Child Mediation: effective education or conflict stimulation? Adolescents' child mediation strategies in the context of sharenting and family conflict

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Abstract

This study increased the insights on child mediation by investigating whether and how adolescents use child mediation strategies in the context of their parents' sharenting behavior and how this is related with family conflict. The results of a survey among adolescents confirmed their use of active, restrictive, and supervising child mediation strategies in the context of sharenting. Sharenting frequency of both mothers and fathers was associated with increased use of restrictive strategies. For mothers, it appeared that sharenting frequency directly and indirectly predicted more family conflict about sharenting via restrictive child mediation. For fathers, no significant effects were found from sharenting frequency on conflict about sharenting.

KEYWORDS: Adolescents, Family Conflict, Sharenting, Child Mediation.

1. Introduction

Sharenting is a combination of the terms "parenting" and "sharing" and is described as the practice of parents displaying information about their children on social media (Marasli, Suhendan, Yilmazturk, & Figen, 2016). Sharenting regularly stimulates tensions and conflicts between parents and their adolescent children, because the content parents post does not affiliate with the online identity adolescents try to develop (e.g., Hiniker, Schoenebeck, & Kientz, 2016; Ouvrein & Verswijvel, 2019). Therefore, children sometimes try to start open dialogues with their parents about what they think is (un)acceptable or formulate rules and boundaries that their parents should respect (Hiniker et al., 2016; Ouvrein & Verswijvel, 2019). These strategies seem to resemble respectively active and restrictive mediation strategies, as known in the literature on parental mediation (e.g., Nikken & Jansz, 2006; Valkenburg et al., 1999), but then the other way around, a phenomenon known as child mediation (Nelissen & Van den Bulck, 2018; Scheurs & Vandenbosch, 2020).

Child mediation describes a form of socialization in which children learn something about media-use to their parents (Van den Bulck et al., 2016). Although there is ample of research on parental mediation (e.g., Mesch, 2006; Nelissen & Van den Bulck, 2018), the insights on child mediation remain limited (e.g., Scheurs & Vandenbosch, 2020; Van den Bulck et al., 2016; Van den Bulck & Van den Bergh, 2005). This is in contrast with the fact that children become increasingly important as "teachers" for digital media and related practices (e.g., sharenting) (Correa, 2014; Ito et al., 2008; Kiesler, Zdaniuk, Lundmark, & Kraut,

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2000). Such forms of socialization can stretch or even reverse traditional family relationships with adolescents becoming more dominant toward their parents (Nelissen & Van den Bulck, 2018; Mesch, 2006), which might put pressure on the family communication and stimulate conflicts (Beyens & Beullens, 2019; Kiesler et al., 2000).

This study aims to explore the use of child mediation strategies and the impact of it on family conflict within the specific context of sharenting. More specifically, we propose and test a model of the (in)direct effects of sharenting frequency on family conflict through the use of three different child mediation strategies used for sharenting (active, restrictive and supervising). Gaining more knowledge on how families negotiate the issue of sharenting and the role of child mediation in this process is necessary (Hiniker et al., 2016; Scheurs & Vandenbosch, 2020), because it can inform both parents and children on good practices in dealing with sharenting and improve their relationship.

1.2. Sharenting

On social media, parents often share information (e.g., pictures, videos, status updates) about their children (Brosch, 2016; Morris, 2014; Wagner & Gasche, 2018). Previous research mainly focused on prospective and new parents' sharenting behavior as it is a rapidly growing phenomenon that already starts when the child is unborn (Brosch, 2016; Duggan, Lenhart, Lampe, & Ellison, 2015). Nevertheless, adolescent children are also confronted with sharenting as today's parents are raising their adolescent children in a first digital culture (Brosch, 2016).

Although both parents participate in sharenting, it seems that mothers more often share information about their children on social media than fathers. Davis and colleagues (2015) indicated that 56% of mothers and 34% of fathers of children up to four years old share information about parenting topics on social media. Fathers and mothers differ in the topics of sharenting. A study by Ammari and colleagues (2015) shows that mothers more often post "cute" pictures and family photos, whereas fathers rather like to share about the children's achievements, often related to sports.

Parents seem to have several reasons for sharenting Firstly, sharenting might be a way to work on their self-presentation of a good parent, by getting likes and comments (e.g., Davidson-Wall, 2018; Kumar & Schoenebeck, 2015). Sharenting also offers parents the opportunity to receive affirmation, feedback and social support during parenting (Davis et al., 2015; Duggan et al., 2015) and related to that social contact with other parents (Brosch, 2016; Wagner & Gasche, 2018). Additionally, social media are a storage place for collecting pictures and videos and sharing these with friends and family (Brosch, 2016; Davis et al., 2015; Duggan et al., 2015; Kumar & Schoenebeck, 2015). Although sharenting might lead to several advantages

for parents, it may also be associated with some undesired consequences for the family, such as conflicts about it.

1.3. Family conflict and sharenting

Family conflict refers to both children's noncompliance and resistance to parent's instructions as well as parent's resistance to children's requests (Eisenberg, 1992). Family conflicts regularly develop about new technologies/practices (Ivan & Nimrod, 2021), with oftentimes a reshape of the traditional family patterns as a result (Nelissen & Van den Bulck, 2018). Both the introduction and frequency of use of the new technology/practice seems to play a role. Applied to the context of tablets for instance, research indicated that the more adolescents used tablets, the more conflict about it was reported within the family (Beyens & Beullens, 2017). These family conflicts about technology are the result of different skills, knowledge, and expectations (Correa et al., 2013; Perry & Werner-Wilson, 2011). Adolescents and parents in general have different expectations of social media use (Scheurs & Vandenbosch, 2020) and this is also reflected in the qualitative studies on sharenting in particular. Research indicated that impression management and identity development are very important motives for social media use among adolescents (Steinberg, 2013). During adolescence, individuals discover one's true self and start to develop their identity (Steinberg, 2013). Social media provide adolescents with the opportunity to explore their identity by disclosing information and by generating feedback from others (Steinberg & Morris, 2001). Moreover, to express a certain online identity, adolescents carefully consider which information they share online so that every post they make contributes to that desired and idealized image (Krämer & Winter, 2008). For parents, the overload of positive images is not the main goal when posting on social media. They prefer to offer realistic insights in their lives and families (Scheurs & Vandenbosch, 2020). When parents share information about their children, they (unconsciously) contribute to the construction of their child's online identity (Leaver, 2020; Steinberg, 2013). Especially during adolescence, such online identity determined by parents might conflict with the way children want to profile themselves online. Consequently, adolescents are oftentimes embarrassed about the content parents share and can get frustrated about it (Davidson-Wall, 2018; Hiniker et al., 2016; Leaver, 2020; Ouvrein & Verswijvel, 2019; Scheurs & Vandenbosch, 2020). Research among adolescents found that they have very negative perceptions about sharenting, with most of them indicating that this practice is embarrassing and useless and has no added value (Verswijvel, Walrave, Hardies, & Heirman, 2019). This contradiction between motives of parents versus adolescents for sharing online has been referred to as "boundary turbulence", which

can result in difficult family conversations (Leaver, 2020). It becomes even more difficult when adolescents report that they sometimes ask their parents not to post something or delete it, but these requests are ignored. Such instances might form the basis for family conflicts about sharenting (Nelissen & Van den Bulck, 2018; Leaver, 2020; Ouvrein & Verswijvel, 2019; Vaterlaus et al., 2014).

Quantitative insights are lacking though on whether sharenting might result in actual family conflicts. Based on the positive association between general use of new technology and amount of family conflict, and the suggestions on conflicts about sharenting from the qualitative studies, it can be expected that sharenting frequency predicts the amount of family conflict. Given the differences in amount and type of sharenting behavior, this needs to be investigated separately for fathers and mothers. We therefore formulated (see Figure 1):

H1: There is a positive association between sharenting frequency of fathers/mothers and the amount of family conflict about sharenting.
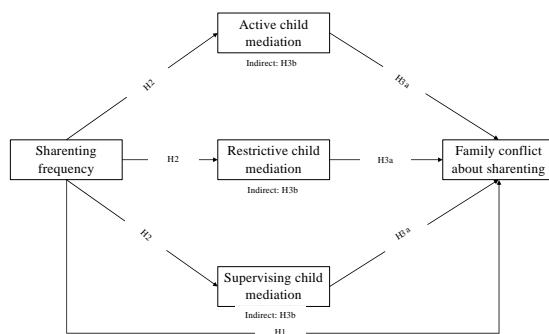

Figure 1 - Proposed model.

1.4. Parental and Child Mediation

To avoid the undesired consequences of sharenting, adolescents try to steer their parents' sharenting behavior, which is known in the literature as child-effects (e.g., Van den Bulck et al., 2016; Van den Bulck & Van den Bergh, 2005), bottom-up technology transmission process (Correa, 2012; Correa et al., 2013) or child mediation (Nelissen & Van den Bulck, 2018; Scheurs & Vandenbosch, 2020). The different concepts describe the influence that children have on their parents' Internet use (Van den Bulck et al., 2016) and should be seen as the opposite socialization process of parental mediation.

Numerous studies have focused on parental mediation strategies online (e.g., Chen & Chng, 2016; Schrodt et al., 2009; Wisniewski et al., 2015). Two major forms received considerable attention: active and restrictive mediation (Chen & Shi, 2019). Active mediation refers to parents' guidance and advice, for instance in the form

of discussions about Internet use and making their children aware of the risks (e.g., Chen & Shi, 2019; Kirwil, 2009). Lee (2018) associated active mediation with a warm, open, and encouraging discussion, not only with the intention of avoiding the risks of online use, but also stimulating the positive use of it. Restrictive mediation on the other hand, describes regulation strategies for children's Internet use, meant to keep it restricted. Restrictive mediation mostly consists of rules concerning how much time children can spend online or which websites they can visit (Chen & Shi, 2019; Chen & Chng, 2016; Kirwil, 2009). Several studies on children's and adolescents' online media use added a third category, which is referred to as co-use (e.g., Chen & Shi, 2019; Livingstone & Helsper, 2008; Scheurs & Vandenbosch, 2019), co-viewing (e.g., Chen & Shi, 2019) and sometimes as supervision (e.g., Sasson & Mesch, 2014). It describes a socialization process in which the parent is sitting next to the child and experiences with the technology are shared and thus also supervised, but without active discussion (Chen & Si, 2019; Livingstone & Helsper, 2008; Nathansson, 2002; Sasson & Mesch, 2014).

Across the years, some scholars went even further and increased the insights on the fact that media socialization processes between parents and children are reciprocal (Nelissen & Van den Bulck, 2018; Nelissen et al., 2019; Scheurs & Vandenbosch, 2020; Van den Bulck & Van den Bergh, 2005). Following this reasoning, some studies have switched the focus to the contribution of the children to their parents' media consumption (e.g., Correa, 2012, 2014; Ito et al., 2008; Nelissen & Van den Bulck, 2018). These processes have mostly been investigated in relation to TV-consumption (e.g., McLeod & Brown, 1976; Nelissen & Van den Bulck, 2018) and the adoption of new online media technologies (e.g., Chen & Shi, 2019; Van Rompaey, Roe & Struys, 2002).

However, due to the intergenerational gap concerning the use (and not just the adoption) of the Internet and social media in particular (Madden, Lenhart, Duggan, Cortesi & Gasser, 2013), child mediation might even be more important in steering parents' online behavior (Van den Bulck & Van den Bergh, 2005). Indeed, some studies indicated that children and adolescents in particular educate their parents on the correct online behavior (e.g., Correa, 2012; Correa et al., 2013; Ito et al., 2008; Kiesler et al., 2000; Mesch, 2006), especially on new media forms (Nelissen & Van den Bulck, 2018) and new practices, such as sharenting (Ouvrein & Verswijvel, 2019). In this way, children develop themselves as the "experts' of the Internet within their own family (Correa, 2014; Ito et al., 2008; Kiesler et al., 2000; Mesch, 2006; Schrodt et al., 2009).

Being in this role, adolescents use different methods to socialize their parents. Correa (2012) distinguishes two persuasive strategies. In the argumentative strategy, children discourse and interpret the motives and wishes

of their parents and decide together on the best online behavior. The children thus teach their parents how to behave and inform them on what is considered as appropriate or embarrassing content to share (Lee, 2018; Scheurs & Vandenbosch, 2020; Van den Bulck et al., 2016). The study of Ito and colleagues (2009) for instance, indicated that adolescents show interest in the online activities of their parents and start discussions about it. For sharenting in particular it was found that adolescents would like to talk more often about their parent's wishes to share content about them and whether and why they think this is (un)acceptable, to see if a mutual agreement on this issue can be found (Hiniker et al., 2016; Leaver, 2020; Ouvrein & Verswijvel, 2019). This strategy is comparable with the active mediation strategy from the parental mediation literature (Valkenburg et al., 1999; Van den Bulck & Van den Berg, 2005). In the non-argumentative strategy, children influence their parents' online behavior by begging and demanding (Correa, 2012). This strategy is comparable with what Van den Bulck and colleagues (2016) defined as restrictive child mediation, as these are strategies used to put limits or reduce certain behavior. In the context of sharenting it has been found that adolescents put boundaries for their parents on what they can share and how often (Hiniker et al., 2016; Ouvrein & Verswijvel, 2019). Apart from open discussion and setting rules, several studies on sharenting also reported on some form of supervising the social media profiles of parents and intervening on their accounts when parents are not listening to their wishes or are just "lost" (Correa, 2014; Ito et al., 2018; Ouvrein & Verswijvel, 2019).

To the best of our knowledge, no quantitative study has investigated the use of child mediation strategies in relation to sharenting. Moreover, it is not clear which strategies adolescents use in relation to sharenting frequency and when. This study aims to fill in this gap by investigating the association between sharenting frequency and the use of the different types of child mediation strategies. Based on the sharenting literature, we distinguish between active, restrictive, and supervising child mediation strategies:

H2: There is an association between sharenting frequency and the use of child mediation strategies (active, restrictive, and supervising) in the context of sharenting.

1.5. Family conflict about Mediation

One important difference between parental mediation and child mediation is the power balance between both. Whereas parental mediation typically meets with the traditional ideas on parents as dominant socializers, child mediation puts these structures under pressure. Many parents express fear or anger when being confronted with a switch of authority (Kiesler et al.,

2000; Mesch, 2006). In the in-depth interviews of De Mol and Buysse (2008) for instance, the use of the words "influence of children" was enough for some parents to become angry because they associate it with a lack of power. Also, in the survey study of Nelissen and colleagues (2019) among parents, influence of the children was often interpreted as controlling and restricting, instead of as a transmission of knowledge and skills. Such attitudes might stimulate reciprocal frustrations and family conflicts. Accordingly, Mesch (2006), and Nelissen and Van den Bulck (2018) found higher amounts of family conflict in families in which the children are the experts on online media and try to take over the dominance on this domain. However, these studies investigated the use of child mediation in general on the frequency of family conflict. Insights are lacking on whether the use of specific child mediation strategies (i.e., active, restrictive and supervision) is associated with the frequency of family conflict about social media.

From the literature on parental mediation, it is known that the use of the specific mediation strategies has an influence on the parent-child communication and relationship (Mesch, 2006), especially during adolescence (Lenhart et al., 2010; Livingstone, 2007; Mesch, 2006). Research indicated for instance that restrictive mediation can easily backfire (Brehm & Brehm, 1981), as this strategy has been linked with more family conflict (Beyens & Beullens, 2017; Beyens & Valkenburg, 2019; Nelissen & Van den Bulck, 2018; Van den Bulck & Van den Berg, 2000). The use of active mediation on the other hand has been associated with more cohesiveness in the family (Sharaievska, & Stodolska, 2017) and less conflict (Beyens & Valkenburg, 2019; Van den Bulck & Van den Bergh, 2000). However, consistency is lacking, as other studies found no effects (e.g., Beyens & Beullens, 2017) and still others reported negative effects of active mediation on the amount of conflict and the attitudes toward the parents (e.g., Nathanson, 2002).

Applying the literature on parental mediation to child mediation, it can be expected that the use of child mediation strategies is related with the amount of family conflict. We thus formulated:

H3a: There is an association between the use of the different child mediation strategies (active, restrictive, and supervising) and the amount of family conflict about sharenting.

Given that, based on the literature, it can be expected that the frequency of sharenting by fathers/mothers can be associated with the use of specific child mediation strategies and that these child mediation strategies might in turn predict the amount of family conflict, the idea rises that there might also be an indirect effect at stake here, explaining the impact of frequency of

sharenting on family conflict through the use of child mediation strategies:

H3b: The different types of child mediation strategies (active, restrictive, and supervising) mediate the relationship between sharenting frequency of fathers/mothers and family conflict about sharenting.

2. Method

2.1 Sample

An online survey was conducted among 144 adolescents (*N*= 144; 52.1% girls) with an average age of 14.42 years (*SD*= .68). We focused on sharenting on Facebook and Instagram, as these are the most popular platforms among parents for these purposes (Marasli et al., 2016; Morris, 2014). To be included in the study, at least one of participants' parents needed to be active on at least one of the platforms. The data collection took place at two schools in The Netherlands. Prior to the study, we sought approval from the school board and parents. The study protocol was approved by the Ethics Committee for the Social Sciences and Humanities of the University of Antwerp.

2.2. Measures

Sharenting frequency was measured for mothers and fathers separately. Three items were used on a Likert scale ranging from *"rarely to never"* (1) to *"every day"* (4). The items referred to different types of information parents shared (written information, pictures, and videos). The total frequency scores for fathers and mothers were calculated by summing up the three scores ($\alpha_{mothers}$= .81, $\alpha_{fathers}$= .90).

Child mediation strategies (Table 1) were also measured separately for mothers and fathers by using seven items, inspired by the "parental mediation strategies scale" of Wisniewski et al. (2015). The items were adapted to the context of sharenting. A Likert scale was used ranging from *"never"* (1) to *"often"* (5). Factor analyses pointed toward three factors (Table 1), reflecting three types of child mediation. Active child mediation consisted of three items ($\alpha_{mothers}$= .69, $\alpha_{fathers}$= .73). Restrictive child mediation also consisted of three items ($\alpha_{mothers}$= .68, $\alpha_{fathers}$= .69). The total active and restrictive child mediation scores for fathers and mothers were calculated by summing up the scores for the different items. Lastly, supervising child mediation contained one item.

Family conflict about sharenting was captured using two items ("How often in the past six months have you been mad at your parents/one of your parents for sharing a post/photo/video of you?" and "How often in the past six months did you have a conflict with your parents/one of your parents about a post/photo/video they shared online about you?"). These were based on

the study of Beyens and Beullens (2017) and adapted to the context of sharenting. These items were answered on a Likert scale ranging from *"never"* (1) to *"very often"* (5). The total family conflict score was calculated by summing up the scores.

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive results

An overview of descriptive statistics can be found in Table 2. The total scores for sharenting frequency for mothers and fathers were low to moderate, and not significantly different (*t*(80)= 1.46; *p*= .148). Results further indicate that more than 50% of the adolescents in our study explained something about sharenting in the past six months (cfr. Active mediation). Concerning the restrictive child mediation strategies, the most used strategy was telling the parents that they were not allowed to share certain things. For supervision, it appeared that almost 40% of the adolescents checked the profiles of their fathers and mothers at least once in the past six months.

Family conflict about sharenting was low. More than 80% of the participants never had a conflict. However, nearly 20% had been mad about something their parents shared at least once in the past months.

3.2. Model testing

To test our hypotheses, a mediation model (Model 4) was constructed and tested using the PROCESS Macro of Hayes in SPSS. Sharenting frequency was included as independent variable, family conflict as dependent variable, the three types of mediation as mediators and gender as a covariate. Separate models were created for the sharenting of fathers and mothers (Overview and details see Figures 2 and 3). Bootstrapping (5,000 resamples) was used to test the mediation models. For fathers, the indirect model did not generate a good fit, so we decided to continue with a model with only direct effects for fathers.

Looking at the direct associations between sharenting frequency and family conflict about sharenting (H1), it appeared that sharenting frequency of mothers was positively related with increased family conflict (β= .13; *p*= .003).

H2 focused on the direct effects of sharenting frequency on the use of child mediation. The results indicated a significant association between sharenting frequency and the use of restrictive and supervising child mediation for both fathers and mothers. More specifically, a higher score on sharenting frequency resulted in an increased use of restrictive (β_{father}= .08; *p*= .03; β_{mother}= .10; *p*= .001) and supervising strategies (β_{father}= .18; *p*= .001; β_{mother}= .22; *p*= .001). Sharenting frequency was not related with active child mediation.

For the association between the different child mediation strategies and family conflict (H3a), it was found that the use of restrictive strategies with both mothers and fathers resulted in more family conflict (β_{mother}= .59; p=.001; β_{father}= .48; p=.001). Moreover, an indirect effect was found from sharenting frequency of

Components	Mothers			Fathers		
	F1: Active mediation	F2:Restrictive mediation	F3:Supervising mediation	F1: Active mediation	F2:Restrictive mediation	F3:supervising mediation
In the past six months,						
how often have you explained something about sharing certain things (written information/pictures/videos) of you on social media to your mother/father?	.66			.74		
how often have you told your mother/father which things (written information/pictures/videos) you like that they share about you like on social media?	.83			.83		
how often have you told your mother/father which things (written information/pictures/videos) you find bad when they share them about you on social media?	.83			.83		
how often have you told your mother/father that she/he is not allowed to share certain things (written information/pictures/videos) about you on social media?		.64			.72	
how often have you forbidden your mother/father from sharing certain things (written information/pictures/videos) about you on social media?		.86			.88	
how often did you asked your mother/father to remove certain things (written information/pictures/videos) that they shared about you on social media?		.85			.77	
how often have you checked the social media accounts of your father/mother to see what they share about you?			.98			.82

Note: For mothers, the KMO-test verified the sampling adequacy (.68) and the Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant (χ^2= 197.43, df = 21, p = .000). For fathers, the KMO-test also verified the sampling adequacy (.71) and the Bartlett's test of sphericity was also significant (χ^2= 244.55, df = 23, p = .000).

Table 1- Factor loadings active, restrictive, and supervising child mediation mother and father.

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
1. Gender										
2. Sharenting father	-.125									
3. Sharenting mother	-.081	.416***								
4. Active mediation father	.025	.196	.222*							
5. Active mediation mother	.043	.125	.175	.812***						
6. Restrictive mediation father	.152	.264*	.153	.361***	.221*					
7. Restrictive mediation mother	.127	.124	.363***	.199*	.295***	.686***				
8. Supervising mediation father	.091	.031	.307**	.150	.090	.438***	.464***			
9. Supervising mediation mother	.047	.386***	.198	.308***	.133	.363***	.145	.051		
10. Family conflict about sharenting	.084	.306**	.434***	.272**	.229*	.234**	.301***	.097	.663***	
M	4.94	5.28	1.91	2.04	1.44	1.51	1.51	1.73	1.68	2.32
SD	2.78	2.25	.87	.85	.66	.67	.97	.95	1.01	
Range	3-15	3-15	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	2-8	

Note: ***p < .001; **p < .01; *p < .05

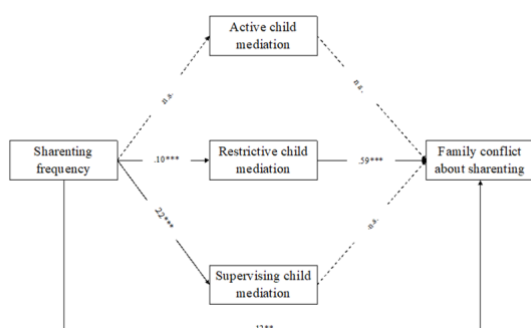**Table 2** - Descriptive statistics and correlations.

Figure 2 - Meditation model mothers.
Note. ***p < .001; **p < .01; *p < .05; Model Fit mediation model: $F(4, 84)$= 6.56 ; p = .001); R^2= .24
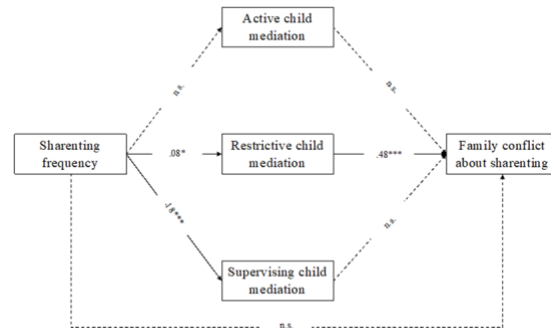

Figure 3 - Meditation model fathers.
Note. ***p < .001; **p < .01; *p < .05; Model Fit model with only direct relations: $F(1,71)$= 3.27; p = .075); R^2= .04

mothers on family conflict through the use of restrictive child mediation strategies for mothers (β= .06, C.I. 95% .007 till .138), which partially confirms H3b. Active mediation was not related with family conflict.

4. Discussion

The current study increased the knowledge on both sharenting and child mediation by investigating adolescents' child mediation strategies and their predictors and outcomes in the context of sharenting behavior of their parents.

The results indicated that adolescents' perceptions of their parents' sharenting behavior were moderate to low, with no differences between their fathers and mothers. This is in contrast with the study of Ammari et al. (2015) among parents, who found that mothers share more often compared to fathers. This seems to confirm the differences between adolescents' and parents' perceptions on parenting. However, differences were found on the association between frequency of sharenting and the amount of family conflict (H1), as it was only for mothers that a significant positive association was reported here. This can be explained by previous research indicating that mothers more often share "cute" things who might be easily considered as embarrassing or frustrating (Leaver, 2020); whereas fathers post more often about accomplishments (Ammari et al., 2015).

Concerning the use of child mediation strategies in the context of sharenting, significant differences were found between the different strategies. Our participants indicated to adopt more often the active mediation strategy for both their mothers and fathers. This corresponds with the fact that they also believe that this is the best strategy (Vaterlaus et al., 2014). These strategies were related with sharenting frequency. For both mothers and fathers, it appeared that increased sharenting resulted in increased use of restrictive and supervising strategies, thus partially confirming H2. This follows previous research indicating that increased use of certain technologies or new practices is related with more parental mediation (e.g., Beyens & Beullens, 2019). It thus seems that parents and adolescent children react in the same way when they notice an increase in certain media use from the other party. However, by specifying the different types of child mediation, our study can add that especially restrictive and supervising strategies are related with increased use. This might suggest that active child mediation is mostly used when sharenting is still low. Increased use of restrictive and supervising strategies can then be the next step, when active mediation is not helping or not sufficient. Further research is necessary to test and explain this finding.

The last part of the study (H3a) posed the question of whether the use of these strategies was also related with family conflict about sharenting. This was only confirmed for restrictive child mediation. In accordance with the findings on restrictive parental mediation (e.g., Beyens & Beullens, 2017; Beyens & Valkenburg, 2019; Nelissen & Van den Bulck, 2018; Van den Bulck & Van den Berg, 2000), restrictive child mediation was related with more family conflict about sharenting for mothers and fathers. It is thus not only children who can react rebellious toward rules and restrictions, parents seem to react in a similar way when their children control their sharenting (i.e., Reactance theory; Brehm & Brehm, 1981). Apart from the direct effect, also an indirect effect was found in which restrictive mediation functions as a mediator between sharenting frequency and family conflict in the model of mothers, thus also partially confirming H3b. Active and supervising child mediation were not related with family conflict.

This study has some limitations. As this study relied on cross-sectional data, we are unable to draw firm conclusions on the causality. Following the literature on parental mediation and sharenting, we concentrated on how sharenting frequency can steer child mediation and family conflict. However, it seems plausible that these processes also contain a feedback loop (Scheurs & Vandenbosch, 2020), in a sense that the used strategies and amount of conflict again have an influence on the sharenting frequency. To further investigate such transactional models, future research might benefit from a longitudinal approach. This study also relied on adolescents' self-reported data, which might differ from parents' perceptions. Future research can overcome this by including both data from children and their parents. Moreover, future research should include measures on the general family relationships and communication patterns and on conflict with father and mother separately. How well adolescents can communicate about their feelings depends on the general climate and involvement in the family (Schrodt et al., 2009).

Our results have implications for scholars in socialization research as well as for parents. Firstly, scholars must recognize the existence of child mediation practices and further explore this phenomenon. Socialization develops as an interaction between the meaning of the sender and the interpretation of the receiver. It is not because children make a different interpretation, that their perspective is wrong or is the result of less cognitive capacities, it means that they interpret the situation differently (Van den Bulck & Van den Bergh, 2005). Similarly, parents should have an open attitude toward the feelings of their children when they share things and should stimulate conversations. They should try to understand why children do not like the sharing of certain content and use this knowledge as a basis to develop guidelines together. In that way, the use of restrictive child mediation strategies that might further complicate the adolescents-parent relationship can be avoided.

Acknowledgements

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