

Understanding Engagement of Parents In Online Health Communities for Early Childhood

Jasmeet Kaur, Pushendra Singh

Mélange Lab, IIIT-Delhi, India

OBJECTIVE

To understand the experiences of parents with online health communities, during the initial years of parenting, we conducted a study on the BabyCenter^a platform. Our research explores:

- How do users use online health communities for parenting during the initial years of childcare?

DATA COLLECTION

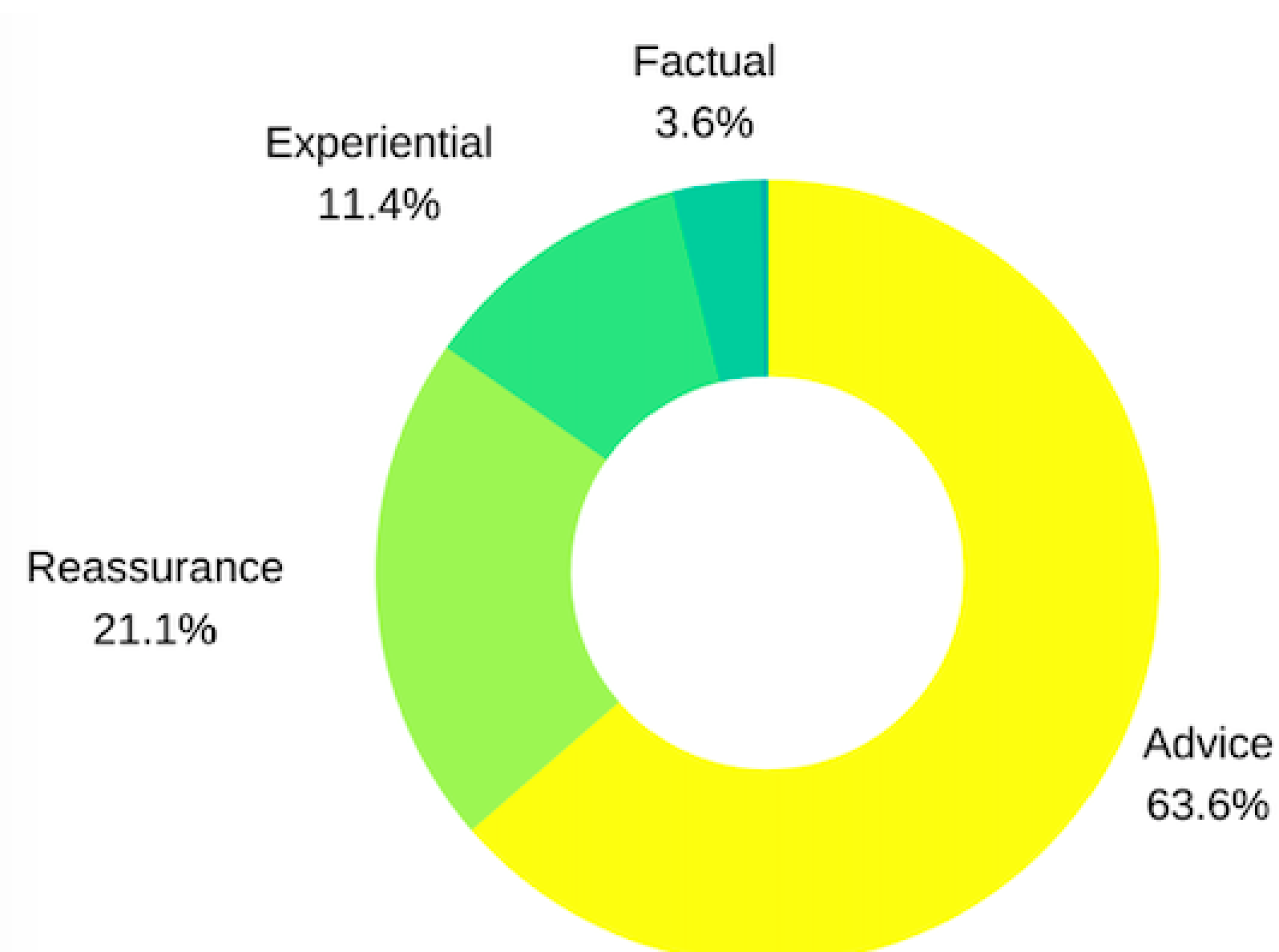
We collected posts with their corresponding comments from the BabyCenter website for six months, from Jan 2019 to June 2019, from three groups, related to our research interest - Baby(0-12 months), Breastfeeding, and Toddlers(12-36 months). We identified **390** posts - 326 posts related to child-related concerns, and 64 posts related to social interactions.

SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

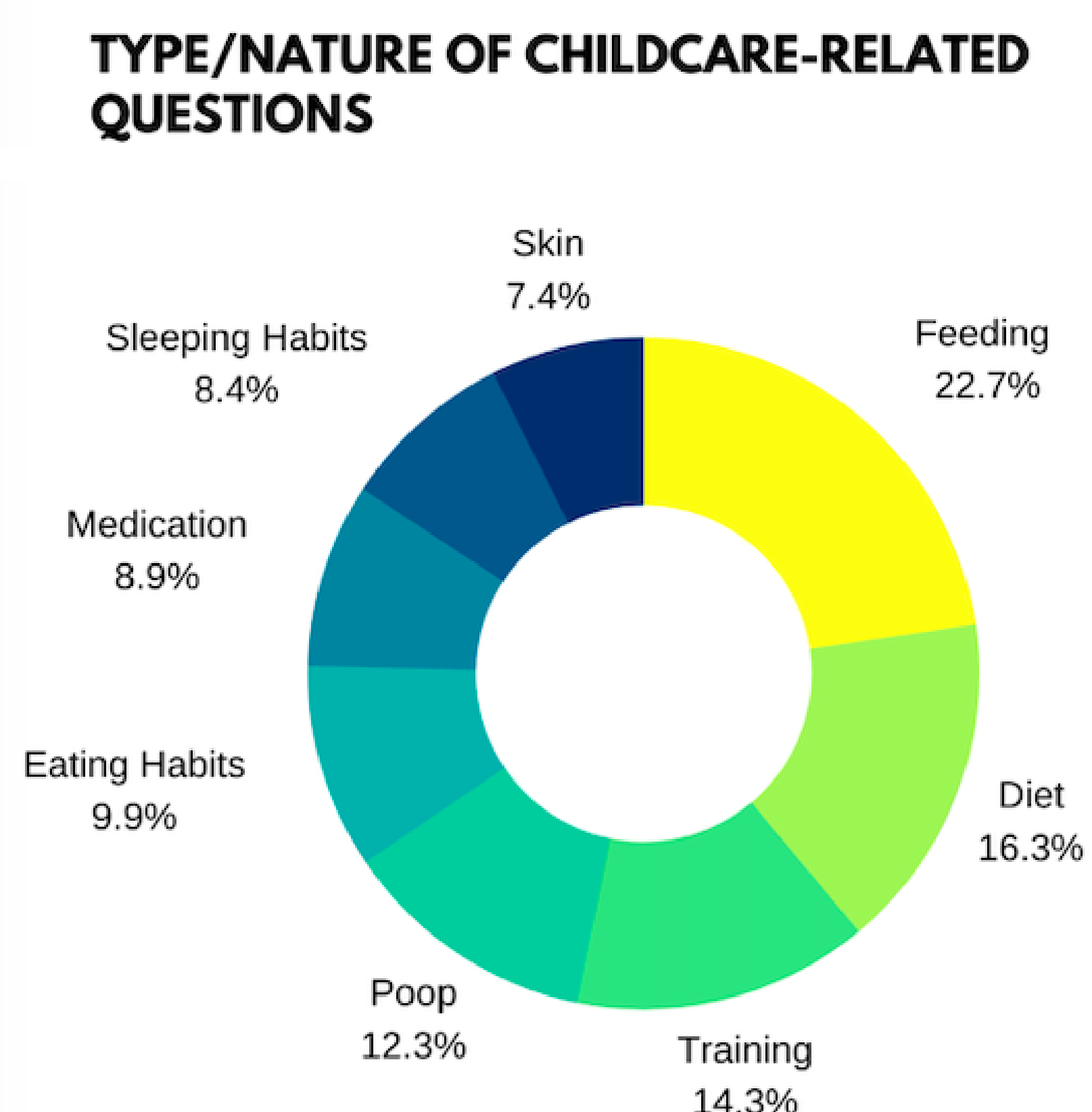
- 30 chit-chat posts
- 13 photo-contest related posts
- 9 nanny and job lookup posts
- 6 posts included links to books, articles and videos
- 5 product promotion posts

INDUCTIVE THEMATIC ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS 1 Type of questions



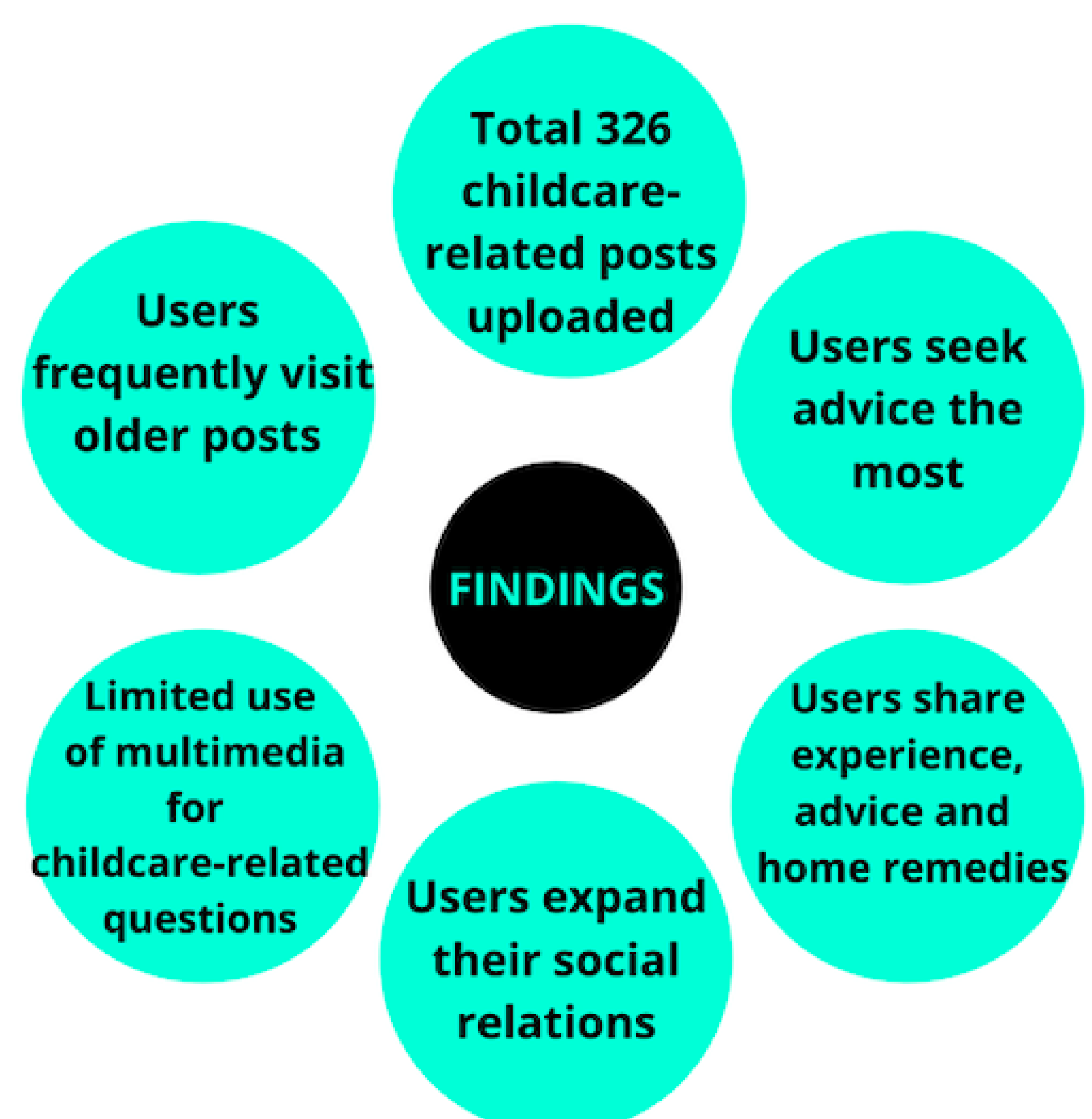
ANALYSIS 2 Topic of questions



ANALYSIS 3 Multimedia Exchange and Activity Trends

DISCUSSION

- **Catering to Reading Behavior:** Information exchanged in online health communities should be indexed and archived in ways such that posts on a health issue, covering its different aspects, are consolidated so that users are able to read about the issue in an integrated manner.
- **Use of Media:** Images have been seen to improve the effectiveness of health education materials [1]. Online health platforms can have mechanisms such as providing built-in tools for easy photo editing to blur the part of the image which the user does not want to reveal to accommodate users' privacy concerns.



CONCLUSION

Online health forums have become a place where users can seek advice, experiences, home remedies, or gain reassurance to manage their health situation.

References

- [1] P. S. Houts, C. C. Doak, L. G. Doak, and M. J. Loscalzo. The role of pictures in improving health communication: a review of research on attention, comprehension, recall, and adherence. *Patient education and counseling*, 2006.

^awww.babycenter.com

Contact Information

- jasmeetk@iiitd.ac.in
- psingh@iiitd.ac.in