Thanks for joining our life: Intimacy as performativity on *YouTube* parenting vlogs

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Abstract

YouTube is currently becoming one of the main international platforms for amateur creators attempting to attract followers through a multiplicity of audiovisual content and engagement strategies based on search and algorithmic recommendation systems. In many cases, this environment, and especially its users, try to adapt to a celebrity network pattern on the basis of the construction of seemingly authentic and close relationships, leading to relevant phenomena such as parenting vlogs. This kind of content is focused on the presence of intimate moments that reflect the daily life of influencers or micro-influencers, capturing large numbers of followers, as well as important communication and information strategies. From this perspective, and through a quantitative content analysis of 1,034 videos and more than 900 viewing hours on two very popular *YouTube* family influencer channels, this study explores the degree of intimacy portrayed in their video content as performative strategies that configure the profiles' post through interactions with followers, brands, and self-promotion. The results suggest that the degree of intimacy shown in this content becomes a performative process for these family youtubers, whereby the more intimate the exposure, the more popular the information offered to the user. In short, this type of content prioritizes the routines of the youtubers, who include their closest family members and friends as a means of attracting attention, while dedicating their time to interacting with brands (advertising) and recording, editing, and submitting a vast amount of personal and private information on the platform (dissemination) in a sort of promotional–private performativity.

Keywords

Social media; Intimacy; Performativity; *YouTube*; Platforms; Vlogs; Influencers; Content creators; Family; Sharenting.

1. Introduction

Today's convergent and participatory culture has brought the possibility to create, produce and disseminate content to an extent never seen before (**Jenkins**, 2006). This new media configuration empowers users to become producers of content and enables them to harness a significant following (**Marwick**, 2015). In this ecosystem, *YouTube* rises as one of the leading participatory platforms (*SensorTower*, 2021), emphasizing the "celebrification" phenomenon (**Driessens**, 2013a); where regular people become microcelebrities or so-called influencers (**Abidin**, 2018; **Marwick**, 2015; **Senft**, 2013).

Among the different types of content and profiles, family vlogs and their related microcelebrity have become common (**Abidin**, 2017; **Lanza**, 2020). Microcelebrities are content creators who amass a niche following who connect through follows, interactions and views (**Dezuanni**, 2020). In the case of family vloggers, children participate in their parents' productions, broadcasting many aspects of their lives (**Feijoo** *et al.*, 2021). Moreover, although one may think that children are central to family vlog productions, social media anthropologist Crystal **Abidin** (2017) states that within the parenting blog genre, children are not the focus, as the main spotlight is centered upon the routine experiences of parenting.

In this environment, parent vloggers –similar to other content creators attempting to increase the visibility and impact of their channels– share different aspects of everyday life and try to find innovative ways to attract followers and achieve visibility (**Jorge** *et al.*, 2021). This need to create content and engage communities is an important consideration, as the quest to monetize may motivate parent vloggers to share aspects of their lives considered private and intimate (**Nottingham**, 2019). This study aims to explore Spanish family channels on *YouTube* through the concept of intimacy, with three specific objectives:

- To systematize the characteristics that define a family channel on *YouTube*;
- To analyze the degree of intimacy within parenting vlog channels; and
- To correlate intimacy and performativity on *YouTube* parenting vlogs.

2. Literature review

2.1. *YouTube*'s impact in the platform era

The characteristics that define social media are also the ones that make them successful among their users, who generate, share and viralize content. These platforms could be defined as digital meeting points for people with common interests (**Flores-Vivar**, 2009). These "nodes" of virtual relations enable the creation of a profile, which delimits the set of users with common interests, while providing the possibility to follow the activity of people within the platform (**Cabalquinto**; **Soriano**, 2020; **Casilli**; **Posada**, 2019). *YouTube* is a social media platform, and a Google subsidiary, where users upload and share audio-visual content, generating communities. The traits that characterize *YouTube* in the social media ecosystem include the possibility of creating a profile for each user, which allows sharing and publishing content, as well as functionalities that enable interaction with other profiles and community content related to promotions, self-branding or giveaways (**Tur-Viñes**; **Núñez-Gómez**; **González-Río**, 2018; **Androutsopoulos**; **Tereick**, 2015).

This rise of online communities on social media has given way to phenomena of interest in terms of the interactions and relationships between creators and audiences. In this scenario, *YouTube* positions itself as one of the leading platforms, with more than 2 billion monthly users and approximately a billion hours of video viewed every day (*YouTube*, 2022). According to *Alexa* (2021), this platform ranks second in terms of traffic worldwide. This has enabled the emergence of multiple creators attempting to harness this viewership for popularity and monetary gain.

Youtubers are understood as those who create and share videos on the platform aimed at attracting and engaging with a community of followers (**Pérez-Torres**; **Pastor-Ruiz**; **Abarrou-Ben-Boubaker**, 2018). The youtuber phenomenon emerges as a reflection of reality TV, where children, teenagers and family influencers participate (**Stefanone**; **Lackaff**, 2009; **Fernández-Gómez**; **Fernández-Vázquez**; **Feijoo**, 2021). In this sense, family influencers have been identified as a genre that is characterized by musical and comedic content to engage followers, enveloped in routine chores and domesticity (**Abidin**, 2017). The specific characteristics of family vloggers on *YouTube* lend themselves to the analysis of the types of productions shared in their quest for periodic content generation, as well as the possible implications of this process for all the members of the family (**Tambunan**, 2020). Moreover, the monetization of User Generated-Content (UGC) on *YouTube* has been identified as a catalyst for increasingly personal and intimate relationships between followers and

influencers (**Raun**, 2018). Social media influencers have positioned themselves as important intermediaries between companies and consumers with relevant implications for family vloggers (**Enke**; **Borchers**, 2019).

2.2. Intimacy, parenting as self-representation and performativity

The presence of intimate content on social media, and specifically on *YouTube*, has been analyzed in the context of vloggers, who use it as a strategy to establish trust and closer relationships with followers (**Marôpo**; **Jorge**; **Tomaz**, 2019). Beauty vloggers' success has also been related to the degree of intimacy of their content, who in some cases have been able to commodify their status as microcelebrities through the inclusion of increasingly intimate content (**Berryman**; **Kavka**, 2017; **Castillo-Abdul**; **Bonilla-del-Río**; **Núñez-Barriopedro**, 2021). Trans vloggers have also been successful in generating support through the inclusion of intimacy in their productions (**Horak**, 2014). Negative self-disclosure has also been the focus of analysis as an example of intimacy made public (**Berryman**; **Kavka**, 2018). These studies suggest that the presence of intimate moments in influencer content is common and strategic to connect with the audience and create an idea of closeness (**Wang**; **Lee**, 2020).

Moreover, **Raun** (2018) emphasizes the importance of intimacy as a form of "affective labour" and a defining trait of successful influencers attempting to establish themselves as accessible, available, present, connected, authentic, and collective (**Melonçon**; **Arduser**, 2022). **Marwick** (2015) points out that microcelebrities use intimacy as a strategy within specific cultural norms, in a process of negotiation and unique content regulation. In this sense, **Raun**'s (2018) defines intimacy on *YouTube* as a genre with an aesthetic structure of affective expressions that involves aspects such as the thoughts, dreams, food consumption, and the home of influencers. **Raun**'s (2018) explanation fits into **Hearn** and **Schoenhoff'**s (2016) description of the engagement of social media influencers, who argue that such aesthetics illustrate attention-seeking strategies. It is important to note that the nature of social media influence and celebrity is closely related to the maintenance of interest and interaction by their followers through the creation of content that engages a specific audience through self-branding and the positioning of the content producer as an "opinion leader" in their field (**Silva**; **Quelhas-de-Brito**, 2020). Self-branding has been pointed as a form of affective labor undertaken in purpose by content producers to gain increased attention (**Hearn**, 2008). Thus, self-branding and self-representation become closely related in the social media sphere.

The relationship between the expectations of viewers and followers as determinant in the characteristics of the content produced and behaviors displayed has been well established (**Hearn**; **Schoenhoff**, 2016). Some scholars have identified a so-called "attention economy" (**Senft**, 2013) referring to the exchange of content for attention that can be measured in metrics such as the number of subscribers, views, likes, or comments (**Banks**, 2021). While these considerations are important for most social media influencers, the sharing practices of families in this environment have unique traits. In this sense, media scholars **Blum-Ross** and **Livingstone** (2017), have described the sharenting phenomenon as the act of "sharing representations of one's parenting or children online" (p. 110). They conceptualized these practices considering the identity of content producers as it is reflected by their parenting behaviors, practices, and their intricacies with their networked self (**Papacharissi**, 2011; **Vizcaíno-Verdú**; **Aguaded**, 2020). These controversial practices reflect the complexities of modern parenting as a central aspect of self-representation on social media (**Holiday**; **Norman**; **Densley**, 2022) as is the case with parenting vloggers. **Nottingham** (2019) cautioned about the balance between the need of parent vloggers to continuously produce content that attracts attention and the lack of regulation in terms of privacy and workload for minors in these productions.

The idea of intimacy is related, as indicated by **Jerslev** and **Mortensen** (2015) and **Busse** (2017), to the concept of performativity, understood as media content that performs an action. In this study we consider influencer performativity as a backstage practice, in which these profiles create a sense of intimacy through languages and cultural components that create affiliations (in this case family-related) with followers, attempting to convey an apparent authenticity (**Marwick**; **Boyd**, 2011). In this sense, intimacy becomes performative as part of the youtuber's self-expression and identity construction as a celebrity. The performative nature of the content is subordinated to the establishment of the creator's self-concept on social media by exposing private information within immediate and phatic communication (**Rubio-Hurtado** *et al.*, 2022). Other authors mention this model of performativity as a strategy to invite people into the intimate lives of celebrities, who become the main attraction of some communities. This is understood as a continuous reality built upon celebrity capital (**Collins**, 2014; **Driessens**, 2013b). For instance, **Elorriaga-Illera** and **Monge-Benito** (2017) described how Verdeliss' profile evolved from an amateur to a professionalized channel as her content displayed increasingly more branded content that adapted to the day-to-day activities of the family. Thus, these authors' description of the 'slice of life' as a relevant genre for brands is noteworthy for our analysis of these two influencer channels, as these moments in daily life become more prevalent within the channels, as they gain visibility and success (**Jaramillo-Dent** *et al.*, 2020).

In the current media ecosystem, *YouTube* raises new amateur means of expression (**Castillo-Abdul**; **Romero-Rodríguez**; **Balseca**, 2021) for public intimacy, where the subjects hold partial control over their own privacy, and the main creator decides the extent to which intimacy is developed. Moreover, once the contents are shared, control over them is lost (**Baigorri-Ballarín**, 2019). These sharing practices include ordinary daily activities such as what they eat, who they live with, where they go, what they buy and what they think, displaying aspects of life that, until recently, belonged to intimate life, exalting the ordinary of private lives (**Sibila**, 2008; **Martín-Criado** *et al.*, 2021).

3. Method

In order to respond to the objectives and the following research questions, we conducted an exploratory-descriptive analysis, followed by a correlational analysis between items related to intimacy and performativity. The questions and hypotheses driving the research were:

- RQ1: What characterizes a family channel on *YouTube*?

> H1. Family *YouTube* channels are characterized by a daily performance of their intimate activities, in which they involve interests and people.

- RQ2: How much intimacy is shared on family *YouTube* channels?

> H2. The level of intimate content shared on Spanish family *YouTube* channels is high.

- RQ3: Is there any relationship between the performative nature of *YouTube* parenting vlogs and the intimate activities?

> H3. Performativity correlates with intimacy in *YouTube* parenting vlogs.

For this purpose, we carried out a quantitative content analysis (**Riffe**; **Lacy**; **Fico**, 2014). Consequently, we validated the research instrument through Krippendorff's α to assess intercoder reliability (**Krippendorff**, 2004). In addition, we used an ordinal scale to analyze of the degree of intimacy and performativity (**Orlandoni-Merli**, 2010). This procedure enabled the measurement of attributes and qualities, ordering them from high to low on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 was equivalent to a lower degree of intimacy, and 10 to the maximum level of intimacy (**Coronado-Padilla**, 2007).

3.1. Sample

The following inclusion parameters were considered in delimiting the sample: a) youtuber channels; b) family theme displaying everyday routines (parenting vlogs); c) integration of one or more people who share a kinship with the youtuber; d) households with children; e) channels with over 50,000 followers on *YouTube* and over 50,000 followers on Instagram; f) a frequency of publications of at least one or two videos per month.

The resulting sample was further delimited using purposive sampling (**Palys**, 2008), obtaining a final count of 1,034 videos up to September 2021 (from two top Spanish parenting vlogs) (Table 1). The number of videos selected from each channel corresponds to the frequency of publication within the channel, thus, if content was published more often, the sample from said channel includes a higher number of videos. Content and images from these channels were not shared in the results, since the audio-visual content provided by the families introduced minors, adhering to the ethical principles of the *APA Code of Conduct* (*American Psychological Association*, 2017) in order to preserve the privacy and anonymity of children.

Table 1. Sample of family channels on *YouTube*

Channel	Country	Family unit	Children	N. of followers on *YouTube* and *Instagram*	N. of videos selected	Frequency of publication
JustCoco Vlogs	Spain	Four members	Two descendants	957,000 on *YouTube* and 490,000 on *Instagram*	711	Minimum 3 weekly videos
DaddyHappy Vlogs	Spain	Four members	Two descendants	78,600 on *YouTube* and 53,900 on *Instagram*	323	Minimum 1 monthly video

33.2. The codebook

The codebook was derived through the operationalization of variables by transforming abstract concepts into observable and measurable items. For this, we applied the **Arias-Odón**'s (2012) procedure, establishing dimensions and items. See the complete codebook in:

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The main variables were derived from previous studies (**Abidin**, 2017; **Hearn**; **Schoenhoff**, 2016; **Notthingham**, 2019; **Pérez-Torres** *et al*., 2018; **Raun**, 2018; **Tur-Viñes** *et al*., 2018). These variables were identified according to the framework previously discussed in terms of influencer performativity and intimacy on social media. Then, two of the authors individually codified a subset of the sample through a codebook comprising each of the videos, for the purpose of the subsequent quantitative analysis. We finally calculated intercoder reliability through Krippendorff's α with a resulting coefficient of .729, which validated the coders using this codebook for analysis. Likewise, a Cronbach's Alpha of .770 was obtained.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Descriptive analysis: Hypothesis 1

To analyze the results, we looked at three general variables that were subdivided into different specific dimensions. Within the variable 'Performative identity', four dimensions were analyzed: a) Community impact; b) Self-concept; c) Communication style; d) Content and topics. This distinction enabled the definition of the profile and online self-expression of the youtuber (Table 2). In relation to this first dimension, the mean presented neutral values (1.98) and the standard

deviation showed values close to 1 with significant statistical differences. This item was comprised of four response options linked to the number of views of the selected vlogs (From 0 to 10,000/ From 10,000 to 500,000/ From 500,000 to 1,000,000/ More than 1,000,000 views). Thus, it is worth noting that the average was close to intermediate preferences. These channels reached 10,000 to 500,000 views by network users.

Table 2. Performative identity variable

Dimension	Variable	N.	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Community impact	Views	1,034	1	4	1.98	.457
Self-concept	Displayed self-esteem	1,034	1	4	3.45	.577
	Description of the self	1,034	1	4	3.99	.132
Communication style	Spontaneous speech	1,034	1	4	3.92	.496
	High and emphatic tone	1,034	1	4	3.90	.543
	Unique labels	1,034	1	4	3.83	.702
Contents and topics	Themes	1,034	1	4	1.50	.899

Regarding the self-concept variable, two aspects were considered. On the one hand, the level of self-esteem the youtuber displayed in the video, and on the other hand their self-description, observing whether it was positive or negative. Moreover, the level of displayed self-esteem yielded values close to 4 (3.45), indicating that their displayed self-esteem is positive. However, the standard deviation decreased (.577). This figure described the existence of significant statistical differences in relation to the two channels. On the other hand, the description of the self-revealed values that were very close to 4 (3.99). Which means that youtubers define themselves positively. In contrast, the standard deviation presented irregular values (.132) with remarkable statistical differences. This result reflected disparities between the two channels, which may be influenced by their level of popularity (the more popular, the higher the displayed self-esteem and the feeling of acceptance by the community).

In terms of communication style, three traits were considered: spontaneous speech, elevated and emphatic tone, and unique entrance and exit etiquette/greetings by the youtuber. The first item (spontaneous speech) yielded values close to 4 (3.92), while the standard deviation was high (.496), leading to significant statistical differences. The second item (elevated and emphatic tone) showed means of approximately 4 (3.90) and a standard deviation relatively close to 1 (.543). The third item (unique opening and closing utterances) showed a result close to 4 (3.83) and a standard deviation that did not present significant statistical differences (.702). In short, the profile of the analyzed influencer stands out for the use of stipulated, reiterative, and identifying messages, as well as for the use of a friendly and spontaneous speech.

Regarding the observed subjects, the results presented neutral values in the mean (1.50), while the standard deviation showed values close to 1 (.899). There were no significant statistical differences. This question is organized around four thematic axes:

- Detailed family routine parenthood/family milestones;
- Interests (fashion, sport, video games, etc.) dreams, thoughts, and projects (past and future);
- Advice/suggestions to the community;
- Other topics.

These data showed us that the most recurrent contents are those related to family and parenthood.

Within the variable 'Brands and self-promotion' three dimensions were examined (Table 3):

- Participation encouragement and promotion;
- Creation and promotion of the personal brand;
- Raffles, contests, and gifts.

Continuing with the study and observing the first dimension, we found that the means showed values close to 4 and standard deviation scores close to 1. The items that achieved high scores included invitations to visit accounts on other platforms (3.86) and invitations to watch other videos on the channel (3.77). On the other hand, items with the lowest scores included the mention of the number of subscribers in the video (celebrations, etc.) (1.70) and the direct request for comments and/or opinions (3.56). This suggests that influencers depended to a greater extent on the viewing of the videos, as well as the increase in followers on their other accounts or channels on their different active social media profiles.

In relation to the second dimension, from the three items only one came close to 4, brand promotion (3.35), while personal brand awareness (1.71) and brand ambassadors (1.30) yield low averages. These figures implied that youtubers use minimally their channels for the dissemination of their personal brand, acting as managers or representatives of brands. As for the standard deviation, high values close to 1 were obtained, confirming the absence of significant statistical differences in the study sample.

Finally, in the third dimension, we found very low averages, with raffles, contests and gifts yielding the higher scores (1.42), followed by strategies for meeting with fans by means of other people's brands (book signings, etc.) (1.29) and attending public spaces to meet with fans (1.05). However, most standard deviation values were close to 1, except in one of the cases. Thus, we saw significant statistical differences. This suggested that the analyzed youtubers were not characterized by a strategy in terms of meetings and raffles.

Table 3. Brand and self-promotion variable

Dimensión	Variable	N.	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Participation encouragement and promotion	Crutch expressions	1,034	1	4	3.86	.631
	Direct request for comments	1,034	1	4	3.56	1.507
	Mention of subscribers	1,034	1	4	1.70	1.267
	Invitation to other channels	1,034	1	4	3.77	.802
	Invitation to other accounts	1,034	1	4	3.86	.631
Creation and promotion of the personal brand	Personal brand dissemination	1,034	1	4	1.71	1.278
	Brand promotion	1,034	1	4	3.35	1.234
	Brand ambassadors	1,034	1	4	1.30	.907
Sweepstakes, contests and gifts	Raffles, contests and gifts	1,034	1	4	1.42	1.045
	Meeting with supporters/ attendance	1,034	1	4	1.05	.393
	Meeting with followers-strategies	1,034	1	4	1.29	.883

In the variable 'Degree of intimacy' the dimensions have been grouped in two areas: matters related to intimate data (information) and those concerning intimate practices (practice and behavior). In relation to intimate data, three dimensions were analyzed (Table 4):

- Personal and contact information;
- Work and academic background (youtuber/family);
- Location exposure.

The first dimension offered neutral values. However, the standard deviation was very high and therefore no significant statistical differences were found. The items that achieved the highest scores included full name (3.15), email (2.80), and beliefs (2.54), as opposed to sexual orientation (1.01) and date of birth (1.19). From these data, we could point out that, despite sharing their intimate, personal and family life with the virtual community, not much personal contact information is shared, except for an email address created for a specific activity (e.g. receive messages from the followers).

In the second dimension, related to the work of the youtubers studied and/or their relatives, the means and standard deviation showed descending values. This confirmed significant statistical differences throughout the videos analyzed. Those items that had achieved higher scores included current/former youtuber/family employment (1.63/1.39), followed by the location of the current/former employment/training center (1.33/1.12) and training, formal/non-formal education (1.02/1.03). In short, it should be noted that the youtuber mentioned this type of information only to a limited extent.

The third dimension was notable for high means close to 4, as well as an upward standard deviation, meaning there were no statistical differences. The items with the greatest impact were the places visited by the youtubers and their families/friends (3.34) and youtubers' country/city/household (3.09). Those with the least impact were the youtubers' and their relatives/friends' next destinations (1.64) and the country/city/household of their relatives/friends (2.13). This suggests that the contents of interest are those related to the main characters of the vlog.

In line with the practices of intimacy we compared two dimensions:

- Family environment/friendship;
- Image protection.

The first dimension pointed to low values in relation to the mean. However, the standard deviation was high with no statistical differences. The highest ranked item was the representation/integration of members of the same family household (3.67) and the presentation/integration of relatives outside the family household (2.15), compared to the presentation/integration of acquaintances/neighbors (1.29), the presentation/integration of friends (1.72). In conclusion, these influencers focused on the presentation of themselves (performative identity), mainly, and of the people who live in their family unit, who in some way, participated directly and indirectly in the productions of the vlog.

Finally, the last dimension showed a high average in the items of photographic/audio-visual/informative exposure of older relatives (3.41) and photographic/audio-visual/informative exposure of underage relatives (3.16). The explicit statement (oral or written) on image rights of youtuber and/or relatives (1.23) received the lowest rating. The results of the

Table 4. Intimacy variable

Dimension	Variable	N.	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Intimate data						
Personal and contact information	Full name	1,034	1	4	3.15	1.354
	Date of birth	1,034	1	4	1.19	.723
	Email	1,034	1	4	2.30	1.487
	Phone number	1,034	1	4	2.31	1.487
	Postal address	1,034	1	4	2.80	1.430
	Beliefs	1,034	1	4	2.54	1.500
	Sexual orientation	1,034	1	4	1.01	.186
Work and education (youtuber/family)	Current/previous employment youtuber/relatives	1,034	1	4	1.63	1.224
		1,034	1	4	1.39	1.014
	Training, formal/non-formal education	1,034	1	4	1.02	.246
		1,034	1	4	1.03	.321
	Location of current/previous employment/training center	1,034	1	4	1.33	.940
		1,034	1	4	1.12	.586
Location exposure	youtuber's country/city/household	1,034	1	4	3.09	1.380
	Country/city/relatives' home/friends	1,034	1	4	2.13	1.454
	Places visited by youtuber/relatives/friends	1,034	1	4	3.34	1.244
	Upcoming youtuber/relatives/friends' destinations	1,034	1	4	1.64	1.232
Intimate practices						
Family/friendship environment	Introduction/integration of members of the same family home	1,034	1	4	3.67	.936
	Introduction/integration of relatives outside the family home	1,034	1	4	2.15	1.460
	Introduction/integration of friends	1,034	1	4	1.72	1.282
	Introduction/integration of acquaintances/neighbors	1,034	1	4	1.29	.891
Image protection	Explicit statement (mention or written) about image rights of the youtuber and/or relatives	1,034	1	4	1.23	.802
	Photo/Audiovisual/Information exposure of adult relatives	1,034	1	4	3.41	1.190
	Photo/audiovisual/information exposure of underage relatives	1,034	1	4	3.16	1.345

standard deviation indicated that there were no significant statistical differences. Image protection was an important issue. However, in the different units analyzed we did not observe explicit direct/indirect mention of image rights, although we found constant exposure of family members.

With this section, we conclude the descriptive analysis of the sample concerning the parenting vlog channels, supporting the first research question and hypothesis. Parenting vlogs on *YouTube* use their channels to share daily experiences through patterns such as self-concept, self-brand promotion, and other interactions with their family and community of followers. Parenting vlog youtubers present themselves using a positive, friendly, and spontaneous speech. These channels focus their contents on intimate aspects of family and parenting, where followers have a leading role. Influencers constantly mention their followers to convey appreciation. Indeed, most content and engagement strategies carried out with followers involve direct physical or online interaction (Lives, Q&A, etc.) as a means of communication. Other particularity of these influencers is the intimate information offered, which increases in parallel with their success. In other words, the results indicate that the greater the involvement of the followers, the more intimate information is offered by the influencers (thoughts, concerns, doubts, recommendations, sharing of intimate family milestones...). In short, these daily performances display constant intimate activities based on the influencers' own interests, but also in response to their followers' requests.

4.2. Analysis of the degree of intimacy: Hypothesis 2

In order to evaluate the degree of intimacy of the two accounts, we used an ordinal scale from 1 to 10, where 1 reflects a low level of intimacy and 10 a high degree of intimacy. To do this, we calculated the total dichotomous (yes/no) options chosen in the previous analysis and converted these data into a scale from 1 to 10 (Figure 1).

Our analysis found that there was a greater degree of intimacy in content that revealed information about the youtuber than that of relatives, friends, and people outside the channel. The values with the highest degree of intimacy corres-
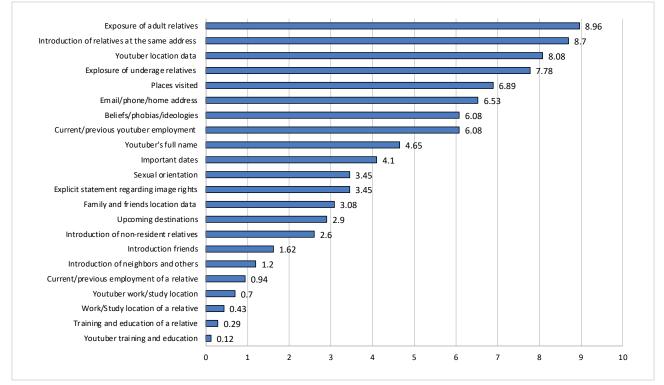
Figure 1. Evaluation of the degree of intimacy in the two parenting vlogs

ponded to exposure of adult relatives to the camera (8.96 out of 10), presentation of members of the same family home (8.7 out of 10), youtuber's location data (8.08 out of 10), exposure of minors (7.78 out of 10), location of the places visited (6.89 out of 10), youtuber's contact information (6.53 out of 10), and information about the youtuber's current employment or academic data (6.08 out of 10). The latent presentation of information by the youtuber stands out from this compilation, as well as a clear predisposition in these family videos to expose minors (usually the youtuber's own children). Some transcribed examples of videos concerning these items were collected in Table 5, and Figure 2 shows an illustrated rendering of a screenshot of a family intimate moment.

Table 5. Examples of variables reflecting high intimacy levels per channel

Category	Channel 1	Channel 2
Adult relatives to the camera	And here she is at last, my friend! For those of you who don't know her, she's one of my best friends since childhood.	The Familukis! I haven't had time to introduce them. He's been messing with my hair all weekend.
Presentation of members of the same family home	This is my mom. Say hi mom! We always go shopping together, right mommy?	What's the sister like? Tiny. She's eating. This gift is for her to play with, isn't it?
Location data	And my mommy and I are going shopping. We always take the same route, don't we, Mommy? *Lidl*, *Alcampo* and *Carrefour*.	We came to the Disney store and that's all, what? Expensive. What do you want?
Exposure of minors	Can you help me? Can you tap your little brother with the little sponge very gently?	I'm taking the opportunity to record you now because with your ding-a-ling out in the air, I won't be able to record you.
Location of the places visited	Where are we going? We're going to the UK!	We're in Dad's car and we're on our way to Valencia.
Youtuber's employment or academic information	So since I have commercial and administrative experience, I'm pretty good with computers...	I'm a National Police officer and I take great pride in my work, as well as my work as a youtuber.
Contact details of the youtuber	We're on our way to the post office to open a postal box so you can send us little things! We left the info in the description.	If you want to appear in my videos, send me your personalized intro saying: 'Hey, what's up gang, wake up now that you're dozy! to this e-mail…'
Believes, phobias, ideologies	Oh, I just can't. Kill her, or get her out of here. But I really can't handle spiders since I was a kid.	We're getting ready for Christmas. What are we going to do? A Christmas tree. Are you up for it, Neo?

Conversely, values with a lower range of intimacy referred to content that offered information on the place of work or study for relatives and friends (0.41), the type of training and education of relatives (0.35), the place of work or study

for the youtuber (0.7) or the youtuber's own academic information (0.1). In total, an average of 3.67 was obtained in terms of the degree of intimacy in both accounts. Despite the lack of explicit statements on rights or image protection in the vlogs, family members across different age ranges are exposed visually in the content analyzed.

In this case, the hypothesis was not completely proven, since the degree of intimacy does not seem to be high in videos where commercial content and corporate collaborations are the main focus. However, in terms of intimacy, aspects such as the youtuber's thoughts, beliefs and ideas stand out, as well as the presence of family, friends, and minors in their daily routine.

Figure 2. Rendering of a screenshot of a family event

4.3. Intimacy as performativity correlation: Hypothesis 3

To conclude the analysis, we conducted a correlation between the variables related to performativity and intimacy to understand this practice as a phenomenon that is associated with family performance on *YouTube*. First, we used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to assess the normality of the distribution (related to the averages of performativity and intimacy dimensions), since our sample is larger than the standardized sample base (n>50). We found that the significance level was low (K-S(1,034)=.403, *p*=.001). Accordingly, we applied the Spearman correlation test for nonparametric interval data (Table 6).

Table 6. Intimacy as performativity Spearman correlations

Performativity	Personal information	Youtuber work/education	Family/friends work/education	Family/friendship environment: introduction of members of the same/outside home	Exposure (adults)	Exposure (children)
Self-concept	.329**	-.126**	-.042	-.142**	-.074*	-.096**
Sig.	.001	.001	.179	.001	.018	.002
p	.57	.35	.20	.37	.27	.31
1-β	1	1	.99	1	1	1
Self-described positively or negatively	-.030	.017	.013	.023	.032	.026
Sig.	.335	.594	.673	.469	.304	.402
p	.17	.13	.11	.15	.17	.16
1-β	.99	.99	.99	.99	.99	.99
Communication style	.197**	.150**	.066*	.186**	.256**	.175**
Sig.	.001	.001	.034	.001	.001	.001
p	.44	.38	.25	.43	.50	.41
1-β	1	1	1	1	1	1
Contents and topics: family routine, interests, dreams, advices	**.147***	.028	**-.033***	**-.108***	-.042	-.022
Sig.	.001	.361	.288	.001	.180	.473
p	.38	.16	.18	.32	.20	.15
1-β	1	.99	.99	1	.99	.99

*Sig.<.05, **Sig.<.01; *p*=.10 low, .30 medium, .50 high

Following the Spearman's test, we found statistically significant relationships between some of the variables related to performativity and intimacy. First, we identified that items collected on self-concept were significantly associated with sharing personal information on the channel, providing information related to the youtuber's employment and education, family, and friends, introducing people from one's own family environment or external people, and exposing adults and children. In all cases, we found a medium-high effect size (from .20 to .57) with significant potency (1-β=1; 1-β=.99). Specifically, sharing personal data such as names, emails, addresses, and introducing people in the channels, was strongly related to self-concept, which would corroborate the third hypothesis.

In terms of the positive or negative self-description of the youtuber, we found that there was only a statistically significant relationship with intimacy concerning the introduction of other people in the videos, or the exposure of children. In other words, we presumed that youtubers in parenting vlogs were more likely to self-describe (positively or negatively) when other people were involved in their videos, or when they interacted with minors (with a mean effect size of .11 and .17 respectively) and a significance that could be extrapolated to other cases ($1-\beta=.99$). Therefore, in the remaining cases, the third hypothesis is discarded.

In the case of the youtuber's communication style, we once again found a statistically significant relationship with all the items related to intimacy. Maintaining a spontaneous, emphatic, and unique speech is directly linked to all the variables related to the intimacy of the youtuber, with medium-high effect sizes (between .25 and .50) and considerable sample potency ($1-\beta=1$). This means that the type of communication in parenting vlogs is part of their family intimacy. Here again, we corroborate the third hypothesis.

Finally, referring to the contents and topics of the channels, we found that, except for the youtuber's employment/education (intimacy variable), there was a statistically significant relationship between the family routine, interests, dreams and life projects of the youtubers and the intimate information shared (medium effect sizes between .15 and .38, and a considerable sample potency of $1-\beta=1$ and $1-\beta=.99$). Thus, the contents of parenting vlogs are especially intimate, also supporting the third hypothesis.

We found that there is a critical correlation between influencers' performativity and intimate content. As an example, to present themselves, they tried to provide as much information as possible about their life (names, family members' appearances, personal stories, etc.). It was also interesting that influencers' self-concept was reflected when other people were involved (e.g., talking about themselves positively or negatively when family members appear, or when they refer to their followers). Another aspect linking the performative character of parenting vlogs to intimacy was the communicative style. In these videos, spontaneity and emotion seems to be paramount. Particularly, the influencers' whole life is based on explaining to their followers what, how, when and where they experience life. And lastly, the topics addressed by the influencers fit their followers' claims from a family perspective and daily entrepreneurial activities. From this perspective, we considered the relevance of the descriptive results and correlations related to the previously introduced theories, in order to understand the intimate-performative phenomenon of parenting vlogs..

5. Conclusion, limitations, and future research

The study of intimacy and performativity on *YouTube* family channels has enabled the systematization of characteristics that determine the degree of exposure of intimate information in a new participatory, digital and mediated environment (**Androutsopoulos**; **Tereick**, 2015). An audio-visual typology that deals with contents related to parenthood from activities related to the upbringing of children and their daily routine to leisure activities, constructing a thematic genre reminiscent of the photogenic instantaneity of the *Polaroid*, that reproduces daily family life (**Vizcaíno-Verdú**; **Aguaded**, 2020). This genre, through the enhancement of daily tasks (**Elorriaga-Illera**; **Monge-Benito**, 2017; **Sibyl**, 2008), attracts a large following on *YouTube* (**Abidin**, 2017).

Having reviewed and compared the high number of subscribers and views in these scenarios, we consider that, as **Harwik** (2016) and **Driessens** (2013b) point out, family youtubers exploit the platform to guide their followers in a process of social loyalty that enables them to build a sort of celebrity capital. In this way, they consolidate their identity on the platform through virtual relationships established with their community, with whom they share common interests (**Flores-Vivar**, 2009).

Throughout the data collection process, we observed an evolutionary development of the main characters in the two channels, from absolute anonymity to celebrity (**Abidin**, 2018; **Elorriaga-Illera**; **Monge-Benito**, 2017; **Marwick**, 2015; **Senft**, 2013). In these cases, their expressive modes and their accounts of daily life, interests, dreams, and fears demonstrate an informative flow that intensifies with the videos (and the years), ratifying the reality media format that **Collins** (2014) suggested. This coincides with the progressive increase in their display of intimacy, since part of their success is related to their exposure of areas of life that formerly belonged to the private sphere.

Regarding the first and second research questions, these profiles are characterized by the frequent availability of content from their private lives that is posted continuously (**Rubio-Hurtado** *et al.*, 2022), mainly related to themselves and their family unit and friends. These sharing behaviors may be related to the search for new formats that appeal to their communities, impacting the monetization of their channels (**Elorriaga-Illera**; **Monge-Benito**, 2017; **Nottingham**, 2019). The youtuber-follower relationship can become so close that the latter often needs to delve deeper into the environment and lifestyle of these families. Thus, the degree of intimacy shown by these channels can be intentionally related to a request-fulfillment cycle to establish closer and more intimate relationships with their followers, as in the case of teenage influencers (**Marôpo** *et al.*, 2019) and beauty vloggers (**Berryman**; **Kavka**, 2017; **Castillo-Abdul** *et al.*, 2021). By showing the intimacy of their routine practices, these microcelebrities position themselves as accessible and real people with whom to establish a bond (**Raun**, 2018). In turn, family youtubers seem to consolidate these bonds to strengthen their self-esteem in parallel to their reputation and economic benefits (**Hearn**; **Schoenhoff**, 2016).

Recent studies indicate how common it has become to share the images of relatives, including minors, on social media platforms. This was observed within our sample, suggesting a practice associated with sharenting (**Holiday** *et al.*, 2022). As noted by **Nottingham** (2019), family youtubers seem to need content that is continuously updated, often compromising their privacy and the workload of minors.

Along the same line, it is worth noting the emergence of new possibilities and perspectives for the study of sharenting, where cases go beyond child exposure. Parenting vlogs emerge as new models for the expression of intimacy, where family members become the main characters and their relationships are reflected by the moments shared on video. These instants effectively become part of their online identity and generate a need to be continuously updated by creating and posting new content, validated through interactions that motivate parents to continue posting (**Cino**; **Demozzi**; **Subrahmanyam**, 2020). According to the definition of intimacy (**Raun**, 2018), it becomes evident that these channels continuously display both intimate practices (such as childbirth), as well as reflections and thoughts on future and past decisions in search for community reaffirmation and the construction of their online identity. **Ranjana-Das** (2018) explains how the commodification of intimate moments such as birth on *YouTube* turns mothers into neoliberal subjects who present curated versions of themselves for their followers. In this sense, it should be emphasized that, although the concept of networked self-expression and performativity (**Papacharissi**, 2011; **Busse**, 2017) is not new, its adaptation to *YouTube* and its model for content monetization has meant that boosting and maintaining the interest of audiences has become paramount. Therefore, the characteristics of parenting vlogs on *YouTube* are built on spontaneity and expressing a family self-concept through the exposure of daily life activities. In this scenario, thoughts, beliefs, suggestions concerning commercial products, as well as other people in their environment are introduced with several implications in terms of sharenting and other phenomena.

In terms of the relationship between the performative character and intimacy in these channels (third research question), we found a high relationship between the variables. This allowed us to understand there is a sort of familiar performativity in which intimate activities become the main content of these influencers' channels. In other words, sharing the routine, introducing people (adults and minors) from their daily environment, and including narratives related to dreams, projects, and thoughts, portray self-conceived family digital personas that give significance to their performative youtuber selves.

Although the cases presented are limited in terms of the geographic scope of the sample and analysis, the correlational statistical analysis, and the sample representativeness limit some of the factors necessary to extend the research to other international contexts. In this sense, we offer a starting point for understanding these family dynamics with a perspective of interest within social media related to the role of performativity and intimacy. *YouTube* parenting vlogs have become a consolidated genre of intimate performativity and one of the emerging trends in the social media environment. In addition, the structural aesthetics found on *YouTube* have moved to other memetic and audio-visual platforms such as *TikTok*, where this performative model seems to evolve, stimulating to contrast and deepen the representation of the self from the perspective of the family.

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