How Cultures Matter on the Boundary between "Normality" and "Abnormality": A Case Study for "Sharenting" in Taiwan

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Abstract
With the recently controversial trend in "sharenting" on social media, the moral judgment of sharing their children online has been debated in Taiwan. This study argued that cultures influence the viewpoint of this moral issue in Taiwanese society. This paper begins with the original definitions of "normality" and "abnormality" in Chinese and then further discuss three main cultural perspectives (i.e., Confucianism, Christian theology of worldview, and the Lolita culture) on the moral judgment of "sharenting." Based on the cultural perspective approach, this study revealed three cultural perspectives in "sharenting." The first perspective is the Confucian, which views "children" as a possession owned by parents and further normalizes "sharenting" in social media. The second perspective is the Lolita culture, which is famous for an adorable clothing style, and thus justifies the "sharenting." Conversely, under Christian theology of worldview, people who are abnormally interested in prepubescent children might be labeled "pedophilia." These diverse cultures coexist in Taiwanese society, presenting that even when people living in the same society discuss the same issue, different cultural worldviews can mediate their thoughts. Comparative studies have widely examined different cultures from different countries, yet few have discussed different cultures within the same country. Therefore, this research emphasizes different cultural perspectives in the same society. It provides an exploratory discussion about the boundary between normality and abnormality germane to "sharenting." Finally, implications and further directions are discussed herein.

Keywords: Culture, Cultural Perspective, Pedophilia, Lolita, Confucian

Introduction

"Sharenting" has gone viral on social media since 2017. "sharenting" refers to the phenomenon in which parents frequently post photos or videos about their children via social media (Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2017). In 2017, the term "sharenting" became one of the most popular vocabulary words in the Collins Dictionary in the United Kingdom in 2017 (Castnet, December 3, 2017). With the prevalence of social media, "sharenting" has become collective behaviors around the globe. In the UK, each parent couple shares on average about 300 photos of their children online yearly, and each couple has posted 1,498 photos online by their child's fifth birthday (Nominet, 2016). Also, 71% of parents post their children's photos on social media at least five times a week (Parent Zone, 2017). In the Asian region, the Facebook fan page of Ciao-ciao, a Taiwanese child Internet celebrity, was created by her father when she was three years old. The page has up to 881,773 followers (The News Lens, September 6, 2017). Therefore, "sharenting" is a prevailing trend in Western countries and the Asian region.

Although "sharenting" has become popular on social media, some concerns for "sharenting" ensue. Previous studies have significantly focused on the risks, including children's privacy, safety, mental health, and other issues. Among these discussions, whether "sharenting" is an appropriate behavior is the core topic (Blum-Ross & Livingstone, 2017; Siibak & Traks, 2019). Align with this research approach, research in cultural meanings of "sharenting" remains limited. However, this paper argues that examining cultural meanings helps us better understand "sharenting" for two reasons. First, the cultural perspective examines an issue in the long-term, and thus helps researchers to examine the evolution of "abnormality". Second, the cultural perspective examines the interactions among technologies, society, and agents in a macrostructure level. Thus, it helps researchers consider multiple powers thoroughly (Kleinman, 1988 as translated in Chen, 1994; Radley, 1994). Therefore, this paper aims to examine the cultural meanings behind the social norms of "sharenting" based on the cultural perspective.

Adopted by the cultural perspective, this paper defined the social norms of "sharenting" as the boundary between "normality" and "abnormality" toward "sharenting" on social media. This paper firstly examined the literal definition of "normality" and "abnormality" in Chinese, and the definition of "abnormality" in three main medical approaches. Second, the study focuses on the cultural approach to discuss feeling attractions to children from perspectives of Confucianism, Christian theology of worldview, and the Lolita culture. The final section offers implications and other directions for further cultural research.

The Vague Boundary: The Original Meaning of "normality" and "abnormality" from English and Chinese

The literal meanings of "abnormality" and "normality" are bound to each other. The word "normality" is defined as the opposite of "abnormality," as is the definition of "abnormality" in Chinese. The term "normality" (i.e., 正常) was dated back in *Analects of Confucius*, a collection of conversations and ideas from Confucius and his pupils. The original meaning of "normality" referred to regular, usual, and not defective according to *Shuowen Jiezi*, the most reliable ancient Chinese dictionaries

around the second century (Ministry of Education, ROC, 2018; Sturgeon, 2018). Therefore, the original meanings of "normality" and "abnormality" do not only coexist but also in symbiosis. The relationship between the two is just like two poles of a magnet - neither one can exist without the other.

The definitions of "abnormality" and "normality" have constantly been changing throughout history. From the ancient Greek to the modern medical perspective, the meanings of "abnormality" and "normality" have evolved. Before the 19th century, the theory of "Humorism" - suggesting that a human's body is composed of four "humors", including Blood, Yellow bile, Black bile, and Phlegm - played a predominant role in Western medicine. This theory was first introduced by Hippocrates (460-370 BC) in medicine and then applied in mental health issues by Galen (129-201 AD). The definitions of "abnormality" and "normality" thus relied on the balance of these four "humors", and the way of recovery was to make the four "humors" balanced again. However, with the development of bacteriology and anatomy, people began to focus on observational and countable diseases rather than perfect balance in contemporary medicine, with the measurement for abnormality relying on data (Frances, 2013). Recently, unsatisfied with merely taking data to depict the intriguing human mental world, other perspectives with different approaches arose.

Behavioral, Societal, and Cultural Perspectives on "Abnormality"

Behavioral, societal, and cultural perspective are three prevalent approaches for the definition of "abnormality" in the modern medical field. The behavioral perspective derives from the biomedicine model, and its metatheory is "Descartian dualism". This perspective has been widely applied in behavioral science field. This perspective mainly focuses on the overt symptoms, preventions, and treatments of physical diseases (Gentry, 1982; Radley, 1994). In this perspective, the "abnormality" is called as **disease**, which is a series of symptoms caused by a mental or physical abnormality in the biomedicine model (Radley, 1994). Because the behavioral perspective focuses on specific symptoms, "abnormality" is observable, measurable, and quantifiable as a diagnostic category in Western medicine.

Another prevalent approach is the societal perspective, which comes from the biopsychosocial model and medical sociology. The perspective focuses on how individuals' experiences and feelings are affected by social factors, such as income, education, social class. This perspective refers to "abnormality" as **sickness**, which is a comprehensive assessment from both patients and doctors. Therefore, both the behavioral and the societal perspective examine "abnormality" based on the diagnosis from a doctor. However, the societal perspective also studies individual feelings and experiences to define "abnormality" (Engel, 1977; Radley, 1994).

The latest prevalent approach is the cultural perspective, which can be dated back to medical anthropology. Unlink previous two perspectives, the cultural perspective focuses on a complicate set of social practices (Radley, 1994), and examines collectively historical contexts, cultural meanings, and the cultural stigma in a macrostructure level (Kleinman, 1988 - translated by Chen, 1994; Radley, 1994). In a cultural perspective, "abnormality" is identified as a focus on **illness**, which is a cultural interaction among mental, psychological, and physical factors. Therefore,

"abnormality" in this approach is neither the diagnostic categories of symptoms nor the social impacts. It involves many different but related parts, especially cultures (Angel & Thoits, 1987; Wu & Hsu, 2011).

In conclusion, though different modern medical fields have strived for a clear definition of "abnormality", the definition is inconsistent in different perspectives due to various metatheories. In behavioral perspective, the "abnormality" refers to **disease**, which is a series of symptoms caused by a mental or physical abnormality in the biomedicine model (Radley, 1994). In societal perspective, the "abnormality" refers to **sickness**, which is a comprehensive assessment from both patients and doctors. In cultural perspective, the "abnormality" refers to **illness**, which is a cultural interaction among mental, psychological, and physical factors. Therefore, the boundary between "normality" and "abnormality" is flexible. See **Table** 1 for a summary of three prevalent perspectives in the modern medical fields.

Perspective	**The behavioral perspective**	**The societal perspective**	**The cultural perspective**
Metatheory	Biomedicine model	Biopsychosocial model and medical sociology	Medical anthropology
Domain of Medical Fields	Psychology	Sociology	Anthropology
Focus	The overt symptoms, preventions, and treatments of physical diseases.	Social factors, such as income, education, social class.	Collectively historical contexts, cultural meanings, and the cultural stigma in a macrostructure level.
Definition of the Abnormality	Disease	Sickness	Illness

Table 1: A Summary of Three Prevalent Perspective in Modern Medical Fields.

To define such a flexible concept, the cultural perspective has two strengths for an examination of "abnormality". First, the cultural perspective examines the long-term development of "abnormality" defended by cultural groups, and thus helps researchers to examine the evolution of "abnormality". Second, the cultural perspective examines the interactions among technologies, society, and agents in a macrostructure level. Thus, it helps researchers consider multiple powers thoroughly (Kleinman, 1988 as translated in Chen, 1994; Radley, 1994). Therefore, this paper adopted a cultural perspective to examine how discourses shaped by different cultures discuss the "sharenting" in Taiwan.

Role of the Culture: Boundary for "Sharenting" in Taiwan

Due to its colonial history governed by different cultural groups, Taiwan society roots in a hybrid of cultures (Harrell & Huang, 1994). Around the Ming Dynasty (roughly the 17th century), the Han people began to move from Mainland China to Taiwan, and eventually become the largest ethnic groups in Taiwan society. Subsequently, the

island was ruled by the Qing Dynasty in China. During these two Dynasties, traditional Confucian values were introduced to Taiwan society (Huang, 2005, March; Copper, 2014). In 1895, Taiwan was officially governed by the Japanese government. Soon after, the Japanese cultures were brought into Taiwan society (Wang, Wang & Liao, 2006). During the Second World War, the imperial government banned Taiwanese opera, and encouraged people to adopt Japanese names and learn the Japanese language (Grajdanzev, 1942; Chen & Zhen, 1984). These policies accelerate culture change from traditional Confucian to a blend of Japanese cultures.

In 1949, Chiang Kai-shek and his KMT party relocated to Taiwan, and their Confucian worldview was formally transformed into education systems (Roy, 2003). Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Taiwan was supported by the United States as a buffer against China. As a result, during this period a lot of music, movies, and books were imported from the United States (Wu, 1988). Taiwanese young people of that generation absorbed American culture, and even studied abroad in the US (Wu, 1988). Therefore, traditional Chinese culture, Japanese culture, and Western values have all greatly influenced Taiwan society.

In a society with a hybrid blend of cultures, discourses about "sharenting" depends on which culture is more dominant. To examine how cultures have shaped the discussion of "sharenting", this paper focuses on three dominant cultures, which are Confucian, Lolita cultures, and the Christian theology of worldview in Taiwan. The following paper was divided into three section. Each part of discussion began with an introduction of the cultural value of children. Then, a short historical overview of the cultural value was presented in each section. Finally, the "sharenting" under the culture was examined.

Confucian social system: "Sharenting" as parents' belongs

In Confucian culture, social hierarchy is strongly embodied in families, and thus children have been commonly viewed as subordinates. The Confucian social hierarchy is represented by the "Filial piety," also known as "Xiào" (孝) in Chinese. This concept refers to a virtue of individuals who respect their ancestors and parents. Since "filial piety" is a crucial virtue in the Confucian culture, younger people are asked to obey the elders (Wuang, 2010). As a result, they are subordinate to their parents.

To show respect for the elderly, youths are asked to obey and sometimes even make sacrifices for their parents. In one of Confucian classic literatures, "*Kongzi Jiayu*" (孔子家語) (206-220 BC), a man named Zeng Shen (曾參) was famous for the virtue of "filial piety". He once was punished by his father harshly because he had intentionally hurt his father's plants. Worried about his father's feelings, Zeng Shen pretended that he was fine after the punishment though he was severely injured. Zeng Shen even apologized for wasting so much of his father's energy on punishing him (Sturgeon, 2018). Other examples for the relationship between elders and youths is in several old Chinese sayings. The "*Book of Change*", known as "*Yijing*" (易經), stated that "the elder is respectful, while the youth is of a low social rank." Also the *Book of Rites*", known as "*Liji*" (禮記) (475-221 BC) stated that "the elder is kindness, while the youth is obedient" (Li, 2010). These examples presented a Confucian value that the elders typically have more power than the youths.

In a particular historical period, buying children was allowed among the aristocracy, and sexual interest in children was acceptable for people in high social status. In the Three Kingdoms to the Six Dynasties (220-589 AD), aristocrats started to buy young girls as wives, as well as young boys as sexual objectives. This phenomenon was recorded in a historical collection, "*History of the Northern Dynasties*" (北史) (643-659 AD). Since then, buying young girls and boys has become a way to show off one's social status. During the Ming Dynasty of the fifth emperor (1425 -1435 AD), keeping courtesans was banned in the palace. Some royal family replaced young boys with those courtesans (Zeng, 1993; Cheng, 2008). In a classic literature, *Fantastic Tales* (草堂筆記) by Ji Xiao Lan (1789-1798 AD), wealthy families used to buy young boys around ten years old (Lee, 2010), and once young boys were replaced by others once they had grown up (Cheng, 2008).

Throughout the Qing Dynasty, young boys had already become symbolic properties, representing their owners' social status and wealth (Cheng, 2008; Lee, 2010). However, this did not happen among ordinary people, who had neither the chance to buy children nor dared to break the social hierarchy (Wuang, 2010). For example, before the Qing Dynasty, several imperial laws were written to rule peoples' behaviors. Yet, these laws were only applicable to ordinary civilians rather than the aristocracy (Li, 1996). Therefore, when we define "normality" based on Confucian culture, it is necessary to consider hierarchy. See **Figure 1** for a summary of the "sharenting" under the Confucian culture.

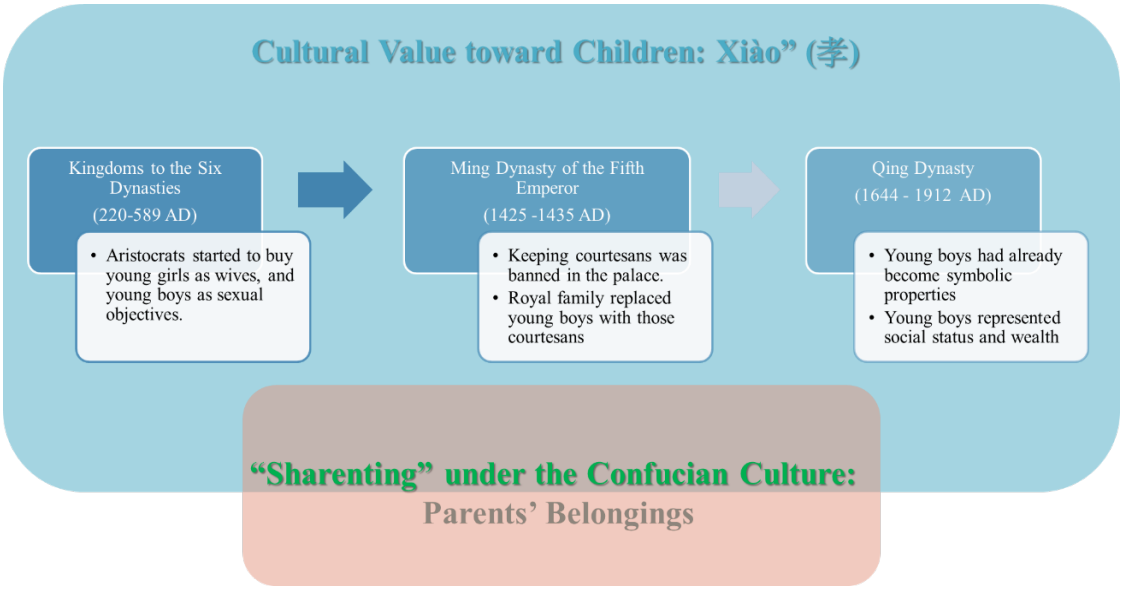

Figure 1: A Summary of the "Sharenting" under the Confucian Culture.

In sum, children may be valued as parents' belongings under the Confucian social system. A Confucian classic collection, "*Xiao Jing*"(孝經) (475-221 BC) stated that individuals' bodies - every hair and bit of skin - are from their parents, and so they must prevent any injury or wound on themselves as best as possible. Another Confucian classic collection, "*Student Rules*", known as "*Di Zi Gui*" (弟子規) (1661-1722) stated that if one receives an injury to one's body, then it will make the parents worries; if one cannot protect oneself well from being hurt by others, then this will shame the parents (Feng, 2009). This quotation implies that a child's body belongs to the parents. Aside from the family system, the statement of "the elder is kind, while

the youth is obedient" is also common throughout Confucian society. Therefore, under this perspective, parents "sharenting" their own children's images are acceptable because it is just like sharing anyone who shares their own body on social media.

Japanese Lolita culture: "Sharenting" as subculture and fashion

Cuteness is an essential element in the Japanese Lolita culture, and thus sweet children are admired. In Japanese, Lolita can be used as a noun or an adjective. As a noun, the term Lolita (ロリータ) can be used as a noun to refer to a specific group. While Lolita refers to young girls under 15 years old in its narrow definition, it can also refer to young ladies with baby-face looks and a sweet appearance in its broader definition. As an adjective, the term Lolita is also used to describe a particular fashion style presented by dreams, gorgeousness, lacy apparel, and other adornments (Lin & Tu, 2012; Lin, 2014). Corresponding with the term "Lolita," another term "Shotacon" (ショタ) is created to refer to young boys whose sex characteristics are still immature (Lin & Tu, 2012). Because both Lolita and "Shotacon" are embodied in the cuteness, children under the cultural value of the Japanese Lolita culture are presented as adorable objects for people to be admired.

The term Lolita originated from the controversial novel *Lolita Complex* by the Russian writer Vladmir Nabakov in 1955. Later, it was translated into Japanese (Chen, 2017). Then, the Lolita culture has been developed as a pop culture and influenced Japanese society. This culture originated from the "Kawaisa" culture covering from 1960 to 1973 when Japan experienced its first economic depression since the Second World War. Following the recovery of the economy and the reflection of their identities, the Japanese began to discuss the relationship between sociocultural structures and individuals. At the same time, the United States, like with Taiwan, had great power to affect Japan's economy, politics, and military through the "Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan" (日本国とアメリカ合衆国との間の相互協力及び安全保障条約). As a result, the Japanese viewed the United States as both a powerful country and an aggressor. Under this contradictory psychological effect, the "Kawaisa culture" was created in the 1970s (Takeuchi, 2010; Kuo, 2015).

Following the development of the "Kawaisa culture," the Lolita culture soon emerged. In the 1980s, with the development of comics, film, and television using the theme of "Lolita," the term "Lolita Complex" (ロリコン, roughly pronounced "lolicom") became very popular in Japan. Ensuing the prevalence of "Lolita Complex", a new term "Shotacon Complex," is also created to refer those who are crazy about young boys (Lin & Tu, 2012; Lin, 2014). By the late 1980s, Lolita fashion had formed by a combination of the "Kawaisa" culture and various clothing style, including European Baroque, Rococo style, British Victorian court costumes, as well as the traditional Japanese princess story of Taisho Romanticism. Soon after, Lolita fashion has been introduced to other countries, including Taiwan, the United States and even its origination, Russian (Lin, 2014). As a result, Lolita fashion is now a unique style of clothing around the globe. See **Figure 2** for a summary of the "sharenting" under the Lolita culture.

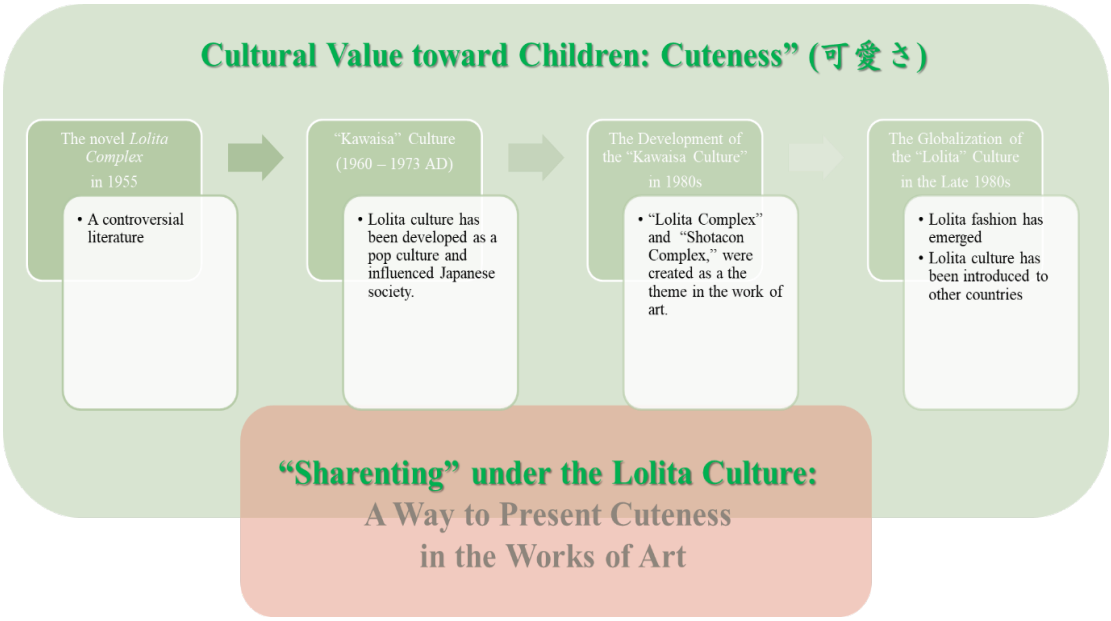

Figure 2: A Summary of the "Sharenting" under the Lolita Culture.

In the Lolita (girls) and Shotacon cultures, sharing children with a dreamy clothing style is acceptable. Because the Lolita culture has been introduced as a clothing style or other form of arts, a strong feeling of young children may be viewed as an inspiration of Lolita-themed works (Lin & Tu, 2012). Therefore, "sharenting" could be viewed as a way to present naivety, purity, and cuteness in the works of art (Lin, 2014).

Christian theology of worldview: "Sharenting" as a risk for pedophilia

In the Christian theology of worldview, children represent the purity of humans. For example, in the *Holy Bible*, a man once tried to stop little children from touching Jesus' hands, yet Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." (Mark 10:13-16 in New International Version). Another chapter stated that once Jesus asked people that "Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He then called a little child unto him, set him in the midst of them, and said, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:1-4 in New International Version). These quotations reflected a cultural value that children are humble, kind, and close to the kingdom of heaven.

In other Christian literatures, children were also portrayed as pure ones. In The Sistine Madonna (Madonna di San Sisto) by Raphael Sanzio, the image of Christ is shown as an innocent and pure baby (Lin, 2006). In the Christie's Old Organ, also known as Home Sweet Home, one of the most famous Christian children's novels in China since the 19th century. In this story, a little girl is represented through the purity and innocence of Saint Mabel (Lai, 2012). The Christian theology of worldview might influence how western people perceive children (Chang & Li, 2010). Psychology studies found that American participants perceived a childlike face as a feeling of warmth and kindness (i.e., Berry & McArthur, 1985; Berry & Brownlow, 1989).

Under discourses rooted in Christian theology of worldview, pedophile is a complete opposite. Pedophile is a psychological term referring to an individual who is sexually obsessed with children. Throughout the Western history, pedophile is anything but new, and its cultural meaning has been changed. The English term “pederasty,” meaning loving, derives from the Greek word "παιδεραστία" (paiderastia), which consists of the words "παῖς" (boy) and “ἐραστής” (lover). The Latin term "pæderasta" is borrowed from “The Symposium,” an Ancient Greek philosophical text by Plato (Laws & O'Donohue, 2008). During the Renaissance era, the term “pederasty” was first introduced in English, written as “pæderastie,” meaning the sexual relationship between adult males and boys. Unlike the negative meaning in the current, the sexual relationship originated from a moral and educational institution during ancient Greece (Ueng, 1997). However, at the end of the 19th century, pedophilia have become a negative term, and is considered to be a form of mental illness. Since the 1980s, a substantial amount of research about pedophilia has been conducted (Laws & O'Donohue, 2008).

The cultural meaning of the pedophile might have been influenced by Christian theology of worldview considering its medical truing point from neutral to negative. The Western knowledge of psychology originated from the ancient Greek “Humorae theory,” systematically organized by Hippocrates (460-379 BC) and extended by Galen (130-201 AD). This theory proposed that a disease was attributed to the imbalance of four fluids in the human body. However, after the end of the Roman Empire, religious trials replaced systematic psychotherapy. As a result, during the people with an abnormal mental condition were viewed as being taken over by the devil and evil spirits, and they had to be forgiven and returned to normality after undergoing confession and punishment (Frances, 2013). The possession of evil spirits was equivalent to the labeling of “evil” on mental illness. Since then, mental illness has tightly linked to the cultural stigma.

Because pedophilia is one form of mental disorders in modern western psychology, it can be linked to the “evil” in Christian theology of worldview. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fifth (DSM-V), the “pedophilic disorder” is categorized as a paraphilic disorder, and pedophilia refers to people sexually fantasizing about prepubescent children (APA, 2018, p.685). DSM-V once officially changed the definition of the “pedophilic disorder,” and the change was harshly objected by Christian associations, such as American Family Association (Charisma News, November 1, 2013). As a result, the APA had to release a public statement.

The statement by the APA showed the negative cultural stigma on pedophilia. In the statement, the APA called the change as an “error,” and promised it will be revised soon. At the end of the statement, APA emphasized its great efforts to protect the young from sexual abuse and exploitation. Throughout the statement, the word “those” is used to refer to “people who sexually abuse and exploit children and adolescents” and “people with the pedophilic disorder.” Therefore, this statement seems to link pedophiles to “abnormality” (i.e., abuse, exploit, disorder). See **Figure 3** for a summary of the “sharenting” under the Christian theology of worldview.

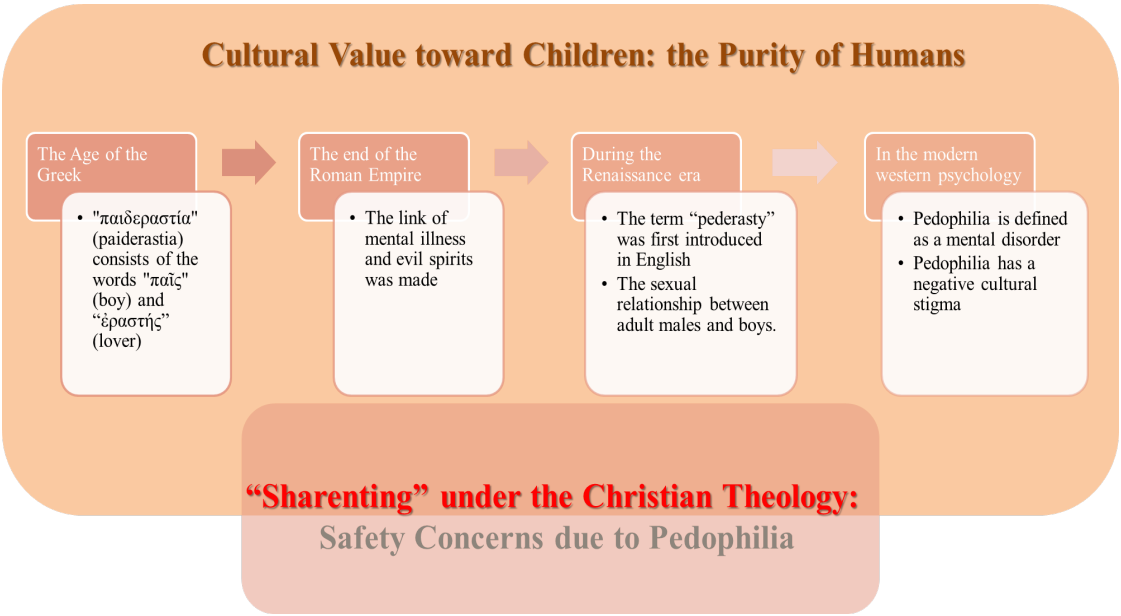

Figure 3: A Summary of the "Sharenting" under the Christian Theology of Worldview.

In Taiwan, the discussion of "sharenting" can be shaped by the negative viewpoint on pedophilia under Christian theology of worldview. That is, aligned with Christian theology of worldview, some people have safety concerns about "sharenting" because they are worried that images on social media may be exploited by strangers. A text analysis study may show a correlation between Christian theology of worldview and the discussion of "sharenting" in Taiwan. The study revealed that news coverages from Western countries mostly linked pedophiles to the negative and immoral concepts in Taiwan (Liao & Zhuang, 2005). The study didn't examine whether these western coverages were framed by Christian theology of worldview, and whether the readers' attitudes toward "sharenting" will be influenced by these coverages. However, if the cultural sigma of the pedophilia has been greatly introduced in Taiwan, then the discussion of "sharenting" might be shaped among Taiwanese readers. As a result, safety concerns about "sharenting" will be raised.

How Cultures Matter on the Viewpoints of "Sharenting"

This study revealed three worldviews of cultures toward "sharenting" on Facebook in Taiwan based on the cultural perspective approach. Based on the Confucian worldview, children's bodies are viewed as a possession owned by parents. Under this perspective, sharing their own children's images is just like sharing their own body on social media. Therefore, "sharenting" is an acceptable social practice because parents, as any online user on social media, presenting themselves is nothing abnormal. In the Lolita culture, presenting adorable young children is acceptable because it can be viewed as arts, popular cultures, or identification. Accordingly, both of these cultures have an influence on people in terms of normalizing "sharenting." Conversely, under the discourse of Christian theology of worldview, people who fancy children might be viewed as pedophiliaand be called for treatment. Thus, people abnormally interested in prepubescent children might be recognized as abnormal. These diverse cultures coexist in Taiwanese society, presenting that even when people living in the same society discuss the same issue, different cultural worldviews can mediate their thoughts.

From the case study of “sharenting,” the boundary between “normality” and “abnormality” in social media is a dynamic process of cultural hegemony. Gramsci (1992) pointed out that cultures constantly interact with each other, and this occurs neither naturally nor inevitably. For example, the meaning of Lolita has transformed from controversial romance into a popular culture since its first debut in 1955 (Chen, 2017; Lin, 2014). Through its development within Japan, the Lolita culture has added new elements, and then it was introduced to other countries even where the original novel first arrived. Although “Lolita Complex” has been given a brand new meaning, it has been dramatically challenged worldwide under pressure from anti-pedophilia movements. Gramsci (1992) proposed "culture hegemony" to explain that it is constant for dominance, competition, and powers' formation. For instance, debate among the “Lolita Complex” remains in Taiwan. Such as domestic companies and local authors, supporters viewed “Lolita Complex” as an art genre by exporting or creating works related to Lolita. Opponents consider the “Lolita Complex” as pedophiles and propose cuts in any form of Lolita works (Lin, 2014). It showed that cultures have kept interacting with others.

Limitations, Future Research Suggestions, and Conclusions

There are several limitations that we should consider for interpreting the results. First, as an exploratory study, this paper lacked empirical evidence to support the presumption. Therefore, future studies should conduct empirical research to examine the cultural meanings of “sharenting” further. For in-depth interviews, future studies can further examine why and how different cultures play roles in interviewers' interpretations of the same themes in the same society. Qualitative text analysis could compare different self-reference terms with other terms. Terms such as “Lolita Complex,” “Pedophilia,” and “I/We” should be examined to see whether terms representing different cultural frameworks will affect people's attitudes toward the same theme in the same country.

Second, while this study revealed three cultural perspectives in “sharenting,” cultural perspectives are not limited to these three. Other “sharenting” issues include children's privacy, social pressures, and social media effects. Therefore, follow-up studies could further explore issues other than the three in this study to examine their cultural meanings further. Future research could also discuss contexts other than Taiwan to discuss the cultural meanings of “sharenting” among different societies.

The study contributes to an exploratory discussion about the boundary between normality and abnormality germane to “sharenting” by examining different cultures in the same country. This paper provided a cultural perspective to examine “sharenting” in-depth rather than the currently prevalent approach focusing on its concerns. Finally, this research argued that examining cultural meanings helps research to have a thorough understanding of social practices, especially in such a hybrid cultural discourse in social media. Therefore, future communication studies should examine not only micro-level but also sociocultural level of issues to fit in the constantly changing contexts in social media.

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