Article

Sharenting of Portuguese Male and Female Celebrities on Instagram

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Abstract: In a contemporary era, strongly characterized by digital omnipresence, celebrities share, via their social media accounts, experiences related to parenthood or, in other words, adopt sharenting practices. This article focuses on the visual and textual representation of the children of six Portuguese female and male celebrities active on Instagram in 2020. The study aimed to explore whether the narratives and content strategies conveyed by celebrities about their children are integrated into authentic and advertising content, and how these vary according to the celebrity's gender. A quantitative and qualitative content analysis was carried out, on a corpus of 1116 pieces of content related to children, in the four Instagram formats—Post, Instastory, IGTV, and Reels. The results showed that children are mostly depicted in spontaneous moments of everyday life that are often perceived as intimate and exclusive moments. While content explicitly identifying advertising or partnerships is infrequent, in many of these contents there was some sort of commercial presence, e.g., through brands identified in children's content. There were also substantial differences in the themes of the content posted by mothers, in contrast to fathers. These differences were especially evident, on the one hand, regarding the categories of the identified brands—male celebrities are associated with outdoor activities and tend to fall into the categories "Leisure" and "Food and Drinks", while the brand categories most often identified by female celebrities are associated with "Clothing and Footwear" and "Childcare and Health", categories that are related to the daily care of children. On the other hand, as for the speech, we found that not only the gender but also the celebrity's persona is relevant when considering the sharenting they do. Generally, the study found that celebrity sharenting is associated with demonstrations of affection towards children, regardless of gender, a fact that highlights the importance of family ties and parental values in a pandemic context.

Keywords: celebrities; sharenting; Instagram; authenticity; advertising

1. Introduction

The digital ecosystem and, more specifically, social media platforms have brought new opportunities as well as challenges to parenting. Parents are now increasingly including their children in digital culture as they post about their children on their social media, telling stories and sharing moments of their lives together. In the United States, 92% of children under the age of two have some sort of social media presence, and a third make their online debut before they are a day old (Otero 2017). Although sharenting is strongly associated with the child's mother (Jorge et al. 2022a; Archer 2019; Jerslev and Mortensen 2018), the father has gained momentum in the social media environment (Campana et al. 2020; Ranson 2015). Sharenting, the portmanteau of sharing parenting experiences online (Blum-Ross and Livingstone 2017), became a widely accepted practice and term. Alongside ordinary users and similarly to influencers, celebrities from various fields of action use social media to share their lives with their fans (and haters), the media, often showing aspects of family nature, where their children are represented.

This paper reports on a study of sharenting practices by celebrities, as users of Instagram, and the way they use this platform to share content about their children. The main

goal of this study is to examine these practices considering the gender of the celebrities themselves, as well as their commercial entanglement. The analysis also focuses on the four content formats by Instagram, a challenging aspect for research and, to our knowledge, unprecedented, which seeks to meet the different functionalities, affordances, and appropriations in the context of sharenting. We draw on celebrity and sharenting literature, as well as on parenting and gender, to present our original study and contribution.

2. Celebrity Sharenting

There are several meanings associated with the concept of celebrity. A celebrity tends to be someone who has achieved something or possesses a particular talent and, therefore, occupies a prominent position in society (Abidin 2018). According to Marwick and boyd (2011, p. 140), celebrity mirrors "an organic and ever-changing performative practice rather than a set of intrinsic personal characteristics or external labels". Marshall and Redmond (2015) remark that celebrities are the embodiment of the possibility of change through consumer culture, and they collectively enable the production and reproduction of a discourse of variability. In addition, they are also able to represent the meaning of individuality and personality as a new form of substitution for class and status value.

In fact, celebrity culture has always involved an articulated duality between public and private life. The relationship between social media and celebrities occurs roughly because these tools facilitate self-promotion, as we will explore in detail below, and, in addition, they can be used to manage celebrities' public perception (Baker and Rojek 2020). This articulation is mirrored in media reports that often scrutinize aspects of celebrities' personal lives, going far beyond their professional achievements. Celebrity media promise to offer their audiences information that is labeled as more "private" and "real" aspects of celebrities' lives (Jorge 2020; Turner 2013; Genz 2015).

In 2010, conversations about celebrity on the Internet began to focus on a specific type of celebrity: the influencer. This term can be defined as:

> everyday, ordinary Internet users who accumulate a relatively large following on blogs and social media through the textual and visual narration of their personal lives and lifestyles, engage with their following in digital and physical spaces, and monetize their following by integrating "advertorials" into their blog or social media posts. (Abidin 2015b)

Moreover, according to Abidin (2018, p. 1), "Influencers are the epitome of internet celebrities, given that they make a living from being celebrities native to and on the internet." According to the author, influencers are a type of micro-celebrities who exert influence over many people. When their influence is mostly exercised through social media, the influencer becomes a Social Media Influencer (SMI). In short, SMI is a term commonly used when talking about someone who is dedicated to generating a form of "celebrity" capital by cultivating as much attention as possible.

Nowadays, celebrities' private sphere is not only reflected in legacy media but also on social media, as they share their daily lives with the online public at their ease. Through the latter, celebrities allow their audiences the opportunity to get to know intimate details of their daily lives—both of their professional moments, e.g., when they are preparing for a show; and ordinary, personal moments, e.g., making breakfast or interacting with their family or friends. They create the perception of access to intimate, exclusive, and authentic content (Marwick and boyd 2011). It is this perception of authenticity that fosters the relationship between celebrities and audiences (Jerslev 2016; Jorge 2020). Among the representations of daily life, celebrity children are portrayed on their parents' Instagram accounts, and it is possible to follow some of their daily doings in relative proximity.

Sharenting (Marasli et al. 2016; Blum-Ross and Livingstone 2017) has become of increasing interest due to the popularity of social media and the visibility it has provided for children (Dobson and Jay 2020). Children tend to appear in their parents' publications as communication intermediaries (Holiday et al. 2020), meaning that the narratives about their children on social networks end up being a technique of self-representation of the

parents themselves, who also reveal moments of their family life in order to demonstrate their aspirations, skills, and achievements. Children are often presented as the extended self of the parent(s) (Holiday et al. 2020; Jorge et al. 2022b). However, even if children occupy a peripheral position within a larger narrative, their identity, as well as their presence in social networks, is still evident.

Even though celebrities sometimes decide to hide their offspring from the public eye, sharenting remains a common activity (Yasharoff 2021). Like any parent, celebrities sharing content about their children face a duality (Chalklen and Anderson 2017): while they may draw positive aspects from such sharing, they also face privacy issues when revealing information about their children. Regarding the privacy issue, Law professor Stacey Steinberg (2017, p. 839) argues that, while children have the right to have their privacy safeguarded, the rights of parents to control their children's education as well as their right to free speech may ultimately outweigh the interests of the children. They may also face additional dilemmas, such as negotiating the right to sharent with other agents who are connected to the child, such as teachers or grandparents (Cino 2022).

As a result of continual exposure through sharenting, the children of celebrities and influencers become known to the audiences, in some cases even before they are born, through narratives controlled and consented to by their own parents—unlike the paparazzi regime previously in celebrity culture. For example, in 2016, American actress Anne Hathaway announced her first pregnancy ahead of the paparazzi on her Instagram account, reclaiming control over how this event was made public (Jorge 2020). Abidin (2015a) designated as micro-microcelebrities the children who inherit exposure and fame due to the online actions of their influencer parents. On the one hand, these micro-micro celebrities, unlike their parents, do not adopt self-presentation techniques, and their presence is associated with the promotion of advertorials, since they can be involved in social networks to promote products, from childcare (e.g., creams or diapers) to lifestyle (Abidin 2015a). On the other, the existence of authentic, everyday content—in contrast to the content of a commercial nature—can become interesting and useful for the study of sharenting, namely how this combination is done to attract and retain audiences without saturation or accusation of over-commercialism (as García-Rapp 2016 notes for beauty vloggers).

By showing the challenges inherent to parenthood, some celebrities promote feelings of identification and relatability in their audiences, since they are representing "struggles" similar to those of "ordinary" people (Jorge 2020) and can thus be perceived as closer to their audiences. There are also many instances of play and involvement of children in the content shared by parents, leading them to imagine, for instance, an audience and modes of self-presentation (Jorge et al. 2022b), as much as there is a colonization of their imagination when they condition their actions to ask the parent to record for social media.

3. Parenting and Gender

A survey conducted by the University of Michigan's C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, involving 569 parents of children up to four years old, revealed that 56% of mothers and 34% of fathers shared parenting-related information on social media (Brosch 2016).

In the specific case of influencers, the popularization of "mom influencers" has proven to be a worldwide trend, as it allows mothers to earn significant income from their personal "brand" and their role as social media influencers (Archer 2019; Jorge et al. 2022a). In fact, Duffy and Schwartz (2018) consider that, in social media, digital work has an increasingly feminine nature. However, it is important not to overlook the fact that the male figure also makes use of his digital platforms to publicize his family life (Archer 2019; Campana et al. 2020). Currently, on social media, we increasingly see the emergence of content that shows the father as someone who is committed to his parenting values (Rowland and Correia 2018).

Some studies conducted in the UK, Europe, the US, and Australia (StGeorge and Fletcher 2011; Niela-Vilén et al. 2014; Salzmann-Erikson and Eriksson 2013) found that some men use the Internet to gather information about pregnancy and fatherhood and seek

support to help practice intimate fatherhood. Intimate fatherhood is a concept developed by Dermott (2014) that refers to the involvement of fathers through an emotional connection that begins in pregnancy, and subsequently relates to supporting partners and caring for their children.

Additionally, some men have also blogged about fatherhood or used social media platforms to share experiences. However, it has been observed that fathers are not as engaged as mothers in online activities (Duggan et al. 2015) and that current digital media often do not address and represent fathers' experiences (Brady and Guerin 2010). However, it can also be the case that fathers feel they have less space to expose their vulnerabilities in online spaces dominated by mothers (Brooks and Hodkinson 2020).

This idea becomes especially relevant because it ends up deconstructing traditional gender roles, since the father was often associated with the public sphere or often seen as "the breadwinner of the family" (Cabrera et al. 2018). This more active role may be explained by the effect of feminist movements that have greatly called for the involvement of fathers in family life and the division of tasks between the genders; as well as the increase in divorce rates, the increase in the number of women in the labor market, and also the adoption of parental policies by governments (Diniz and Sepúlveda, forthcoming). Their active self-presentation on social media as fathers, particularly as Instadads (Rowland and Correia 2018), is related to individual issues and social contexts, and also involves contemporary narratives about fatherhood that are independent of the narratives conveyed by mothers.

The emergence of these new narratives is approached through different perspectives; in the affective relationships between fathers and children, it allows men to include the "care" dimension, creating the perception of being involved fathers. But narratives can also translate into messages of parental equality (implicit or explicit), reinforcing the image of the father as a role model (Rowland and Correia 2018). Our study considers mothers as well as fathers.

4. Social Media and Everyday Commercialism

Since its creation in 2010, Instagram has been developing its own identity and technical and functional issues of the platform have changed. These modifications are inextricable from contextual and historical factors, which take into account technological evolution and also embrace aspects of visual culture and formats supported by social media (Warfield et al. 2016).

Instagram has evolved to be a particularly popular platform for sharing photos and videos of youngsters and their families (Dobson and Jay 2020) and has even been described as a "children's photo album" (Choi and Lewallen 2018, p. 1). Visual representations are situated within stories and hierarchies, where perceptions, intentional or not, about the nature of children and childhood are created. Although Instagram's Terms of Use prevent anyone under the age of 13 from using the platform, photographs, and images of children, including nudity, are shared continuously by other users. The platform has also been developing tools regarding paid or promoted content, to monetize content, as well as to account for criticism of over-commercialism and to allow different agents (such as sponsors) to get access to the analytics. While these developments have been important, influencers find themselves seeking the right balance between official advertising, the influencer economy, and a platform based on authentic sharing and personal communication (Abidin 2017).

When advertising content includes children, and in order to counter perceptions that children are "working" or undertaking a form of work, parents often resort to what Crystal Abidin (2017) has termed "calibrated amateurism". This term refers to a practice that involves the careful sharing of seemingly less polished and produced content that showcases the fun and playful moments that exist behind the scenes of more "staged" images and videos.

In the case of celebrities who inherently hold some sort of influence, they know that their success depends on portraying themselves as authentic and revealing parts

of their daily lives (Khamis et al. 2017), which often includes children in a variety of moments. In addition to triggering feelings of closeness and identification with audiences, the construction of the celebrity shows their more entrepreneurial side through the creation of new performance spaces, as well as reaffirming his own economic value (Archer 2019; Van Driel and Dumitrica 2021). In this respect, children of celebrities work as a form of capital for audience engagement with the celebrity parent (Jorge et al. 2022b).

5. Methods

This study focuses on sharenting practices by celebrities on Instagram and aims to analyze those practices with a focus on gender, i.e., including celebrity fathers as well as mothers. This study is focused on the Portuguese context. As a southern European country, Portugal is a developed country, where in 2018, Internet access was a reality for 79.4% of Portuguese households (INE 2018). The study covered the period of the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020. The restrictions imposed by health authorities in 2020, in Portugal as in many countries around the world, resulted in an increase in indoor time, with family, and schooling (as well as working) from home, which was reflected in increased online time by children and families. For celebrities, it potentially represented fewer opportunities to work professionally, but more to work on their communication through social media, especially as global traffic for these platforms increased.

Thus, the study includes celebrities who frequently make their parenting visible through Instagram, maintaining a gender balance. We considered the most popular profiles in 2020, from a marketing survey on influencer monitoring and management platform on Instagram (Brinfer 2020); Francisco Garcia was purposively added since he strongly focuses on parenting. Moreover, as a teenager, he hosted child-oriented television programs such as Disney Kids and Panda School, and today he shares content strongly linked to childhood and youth. His popularity in this realm made us consider him as a relevant celebrity to the current research.

Additionally, we explored the contents to check whether the children had been represented on their parents' Instagram profiles at least 10 times in the year before. We finally selected three male celebrities (António Raminhos, Diogo Amaral, and Francisco Garcia) and three female celebrities (Carolina Patrocínio, Cláudia Vieira, and Mafalda Sampaio). Their professional activities, children and gender, and their social media performances are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Celebrities' presentation.

Name and Gender	Main Professional Activity	Children and Gender	Instagram Account	Followers
António Raminhos (M)	Comedian/actor and writer He has created "As Marias", a radio sketch turned into a show and book about his daughters.	3 daughters	@raminhoseffect	889k
Cláudia Vieira (F)	Actress, TV presenter, and model	2 daughters	@claudiavieiraoficial	1M
Carolina Patrocínio (F)	Television presenter	3 daughters and 1 son	@carolinapatrocinio	914k
Diogo Amaral (M)	Actor and model He maintains "Breaking Dad", a blog about fatherhood (Bento 2016).	2 sons	@diogoamaral.oficial	475k
Francisco Garcia (M)	Television presenter and actor	2 daughters	@francisco.garciaa	98.3k
Mafalda Sampaio (F)	Megainfluencer, considered celebrity	1 daughter	@mafalda.sampaio	503k

Data referring to 7 October 2020.

Our study considers how the representation—in its visual and textual components—of children made by celebrities uses the features of the Instagram platform. Thus, the collection included content from the four Instagram formats—Post, Instastory, IGTV, and Reels. The corpus consisted of 1116 contents, mostly Instastories and Posts (99%). The

distribution of the corpus in these formats is presented in Table 2. Due to the dimension of the universe of contents, the sampling had different durations. In order to collect sufficient and diverse material to analyze, the timeframe of IGTV and posts was extended from 2 to 7 months. Thus, the corpus corresponds to IGTV posts and videos in the period of seven months, between 1 March 2020 and 1 October of the same year; Instastories between 1 May 2020 and 1 July 2020; and Reels contents, between 30 August 2020 and 1 October 2020 (the feature was rolled out in August that year).

Table 2. Corpus of the study.

Content Nature	No. of Contents with Reference to Children	% of Contents with Reference to Children
Posts	497	44.5
Instastories	608	54.5
IGTV	9	0.8
Reels	2	0.2
Total	**1116**	**100**

In what concerns the publications, Reels and IGTV present in the platform, these were consulted through the platform. As for the Instastories, they were retrieved with a screen recording tool through mobile devices and computer equipment. The collected material was filed in folders with the names of the celebrities and respective collection dates.

We conducted content analysis (Neuendorf and Kumar 2016). Initially, the authors performed an exploratory and qualitative content analysis on the posts of the chosen Instagram accounts that described or mentioned children. Subsequently, the descriptions of all posted content were analyzed in order to understand what discourses are conveyed by the parents themselves in relation to their children. In this phase, the authors immersed in the data for familiarity and also produced a statistical overview of the material. In a second stage, a codebook was developed—inductively from the material collected in the first stage, in conjunction with literature, i.e., also deductively—and thematic analysis coding was performed (Bardin 2009); specifically, the content was coded for general aspects (celebrity/influencer, gender, date of collection, date of publication, Instagram format, video/photo), popularity (number of likes, number of comments—except for Instastories), and parenting.

For content focusing on parenting, additional codes were included for visual and image issues and are divided into three core themes: image and integrity; commercial presence and advertising; and authenticity. These themes were developed to better understand the sharenting phenomenon and its singularities. Regarding image and integrity, we considered how was the child(ren) identified in the content (the child's face(s) is/are totally or partially identified; the child's body(ies) is/are identifiable; the child(ren) appears in the background; a part of the child(ren)'s body appears in the close-up without identification of his/her face(s); the child(ren) appears with a mask; although two or more children are present, only one of the faces is identified) and their level of protagonism in the scene (alone, accompanied by other people or animals). We also included the theme representation of the child(ren) (daily life; outdoors; special events; embarrassing moments; professional contents; and advertising or partnership). Regarding the theme of commercial presence and advertising, we looked for commercial identification (disclosed advertising; partnership; none), and whether there was any brand identification in the content where the child appears, as well as, if any, the brand category. Lastly, for the theme of authenticity, we included the variable of scene context (professional/staged; a spontaneous moment of everyday life; not perceptible). The contents referring to children were also analyzed for oral or written speech (whether the celebrity referred to the children, and under which discursive theme: advertising/partnership, history or funny moment, everyday situation, advice or venting, information about the children, demonstration of affection).

One of the authors coded the material using Excel software, and the other author was consulted when doubts arose. In particular, we saw that there are brands that are identified in the content referring to children, but they are not advertising or affiliate content either. However, in the absence of any kind of explicit identification, it becomes complex to understand to what extent this type of content is being used for the promotion of products or services.

Since the research is related to the identities of children online, there are multiple ethical issues that arise, especially those that are directly related to the privacy and integrity of children. We considered the celebrities' and influencers' open social media accounts as public online locations since they do not require permission to access. Notwithstanding, we chose to blur the faces of the children featured in the content examples presented, when celebrity parents did not do so—and, for the most part, they do not; as well as any other users' images in the comments section. Moreover, although all the images have been public at some point, in our presentation of the data the URLs of the original content are not included so as not to direct readers to them (franzke et al. 2020).

6. Findings

The results found throughout this study revealed that the main categories where children were represented are: "Everyday life" (47%), which includes all spontaneous moments when the child is at home, eating, sleeping, or playing, and others; and "Outside: outings and trips" (36%), which includes moments when the child is on vacation, in the car, at the pool or playing outdoors. Together, these two categories represented more than 80% of the total.

The category "Advertising or Partnership" (7%), which concerns all content that is identified through the hashtag "#pub" or "#partnership", did not prove to be significant, compared to the aforementioned categories, concerning the nature of the content. However, it is important to mention that although advertising or partnership content does not seem to be a prevalent practice, it does exist. In fact, commercialism permeates the content, oftentimes without explicit mention. As for brand identification, it was found that, in general, the children of the celebrities under analysis were also associated with products or services that were not only included in the fields of childcare and health, but also appearing in content where food or beverage brands are identified, for example. In this sense, they are part of the consumption aimed at families and not merely at children.

The relative frequency is also low when it comes to the representation of the child in the category "Special Events" (6%), including different types of celebrations, such as the child's birthday party, the parents' or another special date. It is also noted that a relatively small range of content includes images or videos made by professional photographers and in specific contexts (3%) and that the contents of embarrassing or awkward moments, as is the case of those that include nudity or moments in which the child is dirty, were very scarce in the corpus (1%).

The examples in Figures 1–6 illustrate the categories mentioned above and show how celebrities present themselves as being perfectly "real" "moms" and "dads" who, like ordinary parents, face the challenges of parenting naturally (except in the cases of advertising or partnership and professional content).

Figure 1. Example of the "Everyday life"; Instagram @francisco.garciaa, Post, 7 July 2020.

Figure 2. Example of "Outdoor: outings and tours"; Instagram @raminhoseffect, Post, 21 July 2020.

Figure 3. Example of "Special Events"; Instagram @diogoamaral.official, Post, 8 April 2020.

Figure 4. Example of "Advertising or Partnership"; Instagram @mafalda.sampaio, Post, 22 August 2020.

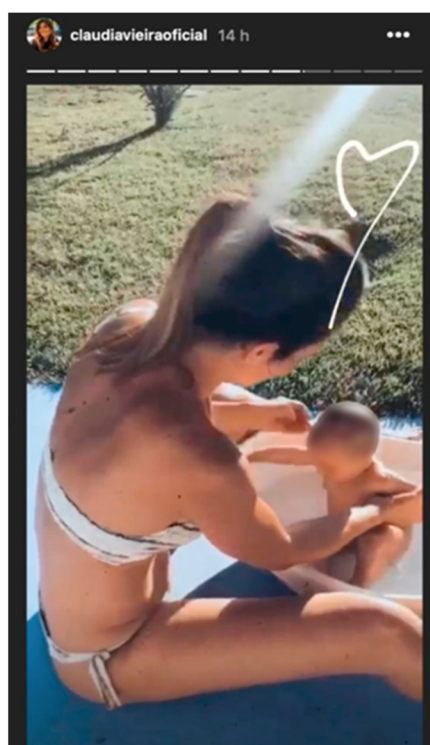**Figure 5.** Example of "Professional content"; Instagram @carolinapatrocinio, Post, 4 June 2020.

Figure 6. Example of "Embarrassing Moments"; Instagram @claudiavieiraoficial, Instastory, 27 May 2020.

As shown in Table 3, both in the case of male celebrities and female celebrities, children were mainly represented in moments of "Everyday life", "Outdoors: Going out and about" (prevalent in the male gender) and "Special events" (prevalent in the female gender). Female celebrities also presented more content with "Embarrassing Moments" and "Advertising or Partnership", than their male counterparts. As far as the "Professional Contents" category is concerned, there were no gender differences.

Table 3. Distribution of content themes by gender (%).

Celebrity Gender	Daily Life	Outdoor Outings and Tours	Special Events	Advertising or Partnership	Professional Content	Embarrassing Moments
Male	**45.9**	**42.4**	**3.9**	3.5	3.7	0.6
Female	**51.2**	**31.6**	**7.7**	4.4	3.8	1.4
Total	**97.1**	**74**	**11.6**	7.9	7.5	2

Regarding the brand categories identified in the publications referring to children, as Figure 7 illustrates, it was found that, in the case of male celebrities, the most identified brand categories were "Leisure", with touristic brands such as @salgadosbeachvillas or @visitmadeira; and "Food and Drinks" where, e.g., the brands @mcdonaldsportugal or @noorisushi were identified. Commercial publications by female celebrities with their children most often fall into the "Clothing and Footwear" category, one that includes, for example, the brand @chiccoportugal; and "Childcare or Health", which includes the diapers brands @bamboonaturept and cosmetic brand @corinedefarme_en. It became evident that the brand categories disclosed in the publications that include sharenting differ according to gender alongside a traditional association, namely associating the roles of men as those who take children out and for fun, and women to daily care.
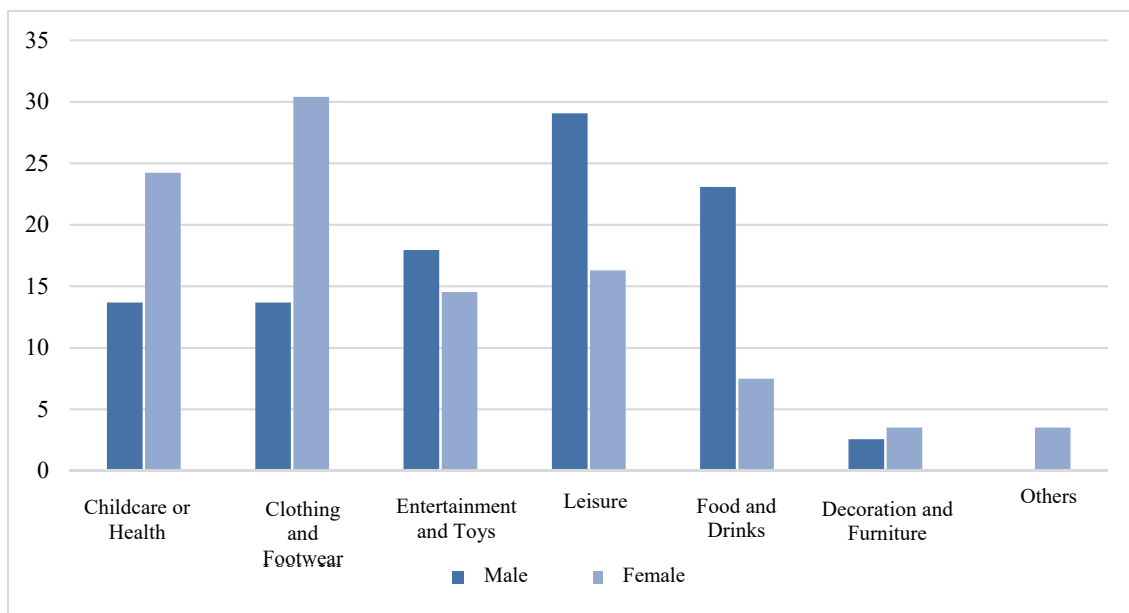
Figure 7. Categories of disclosed brands by gender (%).

Finally, as far as the discursive frame is concerned, in both genders, parents tend to use Instagram to show affection towards their children, as can be seen in Figure 8. However, it should be noted that the second most used form of speech by female celebrities is related to some kind of information about the child, including details about the clothes the child is wearing, how old they are, or even what their favorite toy is. In the case of male celebrities, the second most used form of speech is associated with a funny story or moment. This finding is also attributable to the fact that there is a comedian, António Raminhos, within our sample of male celebrities.
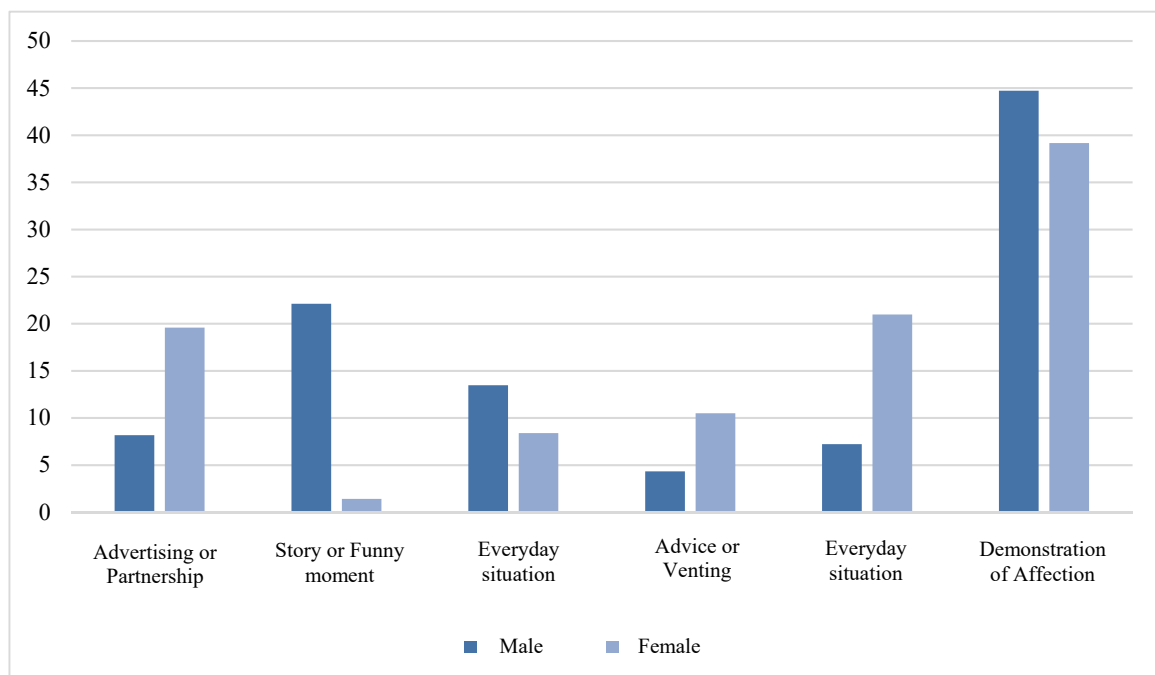

Figure 8. Nature of speech content or description of posts, IGTV and Reels by gender, %.

In order to demonstrate each of the categories of discourse, examples are provided in Figures 9–14.

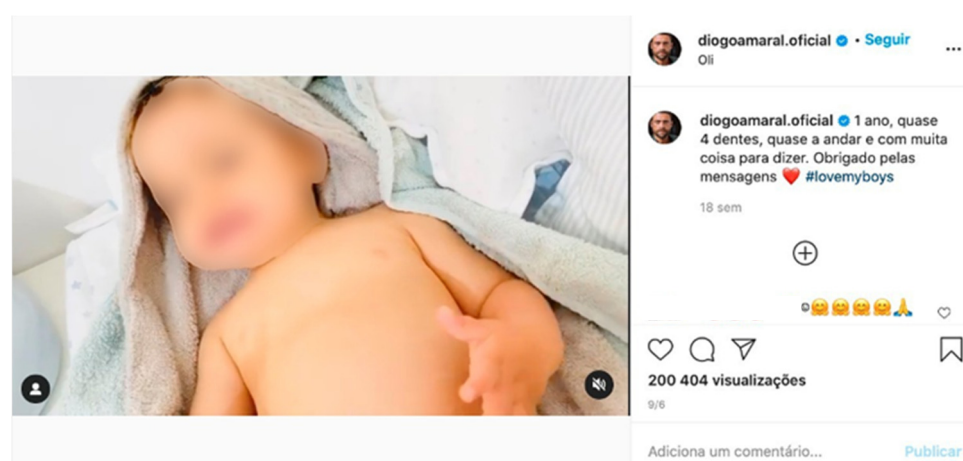**Figure 9.** Example of speech—"Affection Demonstration"; @claudiavieiraoficial, Post, 29 August 2020.

Figure 10. Example of speech "Information about the child"; @diogoamaral.oficial, Post, 9 June 2020.

Figure 11. Example of speech—"Funny story or moment"; Instagram @raminhoseffect, Post, 24 July 2020.

Figure 12. Example of speech—"Advertising or Partnership"; Instagram @francisco.garciaa, Post, 9 June 2020.

Figure 13. Example of speech—"Daily situation"; Instagram @mafalda.sampaio, Post, 21 June 2020.

Figure 14. Example of speech "Advice or venting"; Instagram @carolinapatrocinio, Post, 30 March 2020.

Through our analysis, we found that not all the celebrities in the study use the four content formats available on Instagram for their discourses about parenting. For example, videos in IGTV format were found in the accounts of only three of the six celebrities under analysis (António Raminhos, Francisco Garcia, and Mafalda Sampaio); and Reels format, by only one of the celebrities (Mafalda Sampaio). This may be explained by the fact that these recent formats as Reels and IGTV require other presentation techniques, and also because they are more demanding from a production point of view. Although without significant expression, we can say, in general, that the messages that appeared in IGTV content and Reels are related to comical moments, advertising or partnership actions, and moments that show the child's development.

Since the Reels and IGTV formats are video formats, the fact that posts and Instastories predominate may indicate that celebrities preferred easier-to-produce content such as posts, with a designated caption; or the multimodality afforded by Instastories, where they can add voice, text, music and other elements to photos or videos to express themselves.

7. Discussion and Conclusions

The fact that children tend to appear in moments of everyday life or outdoors, rather than in photographic productions or advertising, invites the public to believe that the moments shown by celebrity parents on Instagram are not staged and are therefore more authentic, a factor that helps in creating a close relationship between the celebrity and their followers (Jorge 2020; Jerslev 2016; Marwick and boyd 2011).

With regard to commercial identification, and as reinforced throughout this chapter, although many of the contents include the presence of a brand, it is not clear whether such content was supported by the brand that is identified or not. This means that in some cases, even if the content contains advertorials (Hearn and Schoenhoff 2016; Abidin 2018), these turn out to be so similar to regular content that the audience cannot identify differences (Van Driel and Dumitrica 2021).

Concerning discourse, it was understood that in the period under review, celebrities showed affection for their children in a public way on Instagram. Indeed, and in such a moment of global significance as the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, this discursive practice ultimately portrays humanistic-based values and, at the same time, reveals that celebrities can play a positive role when they show affection towards their closest ones at such a sensitive time (Kumar and Schoenebeck 2015; Davis et al. 2015; Brosch 2016). Still, regarding discourse, we found differences between content shared by moms and dads and even differences related to the celebrity's persona. For example, funny content is found in a parent celebrity who does this kind of work (comedian), while advertising or partnership content is found more prevalently in celebrities who usually work with brands. This indicates that not only the gender but also the celebrity's persona is relevant when considering the sharenting they do.

Some gender differences in content and discourse were identified, especially concerning the categories of brands identified in content referencing children. Childcare and health brands appeared more in female celebrity content, and leisure, food and beverage brands were more present in male celebrity content. The conservative association imposed by the brands can be attributed to the targeting of the brands through the audiences cultivated by the celebrities, but works towards restricting the representations of parenting performed by the celebrities.

Another point that should be brought into discussion is the fact that parents post information, pictures, and experiences of their children combined with a consumerist dimension. In several instances, we found children promoting products or services for advertising or partnerships. In this specific context, many times, the youngest can be seen as someone who is performing a form of work that was instilled by their parents, to the financial gain of the latter. Parents must decide what is or is not appropriate to share on social media and negotiate the accusation of children's exploitation (Campana et al. 2020; Jorge et al. 2022a).

This qualitative study revealed that male and female celebrities are including their children in digital culture and that the Instagram platform allows them to show and exchange experiences about parenting. In fact, children represent a significant and relevant part of the content that Portuguese celebrities post on Instagram. Commercialism is a driving force behind the presentation of celebrities on social media, and their sharing. Greater transparency about sponsorship should occur, as well as greater enforcement of current regulations.

The exceptional times experienced at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak represented particular circumstances for online media production and consumption. However, we believe that this study, from a particular cultural context, offers new insights into how children's digital identities are constructed in the digital environment. Celebrity sharenting offers opportunities for the normalization of parenting styles, as well as may reinforce conservative gender roles for mothers and fathers. Future research may benefit from comparing celebrities, microcelebrities, and "ordinary parents"; or address this issue in different cultural contexts.

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