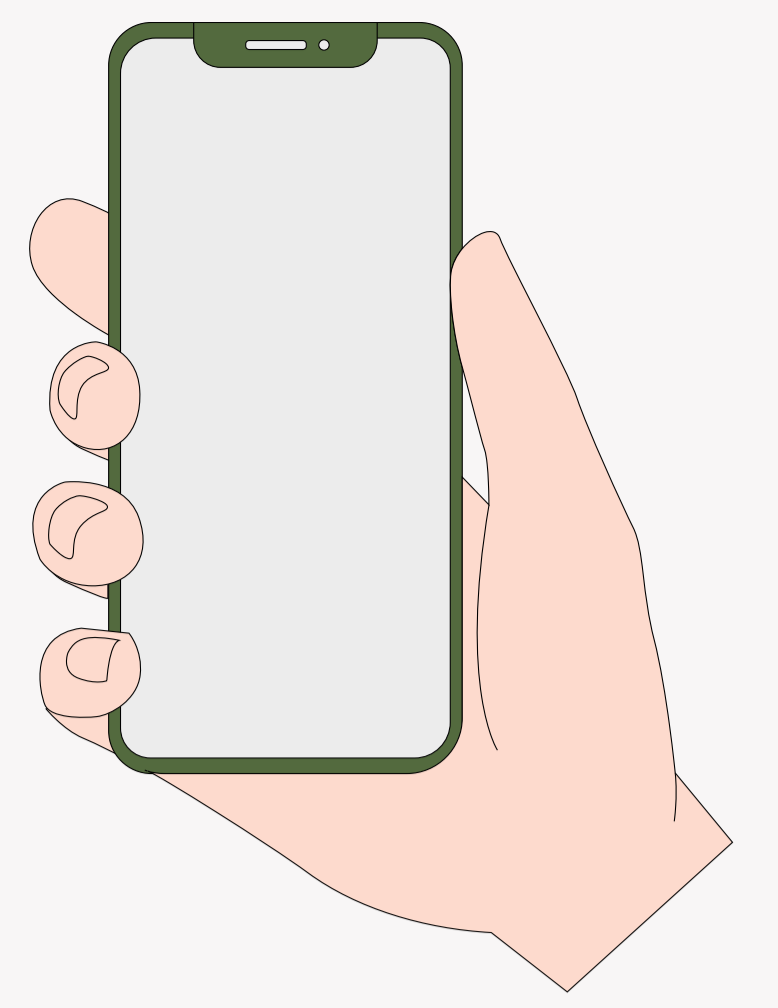


# PARENTING IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Exploring Attitudes Toward Sharenting among parents of Young Children



Julie Brandt

Martina Cutaia

Stijn Van Petegem

## INTRODUCTION

**Sharenting** (a combination of sharing and parenting) refers to the practice of parents publicly sharing information about their children on social media (Tosuntaş & Griffiths, 2024).

In this context, parenthood increasingly becomes a form of **public performance**, with social media serving as a space where parents can **stage and promote their parental success** (Lazard, 2019).

Exposure to parental content online, whether **idealized** or more authentic, may activate **social comparison** processes that influence how parents construct **representations of parenthood**.

These effects may also **vary** according to **social norms**. (Doğan Keskin et al., 2023).

## METHODOLOGY

### Mixed method :

#### Quantitative survey

- Paper and online questionnaire including sociodemographic and Likert-scale questions
- **806 parents** of a child aged 0 to 3 years

#### Analyses:

##### Cluster analysis based on questionnaires:

Clustering variables :

- **Frequency of exposure** to sharenting content (share\_exp)
- **Type of exposure** to sharenting content (authentic or idealized)
- **Sociodemographic variables**

#### MANOVA

Dependent variables :

- **Social comparisons** (horizontal, upward, and downward)
- **Contemporary parenting norms** (child-centeredness, self-sacrifice, and parental determinism)

#### Semi-structured qualitative interviews

- **16 participants** from the quantitative survey
- **vignette-based study**

#### Analyses:

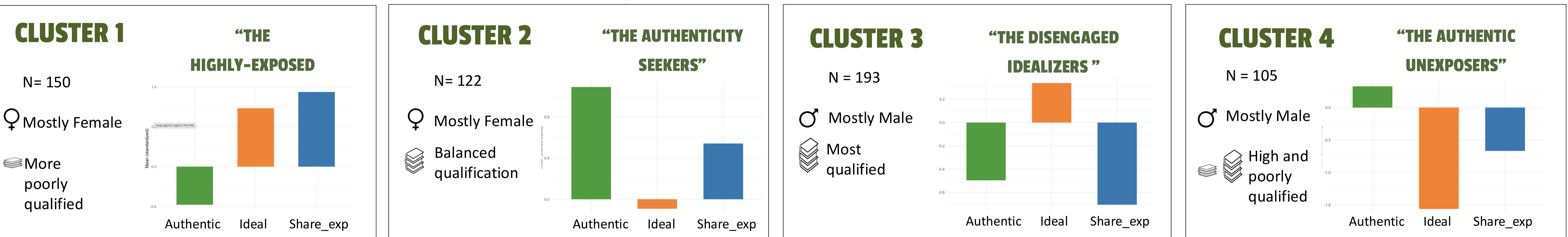
Qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2014)

## GOALS

1. Identify distinct **profiles of parents** based on their sharenting consumption habits.
2. Examine how these clusters differ in their **social comparison** tendencies and **contemporary parenting norms**
3. Explore how **perceptions, values, and emotional reactions** to different types of sharenting content vary across cluster profiles.



## QUANTITATIVE RESULTS



Standardized gender, education- level and expositions proportions

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4
<b>Upward comparison</b> F-Value : 9.373 p < .001	3.21 a	3.15 a	3.09 a	2.53 b
<b>Downward comparison</b> F-Value 5.029 p < .01	2.43 ab	2.69 a	2.42 ab	2.21 b
<b>Horizontal comparison</b> F-Value 3.222 p < .01	3.22 a	3.09 ab	3.01 ab	2.81 b
<b>Child-Centered</b> F-Value 5.681 P-Value p < .001	3.50 a	3.38 ab	3.21 b	3.15 b
<b>Self-Sacrifice</b> F-Value 5.337 p < .01	3.19 a	3.00 ab	2.98 ab	2.84 b
<b>Parental determinism</b> F-Value 1.761 P-Value 0.154	2.62 a	2.63 a	2.65 a	2.46 a

Mean score on a Likert scale from 1 to 5

## PRELIMINARY QUALITATIVE RESULTS

### Cluster 1

- **Child centered and self-sacrifice** : "It's true that we stay there, we cuddle her or put on some music, and give her the bottle, then we try to leave. But actually, if she moves, we stop moving too. And in the end, yes, we put her to bed around 7 p.m., and sometimes it's already 9:30 p.m. and we still haven't eaten dinner ourselves." (ID 608)
- **Parental prescriptions and idealized content** : "Yes, because I think a lot is expected from parents, and that we're supposed to be kind of perfect parents." (ID 608)

### Cluster 2

- **Sharenting exposition and Authentic content** : "What I like is that it's the father who accepts it, who finally acknowledges that he is going through this situation. He recognizes that there is a kind of failure in his relationship with his child, and on top of that, he shares it on the internet." (ID 922)

### Cluster 3

- **Critical distance from social media** : "It has no more value than what you might hear while chatting with a mother outside a daycare center, or something like that." (ID 798)

### Cluster 4

- **Parental balance**: "But with practice, I realized that in the end, being too attentive and too much in the child's direction isn't necessarily very beneficial for the child either." (ID 234)
- **Authentic content** : "But in any case, as soon as I see a video that looks realistic, I can watch it all the way through because, well, it shows several different moments in this man's life, and you can tell it's real." (ID 146)
- **Critical distance from social media and incomprehension** : "Sometimes I come across videos where someone exposes their family or what their family is doing. I think to myself: what is the point? Is it to bring shame? What is the lesson behind this?" (ID 605)

**Common across all clusters** : Awareness of the impact of **algorithms**, the **dangers** of exposing children online, and the implementation of **strategies** to protect them.

"I don't post anything about her, except for Stories where she's seen from behind. Never with an emoji over her face, or if I really do use an emoji, it's only after I've edited the image beforehand, taken a screenshot, and then added the emoji, because I know there are apps that can remove emojis too." (ID 146)

## CONCLUSION

Parents can be distinguished based on their sharenting consumption habits.

These habits influence how they compare themselves and the extent to which they align with some contemporary parenting norms.

→ Parents who tend to **consume more idealized sharenting content** are more likely to engage in **social comparison** and to endorse **stronger values associated with intensive parenting** (Self-sacrifice and Child centered).

However, they all appear to be aware of the **risks** associated with exposing children.