EXPLORING MOTHERHOOD ON INSTAGRAM
Descriptive Analysis of Representations and Narratives of the Gestating Body on Social Networks

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ABSTRACT

The principal objective of this research is to analyse the representations of the pregnant body through the visual creativity of content creators on Instagram. This is a descriptive research project employing an analytical-synthetic methodology and a narratological approach. The research questions addressed the type of publication, its style, and the diversity of experiences shared by future mothers. A total of 182 publications by three influencer profiles during their pregnancy stage were subjected to analysis. One of the principal findings of this study is that profiles aligned with the Realmom movement tend to share a greater number of maternal narratives.

1. Introduction

The concept of motherhood is a significant aspect of the construction of women's identity and their role within society. The process of embodiment during pregnancy can be conceptualised as a performative act, whereby individuals learn, adapt and act in accordance with the social and physical aspects associated with motherhood (Neiterman, 2012). A woman is not born a mother; rather, she becomes a mother through a process of transformation that begins at the moment of conception and continues throughout her life. This transformation encompasses not only the birth of the baby but also the experiences she encounters in all stages of pregnancy and childrearing (Paricio del Castillo and Polo Uses, 2012). (Paricio del Castillo and Polo Usaola, 2020). The traditional gender model on femininity and womanhood is defined by a multitude of maternal attributes, including caregiving, warmth, sensitivity, and empathy (Paricio del Castillo and Polo Usaola, 2020). Conversely, the absence of these attributes is often perceived as a masculine or unnatural trait in women. This represents a mythologising of motherhood as the ultimate state to which every woman aspires, without which she is incomplete. Furthermore, it is codified by the practices that every "good mother" must follow, whereby "good mother" is translated in the terms of the trope "to be a woman" (Alzard Cerezo, 2020; Alzard Cerezo, 2020; Alzard Cerezo, 2020). (Alzard Cerezo, 2020; Giallorenzi, 2017; Kristeva, 1985; Paricio del Castillo and Polo Usaola, 2020).

The process of maternalisation of women can be attributed to the implementation and consolidation of capitalism during the 18th and 19th centuries. This period saw a redefinition of the family unit as a social and economic entity responsible for the survival of children. The female role within the family was consequently relegated to the intimacy of the home, while male roles were less affected (Giallorenzi, 2017). The social construction and practice that motherhood implies, as evidenced by the work of Visa Barbosa and Crespo Cabillo (2015), has also been defined throughout its history by religion, education and/or the media, based on the patriarchal view of the family and society (Kristeva, 1985). "The subjective experience of motherhood lived by women has always been influenced by the representation that others have made of this stage, of which the negative aspects have historically been silenced" (p. 300).

Despite the feminist movement's efforts to demystify the concept of "women's rights" (Gámez Fuentes, 2001; Mendoza Alarcón et al., 2020), recent research, such as that of Alzard, has demonstrated that there is still much to be done in this area. Cerezo (2020) asserts that we are currently witnessing a shift in discourse and practice that is gradually relegating the role of women to roles historically associated with male domination through the use of "positive images of difference" that serve to mask what is, in fact, a false feminine superiority (p. 269).

Likewise, Landa and Calafell Sala (2019) examine the discourses and narratives conveyed through images disseminated online in digital media about motherhood. They conclude that these are shaped by two opposing forces: on the one hand, the imperatives of "health, productivity and performance" of the fitness philosophy embodied in Fitmom, and on the other hand, those of "authenticity and intimacy" embodied in the RealMom movement. They state that:

Western culture, as a symbolic order that must be permanently contested, encourages its users to broaden and diversify the spectrum of representations available to them. This results in the replication of many of the visual forms and underlying logics of mass culture, which the users are attempting to transform (p.151).

The concept of extimacy exemplifies the current practices of users on social networks such as Facebook, Instagram or TikTok. The concept of extimacy is paradoxical in that it represents the intimate as made visible and external through social networks, allowing creators of content to engage with their public. This has led to an upward trend in the expression of 'being a mother' on social media in recent years. "Gestating bodies are exhibited, as well as scenes of upbringing, which in the disciplinary societies of the 19th century were reserved within the home and the family" (Árreguez Manozzo, 2020, p. 97).

The objective of this study is to examine the narratives proposed by various users/content creators about their maternal experiences on the Instagram network through the analysis of images shared during their gestational period.

The research questions that drive this research are as follows: what kind of publications do they share; what style do they have; what are the audio/visual elements they use; or what kind of experiences do they share with the audience?

The primary objective is to analyse the explicit and implicit narratives in the representations of the pregnant body through the visual creativity of the users and to evaluate the diversity of the shared experiences of the process of becoming a mother.

2. Design and Method

This research project is concerned with the representation of motherhood through the body, as well as the creative expression and shared experiences of users on the social network Instagram who are in the process of becoming mothers. This text presents a descriptive, qualitative, content-analytical and synthetic-analytical research on the representation of the pregnant body and motherhood on Instagram. The approach to the analysis of representation is based on two aspects: firstly, narratological studies and, secondly, cultural studies. This approach aims to elucidate the manner in which visual creativity on social media contributes to the construction of meaningful narratives about women's bodies during pregnancy.

2.1. Sample and Selection Criteria

The sampling technique employed is a non-probabilistic purposive sampling technique (Otzen and Manterola, 2017). To this end, a search was conducted on the social network using hashtags pertinent to the subject of study, as detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Hashtags used to search for profiles and posts

	Related *hashtags*	No. of publications*
#reciennacido	48	2.239.532
#pregnancypain	2	153
#embarazofeliz	54	319.968
#embarazoreal	15	3.679
#bebe1month	38	3.693
#primarymother	55	212.711
#babybirth	40	112
#baby	44	3.370.473
#maternitytruth	4	935
#maternity	28	6.289.800
#birth	42	1.899.071
Note: publication data are not cross-referenced.		

Source(s): Own elaboration, 2024.

Once the universe of analysis had been delimited through the hashtags, a series of inclusion criteria were established for the sampling and selection of profiles to be analysed. These criteria were as follows:

1. Publication in the Spanish language.
2. The subjects were required to have given birth between January and February 2024.
3. The sample was delimited to a period of 10 months. The period of gestation was defined as 9 months, with a 15-day window before and after the expected date of birth.
4. A minimum of 40 publications is required, with each publication reflecting the gestating body.
5. The minimum number of followers is 1,000, which is the minimum category for defining micro-influencers.

The aforementioned criteria resulted in a total sample size of 182 publications, created between June/July 2023 and February 2024 by three public profiles:

Table 2. Profiles selected for the sample and number of publications.

	Name	Profile definition	No. of followers	No. of selected publications
@Violet	Violeta Mangriñan	Public figure	2.389.333	65
@andy.genia	Andy P H 🌞	Blogger Yogi | Mama Primeriza 🌱 Sharing real experiences 🎇 to feel less alone ❤️ 🩹 📍 Madrid	61.509	49
@susana.aresla	Susana〰️ maternidad & lifestyle	Public figure 🤱 | REAL Motherhood 👶+👦+😢 🔥 | Postpartum Exercise, Postpartum and Mums 📹 | YouTube +177k 💪 | Therapeutic Pilates Instructor 📍 | Madrid	99.512	68

Source(s): own elaboration based on the public Instagram profiles of Violeta, Andy.genia and Susana.aresla, 2024.

2.2. Variables of Analysis

The variables of analysis were established according to the criteria of relevance of visual and narrative analysis and their implications for theories on the representation of social identities, roles and gender. A total of 26 qualitative variables were employed.

Firstly, a segmentation of indirect qualification variables is applied according to the specific characteristics of the images and their relation to visual language. Secondly, a second segmentation of variables is applied according to direct qualification in relation to maternity and gestating bodies.

In order to establish the initial segment of variables, we have drawn upon established variables in the fields of audiovisual and narrative language theory, as set forth by Chatman (2013) and García Jiménez (1995). This segment is composed of 14 variables. The variables can be divided into five categories: dichotomous nominal qualitative variables, polytomous nominal qualitative variables, ordinal polytomous qualitative variables, open-ended qualitative variables, and dichotomous nominal quantitative variables.

In the application of variables for the second segment, direct qualification, previous studies on the representation of the maternal image and the pregnant body have been taken into account. In this section, a total of 12 variables were subjected to analysis: 11 dichotomous qualitative variables and 1 ordinal polytomous qualitative variable.

The instrument employed for this purpose was an analysis sheet, which can be accessed via the following hyperlink.

3. Data Collection and Analysis

The research was developed in a preliminary phase of documentation and search for previous research that would help to contextualise and delimit the research variables developed during the months of November and December 2023. In the initial phase of preparation, it was determined that the publications of influencers in the formative phase on the social networks TikTok and Instagram would be the focus of analysis. This was due to the brief, persuasive, and visual publication format of these networks, which differs from that of other social networks such as Twitter, Threads, or Facebook. A request was made to the API of both platforms in order to facilitate the sampling process. However, no

response has been received from either platform, prompting the decision to alter the sampling technique and sample criteria in accordance with those previously described.

In the months of January and February 2024, the selection of profiles, sampling and screening of publications were carried out. Once the sample had been established, data collection, analysis and coding were conducted between 1 and 8 March 2024. The IBM SPSS version 29 statistical programme was employed to obtain the results. The tables of results can be accessed via the following hyperlink.

4. Results

4.1. Indirect Qualification

A comparison of the number of posts published by each of the profiles reveals a striking similarity in the volume of content generated over the 11-month period selected for analysis. It is notable that the 68 posts by Susana (37.4%), 65 by Violeta (35.7%) and 50 by Andy (26.9%) stand out from the rest. The data indicate a high level of engagement with this social network by the creators, who are keen to share their experiences of pregnancy, concerns about motherhood, images of their children and advice for their followers about this new stage in their lives.

**Figure 1.** Graph of global variable Publication volume
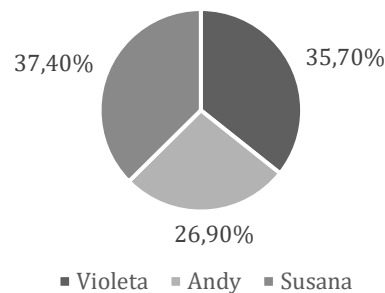
Source(s): Own elaboration, 2024.

Instagram is a social network that currently permits the publication of a variety of content in both horizontal and vertical formats. This includes photographs, image carousels and videos, which can be presented in a number of different ways. The visual variety afforded by the platform enables users to gain insight into the work of their preferred content creators from a range of perspectives. In fact, each influencer is able to utilise a communication strategy that is most suited to their audience. In this case, video is the most prevalent type of publication, accounting for 57.1% of the total count with a total of 104 works. This is due to the format's high consumption and demand among social network users. The duration of these videos is brief, typically a few seconds, and their narrative is dynamic. The content is presented using a modern audiovisual language, including short shots, music, and a fast pace. The creator who uploads the most videos is Andy, with 83.7% of the total, followed by Susana with 75% and Violeta with 18.5%. A review of the videos published by these creators reveals a variety of content, including sports tips for pregnant mothers, humorous content, summaries of special moments, and even videos revealing the sex of babies.

A further analysis of Violeta's posts revealed that 50 of them (76.9%) employed image carousels, a format that enables the presentation of multiple actions within a single post. In fact, she employs this content to provide a summary of her week or to illustrate different moments of the same event. However, Andy and Susana rarely employ this format, utilising it on only six and seven occasions, respectively (12.2% and 10.3%). It is also noteworthy that these creators only upload posts containing a single photograph as content when it is an important moment in their lives. To illustrate, consider the following example: Violeta employs this format to advertise a magazine cover featuring her pregnant figure. Andy presents the first month of her baby's life. Susana utilises this format to make a comparison between different weeks of her pregnancy and the growth of her belly. This data demonstrates the influence of video content on Instagram, a social network originally designed for the sharing of photographs.
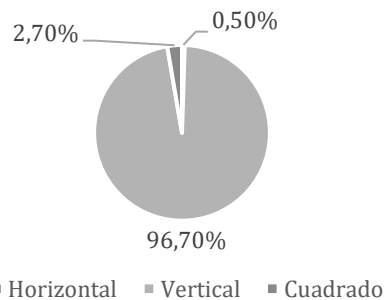
Figure 2. Cross-variable plot on the table Profile *Type of publication.
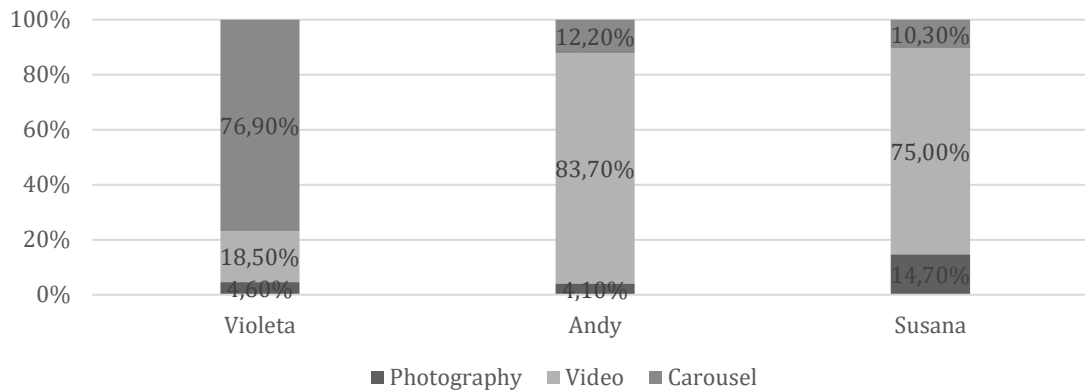
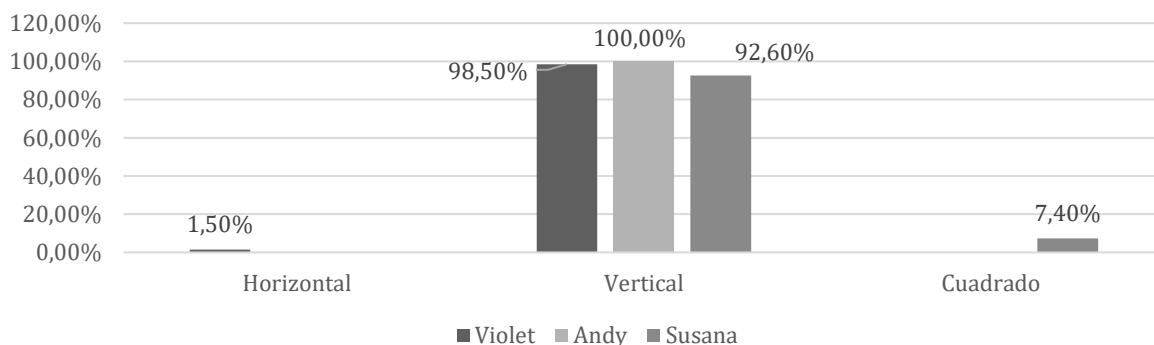Source(s): Own elaboration, 2024.

This social network permits the uploading of content with horizontal, vertical, or square framing. Nevertheless, despite the plethora of possibilities, the creators almost exclusively opt for vertical framing (96.7%), with no significant differences between them. All three creators select an aspect ratio that aligns with the dimensions of modern smartphone screens, encompassing the entire surface area. This enables the user to view the uploaded content in greater detail.

Figure 3. Global variable graph Aspect ratio.

Source(s): Own elaboration, 2024.

Figure 4. Cross-variable plot on the Profile*Aspect Ratio table.

Source(s): Own elaboration, 2024.

In their communications with followers, these content creators supplement their visual and audio-visual material with a text that typically appears in a position either below or adjacent to the publication. In these texts, the content creators provide information on the topics they wish to address at that moment, regardless of whether or not they are related to the images. These topics may include postpartum, caesarean sections, breastfeeding, symptoms, the content spoken in the videos, or simply a

brief title to the post. It is also noteworthy that these texts frequently include advertising content, references to other accounts (sponsors, partners, family, friends), and even emoticons.

In a global context, of the 182 advertisements that were studied, 175 included text, while only seven did not. The only creator who publishes without providing some degree of detail at some point during the period under study is Violeta, who does not hesitate to use emoticons as a means of communicating with her followers. This is due to the fact that she is the youngest of the three mothers under study and the one with the youngest audience, who is able to empathise with this form of communication.

Another significant aspect of these texts is the use of hashtags, an online element present in 71.4% of the posts. Indeed, Andy and Susana utilise hashtags in all their posts, whereas Violeta employs them on just 13 occasions, primarily for advertising purposes. This approach is noteworthy, as younger profiles tend to utilise emoticons and eschew hashtags, whereas more mature creators demonstrate the opposite behaviour, seeking to establish a community that can be found through these tags.

A further analysis of the video format reveals certain variables that are not typically found in carousels or photographs. These variables are voiceovers and music, which are directly related to the audiovisual elements. A further analysis of the first item reveals that the mothers under study do not typically incorporate this element into their works. Consequently, Violeta employs voiceovers in only 3.1% of her video content (2 posts), Andy in 34.7% (17) and Susana in 2.9% (2). Upon closer examination, it becomes evident that Andy is particularly invested in content wherein she engages in direct dialogue with the camera, whereas Violeta and Susana tend to prioritize a format wherein music assumes a central role. Indeed, Susana presents a considerable number of humorous videos in which she dubs a humorous phrase or utilises the available space in the frame to leave text, phrases or indications that she points out as they appear. In relation to music, Andy and Susana utilise this element in 75.5% (37 publications) and 73.5% (50) of cases, respectively, while Violeta only employs it in 18.5%.

Figure 5. Cross-variable plot on the Profile*Information Channels table.
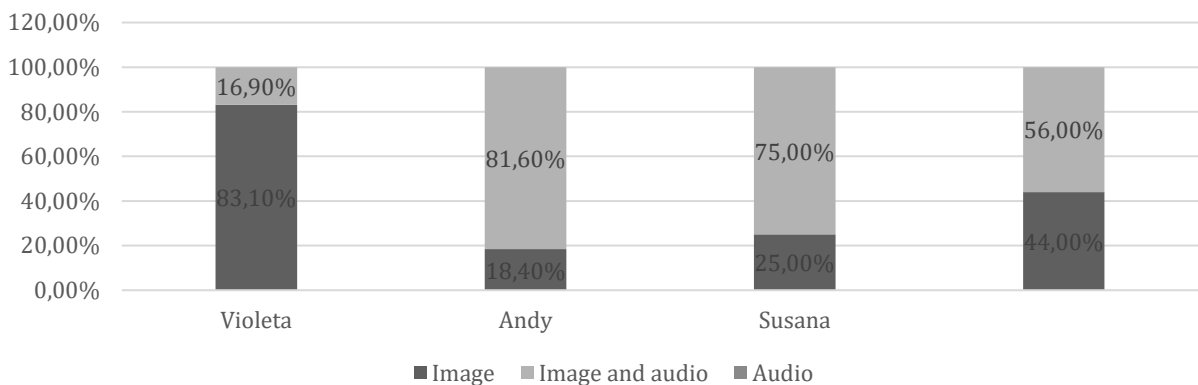
Source(s): Own elaboration, 2024.

Figure 6. Plot of cross-variables on the Profile *Speech, Music and Caption tables.
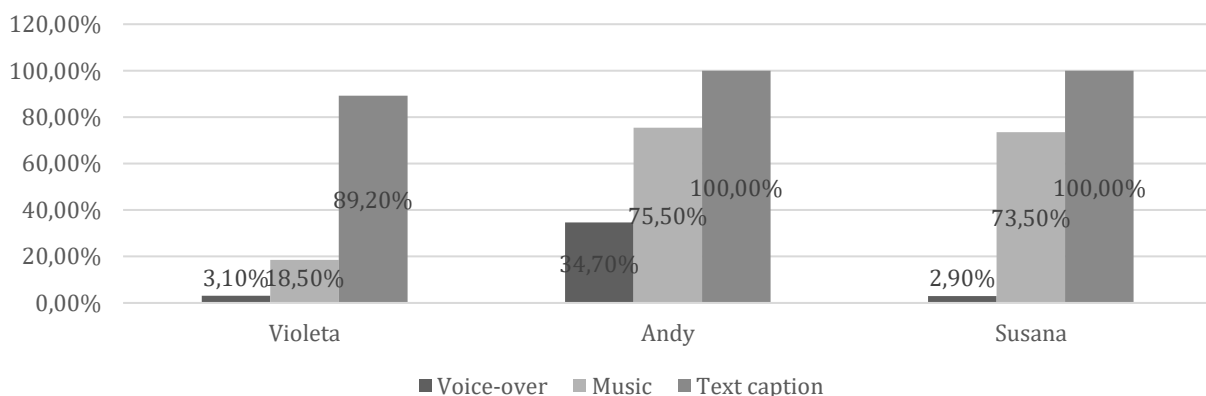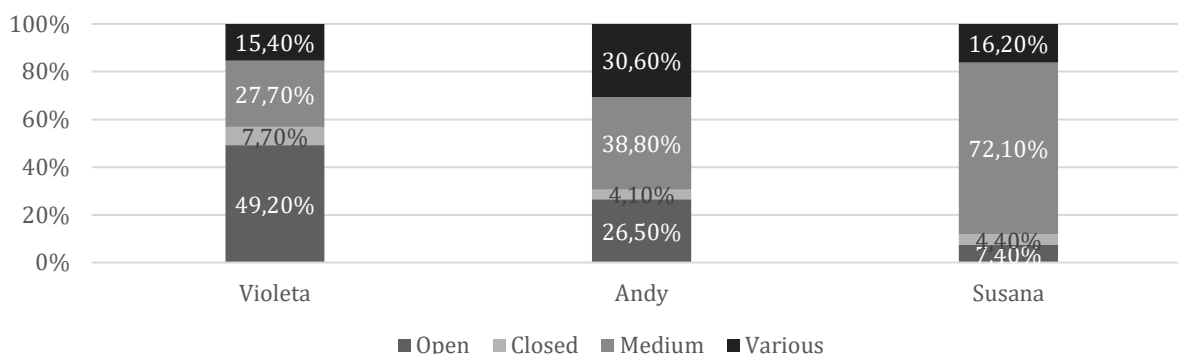

Source(s): Own elaboration, 2024.

As can be observed, audiovisual language plays a pivotal role in the transmission of messages. In this instance, the audiovisual language is employed to capture the evolution of the pregnant body over the course of nine months, as well as the first year of the infant's life, encompassing the mother's postpartum period. With regard to the shots employed, the most frequently utilised by these content creators is the medium shot, which was used in 86 publications (47.3%). The medium shot conveys a sense of intimacy, directing the viewer's attention towards the subject, while the surrounding environment is relegated to a secondary position. The most frequent user of this type of shot is Susana, with 49 instances. This is due to the fact that the videos in question utilise a static shot, which encompasses the area from the thigh/hip to slightly above the head.

Another frequently employed shot is the open shot, which was used in 50 posts (27.5%). The most prolific user of this shot is Violeta, who employed it in a total of 32 posts. This young mother opts for shots where her body and her appearance can be seen in their entirety, leaving space for the environment or her companions. It is also noteworthy that the closed shot is the least utilized, appearing in only 5.5% of the posts analysed in this study. Such shots significantly restrict the content that can be shown, which is incongruous with the style of these creators.

Finally, it should be noted that there is a category of "several shots," which are used for videos that include more than one shot and therefore do not fit into any of the aforementioned categories. A mere 36 of the videos studied (19.8%) employ the use of multiple shots to narrate the events depicted, opting for more dynamic content, changes in location or costume, and so forth.

**Figure 7.** Cross-variable plot on the Profile*Plane Value table.

Source(s): Own elaboration, 2024.

As with the value of the shot, the camera angle in relation to the subject affects the audiovisual message. There are two types of angles: vertical and horizontal. In relation to the camera's angulation on the vertical, the most commonly used frame is the normal or "level" frame, which is set at the subject's eye level and does not convey any particular connotation to the image. This frame was used in 43.10% (78 posts) of the total number of publications. The contrapposto angle was used in 42.50% (77 posts) of the total number of publications. This angulation, situated below the height of the subject's eyes, has the effect of magnifying and exalting the framing subject, thereby imparting a sense of power, grandeur or security over the person who is speaking. Conversely, angles below eye level have a high presence, with 8 publications (4.40%) for the acute angle and 3 (1.70%) for the zenithal angle. The latter is employed in most cases when the subjects are situated on a bed or when images of babies lying down are being captured. This approach, in conjunction with horizontal angles, ensures that these images are presented in a more frontal manner, rather than conveying a sense of isolation and solitude that is characteristic of zenithal images. No publications were identified in which the nadir angulation on the vertical was employed.

Nevertheless, we did identify variations in the utilisation of these planes in relation to the distinct profiles under analysis. While Violeta employs the standard or level angle, Andy and Susana utilise it on only 27.10% and 23.50% of occasions, respectively. The contrapposto angle is employed more frequently by these influencers, as evidenced by the following graph, which indicates that Andy utilizes it in 27 publications (56.30%) and Susana in 48 posts (70.60%). It is noteworthy that 15 videos (8.30%) among all profiles exhibit a high degree of variation in shot angle, with a tendency for vertical angulation. These videos could not be classified within the previous categories.

Figure 8. Cross-variable plot on the table Profile *Vertical angulation.
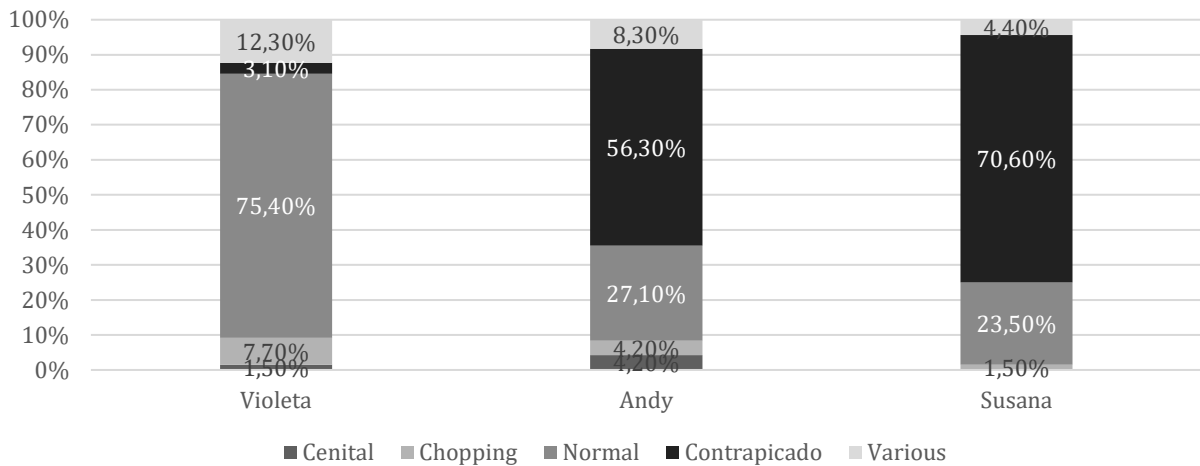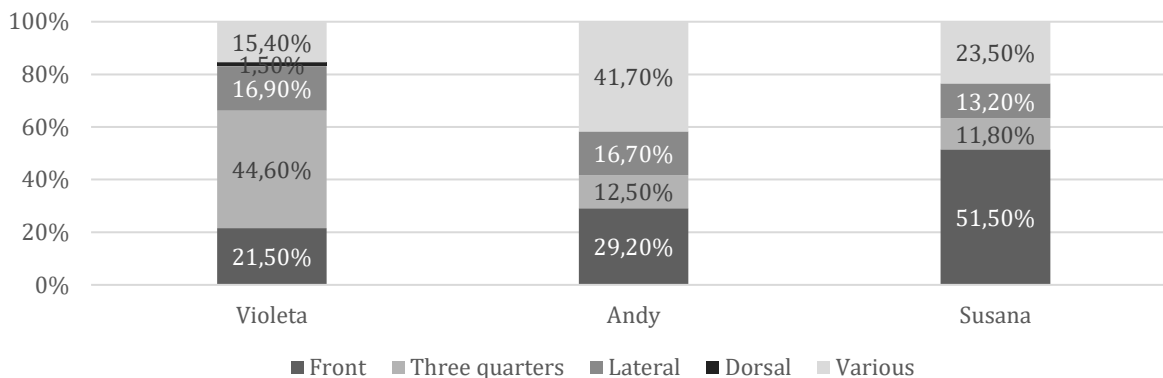

Source(s): Own elaboration, 2024.

With regard to the horizontal angulation, it can be observed that 63 publications (34.80%) exhibit a frontal angulation. This type of angulation has the particularity of flattening the image of the subject, thereby appealing directly to the viewer by breaking the "fourth wall". This angle is frequently employed on social media platforms by content creators seeking to engage directly with their audience. The next most common type of angulation is that of 46 publications (25.40%), in which different horizontal angles can be observed. This category encompasses videos that alter their framing (15 posts) and those in which the angle is modified due to the internal movement of the characters. The majority of these compositions are comprised of frontal, lateral, and three-quarter shots. The third most prevalent angle is the three-quarter angle, which is employed in 43 posts (23.80%) of the total sample. This angulation is the most common and standardised within the horizontal angulations, as it allows the three-dimensionality of the subjects to be seen, it allows the subject's face and expression to be seen almost in its entirety, without breaking the "fourth wall" of the audiovisual space, allowing a more objective and invisible narration. The lateral and dorsal angulations are at the bottom of the global ranking, respectively, with 28 publications (15.50%) for the former and one publication (0.60%) for the latter.

As with the vertical angulations, when the data is cross-referenced by profile, it becomes evident that there is a discrepancy in the type of angulation employed. In the case of Violet, the most prevalent angulation is the classic three-quarter angulation, with 29 posts (44.60%), followed by frontal and lateral angulation, with 14 (21.50%) and 11 publications (16.90%), respectively. Additionally, 10 posts (15.40%) exhibited different angulations above the horizontal. This is the sole profile that exhibits publications with dorsal angulation.

In the case of Andy's profile, she is the one with the highest number of publications where the framing varies in the same post, 20, accounting for 41.70% of her publications. Subsequently, posts with frontal angulation were identified, representing 29.20% of the total number of posts. Posts with lateral angulation accounted for 16.70% of the total number of posts, while posts with classic three-quarter angulation were the least common, representing 12.50% of the total number of posts. The figure for this final parameter is also very similar for Susana's profile, with 11.80% of her publications. The next category, which accounts for 13.20% of the total, comprises publications with lateral angulation. The second largest category, with 23.50% of the total, comprises publications with multiple changes of angulation within the same post. The largest category, with 51.50% of the total, comprises publications with frontal angulation. It should be noted, however, that the majority of publications identified as exhibiting varied angulation typically exhibit two distinct types of frontal angulation, with three-quarters occurring at the entrance or exit of the video.

**Figure 9.** Cross-variable plot on Profile*Horizontal angulation table.

Source(s): Own elaboration, 2024.

4.2. Direct Qualification

It is also noteworthy that the three content creators in question exhibit a strikingly similar maternal age, with all three falling within the 30–40-year age bracket, which is typically associated with the young adult demographic. Moreover, most of them are in a similar familial situation, with Violeta and Susana having more children, while Andy is a first-time mother. Regarding this point, it has been observed that, on certain occasions, Violeta and Susana upload content featuring a greater number of children. In the case of Violeta, this occurs in only six posts (9.2%), while Susana publishes a few more posts with her other children, with a total of eight posts (11.8%). Nevertheless, this represents only 7.7% of the content, with the remainder of the posts featuring the mother and her newborn baby or during her months of pregnancy.

Figure 10. Cross-variable plot on Profile*Other children table.
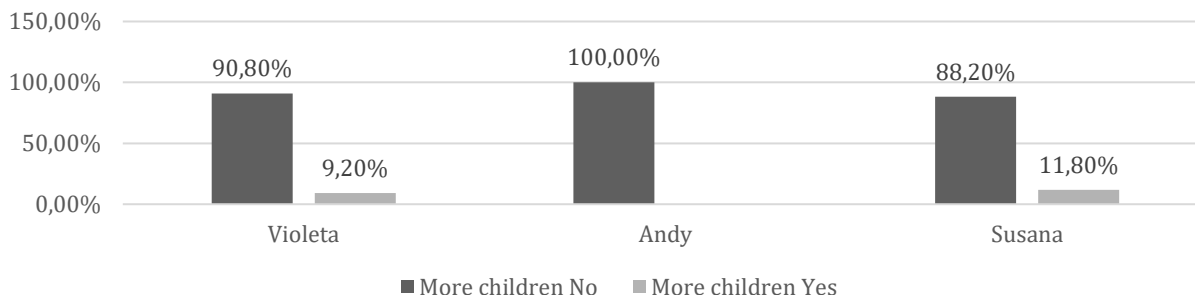
Source(s): Own elaboration, 2024.

On another note, this research also looked at aspects directly related to motherhood, the behaviour of the creators during this stage of their life and the way they present it on social networks. It should be noted that 44% of the posts (80 out of 180) directly depict the pregnant bodies of the mothers studied. This figure reflects a reduced representation of the pregnant body on Instagram by these creators, who opt for less explicit and more subtle content, showing their belly through their clothes. On an individual level, there is a very similar pattern among all the influencers studied, with Violeta being the one who shows her belly most directly (30 posts), followed by Susana (28) and Andy (22).

When it comes to showing the changes that the body undergoes during pregnancy, these content creators sometimes use sports underwear, sexy underwear or others. In this sense, influencers use tops that show the bump, T-shirts that mothers pull up to show the changes, bikinis or sportswear, among others. As we can see, the moment of showing the bump is very natural and fluid, with a carefree gesture where the mother pulls up the garment and lowers her trousers or sportswear a little so that her followers can see the bump. Susana (19.1%) is the creator who uses sports underwear the most, and Violeta (9.2%) the least. However, Violeta is the one who most often chooses sexy lingerie (10.8%) to show off her bump, followed by Andy (4%). Susana, on the other hand, chooses not to publish this type of content.

Figure 11. Cross-variable plot on Profile*Underwear table.
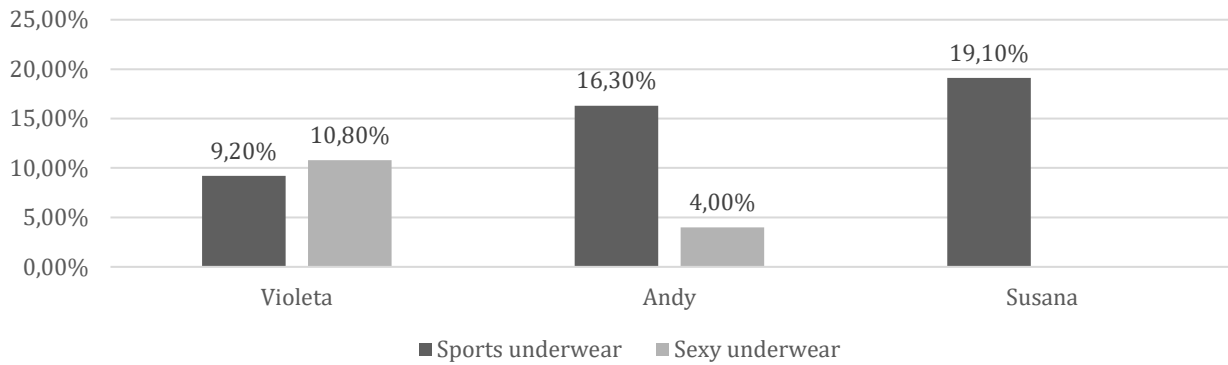
Source(s): Own elaboration, 2024.

Following childbirth, many women document the changes to their bodies, the symptoms they are experiencing, and their adaptation to this new situation. Of the profiles under study, only 7.6% of the posts analysed reflect the postpartum body of the content creators. It should be noted that this information only reflects one month. However, the representation is very small. In this case, Susana is the most prolific Instagram user, with eight posts, followed by Violeta with three and Andy with three.

Another area of interest was the maternal attitude of the creators. For the purposes of this study, maternal attitude was defined as gestures, caresses or holding the baby. It can therefore be seen that this attitude towards the baby is reflected in 22 publications, representing 12.2% of the total. This data should be contextualised within the postpartum month studied in this research. In these publications, the mother can be seen hugging her baby, kissing him, cradling him, etc. In fact, in 15 of these 22 publications, the mother is smiling and happy. Going deeper into this point, Susana is the mother who has published the most posts with a smiling attitude (8), followed by Andy (5) and Violeta (2). Conversely, Andy is the only mother who has posted a picture with a depressed or sad attitude while holding her baby. In contrast, there are also neutral attitudes (6).

However, the maternal attitude section could also include all the affectionate and tender gestures that mothers make when touching their tummies. If this were the case, the data obtained would be much higher, since in almost all the publications uploaded during pregnancy, the creators place their hands on their abdomen.

Figure 12. Cross-variable plot on Profile*Attitude table.
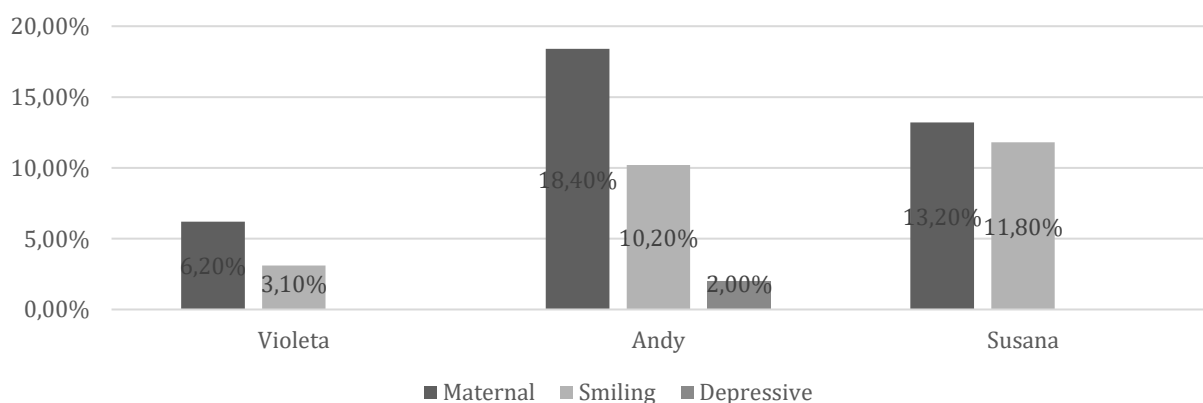
Source(s): Own elaboration, 2024.

Finally, an analysis of the bodies of pregnant mothers revealed that 72.5% of the content published depicts fit bodies. This is consistent with the creators' engagement in sports, adherence to dietary guidelines, and efforts to maintain a healthy weight. Nevertheless, there are instances where mothers with more realistic physiques are depicted, as exemplified by Andy.

**Figure 13.** Cross-variable plot on Profile*Body type table shown.
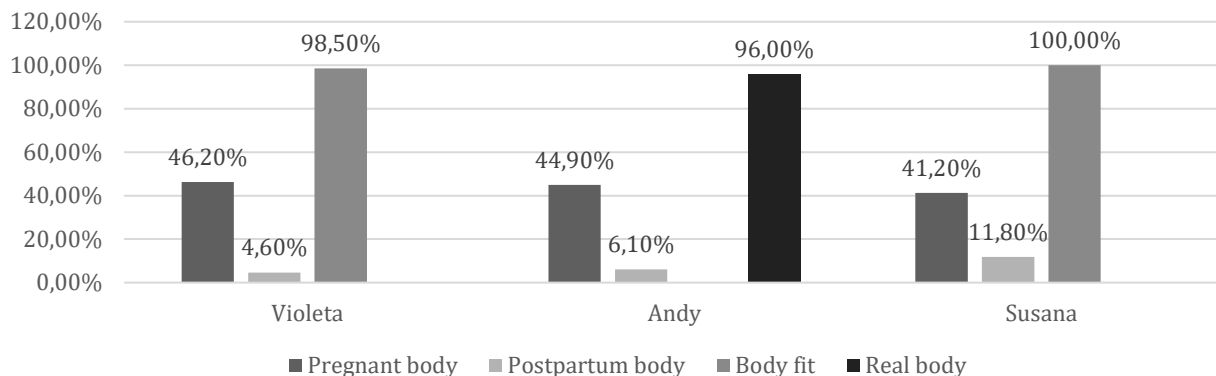
Source(s): Own elaboration, 2024.

5. Conclusions and Discussion

5.1. Between Instagram Ability and Motherhood

The three profiles selected for analysis exhibit a range of publication types. In the case of Violeta, it can be observed that her publications are primarily of the carousel type and are characterised by a visually produced style and static format. On numerous occasions, her publications adhere to the conventions and aesthetic principles typically associated with advertising. This production style is also evident in some of her videos, as evidenced by the one created for the cover of Women's Health magazine (see Figure 14). Furthermore, this content creator demonstrates a high level of attention to detail with regard to the visual and aesthetic aspects of her posts. Her publications typically feature a variety of brand clothing, luxury accessories, impeccable hairstyles, flattering poses, meticulously crafted ensembles, and intricate makeup. In the visual domain, images are typically characterised by excellent lighting, carefully considered framing to accentuate the subject, and subsequent editing to accentuate the image's strengths.

Figures 14-16. Different *posts* from Violeta Mangriñan's profile.
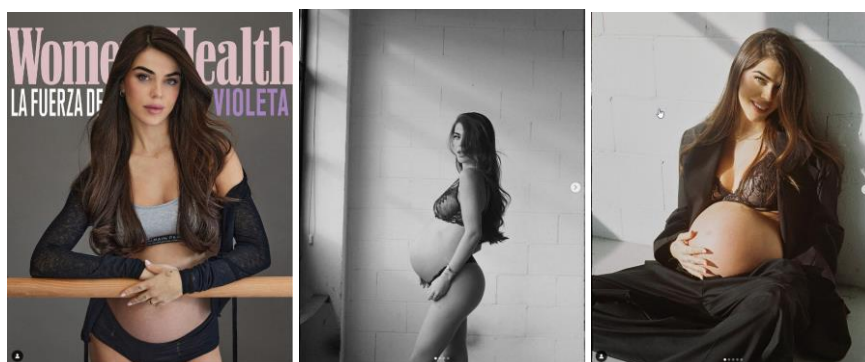
Source: Violet, December 2023.

Conversely, Violeta offers few insights into her personal experiences, challenges, or advice related to maternal aspects, at least in her published works. It is evident that her images of her daily life are predominantly focused on publicity events, with a paucity of publications that depict her as a mother in the conventional sense. This distinguishes her from the other two profiles. As observed by Landa and Calafell Sala (2019), the representation of motherhood in this context is aligned with the neoliberal tropes commonly associated with the 'fitness mum' archetype, whereby the 'condensed bodily fiction of the 'desirable'' is presented (p. 91).

It is noteworthy that this profile does not typically utilise voiceovers or text superimposed over images in her videos. However, she does employ music and emoticons, a digital element that is emblematic of this creator and which she repeats with remarkable consistency. Furthermore, the images she employs tend to recreate and reinforce the visual normativity of invisible writing. In terms

of framing, they are denotative and narrative shots, as they are typically positioned at eye level with a three-quarter horizontal angle and open frames that allow for the appreciation of the body's volumetric three-dimensionality and her protruding abdomen (see Figure 17). Furthermore, Violeta employs open shots, wherein the viewer may observe the selected photographic style, the individuals present in the scene, or the surrounding environment. Conversely, the use of closed shots in Violeta's photographs indicates that these frames are employed in specific instances related to motherhood, conveying an intimate, delicate, and personal moment. This approach differentiates her work from the broader, austere style evident in most of her photographs.

Figure 17. Post by Violeta Mangriñan showing most of the types of frames used.

Source: Violet, October 2023

Conversely, the other two profiles selected self-define themselves and express an interest in the world of exercise, albeit not in the exact words, but rather in terms of the words "yogi mum," "exercise," and "Pilates instructor." Furthermore, both profiles share a theme of real motherhood in their presentation. A comparison of the publications shared by both profiles reveals a discrepancy in the production of posts in relation to the previous profile. The use of video is prevalent, with 83.70% of Andy's posts comprising videos and 75% for Susana, compared to 12.22% and 10.30% that involve carousels in their posts. It is also noteworthy that the type of framing employed is markedly distinct. The frames are predominantly medium shots, which permit the pregnant body to be seen, albeit not in its entirety. The expression of the face, however, is afforded greater prominence. Furthermore, there is a clear preference for frontal compositions and contrapposto angles, which convey a sense of authority and gravitas in the messages conveyed. In these instances, the text itself conveys messages, as do the locutions and the image itself.

Figures 18-19. Capture of videos made by Andy.
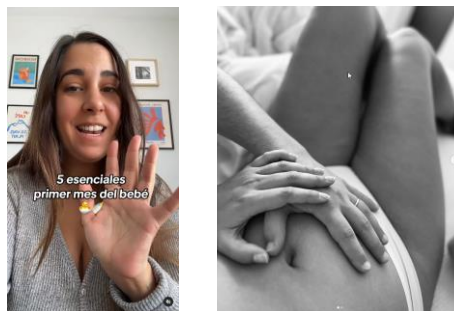
Source: Andy.genia, February 2024; Andy.genia, December,2023.

In terms of content, as previously stated, these two creators are dedicated to developing a social media profile that is primarily focused on motherhood. A further analysis of the content reveals a number of topics that are addressed in greater depth. These include publications related to the recovery of the body during the postpartum period, different symptoms throughout the trimesters of pregnancy, advice for the care of the baby, recommendations linked to the care of the newborn, tips for a good diet during and after pregnancy, and explanations of certain exercises with which to avoid back or hip pain when mothers are pregnant.

A closer examination of the content published by each of these two profiles reveals that Andy compares the growth and development of his baby with different types of food (avocado, mango or papaya, among others), explains the different ways of carrying a newborn baby so that it is comfortable, and even provides advice on how to dress so that mothers are comfortable. In the case of Susana, it is notable that her videos are characterised by a light-hearted approach, incorporating humour in the form of song lyrics or famous quotations that convey a clear and direct message on a specific aspect of motherhood.

A further distinguishing factor between these two content creators and Violeta is the use of hashtags in their publications. Andy and Susana make frequent use of digital elements, whereas Violeta employs them in publications where she engages in commercial activities with a brand. For instance, The hashtags #CKMyEuphoria, #ShotForPandora, #ghddreamland, #rabannehm and #ELLECancerball, among others, are used. A further point to consider is that the tags published by Andy and Susana (e.g. #thirdtrimester, #pregnant, #pregnancy, #healthypregnancy, #realmaternity, #happypregnancy or #pregnancyhealthy) are directly linked to motherhood. This is with the aim that all those users concerned about the gestation of their baby or the process they are going through can find information using these keywords.

A comparative analysis of the visual representation of the pregnant body by three content creators reveals a strikingly similar pattern. All three creators publish content featuring their own bellies, which they share with their followers. This allows the growth of the belly to be observed throughout the nine months of gestation. Another aspect that these three profiles share is the need to "hug" and touch their belly in the photographs, videos, or carousels that they upload to Instagram during the baby's gestation. It is noteworthy that a considerable proportion of these images are captured in everyday attire, encompassing a range of styles, from more informal to more formal. However, there are also instances of images of mothers in underwear in the Realmom rep line, whether in a more athletic or more sensual context. This allows users to observe these mothers from a different perspective. Such content is relatively scarce, as creators tend to avoid publishing such material. In all cases, the images are published with an innocent and clean purpose, and at no time do they resort to morbidity or provocation. It can be observed that Violeta is the creator who uploads the most images in underwear, thus maintaining the aesthetic coherence of her profile and the meticulous and careful style she offers her followers. At the opposite end of the spectrum is Susana, one of the influencers who most often displays her growing baby in sports underwear.

5.2. Conclusions

The principal findings of the research may be summarized as follows: in practically all cases, the dissemination of maternal experiences through the image is of a positive tone, with maternal and smiling attitudes on the part of these mothers. This continues in line with what previous studies have pointed out.

The predominant format utilized by the profiles under examination is video (57.10%), followed by the photo carousel (34.60%) and a single photograph, which is currently the least utilized publication format by these profiles (8.20%). The most commonly used framing orientation is vertical (96.70%), in contrast to horizontal and square framing, which is curious given that the latter aspect ratio is typical of the platform that also began as a social network for the publication of photographs. The fact that the vertical orientation is the most commonly used is also related to the object shown, which allows a greater body surface area to be seen within the frame, especially when working with a more closed shot scale such as medium shots. This framing allows the subject to move closer to and further away from the camera, thereby capturing the subject's movements. In the case of Susana Aresla, who frequently performs dances in her videos, the profile shot is particularly effective.

With regard to the style employed, while @violeta's profile is characterised by the use of invisible writing and a visual language that is reminiscent of advertising, profiles that advocate the dissemination of "real motherhood" adopt a more appealing and direct style, with their public, through mainly frontal framing (34.80%), which is complemented by the use of superimpositions of texts over the image and even voiceovers, as evidenced by @andy.genia's profile, which has 17 publications (34.70%), in which they share advice or concerns about pregnancy or motherhood..

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