

“No moral integrity”: Influencer sharenting and parental protective perception

Arantxa Vizcaíno-Verdú

Universidad Internacional de la Rioja

arantxa.vizcaino@unir.net

Ignacio Aguaded

Universidad de Huelva

aguaded@uhu.es

Juana M. Ortega-Tudela

Universidad de Jaén

jmortega@ujaen.es



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Abstract

Sharenting has been analyzed from different perspectives, introducing insights into the risks and opportunities of presenting children’s lives on social media. Researchers have addressed how this phenomenon impacts the lives of influencers, children, youth, and parents who engage in sharenting on YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. From the perspective of “sharenters”, there is a common assumption that sharenting is not problematic, as they control and ensure the safety of children. However, some studies highlight the threats and consequences of this practice to the integrity of minors on the internet. In this paper, we analyze the perception of parents who are unfamiliar with the phenomenon of influencer sharenting on YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, to understand their ethical concerns as seen from outside the communities of celebrity practices and their followers. Through a survey of 350 Ibero-American parents, we explored their opinions of this phenomenon, the reasons why they think influencers share their children’s lives, the potential risks, and whether there is a correlation between their use of social media and sharenting. Parents argued that there was a lack of moral integrity among influencers, and emphasized the importance of protecting children to avoid transforming them into promotional assets. We conclude that beyond the privacy policies of these platforms, further

research should address how the unique affordances of these platforms impact children's safety on the internet.

Keywords: sharenting; social media; parental mediation; digital children rights; micro-celebrity; online childhood

Resum. «Sense integritat moral»: sobreexposició filial d'influencers i percepció parental protectora

La sobreexposició filial (*sharenting*) ha estat analitzada des de diferents perspectives introduint qüestions relacionades amb els riscos i les oportunitats d'exposar la vida dels infants a les xarxes socials. Els investigadors han estudiat com afecta aquest fenomen a la vida dels *influencers*, els menors, els joves i les famílies que el practiquen a YouTube, Instagram i TikTok. Aquests *sharenters* comparteixen una mateixa opinió, segons la qual aquest tipus de comportament no és problemàtic perquè garanteix la seguretat dels infants. No obstant això, alguns estudis mostren els prejudicis i les conseqüències d'aquesta pràctica per a la integritat dels menors a Internet. Aquest estudi aborda la percepció d'aquells pares que no estan familiaritzats amb el fenomen de la sobreexposició filial practicada pels *influencers* de YouTube, Instagram i TikTok amb la finalitat de comprendre les seves preocupacions ètiques en matèria de criança alienes a aquestes pràctiques populars i comunitàries. A través d'un qüestionari a 350 pares iberoamericans, s'exploren les seves opinions sobre el fenomen, les raons per les quals creuen que els *influencers* comparteixen la vida dels seus fills, i els potencials riscos d'aquesta activitat en correlació amb l'ús de les xarxes socials. Els pares van argumentar que existia una falta d'integritat moral entre els *influencers* i van posar l'èmfasi en la importància de protegir els menors per evitar transformar-los en mers actius promocionals. Es conclou que, més enllà de les polítiques de privacitat d'aquestes plataformes, s'ha de continuar investigant sobre com influeixen les seves característiques úniques en la seguretat dels menors a Internet.

Paraules clau: sobreexposició filial; xarxes socials; mediació parental; drets digitals infantils; micromicrocelebritat; infància en línia

Resumen. «Sin integridad moral»: sobreexposición filial de influencers y percepción parental protectora

La sobreexposición filial (*sharenting*) ha sido analizada desde diferentes perspectivas introduciendo cuestiones relacionadas con los riesgos y las oportunidades de exponer la vida de los niños en las redes sociales. Los investigadores han estudiado cómo afecta este fenómeno a la vida de los *influencers*, los menores, los jóvenes y las familias que lo practican en YouTube, Instagram y TikTok. Estos *sharenters* comparten una misma opinión, según la cual este tipo de comportamiento no es problemático porque garantiza la seguridad de los niños. Sin embargo, algunos estudios muestran los prejuicios y las consecuencias de esta práctica para la integridad de los menores en Internet. Este estudio aborda la percepción de aquellos padres que no están familiarizados con el fenómeno de la sobreexposición filial practicada por los *influencers* de YouTube, Instagram y TikTok con el fin de comprender sus preocupaciones éticas en materia de crianza ajenas a estas prácticas populares y comunitarias. A través de un cuestionario a 350 padres iberoamericanos, se exploran sus opiniones sobre el fenómeno, las razones por las que creen que los *influencers* comparten la vida de sus hijos, y los potenciales riesgos de esta actividad en correlación con el uso de las redes sociales. Los padres argumentaron que existía una falta de integridad moral entre los *influencers* e hicieron hincapié en la importancia de proteger a los menores para evitar transformarlos en meros activos promocionales. Se concluye que, más allá de las políticas

de privacidad de estas plataformas, se debe seguir investigando sobre cómo influyen sus características únicas en la seguridad de los menores en Internet.

Palabras clave: sobreexposición filial; redes sociales; mediación parental; derechos digitales infantiles; micromicrocelebridad; infancia en línea

1. Introduction

The impact of social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram and TikTok on children is steadily growing. One aspect of this is the phenomenon of "sharenting", defined as the act of family members sharing children's private lives online (Hinojo-Lucena et al., 2020). Such exposure can contribute to the development of children's resilience (Leaver, 2020) and help them navigate risks including cyberbullying and grooming, along with other societal challenges (Stoilova, Livingstone and Khazbak, 2021).

The various motivations for parents to share their children's lives on social media include seeking likes, followers and commercial sponsorships (Blum-Ross and Livingstone, 2017), and creating a visual family album showcasing happiness (Vizcaíno-Verdú and Aguaded, 2020). In this study, we aimed to explore the perspectives of parents who typically abstain from sharenting or do not follow influencers who engage in it. Specifically, we sought to understand how these parents perceive the sharenting behavior exhibited by popular social media content creators – commonly referred to as influencers – who have garnered fame and visibility on digital platforms (Abidin, 2018).

The popularity of social media among families varies depending on several factors. Numerous studies have investigated how sharenting may emerge as a way to consolidate online identities (Ranzini, Newlands and Lutz, 2020), foster online communities (Le-Moignan et al., 2017), facilitate the exchange of information to address specific family challenges (Ammari et al., 2015), and provide support in various scenarios such as childbirth and maternal care (Tiidenberg and Baym, 2017). Additionally, among influencers, this phenomenon often serves as a component of their brand promotion activities (Garrido et al., 2023). On occasion, influencers engage in a practice known as "micro-celebrity parental mediation" (Leaver, 2017: 7), wherein parents create content for profit, targeting minors who subsequently gain recognition as "micro-microcelebrities" (Abidin, 2015: 2).

This phenomenon is reshaping the manner in which children's personal lives are displayed on digital platforms (Hayes et al., 2022). The trend encompasses the concept of a "digital footprint" consisting of data created and logged online through individual actions, whether deliberate or inadvertent (Buchanan et al., 2017: 277). Many children who are actively engaged with these platforms started generating digital footprints years ago, even before they possessed the ability to define their own identities (Steinberg et al., 2009). As a result, understanding age-related differences has become

essential to comprehend these social media dynamics (Feijoo et al., 2021), which encompass developmental disparities, variations in online exposure and risk, and differences in parental guidance, and which bear significant implications for policy and interventions.

Certain studies examine sharenting from the point of view of internet celebrity, showing how this form of familial discourse fosters performativity within a consumerist context (Vizcaíno-Verdú, De-Casas-Moreno and Jaramillo-Dent, 2022), or how the popularity of children correlates with the rising popularity of their parents (Jorge, Marôpo and Neto, 2022). Other studies look at the perspectives of parents or children engaged in sharenting themselves. For instance, some research findings argue that to mitigate the practice of sharenting and its associated effects, we should encourage individuals to deliberate on their online sharing, thereby engendering social media dilemmas (Cino, 2022).

Moreover, it is essential to recognize that children and youth, in their own voices, convey a preference to be consulted by their parents before their personal information is shared on these digital platforms (Sarkadi et al., 2020). While they express concerns about this practice, their participation in it persists, often due to their inability to make fully informed decisions, as seen in the case of children and adolescents. Simultaneously, for influencers and micro-celebrities, this participation is intertwined with their professional labor and personal branding. The dynamic tension between children's autonomy and the complex landscape of digital media ethics forms a central focal point in addressing the multifaceted challenges of contemporary childhood in a digital age.

These challenges and moral dilemmas originate from the standpoint of "morality", which encompasses the fundamental principles and values that guide human conduct and interactions. Within this conceptual framework, the interaction between children, technology and digital platforms weaves an intricate tapestry in which moral considerations take center stage. Our comprehension of this interaction deviates notably from our perception of conventional human values. In the era of the Anthropocene and the postdigital (Hood and Tesar, 2019), the longstanding demarcation between the "physical" and the "digital" has been progressively eroded (Jandrić et al., 2018).

As they navigate this intricate landscape, children encounter a unique tension. Having never known anything else, they seamlessly inhabit the post-digital world in which human and non-human elements intertwine (Tesar, 2016). Their experiences are marked by the absence of a clear boundary between the physical and the digital. In this context, the concept of the "innocent" child, rooted in traditional notions of childhood, is being challenged (James and Prout, 2015).

In the midst of these changes, the moral landscape evolves. The delineation of moral values in a world that no longer depends on a clear separation between the "real" and the "digital" undergoes a fundamental shift. The interconnectedness of human and non-human entities, along with shared

agency, reshapes our understanding of what it means to be a child and to have a childhood (Tesar and Hood, 2019). This evolution poses a unique challenge for policy, especially in relation to children and digital media.

Furthermore, it is crucial to acknowledge that the implications of the sharenting phenomenon extend beyond the realm of parental understanding and awareness (Barnes and Potter, 2021). The depths of its effects on children and the intricate dynamics surrounding sharenting are still not comprehensively recognized, especially by the parents actively engaged in this practice. Thus our study endeavors to shed light on the perspective of parents who refrain from participating in sharenting, and to offer an alternative perspective. By exploring the viewpoints of parents who are outside celebrity and 'sharenter' networks, we aim to provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of this complex phenomenon and its impact on contemporary childhood in the digital age.

2. The risks of sharenting and children's involvement on YouTube, Instagram and TikTok

Sharenting has been researched in terms of risks of shared information about children as well as in its consequences on children's lives (Garmendia, Martínez and Garitaonandia, 2021). Damkjaer (2018) observed that the role of parents has changed from being traditionally the best protection model for children's human rights against media harms to being considered as a potential threat to their children's well-being. Fox and Hoy (2019) argue that parents frequently share information about their children as an extension of their routine practice of sharing content on social media. This childhood digital exposure has moved to digital platforms where user-generated content becomes more creative every day, and where influencer and micro-microcelebrity sharenting remain prevalent: YouTube, Instagram and TikTok.

Regardless of the potential impact of involving children and exposing them to fame in these environments, Hayes et al. (2022) noted that for children these platforms do not represent a danger other than contact with strangers. This means that they are not able to perceive the potential risks of the internet in a broad sense – including cyberbullying, hate speech and misinformation, among others. Most especially, children are vulnerable to influencer marketing because they lack developed skills to critically reflect on advertised content (De-Veirman, Hudders and Nelson, 2019). Indeed, marketers promote so much sharenting between celebrity and first-time families that children may develop hyper-consumeristic and addictive behaviors (Fox, Hoy and Carter, 2022). Despite the fact that social media are age-restricted depending on the location, children and youth continue to be highly engaged with these sites (Ofcom, 2022).

Children's involvement with YouTube has become a global phenomenon. McRoberts et al. (2016) carried out research on the content shared by micro-microcelebrities under 12 years old and found that children exhibit

similar behaviors to professional influencers, building engagement with a large community of followers. Elorriaga-Illera, Monge-Benito and Olabarri-Fenández (2022) studied the phenomenon from the followers' perspective, taking the case of a YouTuber mom who exhibited her children daily on her channel, in order to understand the impact of the content on her audience. These findings echo the reflections of Lavorgna, Ugwudike and Tartari (2023), who recently explained how academic research criminalizes and victimizes minors engaged in sharenting.

The commoditized exhibition of children through sharenting began to be evident on Instagram years ago. Choi and Lewallen (2017) noted how children's identities are represented in a stereotypical and racialized pattern. Ranzini et al. (2020) analyzed the perspective of parents who used Instagram to share content about their children, and found that there was no correlation between these parents' concerns for privacy, except in isolated cases. This exemplifies what Barassi (2020) calls a datafied family.

TikTok is currently one of the emerging apps whose success relies on continuous viral short videos focused on content edited on the platform itself (Omar and Wang, 2020). Although sharenting on TikTok has not been deeply analyzed, some studies have explored parental issues on the platform that emerge from cross-platform practices. Badillo-Urquiola et al. (2019) suggested three interventions to control the use of TikTok between parents and children through a system of (a) parental mediation, (b) an "Asking for help" option for parents, (c) and "Automated Intelligent Assistance" to detect risky scenarios for children, alerting them to possible dangers. Similarly, Martín-Ramallal and Ruiz-Mondaza (2022) identified that despite the efforts to regulate minors' safety on TikTok, the platform does not rigorously comply with its guidelines.

3. Research questions

In this exploratory study, we aimed to analyze the perceptions of Ibero-American parents concerning influencers involvement in sharenting across YouTube, Instagram and TikTok. The exploratory nature of this research is substantiated by the underexplored dimension of the field (Holliday, 1964), particularly in the involvement of parents who are not engaged in influencer sharenting practices. This approach contributes additional insights to the existing body of knowledge surrounding the involvement of children in digital media.

Our objective was to understand what their ethical parenting concerns are regarding the overexposure of minors, as seen from outside celebrity and follower communities. For this purpose, we addressed the following research questions:

- RQ1. What do parents think about the exposure of children by influencers on social media?
- RQ2. What are the parents' perceptions of the reasons why influencers share their children's personal information?

- RQ3. What are the risks perceived by the parents regarding influencer sharenting?
- RQ4. Do parents consider that family-influencers could impact on their own social media usage?
- RQ5. Is there a correlation between use of and access to the internet and social media by parents, and their perception of influencer sharenting?

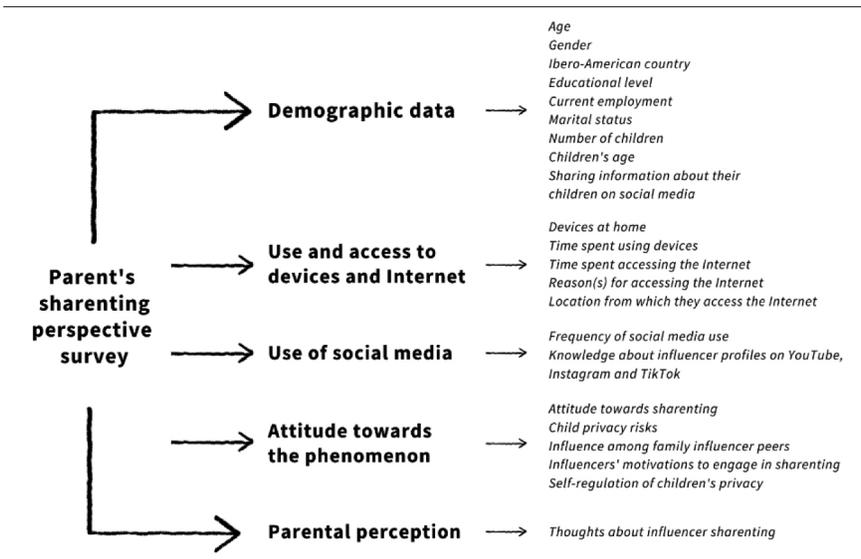
3.1. Method and data

To perform this study, we developed a non-experimental, cross-sectional, quantitative survey of perceptions of influencer sharenting. This methodological framework is grounded in three pertinent research studies: (1) an exploration of sharenting (Cino, Demozzi and Subrahmanyam, 2020); (2) a study focusing on sharenting peer influences (Ranzini et al., 2020), which is linked to the “Attitude towards the phenomenon” section below; and (3) an examination of perceptions regarding the positive and negative aspects of sharenting on social media (Verswijvel et al., 2019), which is associated with the “Parental perception” section below.

3.1.1. Measures: the parent’s sharenting perspective survey

The survey was structured in five distinct blocks, featuring a total of 46 items, as illustrated in Figure 1. Additionally, it was designed in Spanish, in accordance with the parental sample addressed.

Figure 1. The parent’s sharenting perspective survey



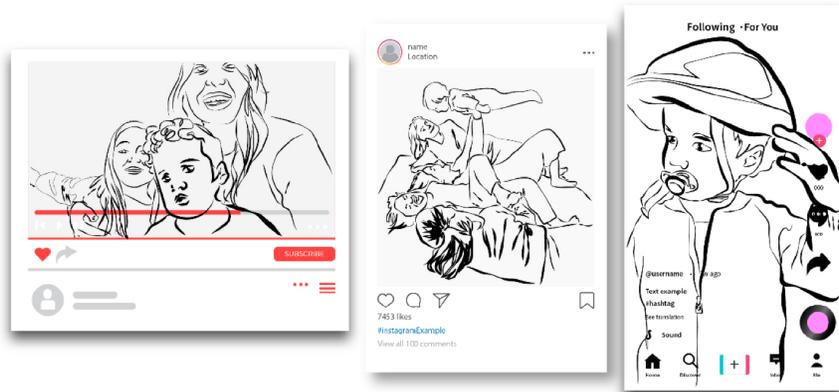
Source: Created by the authors.

For the multiple-choice questions, we employed a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 4, where 1 corresponded to “Strongly disagree”, 2 to “Disagree”, 3 to “Agree”, and 4 to “Strongly agree”. Similarly, another set of questions used a Likert scale with values 1 for “Never”, 2 for “Rarely”, 3 for “Often”, and 4 for “Always”. The final question in the survey was an open-ended one.

The open-ended responses in the survey were qualitatively analyzed using Atlas.ti 23 software, which allowed for the systematic examination of textual data. The qualitative content analysis involved coding and categorizing recurring themes and patterns in the responses (Figure 3), providing a structured approach to derive meaningful insights from the qualitative data.

Before initiating the second block of questions, the survey included three content samples extracted from influencer profiles on YouTube, Instagram and TikTok. This content was shared in order to facilitate the parents’ understanding of the phenomenon of sharenting. The selection of these examples was chosen by addressing the following selection criteria: (a) Spanish-speaking influencers, to facilitate linguistic and cultural understanding of the content by the Ibero-American parents surveyed; (b) Popular family influencers on each platform who exceeded 100,000 followers; (c) Influencers who explicitly presented minors in their content. We selected three profiles with content in which the influencers presented their children, with 960,000 followers on YouTube, 155,000 followers on Instagram and one million followers on TikTok (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Examples of child placements on YouTube, Instagram and TikTok



Source: Illustration created and anonymized by the authors.

After completing the survey, our next critical step involved a meticulous validation process. The instrument’s validation procedure was carried out by a panel of 11 distinguished Ibero-American experts in media and information literacy originating from diverse geographical locations, including Spain, Mexico, Chile, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba and Peru. This

strategic selection of experts was a deliberate decision by the researchers, aligning with the diverse geographic and cultural composition of the sample under study.

The validation process commenced with the development of a comprehensive self-administered validation questionnaire. This questionnaire included all the items from the original survey, enhanced by the addition of three open-ended questions. Each item underwent individual evaluation, using a four-point Likert scale to assess the level of agreement or disagreement with the argumentative approach targeted at its audience of parents and its alignment with the study's research questions. Furthermore, the open-ended questions were designed to extract valuable insights from the experts, prompting them to identify both positive and negative aspects, while also providing general observations to strengthen the instrument's robustness.

The results of the validation process displayed a robust Cronbach's alpha coefficient, yielding a significant value of .893. This outcome attested to the remarkable internal reliability of the survey instrument, confirming its suitability for the subsequent empirical investigation.

3.1.2. Sample

We selected the participants through the snowball method, a non-probability sampling technique which consists of recruiting future participants from among their acquaintances (Atkinson and Flint, 2001). To this end, we involved ten scholar leaders on media literacy who are part of Alfamed, a Euro-American research network that analyzes the media skills of citizens from Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru, Spain, and Venezuela. These leaders assisted us in recruiting 35 parents per country, providing an equal number of participants from each one. A total of 350 parents completed the survey. This sample comprised 249 women (71.14%) and 101 men (28.86%), and 75% of respondents reported not having shared content about their children online. We chose not to exclude the remaining 25% of parents, whether or not they were involved in "sharenting", with the primary aim of gaining a comprehensive understanding of their perspective on influencers' practices in this context.

The selection of these participants was primarily motivated by the fact that, for the most part, they exhibited limited awareness of the practice of "sharenting", particularly in how it relates to influencers utilizing it for promotional purposes. In essence, our focus was not so much on whether these parents actively practiced "sharenting" themselves, but rather, our objective was to look into their insights regarding how influencers leverage this practice for advertising and promotional objectives. By retaining this subgroup in our study, we succeeded in obtaining a more encompassing and enriched perspective on their perception of the interplay between influencers and the exposure of children on social media.

The socio-demographic data were collected in Table 1 (see at <<https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.22072160>>). We found that the majority of

parents had reached a higher level of education, which could potentially influence our results. For this reason, we understood that this limitation inherent to the snowball method may induce a higher reflexive awareness in the findings.

4. Results

4.1. (RQ1) Parents' thoughts about influencer sharenting on social media

In order to address the first research question, we looked at perceptions towards influencer sharenting on YouTube, Instagram and TikTok, corresponding to item 17 and the last question of the fifth section, in which parents shared their opinions of this phenomenon.

Based on parents' perception of sharenting after viewing influencer content on YouTube, Instagram and TikTok, we found that in item 17.1, 75% of parents find it particularly risky for these influencers to share their children's lives online. In item 17.2 we found that 72.8% of parents believe that this sort of content could be harmful to children. Items 17.3, 17.4 and 17.5 showed a similar and significant trend on all three platforms. Notably, we found that TikTok was considered to be the riskiest platform for sharing this kind of content (80% for YouTube, 79.4% for Instagram, and 82% for TikTok).

This data reflected a general awareness among parents that sharing their children's content on popular influencer profiles may entail risks for their children. We noted that they did not perceive any visible risks in the content itself, but they do consider that sharing information about their children on YouTube, Instagram and TikTok may impact their futures. As for the opinions reflected by the parents, we analyzed 77 comments, identifying up to 11 aspects (Figure 3).

Among the aspects highlighted by parents regarding sharenting, we found a generalized concern around social media dilemmas (Cino, 2022). Such perceptions suggested the potential risks of the internet for children, and the moderation of content posted by influencer families.

Some of the most common risks included identity theft, pedophilia, grooming and child-trafficking networks. They also expressed interest in the fact that influencers appear to target minors as a marketing asset for their own purposes (including engaging with followers or establishing promotional ties with brands, among others). Many parents even pointed out that without children these profiles would not accumulate such followers. In view of these factors, parents offered several measures to ensure child safety on social media, in which both those responsible for these platforms and the influencers must be involved.

Figure 3. Parent opinions of influencer sharenting



Children risks

C3: Documenting the intimate lives of minors may be a risk in countries where identity theft and, in the worst cases, child stealing is common.

C10: I agree that they should practice sharenting with young adults, but they should not expose minors, as we do not know if there are pedophile or child trafficking networks behind all this.



Children as a resource for profit and promotion

C5: I think that in most cases they do it only to gain an audience and, therefore, economic benefits.

C32: Their children are a product that they can sell to generate income which they are not able to get in a more honest and safe way.



Children's privacy policy on social media

C10: There should be stricter regulations on videos and other content involving minors on social media.

C11: I think there should be legislation to protect the identity of the smallest members of the family. Also, I think there should be more security on social media to protect minors.



Children's rights on digital platforms

C77: Children have the right to guarantee their safety, and adults have the duty to protect them.

C35: This practice infringes on children's rights, basically the right to protection and its consequences, and it could even be considered a crime of trafficking by both fathers and mothers.



Awareness and monitoring of parental influencers over their children

C21: In my country there are influencer profiles with family content that avoid showing the faces of their children, but present them in everyday life. It is a way of providing them with protection, while still creating community.

C7: If this practice of sharenting is monitored and controlled by parents, it is fine. Everything with moderation, respect and great care with the information shared is acceptable.



Children's unawareness of digital self-identity

C2: Minors are not aware of the situation of becoming famous on the Internet.

C39: There are channels in which children are exposed as influencers, and it is even more worrying because there is no supervisor or tutor and it creates a false illusion of independence, which is not associated with the children maturity level.



Influence and motivations for following the daily lives of influencers

C18: I find it quite difficult to understand why people really follow with such enthusiasm the daily lives of others, it even scares me. I think the problem should be addressed because it is not only about "sentencing" the influencers, but also trying to work on the followers' behavior.

C72: It seems to me that social media are excellent platforms for the exchange of information. The life and care of minors is a topic of interest that sometimes concerns parents and, therefore, in the platform environment we may find information that helps us to find our own answers.



Intimate life as private profile

C2: Accounts where minors are shown should automatically be private.

C73: While I do share some photos on Facebook, I try to keep them as private as possible.



Overexposure of privacy (extimacy)

C4: I think they should not broadcast what they document. Because it exposes them. And it is part of their intimacy.

C37: The intimacy and privacy of minors should be taken care of and especially when the parents are somewhat famous, since the haters can directly target the children, causing deeper harms.



Physical, emotional and data integrity of children

C13: The first priority is the physical and emotional safety and data integrity of children.

C31: I believe that parents are responsible for the physical and psychological integrity of their children.



Right to be forgotten data (children's digital footprint)

C12: Now that content will be forever on the Internet available to the whole world.

C38: It is useful to think about what children will think or feel when they are older and see their personal lives posted on the sites. This should be a decision for each person when they are old enough to make decisions.

4.2. (RQ2) Parents' perceptions of the reasons why influencers share their children's personal information

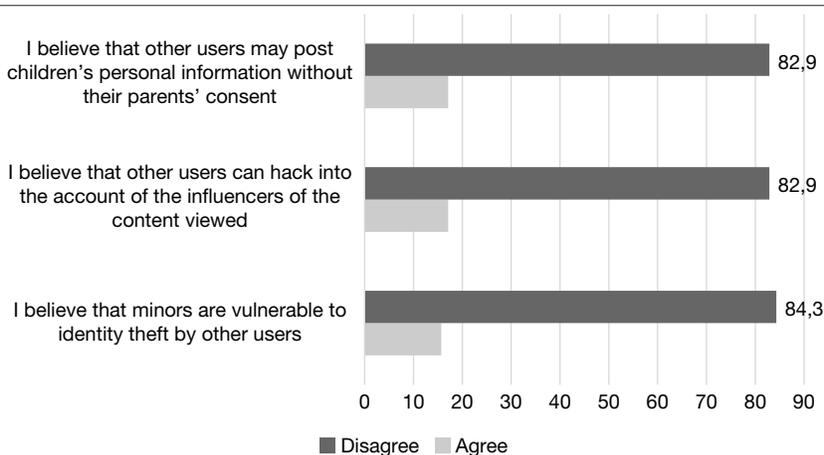
Regarding the second research question, we analyzed item 20. Starting with item 2.1, we noted a significant result: that almost equal numbers of parents agree and disagree that influencer content with children is intended to store memories (49.7% agree and 50.3% disagree). Next, item 2.2 showed significant parental belief that influencers use children for promotional purposes on these profiles (72.3%). In item 2.3, we also found the same significant trend, as 74.8% agreed that the children in these practices are the main factor in their labor. In item 2.4 we found that parents agreed and disagreed in equal numbers that these practices were aimed at supporting other parents. Finally, in item 2.5 we found that a majority of parents (62%) disagree that influencers practice sharenting to teach other families about parenting matters.

4.3. (RQ3) Parents' perception of risks related to influencer sharenting

Following the parental perspective on influencer sharenting and the third research question, we focused on item 18 from the fourth section, regarding the perception of risks to children's privacy on YouTube, Instagram and TikTok. For this case we also applied a descriptive analysis.

Items 18.1, 18.2 and 18.3 referred to parents' beliefs about the vulnerability of influencers' children to identity theft, hacking of profiles, and inappropriate and unauthorized use of those children's content in other scenarios (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Perceived vulnerability of children in influencer sharenting practices



In terms of children's data protection on the three platforms, we found similar agreement. For example (18.4), 80.6% of parents considered that YouTube is the platform that protects children's data the most, being the only platform with a unique section for children (YouTube Kids) at the time we conducted the study. Next (18.5), Instagram is the next safest platform (85.1%). And finally (18.6), the one they consider least safe for children is TikTok (88.3%).

To conclude this research question, we noted in item 18.7 an almost equal degree of agreement among parents (56.3% agree and 43.7% disagree) regarding the fact that influencers, despite being aware of the risks, understand that these platforms collect their children's personal data to share with third parties.

4.4. (RQ4) Potential impact of influencer sharenting

Items relating to RQ4 were analyzed descriptively. Item 16 relates to the parents' knowledge of any of these famous profiles, item 19 refers to influence among family peers, and item 21 on monitoring of children's information on social media. Given the large amount of data, we have compiled the results in Table 2 (see at <<https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.22072160.v1>>).

Regarding item 16.1, we found significant agreement, whereby parents seem to recognize what the role of the influencer is. Having asked them if they followed any influencers on YouTube, Instagram and/or TikTok (16.2, 16.2 and 16.3), we noted an overall agreement among Ibero-American parents who follow Instagrammers (42.1%), closely followed by YouTubers (32.9%) and TikTokers (15.1%). This group also indicated (item 16.5) that they were more interested in different topics other than family (such as cooking, sports, music, etc.) (55.4%). Regarding item 16.6 on the interest of these parents in following influencers who exhibit their minor children, we found that 76.6% of parents did not follow this type of content on social media.

Parents reported that posting children's content on Instagram was more appropriate than on YouTube or TikTok (19.1, 19.2 and 19.3). However, this consideration underlined that parents also disagreed with the appropriateness of this sort of practice (74%, 71.1% and 75.4% disagreement). In addition, we observed significant agreement in item 19.4 (78.6%), in which parents did not consider the contents of these family profiles to be useful for their daily lives.

Finally, we analyzed item 21 on self-regulation of children's information shared by the participating parents. We noted that some parents feel they have enough knowledge to protect their children's rights on these platforms (52.6%), and others do not (47.4%) (21.1). Similarly, some of them reported knowing how to manage the privacy of their YouTube, Instagram and TikTok profiles (55.1%) (21.2). In the same way, it appeared that half of the sample did not know how to remove personal information about their family from social media (46.9%).

4.5. (RQ5) Correlations between parents' use of and access to technology and social media and their perception about influencer sharenting

Before analyzing the correlation between the last three blocks of the survey, we collected the data in Table 3 (see at <<https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.22072160.v1>>), from which we derived that parents: (1) mainly use their own smartphones, smart TVs and laptops; (2) mainly use smartphones, smart TVs, laptops, computers and tablets/iPads; (3) access the internet for two to five hours per day; (4) access the internet primarily for finding information, working and learning; (5) access the internet predominantly from home, a work/study center, and the home of other friends/family members; (6) and most regularly use YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

We administered the Kolmogorov-Smirnova test to all the items for each category (as $n \geq 50$) with the purpose of calculating the correlation between these parents and their perception on influencer sharenting. The results showed that (1) $K-S(350)_{Using\ internet} = .060$, $p = .004$, (2) $K-S(350)_{Using\ social\ media} = .075$, $p = .001$, (3) and $K-S(350)_{Sharenting\ perception} = .113$, $p = .001$. Thus, we decided to conduct the Spearman non-parametric data test.

Following the test, we noted that $r_s(350) = .180$, $p < .001$, $r^2 = .42$, $1 - \beta = 1$ between use of and access to the internet/technologies and the perception of influencer sharenting. Likewise, we analyzed the relationship between the use of social media and the perception of sharenting, and we found that $r_s(350) = .333$, $p < .001$, $r^2 = .57$, $1 - \beta = 1$. The data proved a statistically significant, large and scalable correlation. In other words, despite not being influencers, not engaging in sharenting in their own social media, or not knowing/following this kind of family influencers, parents showed a high concern for this phenomenon. This means that their involvement in the use of the internet and social media cannot ignore these practices, which affect them as parents when thinking about the children's future. Their perspective, as we discussed previously, is fundamentally critical and disapproving.

5. Discussion and conclusions

The phenomenon of sharenting has been broadly explored in research, introducing increasingly diverse discussions. Despite the academic effort to understand these practices, and regarding RQ1, we found that from the outsider parents' perspective, in sharenting children represent the focal point for the advertising efforts of influencers, with potential risks for their safety. Some studies have yielded interesting findings on parents' motivations for sharing their children's lives on digital platforms. However, it seems that consolidating an identity in social media (Ranzini et al., 2020), creating communities (Le-Moignan et al., 2017), exchanging information between peers (Ammari et al., 2015), or sharing similar situations in a sort of parental homophily (Tiidenberg and Baym, 2017) do not correspond to the thoughts of parents who are not engaging in sharenting.

As we discussed in Figure 2, in the face of risks such as identity theft, pedophilia, grooming, child trafficking networks and digital foot-printing, among others, parents tend to focus their concern on the responsible and effective intervention of those in charge of social media and influencers. Their comments underline the need to strengthen policies around children's privacy on platforms, for instance, to facilitate monitoring the content they share, or to facilitate the complete removal of the footprint of data once the children become adults.

In our study, most parents reported that they used social media frequently, but they minimally shared content about their children on these apps. We considered it to be particularly interesting that these parents, without prior knowledge about sharenting by influencers on YouTube, Instagram or TikTok, demonstrated a tendency towards child safeguarding, contrary to the positivist motivations of some of the studies discussed. Thus, concerning RQ2, they share the view that one of the reasons why influencers engage in sharenting is for promotional purposes. That is, far from appearing to mimic a process of "parental mediation" noted by Badillo-Urquiola et al. (2019) or Leaver (2017), influencer sharenting is understood from this outsider perspective as an asset of internet micro-microcelebrification (Abidin, 2015).

Even though we did not explain to parents the possible consequences of sharenting, they identified a wide variety of aspects that might be addressed by influencers who engage in it. In terms of RQ3, they discussed the wide range of risks to children, such as information trafficking, pedophilia and identity theft, some of which were mentioned by Stoilova et al. (2021). They also mentioned several times the use of children for promotional purposes (Kids Digital Media Report, 2019).

A further aspect involved the need to generate a specific privacy policy for children on YouTube, Instagram and TikTok. However, this idea conflicts with what Martín-Ramallal and Ruiz-Mondaza (2022) pointed out, since even if there is a child protection policy, in many cases it is not followed or it is easily infringed. In addition, parents introduced one of the most frequently discussed topics on the internet, the violation of children's human rights on digital platforms, and their potential consequences (Damkjaer, 2018). These proposals include the need to address poverty, inequality, exclusion, violence, adequate justice for parents, racism, hate speech, radicalization, growing up in a digital world and migration, among others, to guarantee children's rights on platforms. Another aspect raised by these parents was the importance of influencers' awareness of monitoring their children's information on social media, using techniques such as anonymization, or using systems to block the non-consensual sharing of content. In other words, parents were aware of how to share family moments with potential proposals for protecting minors.

Thus, some parents noted the possibility of sharing photos of their children on private profiles accessed only by family and friends, or keeping them away from the process of resilient celebrification on the internet (Leaver, 2017). In this perceived marketing-egocentric practice, overexposure of the

child's privacy, their physical, emotional and data integrity, and the right to be forgotten without leaving a digital footprint, as Steinberg et al. (2009) stated, play an essential role in the definition of the child's identity on social media, and in their future.

In response to RQ4, and recognizing the importance of safeguarding the well-being of children on the internet (Damkjaer, 2018), we observed that parents did not regard YouTube, Instagram and TikTok as suitable platforms for sharing children's information for purposes related to celebrity status. Even though they highlighted Instagram as the most suitable platform to practice influencer sharenting, parents considered such content to be useless for their parental growth.

This disparity in perspective contradicts the assertions made by Ranzini et al. (2020), Le-Moignan et al. (2017), Ammari et al. (2015), and Tiidenberg and Baym (2017) regarding the consolidation of children's online identities, the formation of family-friendly online communities, and the sharing of information to address family challenges. Indeed, these authors, in alignment with the viewpoints of philosophers Hood and Tesar (2019), underscore the need to confront the postdigital mindset in which "innocent childhoods" are immersed (James and Prout, 2015). This mindset entails experiencing an environment where ethical inquiries and dilemmas associated with social media consistently evolve and intersect, all within a context where children are maturing in a space that erases the boundaries between the physical and the digital realms.

In this specific scenario, in which children are inevitably engaged (RQ5), parents who do not participate in this field of childhood celebrification advocate for the safeguarding of their children against a phenomenon shrouded in an aura of vernacular positivity (Vizcaíno-Verdú and Aguated, 2020). Therefore, when exposing these parents to actual influencer sharenting content, we encountered a mobilization of parental moral integrity aimed at ensuring the safety of children on platforms such as YouTube, Instagram and TikTok.

In essence, parents neither vilify influencers nor portray minors as victims (Lavoragna et al., 2023). Instead, they emphasize the need to establish protective mechanisms to secure the well-being of children in an era marked by evolving paradigms, in which the boundaries between the physical and the digital are being progressively eroded. This condition challenges prevailing conceptualizations of childhood and the positioning of children as "innocent" in the post-digital anthropocentric context. The Anthropocene's global influences on the planet affect all humans (Tesar and Hood, 2019), with children being particularly vulnerable, irrespective of whether their parents are aware of the dangers, effects or advantages of these essentially advertising practices.

5.1. Limitations and future research

This exploratory study provided us with a deeper insight into the phenomenon of sharenting from a unique perspective, specifically that of parents who

do not intentionally share information about their children on social media or engage in influencer sharenting. We explored various viewpoints that raise awareness about sharenting from the perspective of parents, influencers, children and adolescents involved in this phenomenon. Additionally, we looked at future research avenues concerning sharenting and sharenting practices on different social media platforms. Nevertheless, our findings in this study revealed hesitance toward sharing family-related content on various platforms, irrespective of the content's format. Notably, Instagram was highly favored, despite its incompatibility with commercial activities.

In this regard, we believe that extending this survey to other contexts could facilitate an examination of the perspectives of parents who are unaware of these practices. Specifically, we find it valuable to expand recommendations for safeguarding children on social media, focusing on the distinctive protective features promoted organically by users, extending beyond privacy policies. Moreover, we advocate aligning these recommendations with the approach of the Anthropocene in an essentially postdigital era. It is imperative to persist in exploring the confluence of moral dilemmas stemming from the influencer's labor and their practices, particularly with regard to the digital exposure of children. A conventional belief suggests that such excessive visibility could potentially hamper the formation of their identity and, in more extreme scenarios, compromise their physical and psychological well-being. This is underscored by the distinct context in which these minors are maturing, enveloped within the current platform landscape.

Additionally, our findings provide impetus for further research into the motivations of followers engaging with influencer sharenting. We deem this approach pertinent to ascertain whether their interests align with those of parents who are not involved in the phenomenon of sharenting, or of family influencers. Such research would enhance our understanding of this seemingly unstoppable cross-platform activity, in which parents continue to construct narratives for sharing their family's privacy, notwithstanding the potential implications for their children.

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