, the concept of sharenting has emerged to describe the oversharing of sensitive information about children on the social media and other new media platforms. The rationale behind this phenomenon can be attributed to the widespread adoption of "sharenting," which refers to the habitual use of social media platforms for the purpose of disseminating news, photographs, and other content related to one's offspring (Sharenting, 2017).

In contemporary society, it has become increasingly common for children to have a digital presence at an early stage in their lives, even before they possess the ability to communicate verbally or have physically emerged from the womb. This phenomenon arises from the inclination of parents to share their experiences, both positive and negative, of raising children with their social circle, which includes family members, friends, and acquaintances, using various online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and personal blogs. As a result, the phenomenon of sharenting has garnered considerable interest from both the general public and scholars, with a predominant emphasis on the potential hazards associated with the online dissemination of information, notably in the form of photographs pertaining to children (Kirkey, 2017).

In a similar vein, Brosch (2016) perceives the notion as the habitual utilisation of social media platforms by parents to disseminate comprehensive details concerning their offspring who are under the age of eighteen. 'Sharents' refer to parents who engage in blogging, tweeting, and posting images on various online platforms to document and share various parts of their children's lives. A significant number of children acquire a digital identity at a very early stage, even before they develop the ability to speak and walk. This is due to parents sharing their experiences and moments of parenting with their social network connections, including family members, friends, and peers. Consequently, numerous children possess an abundance of visual representations, textual entries, and status updates pertaining to their personal experiences on various social media platforms. Parents engage in sharenting as a way to connect with others, seek advice, and find support systems (Ranzini, Newlands, & Lutz, 2020). Sharenting is carried out with the motive of making new friends and expanding social networks (Latipah Kistoro & Putranta 2020). By sharing information about their children, parents can initiate conversations and establish connections with other parents who have similar interests and experiences (Latipah et al., 2020). The majority of these instances commence prior to the delivery of a child, wherein pregnant mothers disseminate ultrasound images of their yet-to-be-born offspring. Research conducted among a sample of 2000 parents residing in the United Kingdom revealed that, on average, parents share over 200 photographs of their children annually. Furthermore, it was found that parents tend to share around 300 pictures of their offspring on various online platforms, with Facebook accounting for 54% of the total shares (Papacharissi & Gibson, 2011 p. 75-89). Based on the findings of the Parents, Privacy, and Technology Use Report (2015), a notable proportion of parents who possess a social media account—approximately 20%—engage in the online sharing of information that could potentially cause embarrassment to their children in the future. The majority of parents exhibit well-meaning behaviour when they engage in the practice of sharing personal information and photographs of their children on the internet. An illustrative instance that comes to mind is the recent occurrence in Nigeria, wherein a video captured a youngster imploring his mother to maintain composure and beseeching her for one final opportunity for reconciliation. The comical video garnered widespread attention on various social media platforms, thereby earning individual acclaim from diverse individuals, including Babajide Sanwo-Olu, the Governor of Lagos State.

Parents are, in most cases, involved in sharing images and information concerning their children on social media with or without their consent. The phenomenon of "sharenting," which alludes to the practice of parents sharing their children's personal information on online platforms, has given rise to numerous problems and threats pertaining to privacy (Peng, 2022). In relation to this matter, Livingstone Stoilova, and Nandagiri, (2019) showed that British parents who exhibited heightened levels of concern regarding privacy is further compromised when individuals choose to share further photographs or videos of their children on the internet. The act of sharenting, which involves maintaining connections with family and friends, may be deemed more significant by these parents, perhaps overshadowing any concerns related to privacy. The act of sharing adorable photographs and videos of one's child can serve as a valuable means of fostering connections. Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge that this act is not without its own array of problems and associated risks. The topic of youth media usage is frequently discussed in scholarly literature, as evidenced by the work of the AAP Council on Communications and Media (2016). Yet, it is worth noting that there is a lack of definitive guidelines available to assist parents in effectively utilising social media in relation to their children.

Parents engage in discussions on parenting on social media platforms as a means to alleviate feelings of isolation, post photographs of their children as a means of providing regular updates to their relatives and friends regarding the ongoing events and developments in their lives. Sharing photographs is a convenient method for disseminating information about one's children's accomplishments and developmental milestones to individuals who may be geographically distant or in close proximity. Another prevalent application of social media is the pursuit of parental guidance. The phenomenon of parents sharing information about their children on social media has emerged as a prevalent trend, eliciting significant worries among various stakeholders. One could argue that it is fear of missing out on something (FOMOs) that has consistently and continuously made majority glued to the digital technology and the social media, but adults sharing information on the social media is their own decision. There could be several reasons for parents sharing information about their children on the social media, among which Brosch (2019) opined that it could be to share the joys and challenges of parenthood. It could be in a bid to keep up with the 'jonses' (that is what is happening around them) that has plunged the modern-day parents into the newly coined phenomena called Sharenting. And gradually, it is beginning to tilt towards a norm, that some people are raising such questions as, if you didn't 'Sharent', did you parent?

And so, these parents document their children's lives publicly. The implication of this is that children, even before birth have a lot of their information scattered all over social media. It is no longer new or news to find baby bum photos on the social media. And most times, once a child is born, the mother or both parents share the child's photo indicating the expected date of delivery and the actual date of delivery. Sadly, it does not end there. Parents broadcast chronological progression of their children's lives, if the child were on exclusive breastfeeding, information, or photo of the first attempt at drinking water as well as eating real food would be updated on the social media at the expiration of the six months duration. This could be followed up with a photoshoot for his or her first six months in existence. The process continues to first birthday, first day at kindergarten, graduation from nursery, primary and so on. With all this information, a child is given an online identity that could be different from who he/she is. As cited in Brosch (2019), AVG Technologies conducted research in 2010 and found that, on average, children have a digital identity by the age of six months. By posting on social media, parents start a discussion through which they engage various parents operating online platforms. According to Otero (2017), parents create children's fingerprints on social media when they post their personal information online. This action starts even before the child is born by posting photos of pregnancy. In America, 92% of children below the age of two years have information about them online, and a third of them appeared on social media even before they turned a year old. The situation is understandable under some circumstances, like sharing a family photo with the children and friends.

Today, taking and sharing photos online is a common trend for parents and other users of social media platforms. Offering information online for mothers proves to be beneficial because they gain social and informational support, which alleviates stress and boosts wellbeing (Kumar & Schoenebeck, 2015). However, the privacy of the information shared on social media is not guaranteed. This suggests that the data disseminated via social media platforms, which is private, subjects the owner to safety and privacy risks. This suggests that the data disseminated via social media platforms, which is private, subjects the owner to safety and privacy risks. This has prompted scholars to emphasize the need to design appropriate social settings that alleviate the possible risks the user of the platform may experience. According to Kumar and Schoenebeck (2015), many parents post images of their children online for fun and share with friends and family members.

Additionally, they are forced to post because the photos are cute in some scenes. Levy (2017), in a study, found that young people are discontented by the fact that parents post their information online. This action makes them feel that their parents do not understand their social lives. The impact of social media on different facets of our daily routines has been significant, and this study demonstrates that parenthood is not exempt from this influence. Udenze and Bode (2020) found how parents shared photos of their children on social media. By sharing the photos and information concerning children, parents expose their children to the public domain even before they can differentiate between private and public life. According to Ndolo, Ekwe, and Akpan (2022), ethical parenting principles necessitate that parents adhere to legal and societal norms by safeguarding the personal information of sensitive children. Consequently, the little safeguards provided to children expose their identities on the internet, thereby exposing them to unforeseen dangers such as digital abduction, physical kidnapping, sexual harassment, cyberbullying, and various other problems.

Nevertheless, there seem to be certain incentives for engaging in the practice of sharenting. Udenze (2020) asserts that the phenomenon of sharenting is widespread within contemporary digital culture due to the numerous benefits that social media platforms offer parents. When parents choose to disclose personal information about their children's lives on social media platforms like Facebook or through blogging, they have the opportunity to establish connections with their friends and family. This can result in obtaining an affirmative response, which in turn provides a sense of support and validation for their decision to share such information about their own lives and that of their children (Udenze, 2020). It is crucial to ascertain whether parents possess a comprehensive understanding of the potential hazards associated with the practice of sharenting, which constitutes a significant concern within the realm of parental ethics.

According to Davidson-Wall (2018), mediated digital identity without consent from the kid is created through oversharing of their personal information by parents. Parents risk their children's safety when they enter information about their children online. Also, this information may embarrass children in the future. That is why some societies have enacted laws that prevent parents from sharing their children's photos online. Just as the internet makes parenting fun, parents are expected to be very careful when posting their children's pictures online. Experts maintain that social networking sites should provide parents with the type of time and conditions before sharing photos of their children online.

Sharing of children's development photos by parents discloses a lot of information because of technology advancement. The information is exposed to malicious individuals who are strangers to the parents, and the children's information being shared. Information is saved from the social media platforms, and this ability enables sharing of the information, which affects the development of children's identity (Davidson-Wall, 2018). Therefore, posting information about kids online creates safety and privacy risk to them because of exposing their identity to potential attackers. Kumar and Schoenebeck, (2015) add that parents need to limit their personal content online because the information they post is seen by anybody on social media because of the nature of the social media platforms. This explains why it is significant for parents to familiarize themselves with the privacy setting of the social media platforms. At the same time some parents

are sceptical of sharenting and alter their behaviour by not revealing personally identifying information about their child or by using privacy-protecting measures when sharenting (Ammari, Kumar, Lampe & Schoenebeck, 2015; Autenrieth, 2018).

According to Archer and Kao (2019), mothers find themselves isolated when they give birth to a new baby in most cases. The isolation can be source of extreme depression, anxiety, and stress conditions which have a long-term impact on child growth. This condition forces mothers to join social media platforms to end the stigma and boredom within themselves. In Nigeria, social media has become a popular mode of public and interpersonal communication. Parents and children have utilised these platforms to share ideas, pictures, information, experience, and to connect with others. A big percentage of parents to date in Nigeria are using social media platforms. On the platforms, they post numerous pieces of information concerning them and their children. Through online sharing of the information concerning their children, parents shape the digital identity of the children without their consent. The information disclosed by parents concerning their children remains on social media until the children grow old. Children have the right to privacy, and on the other hand, parents have the right to control their children's upbringing and free speech, which contradicts the children's interests (Udeze, 2021). Therefore, when the parents share information online concerning their children, they act as both narrator and gatekeeper of their personal stories and information. Thus, through this role, the parents offer little protection to their children as long as their online identity keeps evolving.

Once parents opt to provide personal information regarding their children's lives on social media platforms, such as Facebook or blogs, they are presented with the chance to forge connections with friends and family members. This correlation frequently results in the acquisition of feedback that affirms and reinforces individuals' choice to provide personal information about themselves and their children (Udenze, 2020). With this, it becomes imperative to find out whether parents even understand the dangers of sharenting which is a key issue in ethics of parenting. This study explored and explained how sharenting exposes children to potential harm and possible legal issues that could arise in the future. Parents had earlier thought that the screen time is the major problem with the digital media/ social media in their child's upbringing but with the trend of Sharenting, the real problem or rather the real danger may currently lie with the sharenting parents. This is because once a photo gets online, it is impossible to control what happens to the photo and this could lead to digital kidnapping.

The growing practice of parents and guardians sharing sensitive and sometimes dangerous information about their wards on online is a source of concern to many observers. In response to this, quite a number of scholarly works have been published on this subject. Scholars have written extensively on the dangers of sharenting (Ammari et al., 2015; Brosch, 2016; Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2017; Steinberg, 2017; Chalken & Anderson, 2017; Wagner & Gasche, 2018; Udenze & Bode 2020; Ademosu. 2020).

Despite the increasing scholarly attention towards the utilisation of social media and the disclosure behaviours of parents, the existing body of research primarily concentrates on elucidating the viewpoints, experiences, and practices of parents in both developed and developing nations. However, there has been a limited investigation into isolating risk perceptions from the broader spectrum of opinions, experiences, and practices that have been previously examined in these studies. Apart from a netnographic study conducted by Udenze and Bode in 2020 and few others, there appears to be no survey so far conducted on parents risk perception of sharenting in South East Nigeria.

This study would therefore investigate the sharenting risk perception of parents in urban and semi-urban areas in South East; To find out the perception of parents living in urban and semi-urban areas of South East on the risk associated with *Sharenting;* The level of influence of sharenting risk perception on parents indulgence in urban and semi-urban areas of South East, Nigeria

Research questions

This study was guided by the following research questions

1. What is the perception of parents in urban and semi-urban areas in south east on the risk associated with sharenting in the urban and semi-urban areas ?
2. To what extent do sharenting risk perception influence parent indulgence in sharenting in the urban and semi-urban areas in South East Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

These following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

Ho_1: The extent to which parents perceive the risk associated with Sharenting does not influence the degree at which parents engage in the practice.

Literature Review

Risks of Sharenting

Parents may feel insecure and compare their child with others when they see the achievements and experiences shared by other parents (Latipah et al., 2020). This can lead to feelings of inadequacy and pressure to present a perfect image of their child on social media. Through sharing their experiences and challenges, parents can find a sense of community and solidarity with other parents (Ranzini et al., 2020). Parents' attempts at mediation may also affect their children's assessments of the dangers of sharenting. Parents who engage in regular mediation of their children's internet activities are likely to possess a heightened awareness of potential threats and subsequently adopt measures to safeguard their child's privacy (Garmendia Martínez, & Garitaonandia, 2022). They may share less information about their children online as a result. Cultural and societal factors may also shape parents' perception of the risks of sharenting. For instance, in some cultures, there may be a greater emphasis on privacy and protecting personal information, leading parents to be more cautious about sharing information about their children online (Garmendia et al., 2022). On the other hand, the rise of mummy influencers and the normalization of sharenting in certain social media circles may influence parents to perceive sharenting as a positive and beneficial activity (Jorge Marôpo Coelho & Novello, 2022).

In Balaban's (2022) study, it was found that there exists a positive correlation between several characteristics and the frequency of online sharing of pictures featuring children. These characteristics include the overall frequency of sharing such images, the proportion of followers who express positive sentiment towards such pictures, and individuals' perceptions of their level of offline social support.

. Lipu and Siibak (2019) conducted a study on "Take it down!": Estonian parents' and pre-teens' opinions and experiences with sharenting. The findings of the study unveiled a notable discrepancy between the viewpoints of parents and children on the requirement of parental authorization for the dissemination of child-related material on social media platforms. The sharing behaviours exhibited by mothers often give rise to feelings of frustration in pre-adolescents, leading to a breakdown in the delineation of privacy boundaries between parents and their offspring. It is crucial to improve parental comprehension, as children not only

exhibit an inclination to participate in discussions regarding acceptable information disclosure with their parents but also expect their parents to exhibit regard for their viewpoints on the subject.

. .Thus, Latipah et al. conducted a study in 2020 on Elaborating Motive and Psychological Impact of Sharenting in Millennial Parents. The author found that sharenting for millennial parents has both positive and negative impacts, namely by providing new information and knowledge, making new friends, and support. The negative effects include feeling insecure, comparing her child with someone else's child, causing animosity and dissent. Thus, it can be concluded that sharenting by millennial parents is carried out with a variety of motives, carried out with a peer approach strategy, and has both positive and negative impacts at the same time. In another study conducted by Latipah et al. (2022) regarding the elaboration of motives and the psychological impact of sharenting among millennial parents, The study conducted by the author revealed that the practice of sharenting among millennial parents has both advantageous and disadvantageous consequences. Specifically, it facilitates the acquisition of novel information and knowledge, fosters the establishment of new social connections, and provides a source of emotional assistance. The adverse consequences encompass feelings of insecurity, engaging in comparative assessments between one's own child and another's, as well as fostering hostility and discord. Therefore, it can be inferred that the act of sharenting by parents belonging to the millennial generation is executed with diverse motivations, employing a peer-oriented approach, and yielding both favourable and unfavourable consequences simultaneously.

Consequently, Ni Bhroin et al. (2022) investigated the impact of several individual variables, such as demographic parameters and digital literacy, alongside relational factors, such as parental mediation techniques, concerns over children's privacy, and parent-child communication, on the phenomenon of sharenting. The results of their investigation indicate that parents with higher levels of digital skills exhibit a greater propensity for engaging in sharenting. Moreover, parents who proactively moderate their children's internet usage and exhibit heightened concerns regarding their children's privacy are also more prone to engaging in the practice of sharenting. Simultaneously, it is noteworthy to underscore the intricate nature of this relationship practice, as a considerable number of parents refrain from seeking their children's prior authorization before disclosing information pertaining to them.

Methodology

The study employed survey design. With this design, the researcher gathered quantitative data through cross-sectional survey and made statistical interpretations according to the variables under investigation. The survey aimed to gather data on parents' attitudes, behaviours, and perceptions related to sharenting. The population of the study consists of all parents who are internet users and reside in the five southeast states of Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi, Abia, and Imo. The statistics of Parents who are internet users in South-East, Nigeria is not known. Hence, the population of parents who are internet users and who are the focus of this study is infinite. The sample size for this study was 451 respondents, owing to the large nature of cross-sectional survey population under investigation, the researchers opted for the selection of a manageable and representative sample size that would produce valid and reliable results that could be generalised on other populations. To achieve this, a basic sample of 384 was drawn using online sample size calculator advanced by Wimmer and Dominick (2013) with confidence level of 95% and confidence interval of 5.0%. It should be noted that Wimmer & Dominick, (2013) online calculator and other scientific online sample calculators like Australian and Research Basics only provide for a basic sample size which requires an over sampling to make provision for mortality in the field. The calculators require researchers to over sample by 20 to 30 percent and use random sampling technique. Bertlett, Kotrlik and Higgins (2001, p.46) citing Salkind (1997, p.107) Fink (1995, p. 36) and Cochran (1977, p.396) suggested over sampling when a researcher is studying a large population and error margin is expected. Bertlett, Kotrlik and Higgins (2001, p.46) also stated that "if the

researcher decides to use over sampling, let him/her estimate the response rate as a means of calculating for it". To calculate for the over sampling procedure, a response rate estimate of 90% was adopted. The calculation for the contingency is shown below:

$$n_2 = \frac{\text{Minimum sample size}}{\text{Anticipated response rate}} \dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots$$

Where anticipated return rate = 85%.

Where n2 = sample size adjusted for response rate.

Where minimum sample size = 384.

Therefore:

$$n_2 = \frac{\text{Minimum sample size}}{\text{Anticipated response rate}} = \frac{384}{0.85\%}$$

n2 = 384/0.85 = 451

Approximately 451

The sample size for this study is 451 respondents.

The study adopted Multi stage sampling by employing purposive sampling technique to select only the capital territories and the Local Government Areas within the five South East designated to be within the State capitals. The decision is to ensure engaging literate respondents who are friendly with the internet environment. To choose areas or wards within the semi-urban areas, purposive sampling technique was employed. In order to ensure that every ward had deserving number of respondents, proportional representation was further done.

Table 1: Proportional Representation of Selected Wards

Urban LGAs within the capital	Selected Wards	Number of Respondents	Semi Urban LGAs within the capital	Selected Wards	Number of Respondents	Total per State
Umuahia North	Ndume	23	Ikwuano	Oloko I	12	
	Ibeku West	19		Ibere II	11	87
			Umuahia			

|						
			South	Omaegwu	12	
				Old Umuahia	10	
Awka South	Nise I	22	Awka North	Isu aniocha	11	91
				Amansea	9	
	Awka II	28				
			Njikoka	Enugu-Agidi I	11	
				Nawfia II	10	
Abakaliki	Abakpa	24	Ebonyi	Agalegu	9	92
	Azuiyiokwu layout	17		Ndiebo	12	
				Ndiegu	11	
	Azuiyiudene Layout	19				
Enugu North	Independence Layout	29	Enugu South	Maryland	9	102
				Uwani West	12	
	New Haven	26	Enugu East	Trans Ekulu	10	
				Abakpa I	16	
Owerri-Municipal	Azuzi I	20	Owerri North	Naze	9	79
				Emmi	10	
	G.R.A	19	Owerri West	Okuku	9	
				Nekede	12	
Total	11	246			205	
Grand Total						**451**

Unit population × total sample size ÷ total population

In all, 30 wards were selected. This selection is in line with the National Bureau of Statistics in its Core Welfare Indicators (CWIQ) survey (National Communications Commission, (Inception Report, 2011, p. 12). The Facebook communities and WhatsApp groups were used in distributing the e-questionnaire to the parents involved in the study.
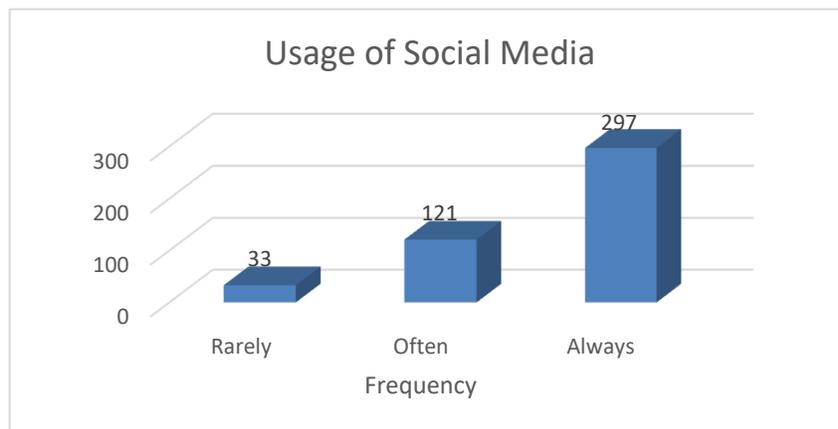
Results

Do you have access to social media?

Chart 1: Access to Social Media
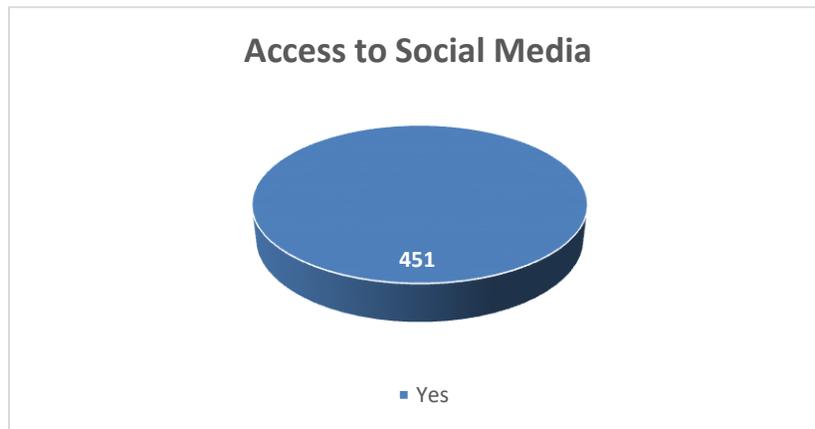
The Pie Chart above shows that all the 451 respondents have access to social media. Without exception, all 451 respondents are users of social media platforms. This shows that social media is extensively available and popular among the respondents.

Chart 2: Use of Social Media

The Bar Chart above shows that 33 (7.3%) respondents use social media rarely, 121 (26.8%) respondents use social media often, while 297 (65.9%) respondents use social media always. This shows that greater majority use social media always.

Table 2: Frequency, Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation of respondents Extent of Indulgence in Sharenting

S/N	Statements	Strongly Agree n(%)	Agree n(%)	Disagree n(%)	Strongly Disagree n(%)	Mean	SD	Remark
1	I share picture or information about my child birthday online	77 (17.1)	198(43.9)	110(24.4)	66 (14.6)	2.63	0.93	Agree
2	I share picture or information about my child's academic price/award online	44 (9.8)	110 (24.4)	187 (41.5)	110 (24.4)	2.20	0.92	Disagree
3	I share picture or information about my child's graduation online	55 (12.2%)	176 (39)	132 (29.3)	88(19.5)	2.44	0.94	Disagree
	Grand Mean and Standard Deviation					**2.42**	**0.88**	**Disagree**

From the above table, 77 (17.1%) respondents strongly agreed,198 (43.9%) respondents agreed, 110 (24.4%) disagreed, while 66 (14.6%) respondents strongly disagreed that they share picture or information about their child birthday online. Again, 44 (9.8%) respondents strongly agreed, 110(24.4%) respondents agreed, 187 (41.5%) disagreed, while 11 (24.4%) respondents strongly disagreed that they share picture or information about their child's academic price/award online. Lastly, 55 (12.2%) respondents strongly agreed 176 (39%) respondents agreed, 132 (29.3%) disagreed, while 88 (19.5%) respondents strongly disagreed that they share picture or information about their child's graduation online. The grand mean of 2.42 established the fact that the respondents generally disagreed to all the item statements on Extent of indulgence in Sharenting.

Table 3: Frequency, Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation of respondents' Perception on Sharenting Risks

S/N	Statements	Strongly Agree n (%)	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Strongly Disagree n (%)	Mean	SD	Remark
1	I feel sharenting practice is a way of attracting unhealthy followers on social media	121 (26.8)	220 (48.8)	99 (22.0)	11 (2.4)	3.00	0.77	Agree
2	I think sharenting practice is an avenue of gaining undue popularity	88 (19.5)	242 (53.7)	110 (24.4)	11 (2.4)	2.90	0.73	Agree
3	I feel sharenting practice violate the privacy of children	154 (34.1)	198 (43.9)	99 (22.0)		3.12	0.74	Agree
	Grand Mean and Standard Deviation					**3.01**	**0.65**	**Agree**

From the above table, 121(26.8%) respondents strongly agreed, 220 (48.8%) respondents agreed, 99 (22%) respondents agreed, while 11 (2.4%) respondents strongly disagreed that they feel sharenting practice is a way of attracting unhealthy followers on social media. Similarly, 88 (19.5%) respondents strongly agreed, 242(53.7%) respondents agreed, 110 (24.4%) respondents disagreed while, 11 (2.4%) respondents strongly disagreed that sharenting practice is an avenue of gaining undue popularity. Lastly, 154(34.1%) respondents strongly agreed, 198(43.9%) respondents agreed, while 99(22%) respondents disagreed that sharenting practice violate the privacy of children. The grand mean of 3.01 established the fact that the respondents generally agreed to all the item statements on perception on sharenting risks.

Table 4: Frequency, Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation of respondents' sharenting risk perception influence

S/N	Statements	Strongly Agree n (%)	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Strongly Disagree n (%)	Mean	SD	Remark
1	I no longer share my child's information or photo on social media	121 (26.8)	143(31.7)	154 (34.1)	33 (7.3)	2.78	0.93	Agree
2	I limit the way I post information regarding my child online	176 (39.0)	253 (56.1)		22 (4.9)	3.29	0.71	Agree
3	I no longer post sensitive information about my child	220 (451)	187 (41.5)	33 (7.3)	11 (2.4)	3.37	0.73	Agree
	Grand Mean and Standard Deviation					**3.15**	**0.63**	**Agree**

From the above table, 121(26.8%) respondents strongly agreed, 143 (31.7%) respondents agreed, 154 (34.1%) respondents agreed, while 33 (7.3%) respondents strongly disagreed that they no longer share their child's information or photo on social media. Similarly, 176 (39.0%) respondents strongly agreed, 253(56.1%) respondents agreed while, 22(4.9%) respondents strongly disagreed that they limit the way they post information regarding their child online. Lastly, 220(451%) respondents strongly agreed, 187(41.5%) respondents agreed, 33(7.3%) respondents disagreed while 11(2.4%) respondents strongly disagreed that they no longer post sensitive information about their child. The grand mean of 3.15 established the fact that the respondents generally agreed to all the item statements on influence of risk perception on sharenting.

Hypothesis

Ho$_1$: The extent to which parents perceive the risk associated with Sharenting does not influence the degree at which parents engage in the practice.

Table 5: **Pearson Correlation of Parents Perception on Sharenting Risk and Parents Indulgence in Sharenting**

		Perception of Sharenting Risks	Extent of Indulgence Sharenting
Perception of Sharenting Risks	Pearson Correlation	1	-.521[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	451	451
Extent of IndulgenceSharenting	Pearson Correlation	-.521[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	451	451
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The data in Table 5 shows the relationship between parents' perception on sharenting risk and parents' indulgence in sharenting. Correlation coefficient yielded significant negative and moderate relationship between parents' perception on sharenting risk and parents indulgence in sharenting (r = -0.521, p= 0.000), implying that the higher risks the parents perceive Sharenting to be, the lower the parents indulge in Sharenting. This also implies that they engage more in Sharenting when they do not perceive it to be risky.

To ascertain the extent to which parents in urban and semi-urban areas of South East indulge in Sharenting.

To assess the extent of parental engagement in sharenting, a grand mean of 2.42 was determined. Based on the results, it could be observed that the respondents expressed a general inclination towards disagreement with all of the item statements pertaining to the degree of indulgence in sharing. The findings of the study are inconsistent with the findings of Latipah et al. (2020), who found that millennial parents actively participate in sharing activities for various reasons, resulting in both positive and negative outcomes. The findings of the study are not consistent with the findings of Lipu and Siibak (2019), who observed that sharenting has become a pervasive aspect of the parental journey for several parents. It was noted that a significant proportion of mothers express a sense of ease when it comes to disclosing photographs and details about their children on social media platforms. This implies that the prevalence of sharenting in urban and semi-urban area could be impacted by cultural elements and personal perspectives on privacy and online sharing. Hence, the phenomenon of sharenting is prevalent when parents residing in urban and semi-urban area actively participate in disseminating information and sharing content pertaining to their offspring on various social media platforms. Although engaging in sharenting can offer advantages such as fostering support and establishing connections with people, it is important to acknowledge the accompanying detrimental consequences and potential hazards.

To find out the perception of parents living in urban and semi-urban areas of South East on the risk associated with Sharenting

The calculated grand mean of 3.01 indicates a general consensus among the respondents on their agreement with the item statements pertaining to the perception of sharenting risks. The results are in line with the

findings of Ni Bhroin et al. (2022), which indicate that parents may perceive the advantages of social connection and support as surpassing the possible drawbacks. This implies that millennial parents participate in sharenting for a multitude of reasons and exhibit a diverse range of behaviours. The parental perspective of the potential hazards linked to sharenting exhibits variability and is subject to the influence of multiple circumstances. The findings are in line with the findings of Ranzini et al. (2020), which indicate that parental concerns regarding privacy and the potential consequences for their child's future can contribute to their reluctance to disclosing information about their children on the internet. The individuals in question may possess knowledge of the potential hazards associated with digital abduction or internet-based child exploitation, as indicated by Brosch's study in 2018. Certain parents may also take into account the potential adverse psychological consequences on their offspring, such as experiencing emotions of insecurity or being subjected to the strain of maintaining an impeccable image. One should be cognizant of both the advantages and potential drawbacks associated with the subject matter.

To what extent do sharenting risk perception influence parent indulgence in sharenting in the urban and semi-urban areas in south east Nigeria?

The risk perception of parents about the internet privacy of their children is a crucial determinant of their indulgence in sharenting. The calculated grand mean of 3.15 indicates a general consensus among the respondents on their agreement with the item statements related to the role of risk perception on sharenting. The findings of this study are in opposition to the findings of Ndolo, Ekwe, and Akpan, (2022) who found that individuals who do not perceive any risks associated with sharing their children's information on social media outnumber those who do perceive concerns. The study revealed that parents exhibiting elevated levels of risk perception tend to employ restrictive mediation methods, including the implementation of privacy settings and the restriction of their posts' audience. These parents exhibit a heightened level of vigilance regarding the potential hazards and ramifications associated with the act of disclosing personal information about their offspring on the internet.

Conclusion

  Sharenting extends beyond individual families to societal and regulatory considerations in the digital age. Notably, a considerable proportion of respondents exhibit infrequent tendencies towards sharing photographs, personal details, or updates pertaining to their children on various social media sites. This finding implies that, in contrast to the prevailing respondents opinion, a significant proportion of parents demonstrate prudence with regards to disclosing their children's personal information on the internet. While several parents exhibited comprehensive knowledge of the possible risk, this will necessitate the implementation of educational initiatives and raising awareness among parents about secure practices in the internet realm. This study also highlights the significance of privacy and security concerns that parents should take into account when disclosing information about their children on the internet. Enhancing parental decision-making could be facilitated through the provision of education and resources pertaining to optimal strategies for "sharing."

  Hence, this study provides nuanced insights into the practice of sharenting within the specific urban and semi-urban contexts of South-East Nigeria. While sharenting is evidently widespread, current findings illuminate the diverse levels of Parental Perception regarding associated risks. Additionally, multiple factors, including age, educational attainment, occupational status, and income, were found to intricately shape parental perceptions of these risks.

Recommendations

Based the conclusion the study recommends that:

1. The study recommends the development and implementation of structured parental education programs aimed at raising awareness about the inherent risks of sharenting. These programs should also offer practical guidelines for responsible online sharing of children's information. Collaborative efforts with local educational institutions, community centers, and non-governmental organizations can ensure the effective dissemination of educational materials through workshops and awareness campaigns.

2. An imperative recommendation involves advocating for the formulation of legislative and policy measures that explicitly address online privacy rights for children in South-East Nigeria. Emphasis should be placed on regulations governing the sharing of sensitive personal information without obtaining informed consent.

3. Establishing dedicated child advocacy and support centers across South-East Nigeria is imperative. These centers should be equipped to provide vital services, including counseling, legal assistance, and resources, to support children adversely affected by online harassment, cyberbullying, or negative consequences stemming from sharenting practices

4. The initiation of impactful public awareness campaigns is highly recommended. These campaigns should effectively communicate the potential risks associated with sharenting and underscore the paramount importance of safeguarding children's online privacy. Collaborative efforts with local influencers and public figures can extend the reach and impact of these campaigns.

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