The trend of sharenting among Malaysian parents: a preliminary study of intention and motivation

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	Social media platforms and applications are increasing exponentially and has become a part of life. It is widely used to connect with large numbers of people without investing much time and effort. This led to the emergence of a new term, 'sharenting' which refers to parents sharing children's information on social media. The trend of sharenting is predominant and has raised concerns in the western countries, but in Malaysia there is still a lack of adequate knowledge on this trend. Past research on sharenting focuses on the usage frequency, content and consequences of sharenting in Western countries. However, there is a dearth of literature on the intention and motivation of Malaysian parents to this trend. Thus, the current study employed a qualitative approach to explore Malaysian parents' intention and motivation of sharing children's information on social media through the framework of Bandura's social learning theory. The sample comprising of Malaysian parents aged between 20 to 40 who share their children's information on social media were interviewed and the findings were analyzed using a thematic approach. This research is significant as it provides knowledge on the trend of sharenting of Malaysian parents. The paper ends with recommendation for further future research.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Social media is a term for the online platforms that people use to create ideas, connect with others, share media content, and form social networks. Among some of the popular platforms are Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest, WeChat and WhatsApp [1]. Today, social media has become one of the most popular internet services in the world. Alexa Traffic Rankings [2], one of the companies which tracks web traffic has ranked Facebook and MySpace as the most visited sites in the world, where Facebook is only second to Google both in world and U.S. rankings. Not only that, Instagram which was developed in 2010 is also a social media app widely used by the netizens with over 500 million active users in 2016 [3]. These social media sites allow people to express their feelings, build community, publish their opinions, connect with people all around the world as well as create and share content [4].

The number of active users on social media who are reading blogs has increased from 54% to 77% globally within the last two years. Further, the use of multimedia platforms such as sharing video has also grown from 32% to 83% in 2006 which is the fastest growing platform on social media [4]. With the evolution of the social media, users' opinions can be easily shaped through the comments from other users. Most of the comments, despite coming from strangers whom the users do not know, these people's opinions in the post becomes a part their sites when they share it with the public.

Sharenting is one the trends that emerged because of the increase in the popularity of social media. It refers to the wide use of social media by parents to upload and share content which includes creating online profile, posting comments or chatting, uploading photos and videos, sharing links, tagging photos and content, remixing and changing existing content and sharing it [5]. It has increasingly become a part of everyday life for people especially with the user numbers of social media platforms and applications increasing exponentially each year. People are easily connected with large number of followers and relatives who are living apart without investing much time and effort.

According to a survey carried out by the University of Michigan's C.S. Mott Children's Hospital among 569 parents of children aged 0-4, 56% of mothers and 34% of fathers were found to have shared children's information related to parenting on social media [6]. Further, it was found in the study that 70 % of parents had knowledge that the information posted on social media had negative consequences such as might embarrass a child (56%), personal information posted might reveal a child's location (51%) or inappropriate photos causes a child to be perceived negatively (27%). In addition, another research carried out by Hart Research Associates on behalf of Family Online Safety Institute (FOSI) [7] among 589 parents of children aged 6-17 found that 20% of the parents who posted information about the children on social media knew that it would embarrass the child in the future. Not only that, one out of ten parents were asked by their child to delete what they have shared online by the parents [7].

Bartholomew *et al*. [8] have found that up to 98% parents shared pictures of their children on Facebook. It has been reported that mothers are more prone to sharing photos of their children compared to fathers because they find sharing photos online are easier and faster to communicate with large numbers of people without investing much time and effort [9]. Currently, the usage of social media has widely exploded where people share facts of their daily lives on social media by posting photos and videos. When Facebook gained popularity starting from 2004, it was reported that 2.13 billion monthly active users were practicing sharenting through the technological development facilitation and growing audience [10].

In the United States, a 2015 study showed that 92% of children below two years old had an online presence and one-third of them were posted on social media even before one day old [11]. Digital footprint refers to an identity which is created when parents post their children's photos on social media even before their birth by sharing their ultrasound image [12]. Thus, the children acquire their online identity before they can even speak. As children grow up, every photo and video that parents had shared on social media becomes a digital footprint of the children. People can review everything of the children through social media by searching their names. This has led to a number of issues with strangers misusing the content that the parents have posted [13].

It must be noted that the social media apps which enables visual sharing provides an avenue for every user's profile to be followed by others or to follow others. With all these social media apps, over sharing of children's information has resulted in negative consequences on the lives of the children such as digital kidnapping, criminal acts, online reputation or digital footprint and invasion of children's rights and privacy. Digital kidnapping is also a trend that happens on social media when someone misuses the photos and videos of the child as their own across all the websites [14]. People will make use of the information which has been posted by the child's parents such as the names, birthday, schools or any other details to create a fake identity together with the photos of the child. The perpetrator will claim the child as his/her own and post photos on websites which are unacceptable or inappropriate.

It is commonly accepted that parents want to share their happiness with their family and friends once they get good news and sharing it on the social media is more convenient and faster than to announce it verbally to their relatives around the world. However, it has been stated that information shared through the years embarrasses the children when they grow up [14]. Children might get bullied or made fun of by others when they go to school especially when something awkward about them has been posted online. It may lower their self-esteem when the other children laugh at them by looking at their humiliating photos and videos online. As stated, the information that parents shared through social media contributes to the children's online reputation [15]. Online reputation is created as a result of everything posted online which is hard to remove or delete. Posting photos and videos as well as comments on the posts of the children on social media shapes the online reputation. This can affect them in the future when they get into education or employment such as an argument on Facebook wall could bring them a negative online reputation and affect their prospects.

As noted, social media serves as a platform for parents to share their experiences such as when their children experience chronic disease [16]. In such situations, they would update the process of how they go through all these problems on social media to alert and remind people to be aware of what could happen to them. This can be seen as a positive effect of sharenting. Despite this, children's rights and privacy need to be protected as they are too young to be exposed on social media [17]. Parents share children's information without their consent and thus create their online identity which may affect their daily life both at present and future. When revealing the information of the children on social media, parents act as a gatekeeper of the

personal information and a narrator of telling stories of the children [17]. These roles of parents give little protection to their children's online identity. There was a case which occurred in 2016 where a teenage girl from Carinthia region of Austria claimed that over 500 photos of her had been uploaded on Facebook by her parents which made her life a misery [18]. She sued her parents for violating her rights of personal life by posting her photos of her sitting in the toilet or lying naked on the bed. Her father was asked to remove and delete the photos from Facebook, but he claimed that since he took the photos, he has the rights to upload them. The lawyer of the teenage girl claimed that her client has the greater chance to win in the court if the photos were found to have violated her rights and her parents will need to compensate the teenage girl. However, there is no further update about this case as it might have been resolved outside the court.

The Western countries have conducted a lot of researche on sharenting, but research in Malaysia is still in its infancy. Further, past researche in the Western word mainly focused on the usage and frequency of sharenting on social media and its effects. Besides focusing on the usage and frequency of sharenting, the studies also analyzed the contents that parents shared on social media and how these contents affected the children. Therefore, this qualitative study focuses on Malaysian parents' intention and motivation of sharenting. The findings from this research are beneficial not only to add to the lack of research on sharenting in Malaysia but also to assist policy makers such as the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) to come up with new policies to restrict the social media users from misusing the content posted on social media. Not only that, but the authority can also introduce a new law to fine people who do not follow the rules. This can protect children from danger in real life or online and will be aligned to the objectives of the Malaysian Child Act 2001 to ensure the rights and safety of the child is given the highest priority.

This research adopted the social learning theory proposed by Albert Bandura, that advocates people learn from others through observation, imitation, and modeling as the research framework [19]. People learn by observing others' behavior and attitude; thus, they will perform in a similar way when they meet the same issues or scenario. According to Bandura, the coded information serves as a guide for action when one forms an idea on how they should perform and act when they meet certain situation [20]. Bandura's theory of social learning indicates that the behaviors of human are influenced by the former or cognitive processes such as attention, motivation and memory which explained on how humans learn through social contexts [20]. Bandura explains how children learn from the social environment by observing and imitating the behaviors of others. He believed that human behavior cannot be fully explained by reinforcing but it involves an influence by others. The intention and motivation of parents to share and post children's information on social media might be affected by cognitive and environmental factors which forms the behavior of sharenting. Parents would post children's photo basically based on their own interest, to share their daily lives with the followers on social media or environmental affected the posting behavior of parents through imitating the other parents' action.

Social media is widely used by individuals to share information or photos to update their daily lives with their followers on the social application such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest, WeChat and WhatsApp. Research has also indicated that parents post hundreds of photos of their children on social media by the age of five [21]. This led to the development of a new term identified as 'sharenting' which refers to the habit of parents' use of social media to share detailed information of their children. Parents' claim that they sharent to gain social support, update their current status or condition with family or obtain feedback and advice from the other parents. Nonetheless, the action of sharenting has brought some negative impact to children which threaten their safety. Among these negative impacts are digital kidnapping, criminal acts, online reputation or digital footprint as well as invasion of children' rights and privacy which has been discussed in the introduction.

The practice of sharenting is a common phenomenon in most of the countries. However, there are some differences in legal responses toward the issues in different countries. In America, the children are unable to obtain any legal remedy to request their parents to remove their personal information or photos shared by their parents on social media [22]. The courts are unwilling to protect children's rights and privacy in the family context as the American government has established a law to protect free speech of individuals, thus sharenting is considered as free speech. Hence, Steinberg [17] has raised the awareness on the danger of sharenting by giving public health model through educating the professionals, parents and the public.

In France, the law has provided protection towards individual's private life and image by giving public warning on Facebook to advise parents not to infringe the children's rights by posting their photos and information. Children may request parents to remove their information through the 'Commission nationale de l'informatique et des libertés (Cnil)' which is the French equivalent of the Information Commissioner's Office, and if parents share children's intimate photos without consent, they can be fined up to 45,000 Euros or up to one year of imprisonment [22]. On the other hand, there is no obvious legal remedy available to protect children whose information has been sharented in England [22]. The authorities are not concerned

overtly on the phenomenon of sharenting, thus English criminal law does not offer obvious remedy on this issue. In Malaysia, children's rights are mainly protected by the convention on the rights of the child (CRC) which has been ratified by Malaysia as well as the MCMC.

The intention of sharenting can be interpreted as an inner force of parents who want to share something on social media due to their interest. Despite having concern for their children rights and privacy, they still share and post consistently as they gain social support from it [23]. Parents also share their parenting experiences by answering questions posed on social media or to get opinion from others [24]. By doing so, parents aim to stay connected and gain social support through social media.

Social media allows people to communicate with large numbers of people without putting much effort on it. Previous researches have proven that people disclose information on social media to create and maintain relationship with others [25], [26]. It has been agreed that social support can be acquired through building relationships on social media by sharing information [27]. The self-disclosing behavior are intrinsically motivated by one's own interest [28]. Thus, people post information or photos to build social communities according to similar interest [29]. As discussed, literature review is predominantly done in Western countries and there is minimal focus on the Malaysian scenario. Thus, the current research is preliminary research conducted to identify Malaysian parents' intention and motivation in sharenting. The next section elaborates on the methodology adopted by the researchers.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

A qualitative research method was used for this study, a process of seeking in-depth understanding of a phenomenon. The data was specifically collected through a qualitative method as it focuses on obtaining detailed information in order to provide a comprehensive insight into the issues [30]. The reason for using a qualitative method in this study is to get in-depth information on the intention and motivation of parents on sharing children's information on social media. Research has proven that qualitative research is mainly focused on analyzing subjective meaning of the issues or events rather than collecting the statistics and number of the data [31]. Thus, the researchers adopted this research design to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

The study was carried out in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia which is ranked as an alpha world city and the fastest growing metropolitan city in the country. The city also has a high Human Development Index, which had an estimated population of 1,76 million in 2016 [32]. For this study, Malaysian parents aged 20 to 40, residing in Kuala Lumpur were targeted as the sample. A snowball sampling method was employed for recruitment of parents who had intention and motivation to share and post their children's information on social media. Snowball sampling is also referred to as a chain referral sampling where the first participant is randomly selected after which the other participants are identified through referral from the first participant [33]. According to the report by the Malaysian communications and multimedia commission [34], the mean age of social media users has increased from 33.0 to 36.2 since 2016. Hence, social media users were mainly aged between 20 to 30, thus this study targeted parents aged 20 to 40 years parents who had shared and posted their children's information on social media. According to Patton [35], the sample size can be determined by the study objectives, time allocated or resources available as there is no basic targeted sample size in qualitative research. The targeted sample size in this study was 8 based on data saturation achieved on the criteria set in the study. Further, the selected sample were also restricted to those having children below 18 who are not considered as an adult according to the age of majority act 1971 [36]. The inclusive criteria of participants for the study was Malaysian, aged between 20 to 40, able to write, read and listen to English proficiently and possess the habit of posting and sharing children's information on social media. The reason for the requirement of English proficiency is to enable the participants to understand the purpose of the study and answer the interview questions appropriately.

Data collection was done by way of face-to-face interviews conducted with the eight samples. Strict ethical rules were followed. Approval from the faculty was obtained prior to conducting the interviews. Before the interview, parents who shared and posted children's information through social media were approached and basic questions were posed to ensure they meet the criteria such as nationality, age, language proficiency. Individuals who fulfilled the criteria were invited as participants for the one-to-one interview at an appointed venue convenient to the participants. Proper consent was also obtained through formal consent forms.

The interviews were audio recorded to be reviewed for data analysis later. Notes were also taken during the interview sessions. An interview questionnaire was developed based on the social learning theory of Bandura [19]. The interview questions such as 'do you think by sharing your children's information make you to be more sociable?' and 'do you think by sharing your children's information build your self-efficacy/confidence?' were posed to the interviewees during the interview session. The interview questions

were tested through a pilot test to identify its applicability and suitability as well as to ensure it was error free [37].

The data was analysed using a thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method which identifies, analyses and reports the collected data into themes and interprets the different aspects of the research topic [38]. The thematic analysis employed in qualitative research increased the in-depth understanding of the research topic. It was easier to understand when the data are coded into themes. The process is divided into five phases, which is familiarizing with the data, coding, generating initial themes, reviewing themes, defining, and naming themes and writing up report [39].

3.   RESULTS

As stated, the results were analysed using thematic analysis where key themes were identified. The findings on the parents' intention and motivation of sharing children's photos and videos on social media from the interviews conducted are presented according to the themes identified inclusive of happiness, keeping memories, comparison among children, filtering information and skills learned. The interview results shown consistant from majority of the participants. All results are discussed as below and responses from participants were provided as example.

3.1. Sharing happiness

Most of the respondents of the interview claimed that they shared and posted happy moments experienced with their children. They also claimed that they wanted to share these moments of happiness with their friends and family who lived apart from them. In response to the question whether posting the photos and videos makes them proud or builds their confidence and self-efficacy, the respondents claimed that they were just sharing the moments of happiness in their lives without any such thoughts. The responses of some of the respondents are quoted:

"Not really as I just want to share about the happiness of my children and the happiness of myself of having children." (Respondent B)

"Not to say that sharing those information like photos or videos will build my confidence or make feel proud of, but it's more toward sharing those happy moment with my friends and family which we can't really get to them everyday." (Respondent H)

"I will more on sharing the happiness of my kids, something that special like I saw my son put on a high heels which is something funny for me to post on social media or maybe when all the kids gather together and I will feel that they are naïve and happy then I will feel like they are different from the adults, then I will capture and share on social media." (Respondent B)

"I don't think like I want to get anything in return, I just feel like I want to share the happy moment with others and create some good memories for me to look back in the future." (Respondent C)

"I didn't expect to get anything in return, just to sharing some happy and funny photos and videos to others." (Respondent E)

The respondents also specified that they did not expect anything in return after posting their children's photos and videos on social media. They basically just wanted to share their happiness and some good memories with their friends and family members. Thus, an analysis of the respondents' responses quoted, the researchers believe that posting and sharing photos and videos on the social media is an avenue which enables the parents to share precious moments of their lives with their children which had given abundance of happiness to them.

3.2. Retaining memories

The factors that influence interviewees to start posting children's information on social media is mainly because it is easier for them to track their memories from the social media apps in the future. In addition, they mentioned that Facebook will show notification on some memories to remind the users about photos or videos taken in the past. The respondents also claimed that they are not influenced by the trend on social media for following users. They said they shared and posted a lot on social media not to attract people to follow, subscribe or give likes and comments to them, but purely to keep the memories online and to be able to view them again in the future.

"Not really, because it's not about comparing but it's just on sharing on their lives and sometimes look at the memory *in the future you will feel that this is something you will treasure about."* (Respondent A)

"Actually, it's started with want to have a memory I can see in the future instead of keeping the photos in the phone or photo album which we are not really looking at, so right now like social media apps such as Facebook and Instagram, they will show you the pass or previous years' memories, it's more on social media helps to have a platform to have this information sharing in the future." (Respondent A)

"The reason that I started to post photos on social media is to create memory for me to look back in the future because Facebook will remind us of the good memories by popping out the photos by telling us when was the photo taken and posted before." (Respondent C)

"For my intention mainly is to track as a record of their developmental stage." (Respondent F)

"The reason of start posting may be want to be the memories of our own, and easier for me and my kids to look when they have grown up, because printing out the photos maybe it will be lost or faded after years, but keeping on social media will be easier to track it back." (Respondent H)

"At first, I just want to keep as memories for me to review in the future, but after sharing I realize that some of the mother on social media give attention on those photos and this encourage me to post more of it." (Respondent D)

One of the interviewees claimed that she wanted to keep the photos and videos as her own memories, but she realised that sharing gives encouragement to new parents who have special kids, as they might not know how to take care of them. Thus, posting those photos and videos can give them some confidence and encouragement to other parents when taking care of the children. Therefore, by posting and sharing the information on social media, the respondents found that it is easier for them to track their memories in the future rather than look for them in photo albums. This can be seen as one of the benefits of social media as it keeps a good record of memories, but then it can also become a threat for it is hard to remove all the information from internet if they want to do so in the future.

3.3. Comparison among children

Most of the interviewees do not compare their children with the children that they see on social media as they mentioned that children should not be compared. In response to the questions on whether they compare their children with the other children that they see on social media, most of them pointed out that they do not compare their children because they think that children at this age should not be compared. This had shown that parents do understand the side effects of comparing among children.

"Not really, because it's not about comparing but it's just on sharing on their lives…" (Respondent A)

"No, as I just want to share something interested and I don't think they should be compared." (Respondent C)

"I will not compare between my children and the others because I don't think they need to be compared." (Respondent E)

"No because I think children don't need to be compared." (Respondent G)

"It's not about making any comparison between the children, just simply sharing on the happy moment when I am with my children." (Respondent H)

Children are born to be special and are important to parents. Parents would not want to compare their children with others to make them be perfect because every child is unique to his/her parents. Therefore, comparison should be avoided as it causes stress on the children.

3.4. Filtering information

The respondents stated that they will filter the information before they post on social media where they will double check the photos or video to ensure they do not accidentally post any private photos and videos which infringes the privacy of their children. The selection of photos will be done properly by parents before posting. Besides, parents are caution about the safety of the children because the photos and videos will be edited to avoid revealing the location.

"Yes, like before I post a video, I will check on the information in the photos, do I accidentally reveal anything and I will just cut the video or don't post the video. Also, when the information reveals where the kids study or where we lived then I'll just remove it." (Respondent A)

"Yes, I will filter based on my preference, some of the parents will post and share everything of their children on social media, but for me sometimes I'll post some funny photos of my children. But if my kids went a performance or what, I'll not purposely post it because I don't think I need to make anyone happy or to show off by showing how good is he. I prefer to share the photos like how happy they are when they are with the other children." (Participant B)

"Yes, I don't post about their living area, their school, and I don't post immediately and check in when I'm at the place, I'll post the photos after we came back from the place." (Respondent D)

"I will not share about the locations and some private information, I will just share about the funny and happy photos and videos of my kid." (Respondent E)

"Ya of course I will filter the information like the more private information and their nude photos, I'm not posting those kind of photos or videos." (Respondent H)

Based on the findings from the interviews, it can be concurred that filtering the information before posting or sharing on social media was considered as an important step for parents. This is because they all agreed that exposing private information of their children might bring harm to the children and expose them to danger. This is an important awareness that all parents should pay extra attenssion to aovid cases like kipnaping.

3.5. Knowledges and skills learned

The findings from the interviews also highlighted an interesting fact where it is noted that parents have picked up some additional skills when they posted the photos and videos of their children on social media. This indirectly became a factor to trigger their intention and motivation to be involved in the trend of sharenting. The knowledge and skills that respondents have learnt included how to edit the photos and videos before posting on social media. Sometimes, the different viewpoints posted by other parents as well as suggestions and opinions given through comments or direct messages to them enhances their skills in posting photos and videos. In response to the question as to the knowledge and skills that parents would learn from posting and sharing their children's information on social media, they claimed that the skills learned and enhanced was the skill of editing, uploading and categorising the photos and videos on different social media applications.

"I learned skills like how to upload and edit the videos and photos nicely." (Respondent A)

"Yes, I have learned skills like editing and how to post it on social media." (Respondent C)

"I learn skills like how to categorize the photos into different album on Facebook after I upload the photos." (Respondent D)

Besides, the respondents also claimed that they picked up some knowledge from their followers and subscribers in the social media. They mentioned that the other parents would tell them what they should or should not do with their children. The comments and messages from the other parents are things that emerged beyond their expectations but then, it added new information that became useful to them.

"Yes, I learn skills like how to edit and upload, the captions that what I want to write on the photos, I will think the caption before posting the photos. I learn things the viewpoints from different aspects." (Respondent B)

"Yes, sometimes when I posted on Instagram story, because after we share, we don't think we are doing something wrong then the other parents will come and approach and tell us it's not right to do that, then we can learn some knowledge from that." (Respondent G)

"Actually in the beginning I just taking photos of my children as part of my interest, but after taking it for a long time, I have learned like how to editing the photos, skills of taking photos and videos, and eventually I now became a photographer which doing the wedding or new born baby photograph." (Respondent H)

The respondents mentioned that they have also learned some soft skills on their own from spending time exploring on the process of editing before posting on social media and from the knowledge given by other parents when they post something illustrating their children doing something inappropriate in the photos or video. Those comments helped create awareness and made them realize that they are doing something that is not right. The photo and video editing skills has no harm to be learnt, but if it applied in the wrong way, then those embarrassing photos and videos might affect children psychologically.

4. DISCUSSION

Social media applications help people to connect with each other easily. People get to contact with friends and family who lived in distance without investing much time and effort. Parents share and post the photos and videos on social media to connect with their friends and family. Most of the interviewees claimed that they shared the happiness with their friends and family through sharing photos on social media. As they did not connect with each other frequently, therefore sharing on social media is the most convenient way for them to update their recent status.

Previous research has emphasised on how parents have violated children's rights by indicating parents reveal too much of children's private information on social media [40]. However, the research did not focus and elaborate on the severity of the consequences of posting the details and information of the children. Since there is a lack of research on the negative implications of sharenting on social media, the use of social media for sharenting has become a trend for parents to post and share their children's photos and videos. Further, according to past research, parents are willing to share the private information of the children such as their date of birth, or videos of their performances and achievements to the public. Parents claim that sharing children's information on social media is a trend where every parent is nowadays sharing and posting with intension to keep the photos and videos as a memory for themselves to review in the future or to gain likes and comments from their followers. As discussed, Facebook has a function which will show notifications of the photos and videos from previous years to remind people about their good memories.

One respondent also mentioned that by sharing and posting his/her children's photos and videos on social media had initiated his/her interest of photography. Eventually, it became his/her full-time job as a photographer where he/she is currently taking wedding photographs and newborn baby photographs. This habit of sharenting had accidentally developed his/her career path by cultivating his/her interest.

The results from previous research on sharenting also indicated that the common things that parents would share are photos of their children's daily lives, outings and special events [14]. However, they do reveal some private information on social media which is open to public view. As compared to the current research, most parents claimed that they do not post and share information which will embarrass their children in the future.

Through this research focused on the intention and motivation of sharenting, the findings from the interviews showed that parents are aware of the danger in sharing too much of their children information on social media. As they had the knowledge, they asserted that they do give thought to this before they share or post their children information. Although some of the parents claimed that they are sharing information with good intention such as giving some positive energy to the other mothers or just to share some happiness with their family and friends, they also have an understanding on the consequences of over sharing.

Despite previous researches having given insights to parents on the consequences of giving too much information on the internet which could harm their children, in Malaysia there is still a lack of awareness on the severity of the issue. According to The Star [41], a total number of 723 cases of children missing aged between 13 to 15 were reported from January to June in this year. Hence, 345 cases out of 723 were solved, and the average of four children are reported missing in a day which indicates that the issue is serious in Malaysia. Since the current research is mainly focused on the intention and motivation of parents who share and post their children information on social media, it does not identify the content that parents like to post and share the most. Besides, this research also did not study the frequency of parents using social media as well as the nature of the contents shared. Further, since the sample is very small and only restricted

to Kuala Lumpur, it cannot be generalised to represent the intention and motivation of sharenting of the population in Malaysia.

As the current research is basically focused on the intention and motivation of sharenting, therefore future researchers can explore different areas such as the content that parents post and how often they do it. Future research can also use a larger sample from different locations in Malaysia or even carry out a survey to ensure reliability and validity of the findings. In addition, future research can also identify which gender post and share the most on social media. This is because, although the usage of internet specifically social media applications among young adults aged between 18 to 29 has reached 72% [42], research has not identified which gender is more active.

5.   CONCLUSION

As a conclusion it can be said that social media is making lives easier and convenient. By using the social media wisely, it can be useful and convenient. In contrast, when people misuse, it will lead to severe outcomes. The widespread use of internet and social media had brought up the issues which causes harm to the children all over the world as well as has raised concerns on the rights and privacy of children. As such, the researchers conclude that parents who are involved in the trend of sharenting must do so with caution and give due respect to children's rights and privacy.

Research shown that the act of posting and sharing photos and videos on the social media has become a trend for everyone and is being done without any conscious consideration which leads to the consequences of revealing too much of information. It must be concurred that parents have the responsibility to protect their children's privacy and when they choose to disclose their children's photos and videos or any information regarding their children, they are infringing the children's rights and privacy. Despite there being research on the effects of sharenting but the parents in Malaysia are generally unaware of the consequences. Today, the consequences such as digital kidnapping, online reputation, criminal acts, digital footprint or invasion of children' rights and privacy which brings mental or physical harm to children is getting serious.

To sum up, the question on whether parents should post and share their children information on social media, is still an ongoing debate. Although some of the parents come up with good and positive intention and motivation, the findings indicate that removing private information of the children becomes difficult as the children grow because the information has become 'too' public. Children's privacy needs to be protected as it may lead to negative outcomes such as placing them at the risk of being targeted by the kidnapper or embarrassing the children when they had grown up. Parents started creating their children's digital footprint since they are in prenatal stage until they are born and this in essence infringes the children's rights and the researchers conclude that more laws should be enacted to address this to provide a safer environment for children.

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