

# My First Step to Know My Child “Pregnant School”: A Netnographic Analysis

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## ABSTRACT

The concept of netnography, which was first used by Kozinets in the literature, is explained as examining the interactions of virtual communities, which are not in contact with each other in the physical world, but come together via the internet, about their habits and expectations. In other words, it is a research method used to interpret virtual cultures, which have their own characteristics, formed by virtual communities formed by the presence of computer-mediated communication technologies. This study aims to thematically analyse the user comments on the most viewed YouTube video of an expert who provides information about pregnancy and postpartum processes. The netnographic method was used in the study to analyse the participant comments in the channel community of the expert who produced content on the subject. In accordance with the prescribed methodology, a total of 566 user comments were incorporated into the analysis. These comments were sourced from the most widely viewed video featuring the content producer, an acknowledged expert within their respective domain. User comments were analysed using MAXQDA software. The analysed YouTube channel provides information about pregnancy and postpartum processes. The research was discussed within the framework of the three codes determined. The analytical framework encompasses three primary facets: information evaluation, product evaluation, and experience sharing. As a result of the research, it was determined that expectant mothers needed guidance before birth.

**Keywords:** digital parent; netnography; pregnancy; pregnant education; pregnant school.

## INTRODUCTION

The current transformation process of technology has brought about the formation of different platforms that will meet many needs of individuals. These platforms are internet-based applications established to meet the information and communication needs of individuals, allowing the creation and sharing of user-centered content. With the development of applications over time, each individual has become a digital content producer within a certain community, approved by his/her followers, creating and sharing content in the desired subject and scope. These environments, which allow individuals to express their ideas freely, have given the keys of social culture to all individuals, enabling them to make their voices heard. In other words, they are important channels that enable individuals to reach the masses with effective communication methods (Mutlu & Bazarıcı, 2017).

*Participatory culture element “YouTube” and parents*

Virtual environments, which allow individuals to form communities where they come together according to common goals and interests, carry out activities, and sometimes even react to events, make it possible to create alternative areas of belonging. Individuals can exchange information on digital platforms by including experiences in line with their daily needs and interests. The “active” and “effective” position provided to the individual in this way is explained by Jenkins’

concept of “participatory culture” (Jenkins, 2006). Within this conceptual framework, Jenkins posits that the prevailing function of mass media has transformed assuming a central role within the realm of popular culture. Castells, on the other hand, focuses on the liberating nature of digital platforms and states that these environments enable to reach individuals on a global scale, at different times or at the same time, without the limitation of space (Castells, 2020).

Virtual environments differ from traditional communities in some aspects such as belonging, communication between group members and participation in the environment. While participation in traditional communities occurs naturally,

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it can vary according to the individual's wishes in virtual environments. It may be easier to leave communities since the interaction is not built on commitment as in traditional communities. Communication, carried out face-to-face in traditional communities, is performed through platforms in virtual communities and remotely in digital environments (Rheingold, 2008). The paramount characteristic inherent to virtual communities lies in the absence of inherent biases or prejudices among individuals therein. In these environments, the absence of non-verbal communication between individuals and the use of written communication prevents the development of prejudice and enables focusing on the written information. In addition, in these environments, individuals can join more than one community based on their interests and needs (Eyrek, 2022).

When platforms are evaluated in terms of digital media users' production, dissemination and interpretation of visual and audio cultural elements, "YouTube" is a popular application where users can act freely and have their discourses observed. This application, as asserted by Burgess and Green in 2009, bestows upon information an active agency, thereby playing a pivotal role in fostering distinctions within experiential outputs and effecting transformative changes in the social structure. When Chau (2010) evaluates "YouTube" within the framework of participatory culture, he focuses on the freedom it provides in terms of sharing and access and emphasizes that there are few obstacles in self-expression and participation processes. Additionally, it addresses the imperative requirement of individuals to engage in production activities and provides robust support for the dissemination of products within interactive virtual environments. In this manner, it substantiates a valuable contribution towards nurturing a sense of affiliation and the cultivation of individual identity. It informally guides users to acquire new knowledge and skills. In addition, as a functional element in conveying cultural outputs, it strengthens the cooperation of individuals with their social networks.

When considered in the context of lifelong learning and access to information, keeping up with information technologies is an indicator of social development. In this sense, all family members should renew themselves according to the requirements of the digital age and acquire minimum competences to use digital technologies and internet tools. Parents, the first and most important guides of children, should continue to get information about digital content on virtual platforms, share their experiences with other parents and get help within the scope of their digital parenting roles (Çalapkulu & Alp, 2020). When evaluated accordingly, it is observed that information activities are carried out on

topics such as nutrition, pregnancy follow-up, childcare and development on these channels as an alternative to pregnant schools within private and public health institutions. Virtual environments are deemed of significant import in augmenting the complementary support offered by the physical environment to parents. They serve as platforms through which individuals are furnished with comprehensive information about the stages of pregnancy and parenthood, encompassing both the prenatal and postnatal phases.

In the pregnancy period, expressed as a kind of crisis period, expectant mothers plan the process, try to adapt to changes, enrich their knowledge about the subject and prepare for birth. During this period, expectant mothers seek information to understand the changes in their bodies, to find solutions to their complaints and to perform the birth process most safely. The focus of the expectant mother also differs with birth. All her attention is directed towards the health, care and development of her child. Studies examining parents' use of the internet and social platforms for these purposes are frequently encountered. However, it is noteworthy that few studies are focusing on how the expectant mother perceives digital platforms in terms of content, to what extent she cares, how she uses them, or their effect on the pregnancy process and parenting roles (Öztürk et al., 2020).

## Present Study

The current study emphasizes the changing information source preferences of individuals in society depending on their habits of using digital platforms. Changes experienced globally have brought about differences in the learning methods of individuals. In this context, parents are also among the individuals affected by the situation. While parents used to prefer their parents as a source of information about the process of raising children, they now find the information shared in virtual environments remarkable. This concept elevates the visibility of individuals or experts who disseminate information within virtual environments, enhancing their recognition and influence within society. It also increases the sphere of influence of these people. In this study, it is desired to analyse the comments on the most viewed post of an influential expert in society. The significance of sharing within these platforms arises from their distinctive characteristics, distinguishing them from traditional communities. These platforms facilitate global-scale communication, devoid of inherent biases, and operate without temporal or spatial constraints.

In addition, the research is also valuable in terms of its focus on pregnancy schools, the importance of which has

been frequently emphasized recently. When the studies in the literature are examined, it is seen that these studies emphasize the effect of the training given in pregnancy schools affiliated with health institutions. This study, on the other hand, differs in that it examines the effectiveness of resources that provide information similar to pregnancy schools on the digital platform. Moreover, the fact that experts in the field of child development from different disciplines such as health and education review the subject from different perspectives makes the study meaningful. Based on the importance of the subject, this study aims to thematically examine the user comments on the video titled "Avoid These 5 Things for Better Baby Development", which has the highest viewership rate, shared on the YouTube channel by an expert who informs about pregnancy, birth and postpartum processes.

## METHOD

### Research Design

Netnographic method was used in the study conducted in qualitative design. The netnography method allows access to the consciousness and knowledge of users on digital platforms. The method developed by Kozinets to examine communities in virtual environments is more natural, less costly and suitable for the digital age than traditional ethnography methods. Netnography does not only consider interactions as content, but also as a cultural output and a set of meaningful expressions (Kozinets, 2010). Consequently, the utilization of the netnographic methodology was employed within the study to systematically scrutinize participant comments within the channel community curated by the subject matter expert, specializing in content production pertaining to the subject in question. The study was approved by the KTO Karatay University Faculty of Medicine Non-Pharmaceutical and Medical Device Studies Ethics Committee (Project number: 2022/022). The study rigorously adhered to the principles and guidelines outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki throughout all its phases.

### Participants

Criterion sampling method, one of the purposive sampling methods, was used in the study. Thus, a number of criteria were determined while forming the study group. These are:

1. It should be a YouTube channel that produces content about pregnancy and postpartum processes,
2. The content should be prepared by an expert,
3. It should have many followers to be able to observe and evaluate the behavior of more individuals,
4. It should be a channel with users from different cultures,
5. It should be the most popular video of the specified channel,

6. User comments on the determined video should be limited to the date when the researchers transferred the data from the YouTube channel,
7. User comments should contain qualified expressions to be analysed in detail.

Primarily, an examination of digital platform content producer channels disseminating information pertaining to the processes of childbirth and parenthood was conducted. Many channels operating in this way were found. Then, content producers were analysed according to their areas of expertise. The channels of individuals who were not experts in the subject were eliminated. Then, it was decided to analyse the channel which includes the experiences of mothers from different professional groups and cultures and has the highest number of participants to evaluate the reaction to the digital content produced by experts in a clearer and general framework. While determining the channels, the quality of the user comments on the channel was evaluated in terms of connection and content. Within this context, a total of 566 public user comments, which were accrued as of the date October 8, 2022, from the most prominently viewed video titled "Avoid These 5 Things for Better Baby Development" (WEB1) on the channel of the subject matter expert, were incorporated into the study's dataset.

### Analysis

In the channel determined to be evaluated within the scope of the study, the user comments on the video with the highest viewing rate were converted into a written document without making any changes. Firstly, the users who made comments were coded. Then, user comments were analysed thematically. Similar comments were classified and visualised in the context of certain concepts, codes and themes using MAXQDA software.

### RESULTS

To clarify the research problem, the findings obtained from the interviews were presented under this title. As seen in Figure 1, the study was grouped under three themes: information evaluation, product evaluation, experience sharing.

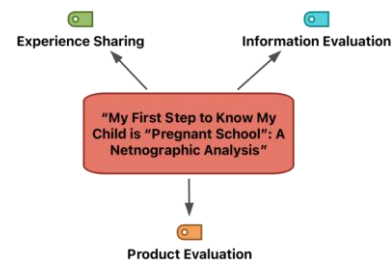
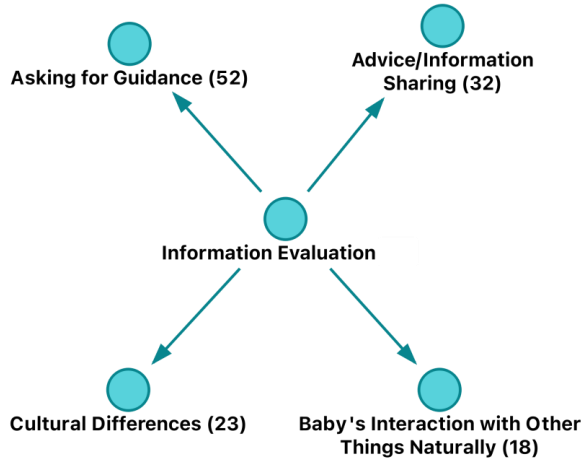


Fig. 1. Themes Display

## Information Evaluation

Four codes were created for the information evaluation theme, the first theme discussed within the scope of the study: asking for guidance, advice/information sharing, cultural differences and baby's interaction with other things naturally.



**Fig. 2. Hierarchical Code-Sub Code Model of Information Evaluation Theme**

Within the thematic domain of information evaluation, it was evident that participants exhibited a notable proclivity for robustly articulating their perspectives regarding the act of soliciting guidance. Users usually asked for guidance and product recommendation on different aspects about the baby development. User comments on the subject include the following:

“Is there another alternative for the upseat? I got it for my son when he was learning to sit but he would keep trying to tip himself over and I had to hold it in place. I ended up using the fisher price one but only for a few minutes once or twice a day because he had terrible posture in it. Luckily, I didn’t need a seat very long because he started to crawl at 5 months and walk at 8, but for my next baby I’m looking for another option.”

“Are walkers actually bad for them? What is your stance on them? I’m just curious because I have a 6 month old and I am getting mixed reviews”

“Can I have my baby sleep with belly on my belly?”

Another code that the participants expressed their opinions on the theme of information evaluation was advice/information sharing. Users additionally proffered their viewpoints concerning both other users’ comments and the content featured within the video. User comments on the subject include the following:

“There’s a website called green mountain diaper with really helpful information (written and videos) as well as many options for purchase”

“The cloth my mother ordered in the Amazon DEFONO store is soft and absorbent. My baby likes it very much. I recommend it to you and hope it will help you.”

“The only things I used for my daughter was educational toys from Monti Kids, which is a montessori program from age 0 to 2 years old. The Montessori Method addresses your child’s cognitive, physical, linguistic, social, and emotional development.”

“One thing I’ve learned is to make sure I’m eating lots of good carbs (oatmeal, sweet potatoes, bananas and lentils ect) are great for helping my milk supply. Gives good rich milk for your baby. One tip, if your little one is happy don’t worry. My baby is smaller then some, but after each feeding he’s happy so I know he’s getting enough.”

In the theme of information evaluation, the participants also expressed their opinions about the cultural differences. Users stated that there are a lot of cultural differences between their country and USA. User comments on the subject include the following:

“Interesting. In my country we are so much stricter. I would never put my baby in the jumper, walker or activity center. And especially would never use a baby seat. Not even a 10 minutes a day. All the physiotherapist in my country I’ve talked to are very strictly against practicing sitting. And I agree with that based on the research. It is interesting to see how it’s different in every country.”

“It’s weird because in Europe we can’t have the head under the scarf”

“This is really interesting for me to see. I guess I live in very strictly ergo country. It is generally advised- No front facing carrying ever, no sitting baby up until they can sit on their own (usually from crawling), no jumpers, no walker or other baby trapping devices, bouncers/loungers just for few minutes a day when absolutely necessary, barefoot when possible and now the big trend of barefoot shoes.”

“About the upseat... the best is no seat before they are ready..in my country (Czech Republic) these seats like bumbo or upseat are not common and discouraged the same way as walkers or jumpers.. the best way is to wait until the baby learns to sit on his own and not to sit him up before he and his spine is ready...”

In the information evaluation theme, another code in which the participants expressed their opinions was baby’s interaction with other things naturally. Users also made reference to the significance of infants’ organic interaction with their immediate environment in relation to their developmental processes. User comments on the subject include the following:



"100% agree. We did the same for our daughter and I feel she was free to concentrate on what she was ready to do from day to day instead of being pushed by us stressed out parents. She was standing up by month 9 and walking at month eleven, right on track. The added bonus is not buying a ton of useless baby equipment which is often at least partly made of plastic."

"Just don't buy anything. Your baby will develop at his/her time. If your baby can't sit on his/her own, he/she is not physically ready. Be patient, my baby learned how to sit around 10 month by herself and now (14 months) she is walking. :)"

"We didn't use any walker or jumper for our daughter. She's able to sit on her own by 5 months and cruising around by holding on furniture by 10 months."

"My baby did not like baby mittens much...I did not put shoes on her until she started to walk and started with very easy shoes that felt like the floor. As for walker and jumpers did not like to use much with her. Preferred teaching to walk the normal way..grabbing both hands ten minutes a day 3 times a day when she started to stand up on her own..as for the bombo...I used it too late would of love to use it much earlier when she started to sit down..it helped a lot for her...foward facing I never liked is not very secure for them...lots of things to keep in mind."

### Product Evaluation

Three codes were created for the product evaluation theme, the second theme discussed within the scope of the study: supportive gears not necessary, expensiveness, gears are bad for the health of the baby (Figure 3).

In the product evaluation theme, the participants expressed their opinions intensely that the supportive gears are not necessary.

Users mentioned that babies don't need any supportive gears while they grow up because they are able to develop on their own. User comments on the subject include the following:

"None of it is necessary. Everyone has learnt to walk and sit without all of these things."

"The seat is so useless. Let the baby sit naturally"

"Baby kittens are also waste of money since they don't stay on their hands and they end up sliding them off anyways"

"Not just babies, but we should all work on strengthening our feet and normalize not wearing shoes when we don't need to be wearing shoes. Shoes are one of the most unnatural inventions that we still use and haven't really figured out a better alternative as a society."

Another code that the participants gave their opinions on the theme of product evaluation was expensiveness. Users complained about the products overprice. User comments on the subject include the following:

"I greatly appreciate your videos, I think the products you recommend in this video are incredibly pricey though. The baby gym costs 140 dollars and the upseat is 100 = (I want the best for my baby but I'm not rolling in cash. I hope I can find a way to afford these things in time for them to be useful."

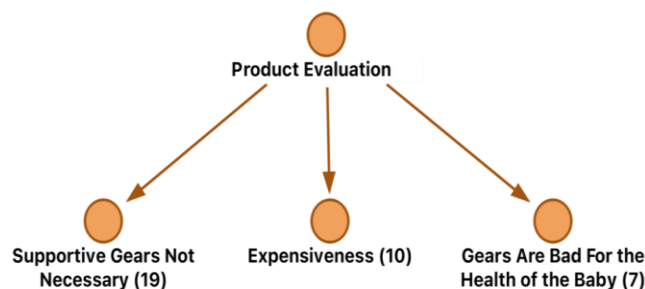
"I've seem the prices on these things, what about parents that can't afford it?"

"Is there any more affordable option available for the up seat? I know 100 dollars is not bad considering it's good for our babies but I'm a young mom and that's a lot of money for me. Thank you!"

In the theme of product evaluation, the participants also expressed their opinions that the gears are bad for the baby's health. Users have contended that supportive apparatuses negatively impact the developmental trajectory of infants. User comments on the subject include the following:

"I'm an American don't use any of these things because physical therapists and developmental specialists show these are not good for development. Most Americans tend to just want containers to put their baby in to keep them occupied rather than give them attention and support development . Same with mittens. We never used them because it's not good for them, and they aren't super safe for them to sleep"

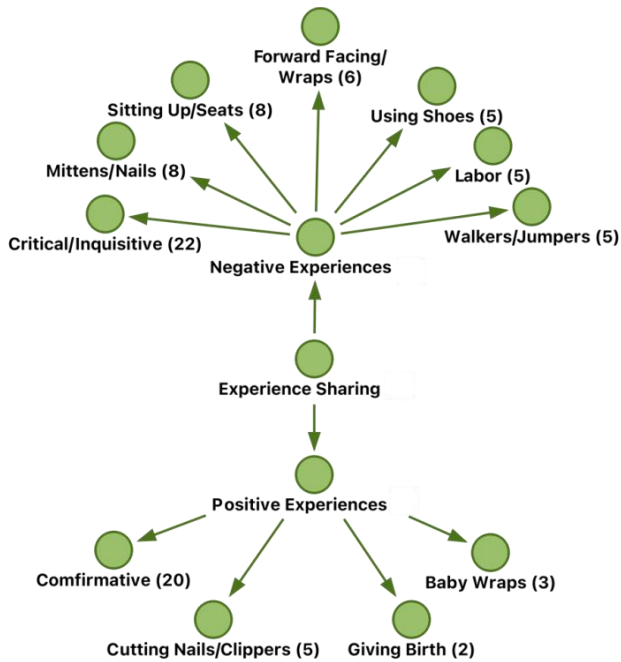
"Never used jumper, walkers or never trained my baby to sit. we did a lots of tummy time She started sitting her own when she was ready at 7 months and now she stands up without help at 7.5 months.. the walkers can damage to baby's spine. The video is informative thx."



**Fig. 3. Hierarchical Code-Sub Code Model of Product Evaluation Theme**

### Experience Sharing

Two distinct categories were formulated pertaining to the theme of sharing experiences, which constitutes the second thematic domain explored within the framework of this research. These categories encompass adverse encounters and favorable encounters.



**Fig. 4. Hierarchical Code-Sub Code Model of Experience Sharing Theme**

**Positive Experiences**

Within the positive experiences category, which serves as the inaugural category under the purview of the experience sharing theme, four discrete codes were established, namely: “confirmative,” “cutting nails/clippers,” “baby wraps,” and “giving birth.” In the positive experiences category, the participants expressed their opinions intensely about the confirmative. Users articulated comments affirming the content depicted in the video. User comments on the subject include the following:

“I’m due tomorrow and I’ve been watching your videos almost my entire pregnancy. I’m so grateful for you and your videos because I can’t afford a doula. Your assistance has engendered a heightened sense of self-assurance within me, and I am eagerly anticipating the impending arrival of my child and the commencement of my journey as a mother. Thank you so much for your passion and willingness to share your knowledge.”

“I’m a pediatric physical therapist and occasional birth doula. I only recently discovered your videos and find them so informative and helpful, and will recommend them going forward to all the pregnant and postpartum moms I encounter. The 5 things you suggest to avoid in this video are on point!!!”

“As a pediatric OT, I also agree with this video! I wish more parents were informed about these topics. One caution- the seat she referred to can be great, BUT it is not the primary

way your child should be playing at that age! (I know she said that but I want to stress it!) The way children learn to develop a skill is to practice that skill on their own :)”

Another code that the participants expressed their opinions on the category of positive experiences was cutting nails/clippers. Users mentioned that they cut their baby’s nails and that they were happy with it. User comments on the subject are as follows:

“So I have been using cuticle scissors for cutting baby’s nails works so well!”

“I refuse to put mittens on my baby. I highly recommend the Fridababy snipper clipper set. The design of the nail clipper is such that it prevents inadvertent cutting into the fingers of the infant. I simply cut my son’s nails while he’s asleep.”

In the category of positive experiences, the participants also expressed their opinions about baby wraps. Users shared their opinion about the baby wraps and how useful they are. User comments on the subject are as follows:

“Ah.. i wish I’d have know about forward facing when baby wearing... My son loves facing out and experiencing everything from that perspective... Now that I know, I’m afraid I’m going to have a hard time getting him to go back to the other way...”

“Nesting days makes an amazing shirt style baby wrap. I loved mine!”

In the category of positive experiences, the participants also expressed their opinions about giving birth. Users talked about how easy and beautiful the birth was. User comments on the subject are as follows:

“She was with me the last month of my pregnancy and her breathing techniques helped me so much to have a very fast and unmedicated labour and to even enjoy the process. She does a wonderful job. I send you so much power and good energy for yours!”

“I had my baby in March...she wasn’t available to be my doula and I didn’t fin one in time. But I had watched her videos throughout my pregnancy...she (her videos) really helped me learn how to breath and get through my 96+ hours of labor. I really enjoyed my labor and my delivery especially (8 mins push time). I had a great experience. If you get to a hard spot try to remember her videos and her telling you what to do. I also had my husband watch her videos and it helped him be a great support for me too. You got this mama!”

**Negative Experiences**

For the negative experiences category, which constitutes another aspect addressed within the framework of the experience sharing theme, seven distinct codes were delineated: “critical/inquisitive,” “mittens/nails,” “sitting up/

seats," "using shoes," "forward facing/wraps," "giving birth," and "walkers/jumpers." In the negative experiences category, the participants expressed their opinions intensely about the critical/inquisitive. Users generated comments characterized by criticism and inquiries regarding the content portrayed in the video. User comments on the subject are as follows:

"Are you though? Are the seats actually good for babies??"

"I agree a 100% no devices all of them are harmful"

"Are the seats actually good for babies?? I've heard otherwise".

"Lots of reputable carriers can be worn facing outward now! They support the hips and the M shape still!"

"Why? If you see her link to the upseat in the description, she has a 10% off code. So she is clearly sponsored by upseat. It's just a marketing pledge. The Bumbo will be just as fine also. No baby equipment manufacturer would make anything that isn't fit for purpose. Keep that in mind before jumping to conclusions because someone on social media says something, when they're getting paid to do so"

Another code that the participants expressed their opinions on the category of negative experiences was mittens/nails. Users articulated the viewpoint that mittens are superfluous in the context of infant care. User comments on the subject are as follows:

"Mittens are horrible... Never used it and kids are still ok even with a scratched eyebrows "

"My baby did not like baby mittens much...I did not put shoes on her until she started to walk and started with very easy shoes that felt like the floor. As for walker and jumpers did not like to use much with her..preferred teaching to walk the normal way..grabing both hands ten minutes a day 3 times a day when she started to stand up on her own..as for the bombo...I used it too late would of love to use it much earlier when she started to sit down..it helped a lot for her...foward facing I never liked is not very secure for them...lots of things to keep in mind."

"My baby HATES hand mittens as a new born she always fussed with them on took them off perfect happy baby, same way with socks! 6 months in and takes her socks off on her own after a second unless her feet are actually cold"

In the category of negative experiences, the participants also expressed their opinions about the sitting up/seats. Users mentioned about the bad experiences on seats and forcing the baby to sit. User comments on the subject are as follows:

"Is there another alternative for the upseat? I got it for my son when he was learning to sit but he would keep trying to tip himself over and I had to hold it in place. I ended up using the fisher price one but only for a few minutes once or twice a day because he had terrible posture in it. Luckily, I didn't need a seat very long because he started to crawl at 5 months

and walk at 8, but for my next baby I'm looking for another option."

"I'm a ftm and I feel horrible, I've been doing everything wrong it seems like. I am so glad I found this video. I have the bumbo and I put my baby girl in it once but didn't even let her stay 15 seconds because it had her slouched over so much"

"I learned not to sit up an infant if it isn't able to do it on its own. Same with standing up. Reason is that they dont have the muscles to support. My pediatrican even told me not to help the baby walk by holding his hands. He said its important to walk sideways on the walls and furniture to build the muscles that stabelizes the hip."

In the category of negative experiences, the participants also expressed their opinions about using shoes. Users talked about their bad experiences with the use of shoes. User comments on the subject are as follows:

"Huh, the daycare I took my daughter to from 3 months to a year old required shoes. Now she is a toe walker and we have to remind her to walk on her heals as much as possible. I wonder if it is connected."

"I only give my newborn socks because it's cold up here in the north. But that's about it. Baby shoes never made much sense for me unless they are used outside and they can already walk on their own. Why do people put shoes on a still-learning-to-walk baby?"

Another code that the participants expressed their opinions on the category of negative experiences was forward facing/wraps. Users expressed the sentiment that they refrain from positioning their infants in a forward-facing manner due to concerns over the discomfort experienced by the babies. User comments on the subject are as follows:

"Id love to carry my baby facing me, but he hates it. Tried it many times without success..."

"M'y son loses his mind if I wear him, sometimes he's ok with a firm backpack material front wearer but he hates wraps. He only is ok if I'm holding him, screams like he's been abandoned if I put him down and has been like that since birth and he isn't really that happy when I hold him. He's just always angry or sad, what should I do for him? He's a little over 3 months old, I am at a loss. How can I do tummy time or anything if he's so upset no matter how I try to distract him?"

"My baby gets reflux and burps when I'm wearing her facing me"

In the category of negative experiences, the participants also expressed their opinions about giving birth. Users likewise shared accounts of adverse childbirth experiences. User comments on the subject are as follows:

"I ended up not being able to use an epidural bc I didn't go in to the hospital till I was 8/9cm dilated. I was told to wait for my water to break, or for contractions to be 5 min apart

for an hour, or for the pain to be unbearable for me to go into the ER. I went once I couldn't deal with the pain anymore and I was only in labor at the hospital for like 2hrs. It did hurt a lot but I felt so energetic and relieved after I gave birth bc the contractions were gone."

"I feel like I got really abnormally bad contractions because I was dying in pain at only 1 dilated! I see other women saying they made it fine up until a lot further so I guess I got unlucky with that."

In the category of negative experiences, the participants also expressed their opinions about the walkers/jumpers. Users articulated concerns regarding the detrimental effects associated with the utilization of walkers or jumpers for infants. User comments on the subject are as follows:

"I was in the same situation. My son used it at my mother's house for a little while. He was fine without it and his legs are really strong since he did a lot of holding on to objects and walking."

"Usually toe walkers are toe walkers because they were placed in walking rings from an early age"

"I agree with this information! Most weve ever used was a jumper or walker and even that was for 15 minutes at the most."

The distribution of participant statements by intensity is shown in Figure 5. The codes shown in larger font size show the expressions used more intensively, while the expressions with smaller font size indicate that the codes are used less intensively. In accordance with the outcomes of this analysis, the predominant codes frequently addressed by users encompass solicitation of guidance, the exchange of advice and information, recognition of cultural disparities, as well as critical and inquisitive commentary.

The codes frequently mentioned by the participants are shown in Figure 6. The depicted visual representation, in the form of a map, elucidates the interrelationships among the codes and highlights the patterns of co-occurrence, indicating which codes are frequently referenced in conjunction with one another. The lines are shown wider to reflect the relationship of the more frequently mentioned codes mentioned together. Talking about the code of critical/inquisitive, the participants



Fig. 5. Code Cloud

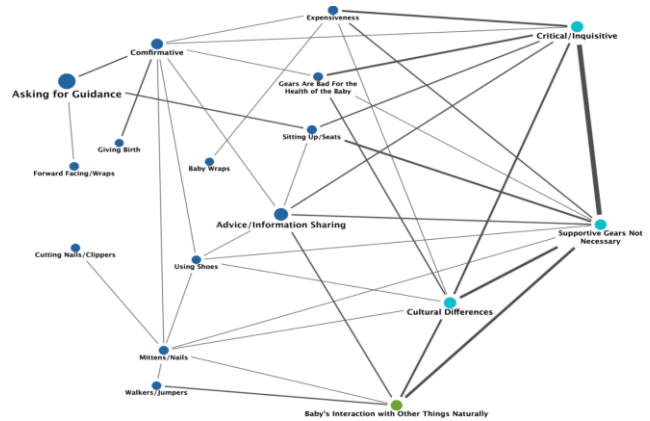


Fig. 6: Code Map

also talked about the expensiveness, confirmative, gears are bad for the health of the baby, sitting up/seats, advice/information sharing, cultural differences, supportive gears not necessary codes. User comments on the subject are as follows:

"I agree. I'm not an OT, but I'd LOVE to be one. I was an infant and toddler teach for years and discovered through trial and error that things I grew up with actually hindered developmental growth and I found new ways to help children learn to walk and sit and use their muscles instead of relying on other things to help them."

"The same in Poland. The jumper, walker, etc. were used here in the past and were the cause of many malformations (at least according to the research I've read, and what's interesting - most of the research was done in USA :-). Sitting, as well as crawling or walking, should result from the natural developmental process, not placing the child in "helpers" that never simulate real conditions."

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study aims to thematically analyse the user comments on the most viewed YouTube video of an expert who provides information about pregnancy and postpartum processes. To achieve this objective, a comprehensive analysis was conducted on the comments, resulting in their categorization into three overarching themes: assessment of information, evaluation of products, and the exchange of experiential narratives.

The code with the highest frequency in the "evaluating information" theme, the first theme created within the scope of the study, is "asking for guidance". The positive effect of the guidance provided to expectant mothers before birth has been proven by research. Perreault et al. (2018) indicated in their study that the guidance provided to expectant mothers about structured diet and exercise practices prevented



excessive weight gain during pregnancy and supported the bone development of the unborn baby. It was also concluded that the guidance given to the expectant mother significantly reduced weight retention in mothers in the first five months and even up to three years after birth (Thornton et al., 2009). Furthermore, it has been ascertained that the nutritional and exercise intervention program administered to expectant mothers during their pregnancy period yielded a favorable impact on the developmental enhancement of infants' emotional regulation skills, as reported by Mortaji et al. in their study conducted in 2023. Adverse prenatal conditions affect the basic physiological system and structure of the baby in the womb (Gluckman et al., 2010). Poor nutrition of the mother and insufficient physical activity during pregnancy negatively affects the cognitive development of the baby (Gluckman et al., 2008). For this purpose, early practices to improve the mother's lifestyle during pregnancy should be adopted and guidance support should be provided to the mother. In addition, platforms that will enable the expectant mother to obtain information about pregnancy and birth from experienced experts will support the expectant mother by facilitating their access to information.

In the study, the sub-codes of the "product evaluation" theme are "supportive gears are not necessary", "expensiveness" and "gears are bad for the health of the baby". In this context, the effects of the products mentioned in the video on child health and development were discussed. It was stated that not all of the "baby gears" products mentioned in the video have a positive effect on child development. Thus, it was pointed out that the products recommended by experts such as physiotherapists should be preferred. Among the most recommended product group is the "upseat". These products support the baby to stand upright and help healthy hip development. However, as a result of the analyses, many families stated that they purchased the products not to positively affect the development of babies or to attract attention, but to keep babies busy. In other words, families often unconsciously prefer products such as "activity centres" that can negatively affect the physical development of babies. Another comment conveyed within the context of the video pertains to the potential deleterious effects of walkers on the spinal health of infants. Consequently, it is suggested that a more prudent approach involves allowing the infant to assume a seated position when they manifest developmental readiness.

Users who draw attention to the readiness of babies state that the opinions of developmental experts on this issue should be examined. The comments on the "expensiveness" code, one of the sub-codes of the "product evaluation" theme in the study, are that families want to buy the products

that support the development of babies, but their access is limited because they are expensive. Families also articulated their inclination to engage in activities conducive to infant development, such as those offered at baby gyms; however, their propensity to opt for such activities was hindered due to the prohibitive cost associated with them.

There are studies investigating the effects of products preferred by families from birth on the development of babies. In the literature, the effect of the products preferred by the parents on the development of babies is explained with the new concept of "container baby syndrome". Container baby syndrome refers to physical or behavioural problems that occur in babies as a result of spending too much time in products that prevent the baby from moving. Car seats, strollers, bumbo seats, bouncy swings, rockers, bouncer seats, nursing cushions, vibrating chairs, jumpers, exersaucers, activity gyms/centers can be given as examples of these products that negatively affect the development of the baby (Anitha, 2019). Healthy physical and motor development in babies also contributes to cognitive, social and language development and prevents behavioural problems that may arise. The motor skills denoted as "stability," denoting the capacity to regulate the central bodily system, and "mobility," signifying the proficiency in executing intricate movements, are deemed pivotal components in the realm of physical developmental milestones. The connections between these skills are particularly strong in the first years of life. The delay in early motor skills affects the development of children negatively by preventing them from exploring the environment (Bly, 2011). In connection with the container baby syndrome, prolonged exposure to certain motor movements in children, staying in a compelling, mostly asymmetric and supinated position, causes retardation in psychomotor development, leading to secondary delays in skills in the affective, cognitive, language, emotional and social areas. Prolonged exposure to pressure in the occipital region, one of the four lobes that make up the cerebral cortex in the brain, causes plagiocephaly (asymmetric appearance caused by flattening of one side of the head), asymmetric facial line and brachycephaly, known as flat head syndrome. Pressure in the occipital region can also lead to decreased muscle strength, poor developmental coordination, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, excessive weight gain and obesity in children at later ages. The fact that the occipital region of the brain is responsible for receiving and interpreting stimuli from the retina affects the optic nerves. An impairment within this particular anatomical region exerts an adverse impact on the early-stage development of visual perception in children, as corroborated by studies conducted by Anitha (2019), Cross et al. (2017), and Littlefield et al. (2003). Therefore, it is necessary to

raise awareness of parents about the use of products such as jumpers and baby gears in babies and their effects on the developmental process of the baby. For this reason, "YouTube", a social area that is easily accessible and widely used with its wide range of content production, is preferred by parents as an important tool for sharing information and gaining experience.

The theme of "experience sharing", another theme discussed within the scope of the study, is divided into two sub-categories, negative experiences and positive experiences. Individuals who commented on the video in their experience sharing stated that the shares were mostly positive experiences that confirm their own knowledge. Other positive shares are the sharing of experiences about cutting the baby's nails, swaddling and giving birth. The fact that expectant mothers confirm their knowledge through this video enables them to be more self-confident about the birth process. The field experts watching these videos state that their knowledge and experience and the information given in the video supported each other, and that they found this information useful and informative. In his comment, one expert emphasised that the most important way to provide children with the skills mentioned in the video is to enable them to apply these skills on their own. When the comments are examined, positive comments such as the situations that make it easier to cut nails, swaddling babies in the mother's lap, the father's support to the mother during birth by watching the related videos during the birth process are the remarkable ones on the video. The most prominent code in sharing negative experiences is critical/curious. According to this code, users made comments that criticize/question the video content. In these comments, users compared their previous knowledge with the information in the video and criticized the correct or incorrect information.

In pregnancy, a transition period including change and stress factors for the expectant mother, the sense of competence that the expectant mother has regarding motherhood is an important factor that facilitates this period. The transition period to motherhood is a process in which the mother realizes her maternal role, learns to meet the needs of the baby and herself after birth, and adapts to physical and psychological changes. Particularly during the initial pregnancy, the acquisition of comprehensive knowledge by women concerning infant care, the developmental attributes of the infant, and potential maladies that may arise in this phase augments the establishment of the maternal-baby attachment. This knowledge empowers the mother in adopting her maternal role, as affirmed by Deliktaş et al. in their study conducted in 2015. During this period, the expectant mother needs support for the child's nutrition,

mental and physical development. While expectant mothers used to get help from various health institutions and their social environment, today, they use social media platforms such as "YouTube, Facebook, Instagram" to share their knowledge and experiences about parenting and to access the information about parenting. While this may be a tendency to get rid of the feeling of loneliness in mothers who are mostly exposed to social isolation, it may also be caused by the need for daily or scientific information about birth and child care (Aktaş, 2019). A code map was also created in the study. The code map indicates which codes are frequently used together. For example, critical/curious users argue that products such as baby gear are expensive and negatively affect the health of babies. It can be said that individuals who are critical/curious are conscious, have different experiences about child care and have a high tendency to reach scientific information by comparing the information suggested in the video with their own knowledge. In this study, it was concluded that digital platforms such as YouTube play an important role in maternal education. The fact that such social environments, where expectant mothers get information about the pregnancy process, infant health and development, and share their experiences during and after pregnancy, are more preferred today transforms these areas into an educational environment. However, today's diversity of information restricts access to accurate information. Therefore, it was pointed out that such platforms should be produced by experts and that it is essential to raise awareness of families about mother-child health and child development.

## Recommendations

The recommendations derived from the findings of this study are as follows:

1. Studies should be conducted to support mothers' digital literacy and questioning skills.
  2. Studies should be conducted to determine the satisfaction levels and needs of individuals regarding educational activities provided to mothers by digital platforms and public and private health institutions.
  3. Field experts may consider organizing seminars and meetings as a means of enhancing parental awareness during both the prenatal and postnatal phases. Parental needs in the prenatal and postnatal period should not only be health-oriented, but the process should be handled multidimensionally and their skills should be developed. Thus, programs that will be carried out by different disciplines should be designed and implemented.
1. Considering today's access to information and the opportunities of parents in disadvantaged groups,

mothers should be offered alternatives to the mentioned educational activities in digital environments.

2. The number of studies examining the contribution of pregnancy school practices and information activities of experts on digital platforms to the physical, mental and social development areas of parents should be increased.

### Ethics approval

The study was approved by the KTO Karatay University Faculty of Medicine Non-Pharmaceutical and Medical Device Studies Ethics Committee (Project number: 2022/022).

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