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ARTICLE

Mediatized motherhood and its monetization: performative scripts of mother influencers

Maternidade midiatizada e monetizável: roteiros performáticos de mães influenciadoras

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ABSTRACT: *This article analyzes the Instagram profiles of three established Brazilian influencers in the motherhood niche, investigating how certain events are established as key moments within their digital narratives. Grounded in the concept of performative scripts and engaging with studies on motherhood, influencers, and consumer culture, the study conducts an exploratory analysis to understand the structuring and mediatization of maternal experience. The findings indicate the recurrence of seven events: pregnancy announcement; gender reveal party; maternity photoshoot; photographic/video documentation of childbirth, accompanied by the mother's account; newborn photoshoot; monthly milestone celebrations; and the child's first birthday party. We argue that these events constitute the rituals through which motherhood is monetized. They are central to gaining recognition among advertisers and audiences and form replicable, monetizable scripts.*

Keywords: *digital influencers; influencer mothers; performative scripts; monetization rituals; motherhood.*

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RESUMO: *O artigo analisou os perfis no Instagram de três influenciadoras brasileiras consolidadas no nicho da maternidade, investigando como determinados acontecimentos são instituídos como momentos-chave em suas narrativas digitais. Ancorado no conceito de roteiros performáticos e em diálogo com estudos sobre maternidade, influenciadores e cultura do consumo, realiza uma análise exploratória para compreender a estruturação e a midiatização da vivência materna. Os resultados indicam a recorrência de sete eventos: anúncio da gravidez; chá-revelação; ensaio da gestante; registro em foto/vídeo do parto, acompanhado de relato da mãe; ensaio newborn; mesversários; festa de aniversário de um ano da criança. Argumenta-se que tais eventos, constitutivos do que denominamos "rituais de monetização da maternidade", são centrais para o reconhecimento por parte de anunciantes e do público, construindo roteiros replicáveis e monetizáveis.*

Palavras-chave: influenciadores digitais; mães influenciadoras; roteiros performáticos; rituais de monetização; maternidade.

Introduction

We are immersed in a cultural and media context in which the strategic sharing of intimacy responds both to a logic of private life consumption — generating audience interest and engagement — and to the market opportunities arising from such exposure (SENFT, 2013; ABIDIN, 2015; MARWICK, 2015; AQUINO; FIGUEIREDO SOUZA, 2024). The discussion surrounding influencers — especially those operating on digital platforms — has been addressed in academic scholarship over the past two decades, with greater emphasis placed on women influencers (EVANGELISTA, 2020; KARHAWI, 2020).

As such platforms become increasingly central to everyday practices of expressing individual recognition (CAMPANELLA, 2024), aspects such as aspirational labor (KARHAWI; PRAZERES, 2022) intersect with the ways in which subjects construct their self-representations through various dimensions, including parenthood. Historically foundational to women's lived experience (FIGUEIREDO SOUZA, 2022) and frequently idealized by the media (TOMAZ, 2015), motherhood constitutes a space of both agency and recognition. However, within academic scholarship investigating manifestations of motherhood on digital platforms, there has been limited discussion of this phenomenon as an influencer niche.

This is particularly relevant at a historical moment in which debates about motherhood and its associated dynamics engage large numbers of women, especially on digital platforms (FIGUEIREDO SOUZA, 2019b; BRAGA, 2021; OLIVEIRA-CRUZ; CONRAD, 2022). In light of market-driven influences that produce a logic of high performance and intensified stimulation — reflected in the figure of the multitasking mother — women use platforms to question, endorse, or negotiate maternal normativity (FIGUEIREDO SOUZA, 2022).[1] Moreover, in a context marked by the emergence — and professionalization — of

1 Socially and culturally established behaviors that women are expected to perform when referring to and engaging with motherhood (FIGUEIREDO SOUZA, 2022, p. 98).

mothers producing motherhood-related content from distinct perspectives, it becomes important to reflect on the elements that constitute the media narratives they construct. This is especially pertinent given empirical evidence (OLIVEIRA-CRUZ; CONRAD, 2022; CHEE; CAPPER; MUURLINK, 2023) demonstrating the extent to which these content creators serve as reference points for mothers, fathers, and pregnant women who consume the content they produce.

Accordingly, this article seeks to investigate the markers — understood here as recurring elements within the media narratives produced by content creators — through which the performative scripts (TAYLOR, 2013) of highly visible mother influencers are structured. Its objectives include:

- understanding which situations and events are established as key moments in these influencers' narratives;
- identifying the demands and dynamics with which they engage;
- examining how such elements contribute to maintaining their relevance both to brands and to their respective audiences.

These narratives are understood as part of a process of mediatization and monetization of motherhood through which symbolic disputes emerge regarding how the mother role should be experienced. They therefore constitute elements involved in the production of contemporary maternal subjectivities.

With these objectives in mind, the study employs an exploratory analysis to examine posts published by three established Brazilian influencers in the motherhood niche[2], seeking to identify key moments that may be understood as constitutive events of what we term "motherhood monetization rituals". Based on observations of the Instagram profiles of Viih Tube, Flavia Calina, and Shantal Verdelho[3], we hypothesize that there are key moments that are repeatedly presented

2 Here defined as having the largest number of followers on the digital platforms most widely used by Brazilian audiences during the period under investigation (KEMP, 2024).

3 Profiles available at: https://www.instagram.com/viihtube/; https://www.instagram.com/flaviacalina/ and https://www.instagram.com/shantal/. Accessed on: Aug. 21, 2026.

as performative scripts, already recognizable to audiences and brands, and that become integrated into mediation processes shaping the influencers' maternal experiences. We argue that such dynamics unfold within a "political culture of neoliberal individualism" (KHAMIS; ANG; WELLING, 2017, p. 4), in which "self-branding is encouraged with the promise of reward".

Brief history of profiles shaped by motherhood and mothering

The media appeal of motherhood spans generations. As one of the central dimensions of women's lived experience — and, arguably, positioned as the primary source of identity for women (BADINTER, 2011; DONATH, 2017) — motherhood has, for centuries, been the subject of debate across different media formats (FREIRE, 2009; MENDONÇA, 2014; SANTOS, 2026). As Renata Tomaz (2015, p. 155, our translation) summarizes, the relationship between media and motherhood has become increasingly inseparable: "The abundant supply of informational products aimed at child-rearing signals communication processes as a privileged space for prescribing the procedures deemed necessary for the proper practice of care". Radio and television programs, blogs, social media, specialized content portals, magazines, newspaper columns, and manuals are examples of this phenomenon.

Over recent decades, digital platforms have stood out among the media environments in which motherhood, caregiving, and relationships with children have become frequently produced and consumed forms of content by mothers themselves (AMORIM, 2019; FIGUEIREDO SOUZA, 2019b; 2022; BRAGA, 2021; DRAMALI, 2022; OLIVEIRA-CRUZ; CONRAD, 2022).

Figueiredo Souza (2019a) identified the main types of posts and discursive framings in the production of motherhood-related content on Brazilian digital media. These are:

- affective profiles, emphasizing love between mother and child;

- informational profiles, involving the sharing of advice and experiences among mothers;
- "real motherhood" profiles, highlighting its negative and challenging aspects;
- maternal taboo profiles, presenting representations of motherhood that diverge from maternal normativity;
- activist profiles, promoting maternal activism or movements associated with non-motherhood.

Affective profiles more frequently feature religious, biologizing, or conservative narratives, followed by informational profiles. The latter include a greater volume of commercial posts, although both "real motherhood" and affective profiles are also used to promote products and services.

Faced with the need to meet greater demands than in previous periods (DONATH, 2017), mothers find themselves immersed in a daily routine of constant stimulation, shaped by self-management and the contradictions of consumer culture (FIGUEIREDO SOUZA, 2022). "While elasticity is a demand that encapsulates the pursuit of the ideal of multitasking perfection, exhaustion is its other side of the coin" (MENDONÇA, 2014, p. 41, our translation).

In this context, mothers who produce motherhood-related content have emerged as content creators who have become professionalized. Some discuss motherhood while (almost) never showing their children in posts, whereas others make their children's presence central to content creation (SCALZARETTO, 2024). Some mothers give visibility to specific maternal experiences, such as atypical motherhood, single motherhood, or dual motherhood (AMORIM, 2019; SILVA; CASSIANO; CORDEIRO, 2019; SILVA, 2022), alongside those whose experiences align more directly with hegemonic maternal models (SANTOS, 2026). Content varies widely, encompassing commercial, activist, and critical approaches, as well as informal, religious, progressive, and conservative perspectives (FIGUEIREDO SOUZA, 2019b; 2022).

Media personalities and celebrities who become mothers frequently begin to orient part of their content and personal brand toward their maternal routines, their interactions with their children, and the discoveries, joys, and challenges of motherhood. Within a logic of intimacy consumption that extends to family life (ABIDIN, 2017; TOMAZ, 2017), these media personalities themselves share with audiences the processes surrounding their decisions regarding (non-)parenthood (AQUINO; FIGUEIREDO SOUZA, 2024).

Mother influencers: Curating intimacy with their children

The popularity of motherhood influencers is part of a broader process of professionalization within the digital influencer industry. From camgirls (SENFT, 2005) to fashion and beauty bloggers (KARHAWI, 2020), who preceded the consolidation of digital influencers, it has become commonplace to observe the processes of recognition through which certain performances of femininity (BUTLER, 2018) are more or less legitimized on social media platforms. Through practices such as the strategic sharing of intimacy and frequent interaction with followers, these figures are expected to establish a relationship perceived as more authentic with their audiences, compared to the distanced stance that traditionally characterized the relationship between celebrities and fans (SENFT, 2013; MARWICK, 2015), thus configuring what Crystal Abidin (2015) calls "perceived interconnectedness".

The construction of an image perceived as more authentic and accessible facilitates the pursuit of engagement and recognition through likes, shares, and comments (KHAMIS; ANG; WELLING, 2017). Given the expectation that this visibility will be monetized by advertisers and by the platforms themselves, influencers must adopt different strategies to build and maintain their online audience (HUND; MCGUIGAN, 2019).

A dual process of constructing the self as a brand is enabled in digital environments. On the one hand, it is essential to constantly share information that is perceived as authentic by audiences, preferably linked to

the individual's life trajectory. On the other hand, advertisers must recognize that certain influencers are more relevant within specific niches. Thus, the articulation between platform dynamics and the advertising market reinforces the self-management typical of promotional culture (WERNICK, 1991). Amid the proliferation of a culture of branding (BANET-WEISER, 2012), it becomes necessary to see oneself as a brand; ideally, the self as a brand must be sufficiently distinctive to be recognized as legitimate, without alienating potential sponsors (MARWICK, 2018).

This configuration is particularly conducive to the dissemination of motherhood-related content. In the case of traditional celebrities or highly popular influencers, there is an additional factor: the recognition that famous women also experience the everyday realities of pregnancy and child-rearing strengthens their connection with ordinary people (LANA, 2011). This recognition is central to the process of humanizing consumption (ROJEK, 2004), promoted by celebrities and digital influencers. The platforms themselves play a significant role in the visibility of this content, as evidenced by the prominent trajectories of influencers' babies, children, and families (ABIDIN, 2017; TOMAZ, 2017).

By sharing everyday experiences, mother influencers create a dynamic of mutual validation between themselves and other mothers who follow them (AYMONE, 2022). The recurrent use of emotional confessions, accounts of suffering, and displays of bodily change are strategies that strengthen the bond with audiences, producing a sense of proximity and trust.

This symbolic authority built by influencers is transformed into media capital that is leveraged to promote products and services geared toward motherhood (CHEE; CAPPER; MUURLINK, 2023). Paradoxically, vulnerability contributes to bringing them closer to the ideal of being able (or attempting) to succeed in all aspects of life, reconciling tensions between the public and private spheres (TRAVASSOS-RODRIGUEZ; FÉRES-CARNEIRO, 2013)[4].

4 It is worth noting that this ideal is not the same for all women. Expectations and judgments related to motherhood vary depending on factors such as social class, race, and sexuality (BIROLI, 2016).

Mother influencers generally produce selves that are pleasing to followers, reducing the discrepancy between the often ambivalent emotions they experience and the cultural expectations associated with the mother role. In parallel, their personal brands incorporate anxieties and ambivalences that foster identification among audiences. Performative anxiety and vulnerability are reflections of visibility, such that the emotional rules governing motherhood intensify the pressures of platformized labor (LEHTO, 2021). Under public scrutiny, mother influencers must negotiate media and market regimes, balancing the perception of "authentic" maternal experiences with the expectations of advertisers and audiences. We argue that this negotiation is guided by a form of curation of familial intimacy which, evidently, includes their child(ren)[5].

Although such portrayals claim to depict "real" motherhood, free of taboos, the reinforcement of gender stereotypes aligns with the interests of advertisers in various sectors related to family life (SANTOS, 2026). A standardization can be observed in these mothers' self-presentation, which contributes to their media recognition while also posing challenges to perceptions of authenticity.

Performative scripts in motherhood monetization rituals

Diana Taylor (2013, p. 61, our translation) defines performative scripts as encompassing "well-theorized aspects in literary analysis, such as narrative and plot, but also requiring attention to *milieux* and bodily behaviors such as gesture, posture, and tone". It is an invitation to examine performances not only through the discourses they produce, but also through what bodies on stage do, the ways in which they reiterate "restored behaviors" (SCHECHNER, 2006) through performative scripts, and how they activate social dramas through them.

5 Although the sharing of children's images (sharenting) is a broader communicational phenomenon (TOMAZ, 2022), its monetization by mother influencers complicates its ethical dilemmas.

Building on this concept to analyze media objects within pop culture[6], Pereira de Sá and Soares (2021) argue that the performative script constitutes a horizon of possibilities in which individuals are strongly empowered by a variety of market tools in their attempts to gain public exposure, form partnerships, and achieve different forms of recognition within their field. Although the authors focus on the music industry in their work, we argue that the mother influencers whose profiles are analyzed here follow very similar performative script patterns in their trajectories toward the visibility of motherhood, (re)producing images and behaviors that foreground certain events as central. It is through such scripts that specific traits of the emotional experience constitutive of contemporary motherhood are prioritized over others. In articulation with forms of performance characteristic of digital influencers, pedagogies are also constructed regarding how to organize this experience and represent it in digital environments.

In this study, we selected the profiles of three mother influencers to conduct an exploratory analysis of their content and test our hypothesis that they follow a specific performative script concerning events considered crucial to motherhood, thereby enhancing their monetization. In addition to their number of followers — 32 million, 3 million, and 1.7 million[7] — which places them among the leading names in the "motherhood sector" in Brazil — the profiles were selected because the influencers had established trajectories on Instagram, the platform on which they most actively interact with their respective audiences. We understand the notion of an established trajectory as the combination of at least three features: a large number of followers, years of consistent content production, and relevant sponsorships. In addition, all three have brands operating in the motherhood and childcare market (Viih Tube founded the children's brand Turmatube, Flavia Calina markets

6 Genuino and Soares (2021) also apply the concept of performative scripts to the analysis of an influencer's profile on social media platforms.

7 Figures refer to the number of followers of Viih Tube, Flavia Calina, and Shantal Verdelho on Instagram, in that order. Last accessed: 8 June 2026.

children's products, and Shantal sells jewelry with a line aimed at mothers and their children).

It is important to note that all three are white women from upper social classes, a factor that must be considered in discussions about the degree of success they have achieved. It is no coincidence that a survey conducted by the Influency.me agency on the 15 mother influencers who stood out the most in Brazil in 2026 includes only two Black women (CARVALHEIRO, 2026). As a foundational structure of capitalist societies, racism manifests both through algorithmic oppression that renders Black content production invisible (BEZERRA; COSTA, 2022) and, of course, through contrasts in maternal experiences. In an analysis of inequality among women in Brazil, Biroli and Miguel (2015) note that households headed by white women have a per capita income 90% higher than those headed by Black women. Drawing on hooks (1984), the authors argue that women's support for a given power structure may bring advantages, but these are unevenly distributed, since "the choices available within the system position them differently in the race for established places of prestige" (BIROLI; MIGUEL, 2015, p. 44, our translation). Thus, what we identify as monetizable scripts of motherhood are experiences predominantly accessible to the country's economic (and White) elite.

Our observations suggest that the key moments structuring the profiles under investigation are mostly concentrated in the child's first year of life, from the discovery of pregnancy to the moment the child turns 12 months old. Drawing on the concept of "gamified pregnancy," as discussed by Bianca Leite Dramali (2022, p. 48, our translation), we argue that the first year of life presents the highest number of occasions with the potential to be transformed into highlighted events that form part of the patterns of mother influencers' performative scripts. These occasions turn the motherhood experience into something "full of stages and phases," reflecting "a sense of time that is eager for achievement and always envisions the next step," similar to what occurs in the pedagogy of gamified pregnancy.

If pregnant women are encouraged to perform a series of rituals marking different stages of pregnancy — such as decorating the nursery or holding a baby shower — and to share these moments on digital platforms, this process continues after childbirth through visible markers of the child's development. We also argue that this performative script resembles audiovisual formats such as series and soap operas, as it produces narrative arcs with hooks and expectations for future "episodes." Both influencers and brands rely on the predictability of this script to position themselves jointly, drawing attention to one another and encouraging participation in the next event.

The study covered Instagram posts published between 2018, when Shantal shared the gender reveal party for her first child, and November 2024, when Viih Tube announced the birth of her youngest child, the most recent among the influencers' children[8]. We observed approximately 80 posts per content creator, including material produced about all children born between 2018 and 2024, a period in which the standardization of posts related to their "kids" intensified. Data collection was conducted manually. We examined each creator's profile to identify thematic patterns in posts featuring or discussing their children. During the analysis of the material, we observed that this set of posts was related to different events marking the trajectories of both mother influencers and their children. We then created initial categories to serve as a comparative basis for the next stage. In this stage, we compared the patterns found in each profile in order to identify performative scripts that recurred across them, featuring common events. The final analytical categories were established based on thematic patterns that were repeated across the content of all the analyzed profiles.

The following events were identified as markers of mother influencers' performative scripts:

8 Flavia Calina has two children who were born prior to the study's temporal scope, in 2013 and 2016. Until 2016, YouTube was the main platform used — and at times the only platform used — by the content creator.

- Pregnancy announcement, with emphasis on the Clearblue pregnancy test brand;
- Gender reveal party. A social event in which the baby's sex is announced, still unknown to the parents/guardians. In general, blue or green are associated with the male gender, while pink or purple are associated with the female gender;
- Photographic/audiovisual maternity photoshoot;
- Photographic/audiovisual record of childbirth, accompanied by the mother's account;
- Newborn photoshoot. Photographic session of the newborn;
- Monthly milestone celebrations. Celebrations marking each month of the baby's life until they reach one year of age;
- First birthday party. Celebration of the child's first year of life.

It is worth noting that cake smash photoshoots also appeared in the corpus. This practice is usually carried out when the baby is between ten and twelve months old, with the images used as part of posts or as decoration for the child's first birthday party. It appears in the content of Flavia Calina and Viih Tube, but not for all of their children. Since it does not constitute a common or consistent event across all creators, it was excluded from the final list.

A notable aspect of how these events are performed is the degree of professionalization involved in documenting these experiences. This professionalization involves personalized kits at gender reveal parties, professional photographers for maternity, childbirth, and newborn photoshoots, and themed decorations for each monthly milestone celebration. Beyond providing a more polished aesthetic to the moments shared with audiences, this also implicitly evidences the need to hire companies and service providers and the involvement of specific brands in the production of these events.

It is common practice to list the professionals involved. This type of post is not usually marked as advertising by the creators, although the brands and companies involved in the event are credited in the caption.

On the one hand, this meets the aesthetic appeal and curiosity regarding lifestyles different from one's own, attracting audiences. It also responds to the interests of brands and companies, which gain the opportunity to position themselves as relevant or even indispensable to these events. On the other hand, it may lead such records to be perceived as overly edited, or even fabricated, lacking a tangible reality with which audiences — especially other mothers without the same resources — can identify or form an emotional connection.

Figures 1, 2, and 3 below respectively illustrate three key moments in the performative script of the mother influencers observed in this study:

- the announcement of the pregnancy;
- the gender-reveal event; and
- the maternity photoshoot.

Figure 1 – Posts announcing pregnancy*.



*Due to Flavia Calina's frequent use of YouTube, the pregnancy announcement during the period under investigation was made on that platform.
Source: Influencers' Instagram profiles, available at: https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vR8B6NAHijefvilQ4s4sXh9riMd34NUxfF_T8NhjzRcl8NgLL7kW7dDj5ocww5i9aq9F7g8K9Cjl9DE/pub. Accessed on: Aug. 21, 2026.

Figure 2 – Posts about the gender reveal party.



Source: Influencers' Instagram profiles, available at: https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vR8B6NAHijefvilQ4s4sXh9riMd34NUxfF_T8NhjzRcl8NgLL7kW7dDj5ocww5i9aq9F7g8K-9Cjl9DE/pub. Accessed on: Aug. 21, 2026.

Figure 3 – Maternity photoshoot posts.



Source: Influencers' Instagram profiles, available at: https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vR8B6NAHijefvilQ4s4sXh9riMd34NUxfF_T8NhjzRcl8NgLL7kW7dDj5ocww5i9aq9F7g8K-9Cjl9DE/pub. Accessed on: Aug. 21, 2026.

In the first, there is an explicit mention of the brand Clearblue, which sells pregnancy tests. In the second, companies that provided services for the event are mentioned, such as photography and catering services. In the third, the clothing brands worn by the influencers in the photoshoots are tagged.

Emotional branding is a marketing strategy in which feelings such as vulnerability, joy, or exhaustion are used to cultivate audience connection and loyalty (GOBÉ, 2010). As Arlie Russell Hochschild (2012) notes, emotions are not only expressed but also mobilized as productive forces within capitalist economies, most notably among "emotional workers": individuals engaged in occupations (or professions) that require substantial emotional labor. Mother influencers can be positioned within this category (LEHTO, 2021). The intensity and volatility of the maternal experience they portray transform lived maternal affect into commodifiable content.

Figure 4 below illustrates a moment of heightened emotional intensity: childbirth. In these posts, the captions feature the mother influencers' accounts of and reflections on this experience. Subsequently, Figure 5 presents posts featuring images of the newborn babies, with carefully planned settings and compositions specifically designed for these photographs.

Another central element in these performative scripts is the inclusion of behind-the-scenes images. These may include recordings of the moment when the influencer announces the pregnancy to her family — or,

at least, of the moment presented as the one when the initial announcement and discovery occurred — as well as texts describing the emotional fluctuations associated with maternal experience.

Figure 4 – Posts documenting childbirth.



Source: Influencers' Instagram profiles, available at: https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vR8B6NAHijefvilQ4s4sXh9riMd34NUxfF_T8NhjzRcl8NgLL7kW7dDj5ocww5i9aq9F7g8K-9Cjl9DE/pub. Accessed on: Aug. 21, 2026.

Figure 5 – Newborn photoshoot posts.



Source: Influencers' Instagram profiles, available at: https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vR8B6NAHijefvilQ4s4sXh9riMd34NUxfF_T8NhjzRcl8NgLL7kW7dDj5ocww5i9aq9F7g8K-9Cjl9DE/pub. Accessed on: Aug. 21, 2026.

All of this is recorded with favorable framing, appropriate lighting, high-quality audio capture, and some degree of editing. Although these accounts portray certain difficulties, the prevailing perception is one of unconditional maternal love.

We argue that the sharing of these personal moments with audiences — even when subject to a degree of editing — increases the likelihood that such content will be perceived as authentic (ABIDIN, 2015), as something personal to that woman, while simultaneously making it appealing to potential brands. After all, an audience that recognizes or projects itself onto the situations presented by the influencer, developing affection for her and her family, is more likely to consume what she recommends and engage with the commercial partnerships she promotes.

Figures 6 and 7 illustrate, respectively, the celebrations marking the babies' monthly milestones and their first birthday.

Figure 6 – Monthly milestone celebration posts.



Source: Influencers' Instagram profiles, available at: https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vR8B6NAHijefvilQ4s4sXh9riMd34NUxfF_T8NhjzRcl8NgLL7kW7dDj5ocww5i9aq9F7g8K-9Cjl9DE/pub. Accessed on: Aug. 21, 2026.

Figure 7 – Posts about the child's first birthday party.



Source: Influencers' Instagram profiles, available at: https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vR8B6NAHijefvilQ4s4sXh9riMd34NUxfF_T8NhjzRcl8NgLL7kW7dDj5ocww5i9aq9F7g8K-9Cjl9DE/pub. Accessed on: Aug. 21, 2026.

It seems that this balance between the presentation of a form of motherhood that may be perceived as ostentatious (DRAMALI, 2022) and the sharing of moments performed as more open and vulnerable is what sustains audience interest in following the media-constructed narrative arcs. This is something actively encouraged by the mother influencers themselves, for instance, through frequent mentions of doubts about having more children in the future or posts suggesting a possible new pregnancy. These cliffhangers — narrative hooks that generate anticipation for future events — add greater appeal and engagement potential to the narrative arcs structured by the events that constitute the performative scripts and the motherhood monetization rituals for these mothers in relation to their respective audiences.

Final considerations

In a context of consumption and negotiation of intimacy, mother influencers have established performative scripts to narrate their maternal experiences and, in doing so, monetize them. The seven events that structure these scripts and configure the monetization rituals embedded within them display some salient characteristics. Among the main ones are: the degree of professionalism involved in the recording of the key moments shared, the (openness to) participation of companies and brands in these events, and the inclusion of records that allow — or give the impression of allowing — audiences to glimpse fragments that appear more vulnerable and less glamorous of their routines.

The events identified as key moments in these creators' digital narratives both respond to and reinforce normative models of motherhood. These models are shaped by expectations of high performance, self-management, consumption, aspirational labor, and intensive mothering, within a context marked by whiteness and the mother influencers' substantial economic capital. The findings suggest that the alternation between ostentation and (apparent) vulnerability serves both the interests of brands and the desires of their respective audiences. Through these performative scripts that articulate affect and consumption, the repetition of these events establishes recognizable rituals, making motherhood — as well as the subjective production surrounding it — not only consumable but also profitable for these influencers. Future research should investigate the extent to which these rituals become central representations of motherhood for their audiences as well, shaping perceptions and practices in their own maternal experiences.

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