

## **Older Portuguese celebrities on Instagram: A snapshot of their strategies and communication practices**

**Authors:** Ana Cristina Antunes, School of Communication and Media Studies, Polytechnic Institute of Lisbon, Portugal

Sandra Miranda, School of Communication and Media Studies, Polytechnic Institute of Lisbon, Portugal

### **Abstract:**

Older social media influencers and in particular celebrities have recently found a new arena where they can gather an entourage of fans: social networking sites (SNS). As their digital born and raised counterparts – social media influencers – they have the power to attract millions of followers by carefully and strategically sharing curated content from their lives, or their opinions and points of view on digital platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and TikTok (e.g., Chappie & Cowrie, 2017; Schouten et al., 2019).

Scholars and practitioners have long been acknowledging that celebrities are important influencers of human behavior in several life domains, including in social media. And in today's digital zeitgeist, companies still recognize their potential effect on consumers, resorting to celebrities' endorsements in the form of positive electronic word-of-mouth about the company's products or services. Yet, research on older celebrities and their strategies and communication practices in SNS, as well as their influence on their digital followers is still scant.

Building on theories related to self-disclosure and celebrity endorsement, this exploratory study examines the top 5 Instagram accounts of older Portuguese celebrities, analyzing their presence and branded personae on Instagram as well as their communicative practices and engagement. Instagram, one of the most popular SNS for individuals of all age cohorts, was chosen not only for its popularity but also because it has been changing the social media ecosystem and because it lends itself particularly well to influencer marketing (Duffy, 2020).

A quali-quantitative study was conducted involving the analysis of all the Instagram publications of these five celebrities during a three-month period, from April to June 2022. The dimensions examined were: the number of posts, the number of followers, the number of sponsored posts, hashtags, themes/subjects of interest, audiovisual and multimedia resources, as well as their interaction and engagement with followers. The results suggest that diversity is their common feature, with clear and marked differences in what concerns their communicative styles and strategies, as well as in interactions and engagement rate with their followers. These older celebrities appear to be unique digital content creators, with an unrepeatable charisma that attracts an increasing number of followers. Their

distinctive digital branded personae, their strong investment in their work or other interests, their digital empowerment and their active and interventive posture on what goes on in their life, around them or in the world defy old-age stereotypes. Although exploratory in nature, this study highlights the bright, successful aging of these older celebrities and reveals that they still have the power to mobilize and engage a considerable number of fans, despite they do not take advantage of this to promote brands or products.

**Keywords:** Elderly, celebrities, social media influencers, Instagram