

#Maternity: emergence of maternal digital markets in Chilean Instagram accounts

#Maternidad: emergencia de mercados digitales maternales en cuentas chilenas de Instagram

#Maternidade: emergência dos mercados digitais maternos nas contas chilenas de Instagram

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ABSTRACT | In the context of the accelerated proliferation of digital communication spaces, motherhood is increasingly defined in terms of consumption practices. This research focuses on the emergence of maternal digital markets in 56 Instagram accounts in Chile. Using tools from digital ethnography, narrative analysis, and visual analysis, we explore the composition of images and text content to elucidate the ways in which the legitimacy journey –from experience to the offer of different products, workshops or general advice on parenting and care– mobilizes affects and normative ideals about good motherhood. The results suggest that the assemblage of algorithms, affects, and norms produces specific ideas about motherhood in interaction with users, thus shaping a mechanism of consumer surveillance. The analysis of the normative movement shows a discourse based on wanting, transforming motherhood into a project of self-construction, while affects are sustained by the promise of belonging and the mobilization of a sense of emotional and/or material lack.

KEYWORDS: motherhood; digital markets; affects; normativity; instagram.

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RESUMEN | *En el marco de la acelerada proliferación de espacios digitales de comunicación, el maternaje se define cada vez más en función de las prácticas de consumo. Esta investigación se centra en la emergencia de mercados digitales maternales en 56 cuentas de Instagram en Chile. Utilizando aproximaciones a la etnografía digital, al análisis narrativo y al análisis visual, exploramos la composición de las imágenes y el contenido de los textos para dilucidar las formas en las que el recorrido de legitimidad –desde la experiencia a la oferta de distintos productos, talleres o consejos generales sobre crianza– movilizan afectos e idearios normativos sobre la buena maternidad. Los resultados sugieren que el ensamblaje de algoritmos, afectos y normas produce ideas específicas sobre la maternidad en interacción con las usuarias, conformando así un mecanismo de vigilancia. El análisis del movimiento normativo muestra un discurso basado en el querer, transformando el maternaje en un proyecto de autoconstrucción, mientras que los afectos se sostienen gracias a la promesa de pertenencia y a la movilización del sentimiento de carencia afectiva o material.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *maternidad; mercados digitales; afectos; normatividad; Instagram.*

RESUMO | *No contexto da proliferação acelerada dos espaços digitais de comunicação, a maternidade é cada vez mais definida em termos de práticas de consumo. A presente pesquisa se concentra na emergência de mercados digitais maternais nas 56 contas de Instagram no Chile. Utilizando aproximações a etnografia digital, a análise narrativa e a análise visual, exploramos a composição de imagens e o conteúdo de texto para elucidar as formas pelas quais o caminho da legitimidade, desde experiência à oferta de diferentes produtos, oficinas ou conselhos gerais sobre criação, mobiliza os afetos e ideais normativos sobre a boa maternidade. Os resultados sugerem que a montagem entre os algoritmos, afetos e normas produz imagens específicas sobre a maternidade junto às usuárias, formando assim um mecanismo de vigilância. A análise do movimento normativo mostra um discurso baseado no "querer", transformando a maternidade em um projeto de autoconstrução, enquanto os afetos são sustentados pela promessa de pertencer e pela mobilização de um sentimento de carência emocional e/ou material.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *maternidade; mercados digitais; afetos; normatividade; Instagram.*

INTRODUCTION

Currently, many mothers turn to social networks for information about their care and parenting process. Virtual communication spaces emerge as a meeting possibility to ask questions and share experiences (Holtz et al., 2015).

However, social media interactions can reproduce cultural stereotypes and generate different ideas of what it means to be a good mother. In the context of the accelerated proliferation of digital communication spaces, motherhood is increasingly related to and defined by consumer practices (Clarke, 2013). Since the 1990s, “infant care has become an incipient business” (Medina Bravo et al., 2014, p. 489). This opens a market space in which objects of consumption are traded and, in turn, different forms of motherhood are constructed and negotiated (Clarke, 2004). In the virtual world, the market of motherhood unfolds in a specific and precise way, mobilizing both norms and affections about motherhood, and what is socially expected of mothers.

Following these approaches, this research focuses on the emergence of maternal digital markets in Instagram accounts in Chile. Through visual analysis of posts and text content, we explore the ways in which the supply of different products on parenting and care mobilizes affections and normative ideals of what it means to be a good mother. We consider social networks and digital spaces as spaces of emergence (Butler, 2017) of various desirable motherhoods. In that vein, we argue that these normative ideals and affects circulate implicitly in the virtual world, shaping objects and consumption practices.

Commoditization of motherhood and digital marketplaces

During the transition to motherhood, consumption patterns can be significantly affected. Anticipatory consumption practices, such as baby wish lists or baby showers involve an intense search for information by the mother or those close to her (Clarke, 2004), mainly via social networks and websites. These practices are part of a process of negotiation of the woman with her new identity as a mother (Wu Song & Paul, 2016). There is a transition from consumption understood as an individual benefit to one understood as a form of care and affection.

These researches rely mainly on the premise of transitional consumption, i.e., that the purchase of goods can facilitate the transition from one role to another (Solomon, 1983). However, the transition to motherhood is an ambivalent process when it comes to consumption experiences. The symbolic dimension of market products conveys certain ways of experiencing motherhood, “equating it with extensive consumption of expensive products” (The VOICE Group, 2010a, p. 392). The transition to motherhood results in a period of strong changes in identity, roles, and lifestyles, which can affect mothers’ interactions in increasingly commoditized

information spaces. Both marketing and consumption reproduce, reinforce, and encourage certain idealized images of what kind of products a good mother should consume and what she should buy for her children (The VOICE Group, 2010b).

The market and consumption are intimately related in the construction of the maternal experience. In social networks, the commodification of motherhood has normalized a public discourse linked to consuming material goods through, for example, the figures of mother-influencers, whose forms of care and upbringing are oriented to the consumption of goods (Krzyżanowska, 2020). Various stereotypes emerge in digital markets, from the yummy mummy, who looks attractive, well-dressed, and posh, quickly after giving birth, to the slummy mummy, sloppy-looking and without luxury goods (Portier- Le Cocq, 2019). Likewise, the fact that motherhood is increasingly defined based on the practices of consumption of material goods (Clarke, 2013) puts high pressure on mothers of low and middle socioeconomic level. Their participation in the care market is limited by their ability to pay and, consequently, they have very little chance of fulfilling the ideal of motherhood presented to them as desirable (Pugh, 2004).

Motherhood commodification shows how consumption has become the main space for producing maternal identity (Ponsford, 2011), through commodities and content that mobilize affects and normative ideas about what motherhood should be or how children should develop.

The production of motherhood in digital communication spaces

Social networks can generate spaces in which new meanings of motherhood are proposed (Imbaquingo Pérez, 2019) and create information flows that can increase women's empowerment in the transition to motherhood (Madge & O'Connor, 2006). For example, digital platforms and blogs can instruct users about their experience of motherhood or become spaces for venting, information seeking, and support (Lupton, 2016; Baker & Yang, 2018; Moon et al., 2019). While these communication spaces allow for the reformulation of meanings about the maternal experience, they also produce normative figures. In its discursive dimension, motherhood is always loaded with meanings that regulate and norm maternal behavior (Palomar Vereá, 2004).

We understand normativity as a convention based on interaction, which produces and promotes an “observable behavior norm, a normalized model of behavior recognized as normal or typical by the actors, and a normative standard [that which appears as desired or correct]”¹ (Agha, 2007, p. 126). These elements

1. Brackets added by the authors.

circulate and come into force in digital communication spaces. For example, Orton-Johnson (2017) evidences how maternity blogs produce a sort of *mammosphere*, in which there are different normative representations that impact the daily practices of their readers (Gleeson et al., 2019). For Kumar and Schoenebeck (2015), sharing photos via Facebook helps to promote and receive validation about good mothering. The authors show that mothers see Facebook as a place to share positive information about their babies, thus exposing their identities as good mothers as an indicator of healthy mothering. On the other hand, Tiindeberg and Baym (2017) evidence how these normative representations can be transmitted even to the pregnancy period, where Instagram and its tools can be used as a means to validate that one is having an adequate or correct pregnancy, reflected in the number of Likes a post achieves.

Digital spaces have the potential to transform the representations that female users have of maternal identity (Friedman, 2013), but they can also reproduce existing cultural stereotypes. Douglas and Michaels (2005), through a study on representations of motherhood in social networks, report a *hypernatulism* or new *mommism*, which tends to configure an unattainable image of the mother as the child's main caregiver. This idealized mother figure is expected to devote herself to caregiving in a disinterested and highly professionalized manner. The concept of intensive mothering (Hays, 1996) refers precisely to this idealization that points to the "natural" need of women to dedicate themselves exclusively and intensively to care, to put the needs of their children above their own, and to feel satisfied and fulfilled in this role (Orton-Johnson, 2017). Motherhood appears as a central element of female identity insofar as it constitutes a trait of femininity realized through sacrifice and renunciation. These mandates also shape moral criteria of intensive mothering and create an experience of guilt for those mothers who take another path, whether voluntarily or involuntarily (Arciniega Cáceres, 2019).

The publications' composition is a key element in analyzing the ways in which affects are mobilized; specifically in social networks for self-presentation (such as Instagram or Facebook), pride is constituted as a central affectivity in discourses of good parenting (Williams, 2009). Lazard and colleagues (2019) posit that "the visual-textual display of pride functions to justify such posts as well as to perform identity work around 'good' motherhood" (p.12).

Jhonsen Thornton (2011) proposes understanding affects as assemblages that resist narrativization, but are still felt as culturally and historically constructed obligations. Affective assemblages may not speak to emotions in a linear way, but they do affect how what is experienced is felt (Grossberg, 1992). Stewart (2007) speaks of the ability of objects of mass circulation and instant communication to enact desires for "possible lives" from commodities: "The experience of being 'in the mainstream' is a concrete

sensory experience of literally being in tune with a ‘something’ that’s happening. But nothing too heavy or sustained” (p. 51). Ahmed’s (2015) work similarly shows that affects circulate in the public sphere through emotive discourses, outlining desired lives and objects of consumption that would enable them to be realized.

Finally, Morrison (2011) shows how mommy blogging marks an emotional reciprocity, creating communities of understanding through the production of stories of “my motherhood”. From the intimate, the affective side of blogging works by subverting taboos, exposing emotions and experiences. However, anonymity prevents the transgression of the public sphere and the access of wider audiences. It is specifically their affective power that enables their production and prevents making the intimate fully public. In many cases, critical opinions do not go beyond the digital space, even if they are ratified, thus preventing the generation of joint efforts against declared structural problems, such as the lack of day care centers, wage disparity, very limited or unpaid pre and postnatal, among others (Diprince, 2012).

Based on the above, the main objective of this article is to identify the emerging normative ideologies about motherhood in popular Instagram accounts that will function as spaces for the commodification of products and experiences. Likewise, we are interested in analyzing the affects that support these ideologies in the publications.

METHODOLOGY

We worked primarily with accounts whose administrators were categorized as micro influencers. In general criteria, a nano influencer has less than 1,000 followers and is characterized by having a direct influence on their followers. In contrast, a micro influencer has between 1,000 and 10,000 followers, focuses on a specific area or topic, and influences from there (Arriagada Sandoval, 2022). The account cadaster work was conducted between March and April 2020 and the selection criteria used were the following:

- Chilean active and public² accounts during the observation period.
- Accounts with more than 4,000 followers (micro influencer).
- Monetizing accounts. Influencers that manage their own brands or promote external brands.

2. As these are public accounts, there was no need to request informed consents to analyze the information. However, no personal name or personal identification is exposed in the text or images.

- That address maternity issues.

Those accounts in which one or more people could not be identified and personalized as owners were discarded. Therefore, accounts of companies, breastfeeding clinics, groups or associations were not considered, in order to observe how maternity digital markets emerge from personal experiences.

The search was first based on an auto-search of the Instagram account of one of the team members who is a first-time mother (two-year-old son/daughter). Then, we conducted a group search using hashtags *#mama*, *#maternidad*, *#maternidadreal* (*#mommy*, *#maternity*, *#realmaternity*). These hashtags were defined by following some of those used by the accounts found in the first instance. The final sample consisted of 56 accounts.

To analyze them, the first step was to build a characterization and systematization database with the following criteria: name of the account, link, number of followers, number of accounts followed, date of first publication, year of beginning, main topic of the account, publication that directly reflects this content (link), number of publications, and link with business/store. Since this study is qualitative, the way of including the data did not follow a quantification criterion. The database was filled by entering each of the accounts, reviewing their publications, and looking for the most relevant topic based on their description and the total number of publications (image and text). We used a socio-material approach (Fox & Alldred, 2017) to fill the criteria and the interpret the results. This approach allows us to jointly analyze publications, their materiality, texts, and categories.

Text and image are co-produced and the results presented here are an account of this process. In this regard, we frame ourselves in the post-qualitative interpretations (Le Grange, 2019) that argue that data are produced in the interaction between researchers and the studied phenomenon.

In a second phase, after producing the database, we categorized each of the accounts based on the selected publication and the account's name. Most of them indicated the theme they addressed in the name, e.g., pediatrician mom, but in other cases, such as *mateas*³ moms, it was the publication that allowed us to understand the account's primary subject. As mentioned, we used a qualitative narrative criterion to select the publication that best reflected the account. I.e., all the publications were examined to select the one that encompassed the account's spirit. Finally, based on the account themes' saturation criterion, we created nine categories, detailed in table 1.

3. In Chile, *mateo* is a term used to define a studious person (translator's note).

Account topic	Number of accounts	Number of publications	Followers number
Stimulation activities	7	3,815	263,100
Legal counsel	3	725	122,800
Maternity blog	9	12,867	294,600
Parenting and motherhood	11	8,466	435,000
Breastfeeding and complementary feeding	9	4,063	542,500
Medical, health	7	4,126	335,100
Ergonomic carrying	2	1,020	57,600
Safety, child restraint system	1	349	148,000
Sleep	7	1,069	358,700
TOTAL	56	36,500	2,557,400

Table 1. Description of the IG accounts by topic

Source: Own elaboration.

Thirdly, to analyze the publications, we used a digital ethnography approach (Schrooten, 2016), making continuous observations of the accounts that met the selection criteria during May 2020.

After categorizing the accounts, the publications that best reflected the assigned category were analyzed in greater depth. To do so, we used two analytical techniques: narrative approximation analysis (Riessman, 2009), and visual social science analysis (Banks, 2010). Both emphasize content and formal analysis, i.e., they consider what is said and how. The latter involves visualizing images, text layout, and emoticons used. What is said considers the published text. In the case of image analysis, we used a visual analysis approach to interrogate the images, considering our initial research question. Visual analysis involves understanding the relationship between three dimensions of the image: the iconic message (what the image denotes in the first instance), the coded iconic message (sociocultural and personal meanings), and the linguistic message (text accompanying the image) (Barthes, 1977).

The following qualitative questions were used to guide the analysis:

- Images: What do they show? How? How does the image relate to what was said verbatim? How does it relate to the category assigned to the account? What idea of motherhood is expressed?

- Text: What does the text say? What kind of affectivity does it use? Does it have emoticons? Which ones? How does the text unfold? Is it short or long? What idea of motherhood is it expressing?

Once we had all the responses, we once again applied a coding using the narrative tools analysis mentioned above. This coding was not completely open, since what emerges as a code is primarily oriented to the research question. Thus, three codes emerged from the descriptions of each of the publications: affectivities, normativity, and commodification. We finally classified the posts based on these three codes, sometimes using more than one code per publication. As an example, one of the analyses is presented in table 2.

It should be noted that, by taking a post-qualitative approach, we approach the data from their production. Thus, the data analysis and systematization (answers to the questions in each of the publications) are part of a subjective observation process by each of the team members, which are then shared and contrasted with the research question and objectives.

Account name	Description of the most representative publication	Code
Consejo Guaguas	In the picture a newborn is crying, it is not a video, but I can hear the crying. In a memory it says “infant colic”, and then pediatrics. The word “pediatrics” introduces the post immediately from a medical expert standpoint. The text is a clarification of what colic is and some facts. In addition, at the end it finishes with “treatment” (which can be performed by the caregiver) and medication, it is made explicit which are NOT useful and which can be harmful. Everything has some emoji that indicates the text’s intention.	Affects
María Lactancia	It is a template. With the account’s logo. It’s about types of weaning. The message is about the diversity of ways of weaning, but then it gives advice on what a mom could do, it doesn’t use inclusive language, it talks about the child. And closes with diversity. In the text, she elaborates on types of weaning. It is a bit contradictory what is said in the text and the first infographic point. The text begins with “from my point of view”. It ends by inviting you to a workshop: “If you think it is time to wean and you don’t know where to start, I invite you to my program <i>Weaning with Love</i> . We start in April and registrations are available on my website”. She closes with the sentence “Remember, breastfeeding is yours, don’t let anyone interfere neither to continue, nor to end it ❤️”.	Normativity and commoditization

Table 2. Example of account coding according to narrative analysis based on the categories normativity, affect, and digital markets (account names have been changed to fictitious names).

Source: Own elaboration.

RESULTS

From the qualitative analysis of the accounts and their contents, we identify three empirical dimensions that we will call *movements*. The first is affective, the second is normative, and the third is commodification. These do not behave independently in the IG publications, but we separate them in order to provide an analytical and reflective look at the maternal digital markets in Chile and the emergence of normative images of how to be a good mother today.

Affects: production of community through the absence and the offer of a solution

There are different sensory affect levels that affectively sustain a publication. In analytical terms it is important to divide these dimensions but, in reality, they function intertwined (Stewart, 2007). The publications are not aimed at everyone, but primarily at mothers. The language is mostly feminine, and motherhood is explicitly discussed, rather than parenthood. This affect is sustained by the virtual promise of the encounter of a community that experiences the same as you, that aspires to the same as you, and that offers recipes for coping with what you have not been able to.

A first relevant aspect is the image, which can be expressed in photographs, digital drawings, colors, letters, logos, or videos. Photographs of a newborn baby crying, another with a red face with flaky skin, or videos simulating a car crash, are some examples of the affective approaches that publications use to capture the attention of users.

The images and videos in the cover are used, in general, to show what appears to be problematic in mothering experiences. In other words, the posts point to what your child or your day-to-day life may be lacking and could be fixed: that he/she behaves well, eats properly, sleeps well (and so can the mother), does not cry so much, breastfeeds well, does not have an accident, etc. Even if the whole publication can talk about a generic experience or can be used as an experiential blog, the cover will seek to impact with the lack of something or with what should be changed.

Other types of visual covers, although they follow the logic of fixing the problem, try to reach the user using the “that happens to me too”. These publications tend to be templates with a sentence, for example “I yell a lot and I feel guilty” or “If I am unwell, I fail my child”. In these cases, the texts talk about the experience of improvement linked to the acquisition of a product or to expert knowledge –which is generally medical or psychological.

In the second and third place appear the affects related to the texts that accompany the images and videos, in many cases ambivalently. For example, in the case of image 1, the text starts with a patient’s account of the screams. The therapist explains that she asked permission to show it and states that the objective of a publication is always to feel affected by the link with the experience shown.



Image 1. I yell a lot and feel guilty

Source: screenshot of analyzed Instagram account (anonymized).

We do not say related, because the virtual materiality of IG allows to affect sensorially in different ways, e.g., with the use of emoticons. In image 2 we can observe that in the text “7 tips for your children to listen to you”, the Chilean expression *hacer caso* (to listen, to obey) shows a very normative and traditional form of the hierarchy between parents and children.

However, in the accompanying text it nuances it with “7 simple techniques that will help you make your child more willing to obey your orders...”. The first sentence seeks to entice mothers to read the publication with a simplified message. The second sentence has a more complex message, using emoticons that give more subjective meaning to the text. The expanded use of emoticons gives more sophistication to the messages, but simplifies the emotions. For example, the female emoticons “I don't know” and “massage” are shown, along with the advice to “pick your battles”, accompanied by the “wrestling” emoticon, which shows two people physically fighting. It is first made explicit that the mother is doing something wrong –“giving too many orders”– to then reinforce the idea of not giving too many orders but only “the most important ones”.

In general terms, in the case of the accounts analyzed affect has a strong relationship with connection. In this regard, the concept of affect politics raised by Stewart (2007) proposes that “There's a politics to being/feeling connected (or not), to impacts that are shared (or not), to energies spent worrying or scheming (or not), to affective contagions, and to all the forms of attunement and attachment” (p. 16).



Image 2. Tips for your children to listen to you

Source: screenshot of analyzed Instagram account (anonymized).

Structures, ideologies, norms, and knowledge are installed, but it is the forms of affect that allow this to appear, move, connect, and be inhabited.

Finally, we see that sensitivities are always latent, to be adapted or sustained on the basis of one’s own experiences of being a mother. It is a constant presence of the “we” that indicates a supreme empathy through phrases such as “it happens to me too” or “it is totally normal”. The accounts are based in the affectivity of female friendship. However, this space facilitates the surveillance and disciplining of maternal beings and doings. Through comparison and competition, “the many women watch the many women” (Winch, 2015, p. 228).

Normativity: self-control and optimization of the maternal experience

Instagram accounts and their contents transmit standardized models of behavior on how to be a good mother. First of all, and as in the affective movement, the messages are explicitly and primarily addressed to mothers. No account includes messages to fathers or talks about parenting in general. The normative mandates are mainly linked to specific dispositions one must have in order to cope successfully with motherhood.

“Be the adult you needed in your childhood”, on a white background, large letters, and highlighting in yellow the whole message. In image 3, the invitation is to compare the upbringing we are exercising with the one we received in our childhood to “be the sensitive adult and be able to read to my children in their activities, and be able to be their voice” [sic].



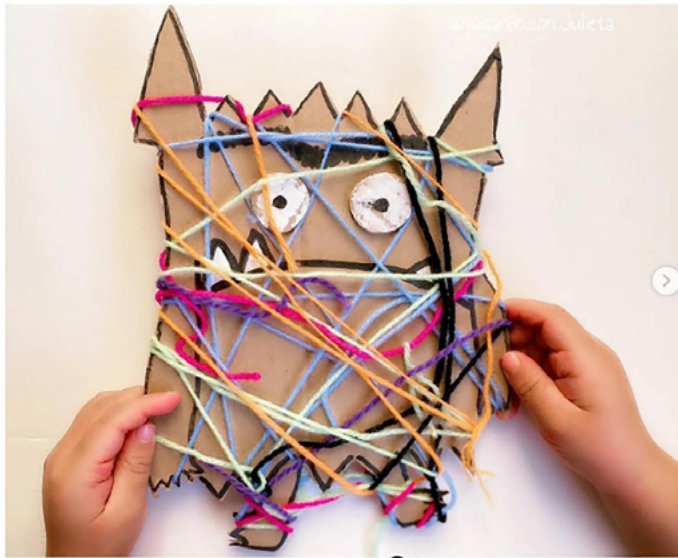
Image 3. Be the adult you needed in your childhood

Source: screenshot of analyzed Instagram account (anonymized).

Self-analysis and the comparison with one’s own experiences create a form of motherhood understood as an opportunity to heal our own problems and, at the same time, to make efficient use of that experience to build a sensitive and empathic mother identity that can be correctly passed on to her children.

The idea of a mother who enjoys the process of mothering appears regularly, with messages inviting to “be children with them”. However, the idea is to take advantage of moments of play to incorporate educational content, such as motor development, reading and writing, or vocabulary development. With a cardboard figure, colored wool wrapped around it and a child’s hands holding it, image 4 is playful and colorful. The publication shows an apparently accessible and easy-to-do activity. Analyzing the text, we see that it involves exercises of emotional, cognitive, and psychomotor skills. The activity requires specific knowledge in quasi-pedagogical dynamics on the part of the person who performs it, thus producing a mother-pedagogue figure that optimizes the moments of play to generate formal learning. The text highlights the multi-purposes of the activity: “The monster is tangled with his emotions and we help him to untangle them (...) we also enhance fine motor skills by wrapping with wool and then using clothespins (...) We also group by color thus reinforcing logical thinking (...) we also strengthen oral language and vocabulary growth” [sic].

The closing of the post with an emoticon of stacked books (📚) show the publication’s pedagogical and educational nature, rather than exclusively playful or recreational.



Motricidad fina

Motricidad fina

Este monstruo está totalmente confundido y enredado con sus emociones y con Juli lo ayudamos y con Juli lo ayudamos a organizar sus emociones , desliza para ver cómo.

Esta actividad ayuda a comprender más la historia y el significado , pero además potenciamos la motricidad fina envolviendo con lana y luego utilizando las pinzas de ropa.

Además agrupamos por color reforzando así el pensamiento lógico.

426 Me gusta

ABRIL 8, 2021

Añade un comentario... Publicar



Motricidad fina

Además agrupamos por color reforzando así el pensamiento lógico.

Finalmente si van al storie se darán cuenta que también fortalecemos el lenguaje oral y el aumento de vocabulario.

Un abrazo y que tengan una linda tarde 🌟📖

Recuerden participar del sorteo de este libro junto a [redacted] 🌟

#mesdellibro #actividadesparaniños #ideasoaraniños #emocionesoaraniños

426 Me gusta

ABRIL 8, 2021

Añade un comentario... Publicar

Image 4. Fine motor skills

Source: screenshot of analyzed Instagram account (anonymized).

Being positive and considering motherhood as a learning experience is also a recurring normative image. With a colorful cover and an illustration of a happy mother with her child in her arms, image 5 conveys optimistic aspects of motherhood. A large caption reads: “Daughter: thank you for teaching me so much”.



Image 5. Daughter: Thank you for teaching me so much
 Source: screenshot of analyzed Instagram account (anonymized).

In this case, it is an invitation to learn, something that a priori is considered positive and feasible. However, learning requires specific contexts, dispositions, and times. Especially, learning from difficult moments or complex processes such as parenting, generates a high level of self-demand.

While the phrases “I am her guide, but she is definitely my teacher” or “She has taught me so much. We travel the road of life together learning from each other” suggest a posture open to challenges and teachings, they also denote an effort to optimize one’s own experience. Not only must motherhood be endured, but we must constantly draw lessons from it, thus drawing an optimism that invisibilizes the stresses of parenting and pushes them to remain positive at all times.

The accounts analyzed convey normative images of how to be a mother and the desirable attitudes. In general terms, there is an image of a mother with high levels of agency and reflexivity, whose identity is constructed from her own will, drawing positives from her experiences to constantly learn and improve. Various aspects are mixed in this potential space for permanent improvement, some more practical linked to sleep or feeding, and others more dispositional such as the constant interest in informing herself, finding solutions autonomously, and rethinking her own childhood experiences.

Maternal digital marketplaces and production of economic activities

Many of the analyzed accounts do not intend to directly sell any product or service, but monetize through advertising. This creates a legitimized market for maternity and parenting products, ethically and economically, based on the mothers' experiences. In other cases, experience is intertwined with expert knowledge. For example, one of the accounts analyzed, which began as a space for advice on babies' sleep, began to offer paid sleep advice as its number of followers increased. Although it was not defined as a space based on personal experience, the expert advice was based on the maternal experience of the creators. At the time of analysis, this account began selling sleep items. Soon after, the original account was separated from the store, creating a new Instagram, but maintaining the link between the two. Something relevant about this account is that the profile picture is that of the creators. This is repeated in several accounts and we hypothesize that it is due to a search for legitimacy of what is advised and sold. Likewise, some publications linked to female entrepreneurship stand out and even allude to other brands and products of Chilean origin. The contents are interspersed with the promotion of the store with tips for sleep. Like other accounts, the publications take special care of the visual identity, using standardized templates and adding a logo, which helps to give a commercial sense to the account.

In other cases, the intersection between personal experience and marketing becomes more explicit. This allows for an ethical legitimacy with respect to what is being offered. For example, in a mother's account, the name alludes to a maternal community, but her presentation in the profile has her own name and a brief caption: "Mom, doula, prenatal educator, and lactation consultant". This presentation highlights the intersection between being a mother, expertise, and knowledge related to motherhood. Image 7 shows the account's creator with her child in her arms. There are messages about how to put children to sleep and then statements that show that she does not agree with this advice. The publication ends with the question "what things have they told you?". As shown in the affectivity section, these messages appealing to the common experience help to attract mothers without being constantly selling. The publications do not directly promote something, as it is necessary to give legitimacy support to these forms of marketing. Despite not being an explicitly commercial publication, it shows two products of the same brand at the end of the video, which operates as advertising.

Image 8 shows an economic activity linked to self-care and selflove, rhetoric used to publish critical topics on motherhood. The creator uses the concept of therapy and offers group and individual sessions for mothers. In some publications she clarifies that she is not a psychologist, i.e., her therapy comes from an experiential and non-expert space.



Image 6. Empowered and enterprising women

Source: screenshot of analyzed Instagram account (anonymized).



Image 7. Separation and bonding

Source: screenshot of analyzed Instagram account (anonymized).



Image 8. If I am unwell, I fail my children

Source: screenshot of analyzed Instagram account (anonymized).

However, her profile is defined as a “Mental Health Service” that comes from other less traditional approaches and away from classic knowledge⁴ (Rose, 1998; Illouz, 2010).

The products began to be packaged as a way of sophisticating the merchandise, which is evident in the creation of products that mix advice, information, and workshops appealing to affectivity with mental health rhetoric, or mental health with affectivity rhetoric. The image shows a phrase that a mother might say, then

⁴ Acronym that refers to the set of knowledge and truths installed by psychology, psychiatry, and mental health diagnostic processes in general.

there is a piece of advice, and a proposal of a workshop to overcome maternal anguish when one thinks that one has failed one's children. Something relevant about the last image and the information about the workshop is that, once again, the sense of community appears. The reference is not only to a service she provides, but also to being part of a group of and for mothers.

The merchandise's legitimacy is justified in the construction of a community of followers and the validation in the interaction with those who participate in it. As the community grows, it is possible to move from an experience tale to one produced for sale, thus reorganizing the account's contents. Generally, the nature of the products sold is related to workshops, courses, talks that derive from blogs and previously established stories.

DISCUSSION

We have seen how Instagram accounts are tools to create and disseminate different affects and norms about mothering, generally oriented towards improving and optimizing this experience, highlighting individual responsibility and personal fulfillment.

The analysis of the normative movement shows a discourse based on wanting, transforming motherhood into a project of self-construction (Stewart, 2007) that does not consider structural constraints or collective support. This highlights an image of an autonomous and self-sufficient mother, whose experience depends mainly on herself and her abilities, thus omitting the conflicts and contradictions of the transition to motherhood. On the other hand, we see that the affects that emerge about mothering are sustained by a promise to meet and belong to a community of peers, a promise that circulates thanks to the identification of those things that remain to be known or those tasks that have not been possible to cope with individually. The mobilization of the feeling of affective or material deprivation is essential to grasp the mothers' attention. This can range from Liking a post, commenting, or purchasing the product promoted in the post. Thus, the maternal digital markets account for how the product offer appeals to the common space of the maternal experience to attract new followers. Product promotion is mediated by the construction of a virtual community that legitimizes commercial interaction and validates the products' importance.

In general terms, we can see that digitalized motherhood creates normative images that are achieved in the consumption of objects, knowledge (workshops), and experiences. In this regard, maternal digital markets constitute a surveillance mechanism for consumers. The use of algorithms in social networks allows them to be used as consumer-oriented technologies, thus producing an assemblage between

algorithms, affects, and norms. There, specific images about maternity are not only offered, but also produced with the users by monitoring their actions and preferences. For Winch (2015), this is a central feature of promotional industries. The production of normative femininities means, in many cases, exposing oneself to the gaze of other users to be seen as someone who contributes to the process of self-transformation. This does not mean that one must achieve the standard, but rather constantly strive to achieve it. What is at stake is the aspiration to a duty, materialized in consumption, in a digital space of peer surveillance. These industries “promote and celebrate the continuous work that is put into struggling and consuming towards an ideal” (Winch, 2015, p. 234). In any case, achieving that ideal is never assured. Its purpose is rather to reproduce ways of life or consumption that support these markets and the normative maternity that emerges there (Winch, 2015).

Social networks and digital marketing have a performative capacity on mothers, their bodies, and what they do. Thus, they represent a space of appearance (Butler, 2017) of certain desirable lives materialized in consumer objects (Ahmed, 2015). In this context, and based on the already evidenced link between maternity and femininity, this research shows that this is also constructed, normatively, in consumer practices. To the sacrifice and renunciation that are at the base of intensive maternity (Hays, 1996), products and ways of consuming are added. In addition to the moral mandate to be available to the other, femininity is also at stake in the way mothers develop, materially and affectively, in the maternal markets.

Finally, these findings reflect the market’s entry into intimacy. In this context, privacy represents an “emotional territory of consumer-oriented corporate surveillance that either supports the alignment of market interests with those of consumers or violates their privacy and self-understanding” (Ruckenstein & Granroth, 2020, p. 13). Following the previous reflections, it is essential to ask about the interaction between privacy and digital markets in the context of the emergence of normative imaginaries mobilized through the use of affects and materialize in the purchase of consumer goods, thus delimiting how to live motherhood and femininity.

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