

Transformation and Connected Commodification on YouTube Content of Married Indonesian Micro-Celebrities Women with Foreign Men



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ABSTRACT: This research examines the commoditized transformation of motherhood in the relationship between economy and culture in the era of social media (Fuchs, 2015a). This study questions the interconnectedness of the commodification process of content, audiences and workers (Fuchs, 2015b; Mosco, 2009; Ørmen & Gregersen, 2022) by focusing on micro-celebrity mothers (Abidin & Brown, 2019). This study focuses on mother micro-celebrities who commodify family life through the YouTube platform. Researchers focus on Indonesian mothers who are married to foreign nationals. Micro-celebrity mothers, based on observation, commodify the process of cultural exchange in the family as a form of informal work. The researcher examined the lives of micro-celebrity mothers, especially migrants without formal employment, to understand how social media features on the YouTube platform are useful in the commodification of daily life content. This research uses the content analysis method to look at the content of messages (Krippendorff, 2019) from a systematic and objective view of documentation. The results of this study show that the commodification of mother content is not only a domestic figure as an ideal childcare provider, but also a market actor who influences audience preferences, while bearing the burden of production and distribution as labor.

KEYWORDS: Selebriti mikro, makna keibuan, komodifikasi, perempuan migran Indonesia

I. INTRODUCTION

This research focuses on examining the transformation of the meaning of mothers as the central figure in the family that has changed with the development of social media, especially the YouTube platform. The study of mothers' meaning transformation addresses their role as mommy influencers (Archer, 2019a) who have gained a large following on social media platforms. Social media provides a space for mothers to practice maternal visibility in sharing advice and personal experiences (Mendes & Silva, 2012), parenting and family life (Archer, 2019a). This presents an opportunity for women as mothers – including those with professional experience, wealth and age – to challenge the traditional social construct of New Order motherhood (Suryakusuma, 2011) using social media platforms.

These mommy influencers employ social media platforms as a means of engaging with brands and businesses, with the objective of promoting their products and services to their respective followings. Researchers have attributed this phenomenon to economic and cultural approaches (Fuchs, 2015b, 2022). Economic and cultural factors play a significant role in the transformation of the meaning of motherhood on social media. This phenomenon popularizes representations of mothers who are financially successful and inspire lifestyles, caring for children, pursuing business endeavours, or managing households. In this discussion, we aim to examine the economic and cultural aspects of this phenomenon to gain insight into the ways in which the meaning of motherhood is negotiated in accordance with the identities they represented on social media. From an economic perspective, we assume that the role of mothers on social media creates a market for economic interests. From a cultural perspective, we assume that motherhood content on social media shapes new meanings of motherhood through information production.

This study challenges the commodification of content, audience, and labour (Mosco, 2009; Fuchs, 2015; Ørmen & Gregersen, 2022), with a particular focus on micro-celebrity mothers (Abidin & Brown, 2019). The term "micro-celebrities" is used to describe individuals who have a smaller fan base or following than those who are more well-known and popular in the mainstream. This study focuses on maternal micro-celebrities who leverage the YouTube platform to monetize family life. We

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posit that mom micro-celebrities act as nodes in the flow of capital by monetizing their popularity and family life. We identified mother micro-celebrities on YouTube who practice this monetization strategy. This genre or variety of content without criteria is a valuable commodity, as portraits of individuals or groups of different cultures become monetized practices that can be commercialized.

The researcher's area of focus is on Indonesian migrant women living abroad. People have been moving abroad to get married since the 1970s (Indriani & Mulyana, 2021). This phenomenon is becoming increasingly prevalent due to the advent of advanced communication technology, namely the internet, which provides access to the marriage trade, or the matchmaking business between Western and Asian cultures (Robila, 2007; Wright, 2004). This data provides a foundation for researchers to focus on Indonesian migrant women who live abroad for a short time or stay in accordance with Presidential Regulation No. 76/2017 (Oktafiani, 2019). This research is crucial to understand the phenomenon of Indonesian migrant women who negotiate changes in maternal identity as micro-celebrities through YouTube, as well as to examine more complex patterns of commodification.

There is a dearth of studies on Indonesian migrant women without formal employment, which is an important gap for researchers to address, particularly given the need to accept other national and cultural differences in the context of international marriage (Indriani & Mulyana, 2021). This further restricts the opportunities for women to gain formal employment, particularly as mothers, while providing a rich source of information for research studies on the complex layers and contradictions of identity in personal space. Therefore, it is crucial for this research to employ critical studies with the objective of dismantling the power dynamics between Indonesian migrant women and foreign husbands, who play a significant role in shaping the perception of motherhood. Additionally, a critical approach is essential to identify instances of identity exploitation for personal gain and economic benefit.

The concept of motherhood has undergone a significant transformation as a result of the advent of social media. The researchers conducted a review of the literature, focusing on post-2010 definitions of motherhood. As mothers engage with various forms of media, including social media, they interact with and create representations of mothers and motherhood (Arnold & Martin, 2016). In order to gain a comprehensive theoretical understanding, we conducted a review of literature based on three distinct paradigms: positivist, constructivist, and critical. Our analysis included studies that employed a positivist approach (Chae, 2015; Germic et al., 2021; Setyastuti et al., 2019), a constructivist approach (Jarvis, 2017; Mendes & Silva, 2012; Paré, 2017), and a critical approach (Indranila, 2022).

A study conducted among 533 Korean mothers revealed that exposure to discourse surrounding celebrity mothers elicited meanings of intensive motherhood ideology and social comparison or competitiveness orientation (Chae, 2015). These meanings are formed by mothers who work outside the home and who regard celebrity mothers as role models (Chae, 2015). Measurements of millennial or young mothers revealed that the meaning of motherhood around parenting is different from traditional values in the family (Setyastuti et al., 2019). Further research indicated that mothers are the primary caregivers of their children, and thus, when they access parenting information from internet sources, they tend to exhibit lower confidence in their parenting abilities (Germic et al., 2021).

Maternal meaning research in the constructivist and interpretive paradigms is more comprehensive. For example, research findings indicate that the blogging frequency of mothers in need of social support is associated with an improvement in the well-being of new mothers. This is because they feel a sense of connection to the world outside the home through the internet (McDaniel et al., 2012). A common practice is to draw comparisons between housewives and working mothers in terms of their understanding of motherhood (Mendes & Silva, 2012). Mothers in commercialized contexts construct the idealized image of motherhood through their provision of intensive care and nurturing for their children (Takševa, 2012). Other research indicates that mothers are individuals who experience liminal phases in motherhood, thereby creating opportunities to renew the narrative movement "par excellence" (Phillips & Broderick, 2014). From the perspective of discourse research, motherhood is no longer a dichotomous division between working and stay-at-home mothers. Instead, it encompasses mothers who secure their economic livelihood through their children through "intensive" parenting (Paré, 2017).

Social media provides a platform for modern mothers to portray their maternal identity as a caregiver (Jarvis, 2017). Conversely, research on motherhood narratives on social media—in particular, blogs—has identified a trend of frustrated mothers seeking solidarity (Orton-Johnson, 2017). The research indicates that mothers are becoming increasingly isolated and overwhelmed with the demands of caring for newborns. Therefore, social media users construct the meaning of motherhood as a figure who needs social support as a new mother (Archer & Kao, 2018). Research indicates that the perception of motherhood on social media is influenced by parenting and health-related content (Moon et al., 2019). Mothers tend to value the ability to access a vast array of information and diverse perspectives without necessarily considering the reliability of the sources (Moon

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et al., 2019). Additionally, research has identified a new phenomenon of mothers who have transitioned from traditional parenting roles to become influencers and bloggers, often featuring stories about their children (Archer, 2019b).

Another study examined the meaning of motherhood from the perspective of scholars from 2001 to 2021, encompassing 115 papers (Schmidt et al., 2022). The research revealed a consensus among mothers on social media regarding their self-presentation. The findings revealed five key norms of motherhood, including: the norm of caring for children (present mothers), ensuring successful child development (future-oriented mothers), integrating work into motherhood (working mothers), being in control (public mothers), and being content (happy mothers) (Schmidt et al., 2022). Other research has also examined the portrayal of an idealized version of motherhood in social media content related to well-being (Kirkpatrick & Lee, 2022). The objective of this study was to provide evidence that new mothers make comparisons with social media depictions of motherhood and exposure to idealized depictions. The portrayal of motherhood as childcare has become a prevalent theme on social media platforms. An analysis of the representations of motherhood on Mother's Day from 2018 to 2020 revealed a transformation in the meaning of motherhood, which shifted between various concepts, including beauty and biology, grief and loss, and care and the impact of the pandemic (Capdevila et al., 2022).

The research conducted within the critical paradigm demonstrates that the mothers' movement on social media functions as a counter-hegemonic force to the discourse of motherhood, or "ibuism." This study interprets motherhood as a new value to pursue dreams and to express depression due to the pressure of ideal motherhood (Indranila, 2022). A review of the literature reveals a paucity of critical studies that address the meaning of motherhood. It is therefore the intention of the researchers to address the gap in the critical paradigm on social media with regard to the meaning of motherhood. A review of existing literature reveals that the study of family commodification has not been a prominent focus among women's micro-celebrities, particularly Indonesian migrant women residing in their husbands' countries. The researcher posits that the limitations of previous studies on the commodification of female micro-celebrities who act as mothers create a gap in the existing literature that requires further investigation. It can be argued that mothers without formal employment have created a space on YouTube through which they can sell their daily lives as a private space (either professionally or in an amateurish manner) and discuss content production that benefits their family economy. Furthermore, micro-celebrities who create content have seized the opportunity presented by the value of cultural differences and diaspora on the YouTube platform, as it facilitates the spread of Indonesian cultural diversity packaged in a modern way (Kencana & Sukmono, 2022).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The researcher outlined that the conceptual definition of commodification is derived from the concept of commodities and commodification within the context of capitalism (Marx, 1904). The researcher proceeded to elaborate on the concept of commodification, delineating its three key dimensions: commodification of content, audience, and labor (Mosco, 2018). The process of commodification involves the transformation of objects and services into marketable products (Mosco, 2009; Murdock, 2011). As market mechanisms penetrate private life, the concept of commodification evolves, reflecting broader trends in capitalism (Fuchs, 2020). This shift has led to the commodification and marketization of activities that were previously considered outside the private sphere, such as family life (Sandel, 2013).

Researchers explore the concept of commodification on social media platforms that enable commodification with new infrastructure. Platforms enable the convergence of content, audiences and user data into a more integrated form of commodification (Athique, 2020). Researchers argue that this form enables connected commodification because platforms facilitate continuous market access from producers to users, which changes the variety of commodities (Nieborg & Poell, 2018; Sadowski, 2019). This conceptual shift sees content on digital platforms as semi-public goods due to the use of goods without any reduction in their value (Hesmondhalgh, 2018).

The idea of commodification has developed in line with changes to platforms (Hudders et al., 2021; Muslikhin et al., 2021). This has also led to connected commodification, which is a process of commodification that's integrated with digital technology (Ørmen & Gregersen, 2022). This concept helps us to understand how the boundaries between public and private life are becoming increasingly blurred because of the conversion of family use value into exchange value on the YouTube platform. It is essential to examine the three domains of commodification as outlined by Mosco (2009) in a connected manner. For instance, the commodification of audiences' views audiences as the primary commodity, with advertisers purchasing audience attention (Fuchs, 2012). It is important to note that audiences are not isolated from other domains. Their attention is not only a commodity that can be purchased, but also the labour of workers who produce attention. Consequently, the relationship can be seen as one where audiences rent space and time to advertisers (Caraway, 2011). Further studies examine not only the commodification of audiences or workers, but also look at platform users who are also workers (Fuchs, 2019). Users facilitate

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the commodification of individuals as audiences for advertisers, as performers for content creators, and as consumers for brands (Ørmen & Gregersen, 2022).

Moreover, it is evident that there is a paucity of research within the domain of labor-producing content (Hesmondhalgh, 2018; Mosco, 2009). Meanwhile, the study of digital media platforms has identified labor as a central theme (Wasko, 2007). Therefore, although YouTube does not formally employ micro-celebrities, it exercises control over the production process and influences the alignment between content and advertisers' interests (Caplan & Gillespie, 2020). Moreover, users who do not comply with the platform's terms and conditions may be subject to a lack of monetization, as Rogers (2020) has observed. There is evidence that the commodification of micro-celebrity labour is undergoing a shift, with an increasing integration of content that aligns with the desires of followers.

This study of commodification is a significant step forward for researchers in highlighting the interconnected nature of commodification on digital media platforms. In other words, users have the option to purchase and sell content, as well as audiences and creative labor. The researcher posits that the concept of connected commodification is a useful analytical tool for examining the use of the YouTube platform structure by micro-celebrities. The commodification concept is useful for analyzing the monetization of micro-celebrities, which plays an important role in creating a market ecosystem that exploits family life. By focusing on female micro-celebrities, especially migrants without formal employment in their husband's country, this research aims to understand how social media features on the YouTube platform contribute to the commodification of their daily life content.

III. METHOD

The researcher employed the critical constructivism paradigm (Denzin, Norman, K. & Lincoln, Yvonna, 2018; Mosco, 2009). This paradigm broadens and modifies the constructivist perspective, which is in opposition to positivism. In alignment with the researcher's examination of Indonesian mother micro-celebrities, an analysis of the concept of motherhood necessitates a critical lens, recognizing that knowledge of the world is temporally and culturally interpreted. The knowledge and phenomenon of motherhood in YouTube content is socially constructed in a dialogue between culture, society, economics, and other factors. From an ontological perspective, critical constructivism aims to elucidate the way socio-historical dynamics exert an influence and shape the object of research. From an epistemological perspective, critical constructivism examines the ways in which the knowledge bases of a specific context shape and influence the object of research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This paradigm is useful for identifying practices in research that may unintentionally contribute to the perpetuation of systems that oppress based on class, race, culture, and gender. The researcher posits that this perspective encourages reflexivity and questioning through dialogue and critical self-reflection. Consequently, this approach can help expose elitist assumptions embedded in existing knowledge.

We employed a qualitative approach (Creswell, John W. & Poth, Cheryl, 2018) to gain insight into the context and complexity of the process of construction and transformation of the meaning of motherhood, as well as the commodification of migrant women's connected motherhood. The researcher employed a qualitative content analysis method (Krippendorff, 2019) to examine the content of the message. We selected this method because it is an effective means of identifying the underlying concepts expressed in the text. The researcher selected the unit of analysis based on the popularity of the content among the largest number of viewers. The content is from the creators of "Happy Family in Germany," "Kimbab Family," "My OzLife," "Shanty in China," and "Istive Musab." Researchers analyze the entire text of the conversation, which is called conversation analysis (Krippendorff, 2019). The stages in the analysis process are unitizing, sampling, recording, reducing, inferring, and narrating (Krippendorff, 2019).

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Women as trailing spouses have difficulty finding work in the formal sector (Indriani & Mulyana, 2021). This structural problem is faced by women everywhere, and women learning informal work. YouTube is an informal workspace where mothers can earn income from home (Mahameruaji et al., 2018). Migrant moms, or moms who move for a living, could become content creators and upload content related to their life experiences as migrants. Popular micro-celebrity mom content on YouTube covers a wide range of topics that attract attention and a large following, such as daily life vlogs, parenting and child education tips, recipes and cooking, and mom creativity. These migrant moms benefit economically from advertising and partnering with brands. They create a space where their followers can interact, exchange information, and support each other.

In media economics, these moms can be called "micro-celebrities" referring to individuals who have a relatively small fan base or following but who have considerable influence among their followers (Raun, 2018). Micro-celebrities are often

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considered a new form of influencer marketing (Abidin, 2016). As a result, micro-celebrities can be an attractive option for brands or companies looking to promote their products or services on social media at a lower cost than using more well-known mainstream celebrities. A mother micro-celebrity in this study refers to a mother who is a migrant and has a relatively small fan base or following but has significant influence within a particular community.

In this context, a migrant mother who is active on social media or other digital platforms can share her life experiences as a migrant, the challenges she faces, and her inspiring stories. Through such content, she can build a loyal fan base or following who are interested in her stories and perspectives. In addition, micro-celebrities can also open up new opportunities for digital content creators who want to build their careers in the media industry. By utilizing digital platforms to build a loyal fan base or following, micro celebrities can build their reputation as influential content creators and earn income from sponsorships or partnerships with brands or companies.

The development of mothers as micro-celebrities who commodify the family began when YouTube arrived in the 2010s. This is in line with research that presents data that mothers producing content about family have the most subscribers and viewers (Blade, 2023a, 2023b). An in-depth exploration of mothers as micro-celebrities shows that migrant women as mothers married to foreigners and living in their husband's country actively produce content (Indranila, 2022). In this context, Indonesian migrant mother micro-celebrities share content about culture, cultural differences, culinary, daily life, travel or other content.

The researcher uses the concept of mothers who work informally in their husband's country through social media as an internet-connected identity, namely micro-celebrity (Senft, 2013). The understanding of micro-celebrity is an individual who is committed to spreading and maintaining one's online identity as if it were a brand (Senft, 2008, 2013). Mothers as micro-celebrities work and benefit economically through followers and fans on social media. Micro-celebrities gain fame by managing audiences by greeting and talking to them (Senft, 2013). Therefore, mother micro-celebrities perform greetings by exploiting private lives, such as daily routines (Abidin & Brown, 2018) to provide consumption with information about life in other countries. They, as laborers, do not differentiate between the private and public spheres (publicity). This erosion between private and public has spread and caused a social condition called "strange familiarity" (Senft, 2008). Researchers argue that micro-celebrity mothers living in foreign countries try to become familiar with unrecognized audiences through the exchange of personal information.

Researchers criticize the study of family commodification in micro-celebrities separately, which only discusses the commodification of content or audiences or workers. Previous studies on family content commodification are limited to cultural differences (Lobodally, 2022; Nurhasanah et al., 2022), family life (Syafuddin, 2020) and children's talents (Nafsa & Zulhazmi, 2022). Meanwhile, studies of content commodification outside the family examine the high economic value of celebrities who discuss conflict (Khairiyani, 2022) and personal life (Noviasri & Andari, 2017). Furthermore, the exploration of studies on audience commodification is also limited to how the YouTube platform works in commodifying the audience as workers in Indonesia (Febriyanti, 2021). Meanwhile, studies of worker commodification see content creators who employ other actors as immaterial workers (Labas & Yasmine, 2017). This is also in line with those who choose children as "main star" workers (Nafsa & Zulhazmi, 2022).

We argue that research on YouTube and commodification tends to study it in a partial way and in isolation from broader commodification processes. We conclude that previous research on family commodification needs to be examined in a "connected" way, or in reference to the integration or interconnectedness of digital technologies. We argue that the digital platform, YouTube, enhances the connection between the content economy, audience and creative labor by fostering commercial interactions (Ørmen & Gregersen, 2022)-so that moments of commodification are not separate or linear in nature. There are several gaps in the study of YouTube and commodification that position YouTube as an institution or platform that has great power to commodify.

This is in line with previous studies that explain how the YouTube platform commodifies the audience as workers (Febriyanti, 2021), vloggers as YouTube stars (Glatt, 2017), intimacy content on micro celebrities to determine affective labor (Raun, 2018). Selain pentingnya mengkaji cara kerja komodifikasi terhubung, perlu juga untuk mengkaji pengguna, dalam hal ini kreator konten, sebagai aktor yang mempraktikkan komodifikasi terhubung. Pelembagaan platform YouTube mendapatkan keuntungan ekonomi dari pengiklan karena adanya konten-konten amatir kreator konten yang menjadi tempat baru untuk produksi selebritas industri. In addition to the importance of examining how connected commodification works, it is also necessary to examine users, in this case content creators, as actors practicing connected commodification. The institutionalization of the YouTube platform gains economic benefits from advertisers as amateur content creators become the new venue for the production of industrial celebrities.

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Connected Commodification: Content, Audience, and Labor

Adam Smith and classical political economists distinguish between use value and exchange value (Mosco, 2009). Use value comes from human needs, while exchange value is the value of what the product gets in return (Fuchs & Mosco, 2016; Mosco, 2009). The researcher uses the main concept that commodification is the process of transforming use value into exchange value to review the research problem. This study uses the view that commodities that accumulate into capital do not occur naturally, but through a production process that has control over humans (Marx, 1904). In other words, motherhood products become exchange value produced to become capital for micro-celebrities.

Content commodification is the process by which ideas, experiences, or expressions of a personal or social nature are transformed into products or services that have economic value and can be traded (Mosco, 2009). In the context of this study, content commodification occurs when something that was originally not for commercial purposes, such as daily life, or the role of mothers is transformed into material that is attractive for public consumption and utilized for economic gain, in this case monetization. The researcher observed that there are characteristics of content commodification such as the transformation of the meaning of personal aspects of motherhood from family experiences into “content” that can be sold or accessed by audiences at a certain value. In particular, we see this perspective as a process of commodification in communication that involves the transformation of messages (Fuchs & Mosco, 2016; Mosco, 2009). The commodification of content creates an economic value that is produced to attract audiences and thus becomes an asset for platforms or brands that want to reach a specific market. Researchers suggest that the YouTube platform is the main arena where this commodification takes place.

In YouTube content created by Indonesian female micro-celebrities married to foreign men, narratives of motherhood in cross-border or cross-cultural marriages are often commoditized and consumed by audiences. I argue that this communication phenomenon demonstrates in popular culture that the meaning of motherhood is influenced by cross-cultural identity and media exposure. We analyze the commodification that occurs in this phenomenon in reference to aspects of mothers' personal lives that are transformed into commercial value through YouTube. YouTube is the main platform for mothers to build a public image for commercialization purposes. They portray the role of an idealized transnational married Indonesian mother. The researcher determined three content packaging that micro-celebrities use to build personal brands, namely in the form of daily life, lifestyle, and parenting style. We argue that these are the three things that attract advertisers and brand collaborations.

This research found that the meaning of motherhood is transformed not only to be represented as a biological and emotional function, but also as a commodity that can bring economic benefits. These Indonesian micro-celebrity mothers represent culture through cultural uniqueness that is marketed as unique and inspiring. The text that is built in YouTube content by displaying the image of a multicultural family is considered modern and attractive to the audience. The commodification of motherhood is inseparable from gender issues where women face pressure to maintain the image of the “perfect mother” who is also economically successful as a micro-celebrity. This pressure impacts on them to perform motherhood, between authenticity and commercial strategies that risk sacrificing personal values in order to maintain relevance and profitability in the market. The meaning of the ideal life and the “perfect mother” also has an impact on the normalization of consumerism that is connected to the display of consumption of certain products intended for the family. The researcher argues that through the comments of followers, this pattern grows what is considered to be the ideal or perfect mother in the minds of followers. Of course, there are desires from other mothers to reach unrealistic standards.

The commodification of content by these micro-celebrity mothers aims to reinforce the transformation of the meaning of their mothers which creates a relation of production of consumption by the audience. Audiences contribute to the creators' profitability through interactions such as likes, comments and shares, which are then translated into commercial value. The researcher relates this transformation of motherhood to the commodification of audiences. We analyze that audiences are mobilized as economic assets through representations of motherhood and intercultural life produced and distributed in YouTube content. The motherhood content featured by these micro-celebrities involves the promotion of children's, household, or lifestyle products that are perceived to be relevant to the target audience, namely young mothers or mothers-to-be who are inspired by migrant life or transnational marriage. Researchers argue that these micro-celebrities are like the media that produce audiences and deliver them to advertisers (Mosco, 2009).

Personalized motherhood narratives help create an emotional connection with audiences, making it easier for them to be led to buy the advertised product. The programming used to attract audiences is no longer a “free lunch” (Fuchs, 2012). From this perspective, the audience is the main product. As Indonesian women married to foreign men, these micro-celebrities often present a unique intercultural home life. These narratives combine motherhood with cultural exoticism, where cultural differences between the couple are used to attract the attention of the audience. Highlighting differences in language, customs or challenges in intercultural relationships can enhance the appeal of their content. However, it also presents ethical issues

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related to stereotyping and romanticizing certain cultures. Cultural representations are often simplified for commercial purposes, which can reinforce certain biases among audiences. YouTube as a platform facilitates the commodification of audiences through features such as comment sections, “like” buttons, and recommendation algorithms. These micro-celebrities utilize interactions with audiences to build loyalty and increase engagement, which ultimately impacts their revenue from advertising or sponsorship.

An important point in this research, often examining the commodification of content and audiences ignores the commodification of labor. The researcher analyzes that content production as digital labor. In the production of motherhood-themed content, micro-celebrities not only act as mothers who share their experiences, but also as digital workers who produce content. Labor is constituted out of the unity of conception, or the power to envision, imagine, and design work, and execution, or the power to carry it out (Mosco, 2009). Everyday activities such as parenting, cooking, and living an intercultural home life become “emotional labor” that is capitalized on to attract audiences. This emotional labor demands a combination of authenticity and performativity. Micro-celebrities must show a side of life that seems real and relatable, while remaining visually and narratively appealing. In doing so, they integrate personal life with commercial work, often blurring the lines between personal and professional life.

The researcher establishes mothers as micro-celebrities as a labor force that not only includes technical content production activities (video shooting, editing, and distribution), but also includes the exploitation of their emotional and relational dimensions. Personal lives become economic assets, where every interaction and story has the potential to be commercialized. Domestic life as a mother that is usually considered “private” becomes part of a commodified marketing strategy. For example, moments of intimacy with children, interactions with partners, or adaptations to foreign cultures are featured as the main attraction. Gender roles on YouTube that feature motherhood as a central theme in content reflect dominant gender roles, where women are expected to multitask: caring for children, managing the household, and generating income through digital work.

In this context, female micro-celebrities face the dual pressures of fulfilling social expectations as “perfect mothers” and meeting market demands as productive digital workers. At the same time, marriage to a foreign man gives their content added appeal, as it creates a unique narrative of cultural adaptation and cross-country relations. These micro-celebrity mothers also face the challenge of the platformization of labor. The YouTube platform provides a space for microcelebrities to generate revenue through advertisements, sponsorships or brand collaborations. However, it also puts micro-celebrities in a vulnerable position to the logic of platformization. YouTube's algorithm determines the visibility of content, which affects creators' earnings. Therefore, microcelebrities have to constantly create relevant and engaging content, which often increases their work intensity. Moreover, the work done is often not fully rewarded. Revenue from the platform mostly goes to YouTube as the owner of the ecosystem, while creators only receive a small portion.

This shows that although micro-celebrities have autonomy in content production, they are still dependent on the capitalistic structure controlled by the platform. This commodification of labor in motherhood-themed YouTube content presents an ethical dilemma. On the one hand, micro-celebrities have the opportunity to generate income and build their personal brand. On the other hand, the exploitation of aspects of their personal lives, especially motherhood and intercultural marriage, can cause psychological and social distress. In addition, the labor performed is often not formally recognized. Work such as video editing, interaction with followers, and personal brand management are often considered as “additional activities,” despite requiring significant time and effort. This finding is in line with the results of research with the example of YouTube beauty vloggers, this study shows that celebrities on social media are economically embedded in an industrial structure shaped by the platform's business model, technical capabilities, advertising market, and commercial cultural intermediaries (Hou, 2019).

The findings reveal that cultural differences between Indonesian women and their foreign partners become a capitalized element, creating a sense of motherhood that women's roles in the domestic sphere can be used as an economic opportunity, but at the risk of blurring the lines between personal and professional life. As micro-celebrities, they become an important part of the growing creator economy, providing new economic opportunities for women in a patriarchal society. This research provides critical insights into the dynamics of commodification in the digital economy, particularly among women who utilize platforms like YouTube to showcase their motherhood. The findings highlight the need for a more gender-conscious approach in understanding the social and economic impacts of the creator economy, as well as the importance of regulations that protect the rights and welfare of creators in the digital space.

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V. CONCLUSIONS

This research reveals that Indonesian migrant women who are married to foreign men and become micro-celebrities on YouTube commodify content, audiences and labor in a bounded manner. The transformation of motherhood produced by Indonesian women micro-celebrities is not only a means of sharing experiences, but also a tool to generate economic benefits. Portrayals of “ideal” and “perfect” motherhood are often associated with parenting skills. In this context, mothers are not only domestic figures, but also market actors who influence audiences' preferences for certain products. The commodification of motherhood in the context of micro-celebrities of Indonesian women married to foreign men is a phenomenon that shows how traditional roles can be transformed into economic value through social media. However, this process also brings ethical, social and emotional challenges that need to be addressed. This research suggests the need for further studies on the impact of this phenomenon on society, especially in terms of representations of gender, culture and family.

This research reveals how female micro-celebrities use their maternal identities and intercultural lives as commodities that appeal to audiences. Narratives of motherhood and cultural exoticism are packaged in such a way as to generate economic value through collaborations with brands and platforms. However, this commodification also presents ethical challenges, such as the reinforcement of cultural stereotypes, the exploitation of audience emotions, and the entrenchment of traditional gender roles. This study highlights the importance of examining the power dynamics between creators, platforms and audiences, and their impact on representations of gender and culture in digital spaces.

This research shows that the micro-celebrity labor of Indonesian women married to foreign men on motherhood-themed YouTube content is a commodified form of digital labor. Their personal lives become economic assets that appeal to audiences, while their emotional and technical labor becomes part of the capitalistic ecosystem of digital platforms. A more critical approach is needed to understand how micro-celebrities manage their digital labor, including recognition of the workload they bear and the social and psychological impacts of this commodification.

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