Community Building Through Hashtags: Babywearing Trends, Inclusivity, and Identity Formation

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Introduction

- "Babywearing" is a global term that embraces different cultural appropriate methods one can use to carry a child on the body.
- This research is a collaborative project with Dr. Christine Schreyer and the Center for Babywearing Studies in New York City.
- The research supports the center's inniative to build a dictionary with culturally relative and inclusive babywearing terminology used for educational purposes.

Research Questions

- Our research sought to determine:
 - which terminology is essential to identity formation;
 - address gaps of language inclusivity;
 - to determine which terms should be considered for a babywearing dictionary from the hashtag data.

Methods

- Literature review on the topics of: communities of practice, critical discourse analysis, hashtags, and babywearing
- Interview with the Center for Babywearing Studies featuring Founder Joanna McNeilly and Operations Manager Bianca Fehn
- Transcription of interview content
- Data collection from public social media on TikTok, Twitter, and Instagram
- 259 preliminary hashtags following searches of #WearAllTheBabies #Babywearing and #BlackBabywearingWeek
- 173 primary hashtags (SEE FIG. 6)
- 600 + secondary hashtags (GENERATED FROM PRIMARY)
- Data Coding and Analysis of primary hashtags
- Babywearing community members connected with hashtags tied to the practice of babywearing, parent identity, carrier types, and original babywearing hashtags. (See Fig. 3)

Data Analysis



Fig. 1 Out of curiosity, searches were tasked to discover which nations had the highest posts on Instagram with their country's name and the practice of babywearing, ie. #BabywearingMalaysia, which had the highest number of posts associated with their hashtag. This provided national relations directly linked to babywearing practices at the time of data collection.

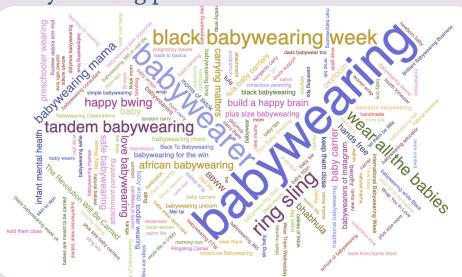


Fig. 2 173 Primary Babywearing Hashtags were arranged according to their recurrence across the data collection phase. Each time a hashtag was read it was counted and those figures are represented here. Each hashtag frequency is associated with its size in the word cloud. #Babywearing was the most recurring hashtag in the community.

Legend								
Parent Identity	Child Identity	Types of Carriers	Babywearing Method	Education	Healthcare	Cultural Connection	Activities	
37	14	20	15	6	5	14	1	
Parenting	Locations	Other Languages	Ad	Business	Original BW Hashtags	Babywearing	Other Identity	
5	4	4	0	5	28	60	11	

Fig. 3 Primary Data Identity Categories were coded into 16 identity categories. The most common categories represented in the primary hashtag data were the practice of babywearing, parent identity, carrier types, and original babywearing hashtags. There are 229 representations of identity which indicate an overlap of 56 identities across 50 of the hashtags,

Overlapping Identities among	50 total	100%	
Babywearing Method	Babywearing	9	18%
Original Babywearing Hashtags	Babywearing	9	18%
Parent Identity	Babywearing	6	12%
Cultural Connection	Babywearing	5	10%
		29	58%

Fig. 4 Primary Data Overlapping Identity Categories are expressed here with an example of the top four overlapping identities which comprised 58% majority of the overlapping categories. Notice each category shows intersections with hashtags related to the practice of babywearing.

Discussion

32 weeks pregnant autism mom babywearing dad babywearing daddy babywearing mama babywearing mamas babywearing mom badass mama bear mom black moms chusto mama cinna moms conscious motherhood crunchy mama dad life daddys girl daddy snuggles exhausted mother expecting moms fatherhood Fathering At Work father of two fit mom for mom for mother fourth trimester gift for mom gift for mother hippie mom honest motherhood insta mom madre mama mama blogger mama tribe mamma mom mom and daughter mom content mom life mom life unfiltered mommy daughter mommy life mompreneur moms of instagram moms of tiktok mom of twins moms over 30 mom tips mother mother care mother daughter motherhood motherhood in the raw motherhood rising motherhood simplified motherhood through instagram motherhood unplugged mothering skills mum blogger mum bloggers uk mum life mummy mummy cuddles mums of instagram mums of instagram uk natural mama natural momma new dad new mom new mothers new mum new mums new parents nigerian mama parentalite parents of twins plus size mom postnatal postpartum sahm sahm life semi crunchy mom tattooed mom tiktok mom traveling mom twin mom twin mom life twin mommy twin moms rock twin mum twin parent twin parents uk mama vita da mamma wahm wahm life work from home mom vaya mamas

Fig. 5 As the research sought to make evident inclusivity amongst the online babywearing community it is important to note that the secondary hashtag data shows representation of little gender diversity amongst parent identity hashtags. The pink is representative of female parent identities, blue of male, and white of neutral. This illustrates that when sharing parent identity, babywearing community members view and post hashtags more often linked with female parent identities.

Growth Statistics

The preliminary data was collected partly to establish growth trends over the course of the research. Growth rates across platforms had to be established separately as each platform represented their data differently. Twitter was removed from this process as growth data wasn't publicly available. TikTok illustrates hashtag growth associated with the views a hashtag receives. Instagram illustrates growth based on the number of posts linked through specific hashtags.

Data analysis illustrated the highest growth recorded on Instagram was #BlackBabywearingWeek2021.

Data analysis illustrated the highest growth recorded on TikTok was #Babywearer.

Data analysis illustrated two hashtags found on both TikTok and Instagram highest growth charts were

#BlackBabywearingWeek and #BlackBabywearing

*capitalization of words within hashtags was added for accessibility purposes but were not representative in the data

Results

- Foundational results in determining the boundaries of accessibility and inclusivity amongst online babywearing communities
- Data illustrated the most commonly used hashtags were tied to the practice of babywearing, original babywearing hashtags, parent identity, and types of carriers.
- Data illustrated overlap in identities most often intersected with hashtags related to the practice of babywearing
- Data Illustrated which hashtags had the most growth during collection periods

Acknowledgements







Center for Babywearing Studies



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