



# From Scrolling to Struggling: How Sharenting Exposure Relates to Parental burnout

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## Introduction

- Sharenting refers to parents sharing information and audiovisual content related to their children, parenthood and family life on social media (Brosch, 2016).
- *Idealized sharenting*: Staged, curated, and aesthetically perfect family portrayals (the "highlight reel").
- *Authentic sharenting*: Raw, unfiltered, and honest depictions of daily struggles (e.g., messes, tantrums)
- According to social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954), such exposure may trigger:
  - Upward comparison → "Others are doing better than me"
  - Downward comparison → "I'm doing better than others"
  - Horizontal comparison → "Others are similar to me"

## Objective

- While sharenting is widely documented, the sequential mechanism linking specific content exposure to parental burnout remains under-explored.
  - Parenting content on social media is often highly curated/idealized, which may increase parental burnout.
    - upward comparisons
    - Perceived pressure to be a "perfect parent"
  - These processes may contribute to higher parental burnout.
- In this study, we examined links between sharenting exposure, social comparison (upward/downward/horizontal), Perceived pressure to be a "perfect parent", and parental well-being**

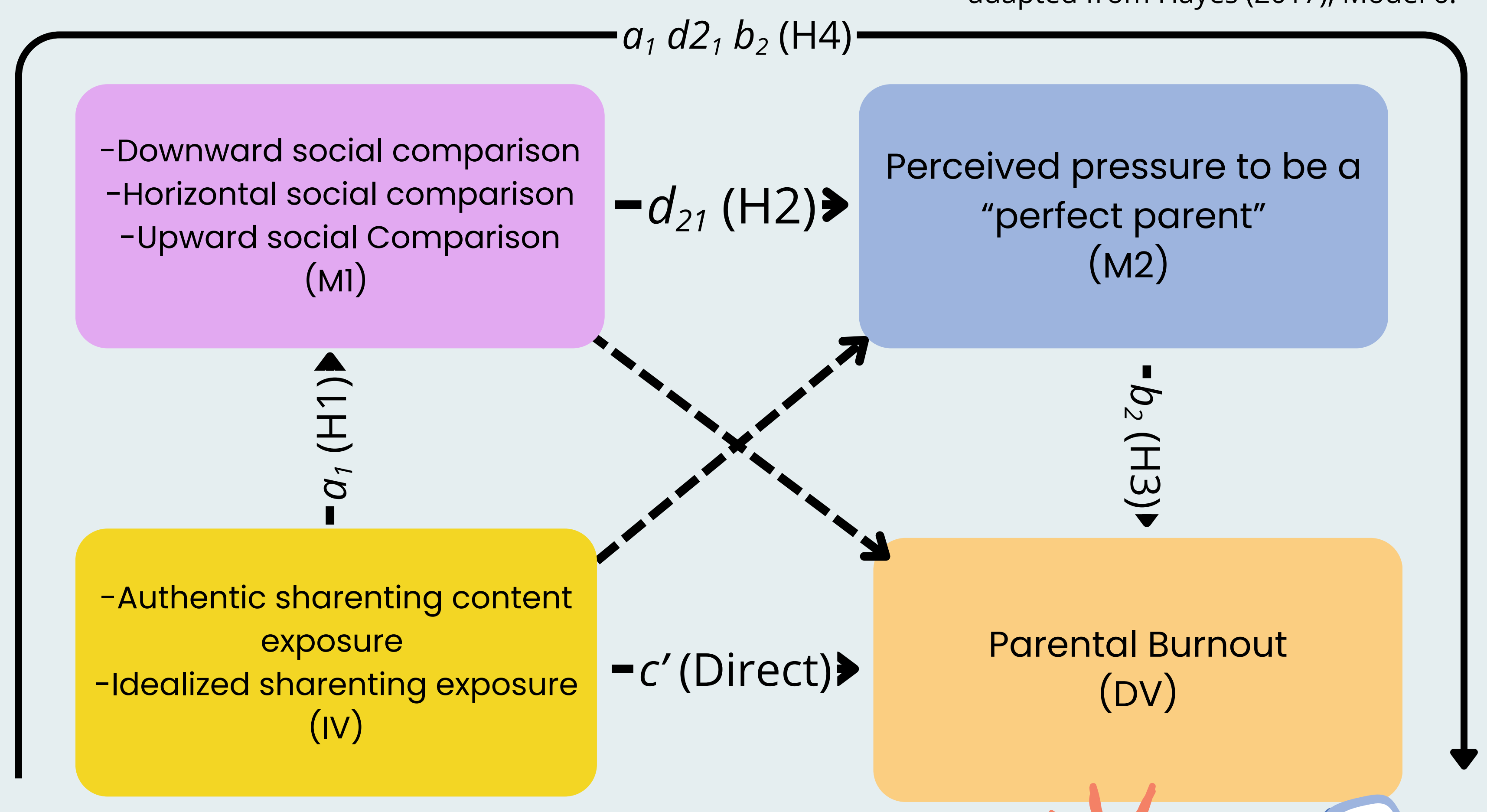
## Method

### Sample et Measures

- Cross-sectional survey (online + paper) ; recruited via daycare centers and social media.
- Parents of child aged 0–3 years; N = 805 (679 women, 126 men)
- Measures
  - *Sharenting content* : self-developed ; idealized (5 items;  $\alpha=.89$ ), authentic (5 items;  $\alpha=.84$ ).
  - *Social comparison orientation (INCOM-based)*: upward (6 items;  $\alpha=.92$ ), downward (6 items;  $\alpha=.89$ ), horizontal (5 items;  $\alpha=.94$ ). (Gibbons & Buunk, 1999; Rose et al., 2023)
  - *Perceived pressure to be a "perfect parent" (M2)*: adapted from Meeussen & Van Laar (2018), 7 items ;  $\alpha = .75$
  - *Parental burnout (BPBs)*: Brief Parental Burnout Scale (Aunola et al., 2021); 5 items ;  $\alpha = .80$ .

### Hypothesis

Figure 1. Conceptual model of the sequential mediation. Structure adapted from Hayes (2017), Model 6.



## Results

Table 1. Synthesis of Mediation and Serial Mediation Analyses

Exposure Type (X)	Comparison Type (M1)	Path $a_1$ (X → M1)	Path $d_{21}$ (M1 → M2)	Mediation (H <sub>3</sub> )	Serial Mediation (H <sub>4</sub> )
IDEALIZED CONTENT	Upward (m.asc)	0.253***	0.227***	0.012*	0.014**
	Downward (m.desc)	0.109*	0.041 (ns)	0.002 (ns)	0.001 (ns)
	Horizontal (m.hor)	0.120*	0.011 (ns)	0.001 (ns)	0.000 (ns)
AUTHENTIC CONTENT	Upward (m.asc)	0.014 (ns)	0.345***	0.001 (ns)	0.001 (ns)
	Downward (m.desc)	0.081 (ns)	0.101*	0.003 (ns)	0.003 (ns)
	Horizontal (m.hor)	0.029 (ns)	0.072 (ns)	0.001 (ns)	0.001 (ns)

Note: Standardized coefficients ( $\beta$ ) are reported. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$ . (ns) = non-significant. M1 = Mediator 1 (Social Comparison), M2 = Mediator 2 (Perceived pressure to be a "perfect parent"), Y = Parental Burnout (DV). The direct effect ( $c'$ ) was non-significant in all supported models, indicating full serial mediation.

## Discussion

- *The Psychological Path*: Only idealized sharenting triggers the distress chain, as its impact is fully mediated through a specific sequence: Idealization → Upward Comparison → Perceived pressure to be a "perfect parent" → Parental Burnout.
- Conversely, authentic content remains non-significant.
- Upward social comparison : Upward social (m.asc) comparison is the strongest drivers of parental pressure
- *Practical Takeaway*: To protect parental well-being, interventions should focus on reducing "upward comparison" and promoting authentic representations of parenthood.

## References

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