



ANALYSIS OF VIRTUAL STIGMA AND ITS SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL IMPACT Awareness-Raising Campaigns for People with Disabilities and Mental Health Conditions

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ABSTRACT

Virtual social media, central to current cultural dynamics, have an ambivalent impact. They facilitate the visibility of vulnerable groups but can also perpetuate prejudices and reinforce stigma in digital environments. This study analyses various Instagram campaigns using a mixed-methods approach. The results highlight how interactions established in awareness-raising campaigns targeting people with disabilities and mental health conditions generate empathy, support, and social advocacy, although it is necessary to strengthen dissemination strategies from a socio-educational perspective to move beyond neutral messages and foster greater social participation.

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1. Introduction

The word stigma originates from Greek and refers to a specific physical mark made with fire or a blade on individuals considered inferior, strange, or different (Callejas Fonseca & Piña Mendoza, 2005; Scambler, 2009). Goffman (1963) establishes that society itself creates the means to categorise individuals, determining the attributes deemed ordinary. For Frost (2011), laws, policies, religions, and other institutional structures construct the stigmatisation process, shaping specific meanings towards an individual and/or group.

Social stigma manifests through three main socio-cognitive processes: stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination. Stereotypes are understood as the simplified categorisation of information about different social groups. Prejudices result from cognitive and affective responses to these stereotypes, while discrimination translates into negative behaviours towards those individuals or groups (Catalano, 2021; Corrigan et al., 2009; Corrigan et al., 2010).

In addition to social stigma, it is important to highlight the phenomenon of self-stigma, which involves the internalisation of public negative stereotypes and attitudes by the individual (Corrigan & Shapiro, 2010; Livingston & Boyd, 2010; Lucksted & Drapalski, 2015). Another type of stigma, known as institutional stigma, is linked to the policies and practices of institutions, both public and private. These policies can perpetuate discrimination and exclusion, reinforcing the barriers faced by stigmatised individuals (Mascayano-Tapia et al., 2015).

Regarding the effects of stigma, specific factors impacting the daily lives of those affected can be identified. Firstly, consequences on self-esteem and self-concept arise from threats to personal identity, highlighting the link between negative perceptions and the internalisation of these prejudices. Stigmatisation can also lead to social rejection, affecting the development of a normalised and participatory lifestyle (Quiles del Castillo, 2019; Lowell & Wetherell, 2019; Thompson et al., 2002). Lastly, stigma affects caregivers, friends, and family members, who experience high levels of stress and anxiety due to negative reactions from others, a phenomenon known as courtesy stigma or stigma by association.

In the contemporary context, stigma towards certain groups also has an impact in the virtual environment. The digitalisation of social interaction spaces requires a reconsideration of terms traditionally used to describe physical relationships and an understanding of how these interactions affect individuals (Galán-Casado & Giménez-Gualdo, 2023). The internet is closely linked to virtual identity, how individuals define and position themselves on social media, and the idealised or non-idealised presentation to impress others, influencing subjective well-being. This phenomenon, combined with social processes such as online impact and popularity, the quality of social relationships, and the preference for communication through digital networks, generates evident risks and certain prejudices towards technology use, known as digital stigma (Chen, 2023; García-Pérez et al., 2024), which is exacerbated by anonymity and virality.

Specifically, individuals with disabilities and mental health conditions tend to use new technologies less than others, often limited by family members or professionals (Martínez Calvo, 2022). On the other hand, authors such as Mateu-Mateu & Navarro-Gómez (2015) suggest that the benefits of social media use for individuals with mental health conditions depend on individual characteristics, such as digital literacy, the chronicity of the condition, or the purpose of accessing the medium, although other studies point to potential adverse effects, such as the development of symptoms or the creation of a new identity to conceal or deny the condition as a form of protection against digital-era prejudices (Krishna et al., 2013; Pavalanathan & De Choudhury, 2015).

Moreover, virtual social media, alongside other technological tools, have become significant instruments of empowerment for particularly vulnerable groups in today's society, such as individuals with disabilities and mental health conditions (Herrera-Peco et al., 2023). Various studies have demonstrated that these technologies can foster a sense of community, connecting different individuals and supporting effective social relationships (Ulvi et al., 2022). Their capacity to share ideas and life narratives, uniting vulnerable groups in this digital world, has transformed social media into powerful platforms for challenging irrational ideas and stereotypes that promote stigma and self-stigma (Cara et al., 2022). Likewise, authors such as Lapierre Acebedo (2023), who investigated the activism of individuals with disabilities on social media, highlight the challenges and strategies for promoting visibility, as well as associated accessibility issues.

In response to stigma, various awareness-raising campaigns have emerged to foster consciousness and promote cultural change, representing efforts to counter prejudice and promote inclusion. These campaigns use digital tools to mobilise communities, highlight personal stories, and encourage a positive discourse around diversity. They also rely on collaboration with influencers and the development of multimedia strategies to maximise their reach and generate a significant societal impact. In this context, Instagram stands out as a social media platform focused on sharing visual content, primarily photos and short videos. In 2024, Instagram's active user base reached 2 billion, making it the fourth largest social media platform globally. One of the main factors behind its success is the variety of tools available to users, such as stories, reels, and feed posts, which allow the combination of creative elements like text, visual effects, and audio in a single format (Valencia-Ortiz et al., 2021). Instagram not only serves as a space for sharing visual content but also shapes social narratives through mass interaction among its users. This environment can amplify inclusive or stigmatising discourses, depending on how the platform is used.

2. Methodological Design

This research aims to examine the socio-educational impact of discourses generated in various campaigns on the Instagram platform concerning individuals with disabilities and mental health conditions. From this general objective, the following secondary objectives are derived:

01. To analyse Instagram campaigns as a virtual setting where stigmatising behaviours towards individuals with disabilities and mental health conditions occur.
02. To understand the differences in the socio-educational impact produced by social media campaigns targeting individuals with disabilities and mental health conditions.
03. To describe the strategies employed in these campaigns to identify those that achieve greater impact for the benefit of these vulnerable groups.

Having outlined the objectives of this study, it is essential to note that it is based on a series of hypotheses:

- H.1. Awareness-raising campaigns on social media can serve as tools to generate empathy and mobilise support for vulnerable groups.
- H.2. Awareness-raising campaigns on social media also have the potential to amplify stigmatising discourses and prejudices.
- H.3. Instagram campaigns aimed at raising awareness of mental health issues have a greater reach than those targeting individuals with disabilities.
- H.4. Socio-educational campaigns that employ emotional content, personal narratives, and strategic use of hashtags achieve greater impact in terms of interaction and awareness-raising compared to less structured initiatives.

To conduct this research, a mixed-methods approach with a descriptive design is proposed, analysing hashtags produced in various campaigns on the Instagram social media platform. This design examines quantitative descriptive data provided by these campaigns while also conducting a qualitative content analysis of strategies and discourse narratives, enabling a comprehensive evaluation of the interactions and narratives associated with these campaigns.

2.1. Procedure and Techniques Employed During the Research

Having established the research objectives, it is essential to outline the steps undertaken, as shown in Figure 1 below, which details the project phases:

Figure 1. Procedure of the research phases.

Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

As illustrated in the previous figure, the first phase of this study involved selecting current campaigns conducted on the Instagram social media platform, with objectives focused on raising awareness about mental health issues and the inclusion of individuals with disabilities. Given the abundance of social campaigns, the following inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied:

Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria applied in phase 1

INCLUSION CRITERIA	EXCLUSION CRITERIA
Aims to raise awareness and social awareness on mental health issues or inclusion of people with disabilities.	Does not focus on issues related to mental health or inclusion of people with disabilities.
Aimed at the general public	Targeted at a very specific sector
Campaigns with social impact	Campaigns with no impact

Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

After applying these criteria, and to enable a comparative analysis of the results, two campaigns targeting individuals with disabilities and two others focused on mental health conditions were selected. These four campaigns are described in the following subsection, entitled “Scope of Study”.

Additionally, a quantitative exploratory analysis was conducted to identify the predominant hashtags in each campaign and the terms used in Spanish. The selected hashtags are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Hashtags used

Individuals with disabilities	Individuals with mental health conditions
#discapacidad (#disability) #inclusion (#inclusion) #accesibilidad (#accessibility) #inclusión (#inclusion) #discapitados (#disabled) #discapacidades (#disabilities) #capacidades (#abilities) #accesible (#accessible)	#saludemocional (#emotionalhealth) #saludmental (#mentalhealth) #bienestar (#wellbeing) #ansiedad (#anxiety) #saludmentalyemocional (#mentalandemotionalhealth) #trastorno (#condition) #depresion (#depression) #mental (#mental)

Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

The data were collected using the data scraping platform Apify, which enabled the extraction of information related to posts associated with these hashtags during the period from 1 January 2024 to 1 December 2024. The Apify tool allows the downloading of all hashtag-related data, including relevant aspects such as links to videos, images, and interactions with the most significant content. Once obtained, the data were exported to Excel, Office 2021 version for Windows, for subsequent analysis.

Videos were transcribed, and images were described to enable their interpretation. From the collected information, messages providing relevant data for the study were selected.

In the third phase, a descriptive data analysis of the hashtags generated in these campaigns was conducted using the Excel program, where the data from the previous phase had been exported. Additionally, to assess the level of interaction in these campaigns, the weighted engagement formula used in other studies, such as Renedo-Farpón & Neira-Carrión (2024), Li et al. (2021), and Chen et al. (2021), was applied. This formula prioritises more significant interactions, such as comments, which reflect greater engagement compared to likes:

$$\frac{(1 * \text{no of likes}) + (2 * \text{no of comments})}{\text{total no of posts}} * 100$$

Following the acquisition of these data, the fourth phase involved analysing the discourse content to meet the research objectives. Thus, the data collected in Excel from the four campaigns were coded. The coding process was carried out independently by two researchers, who subsequently compared their results to ensure consistency and reliability in the analysis. In cases of disagreement, a third researcher coded the disputed content. This collaborative strategy minimised biases and ensured accuracy in the classification of posts and comments, providing a robust foundation for the study's conclusions. The coding was based on specific variables designed to identify key patterns and characteristics of the content. These variables included:

Table 3. Coding results

Category	Description
Discourse impact	Positive (shows support, empathy or acknowledgement through emoticons and/or messages); Negative (disagreement, criticism or content that perpetuates prejudice); and Neutral, when no clear opinion was expressed, speeches that do not generate significant reactions, or information that fails to make an impact.
Behaviours	Presence of stigmatising or enabling elements, such as infantilisation, condescension or trivialisation of mental health problems.
Strategies	Type: informative, educational Medium: image, video or commentary Content

Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

Finally, for the content analysis, the coded data in Excel were exported to the MAXQDA Analytics Pro tool (version 24.7.0) to gain a comprehensive overview and highlight the most valuable aspects for this research.

2.2. Scope of Study

The Instagram campaigns selected for this study, which met the previously mentioned inclusion criteria, are as follows:

01. The #Incluencers (#Influencers) campaign, promoted by Incluyeme.com, encourages the employability of individuals with disabilities and motivates society to act as agents of change in workplace inclusion. It began in January 2024.

02. #Barrerismo (#Barrierism), led by Fundación ONCE, highlights urban obstacles affecting the mobility of individuals with disabilities, raising awareness and advocating for infrastructure changes. Although this campaign started before 2024, it was included due to its ongoing activity and significant debate on the Instagram platform.

03. #HazTuParte (#DoYourPart), an initiative by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), aims to reduce stigma and discrimination related to mental health, encouraging open conversations about emotional well-being. This campaign began in mid-October 2022 but remains active with a large following.

04. Lastly, Hablemos de #SaludMental (#Let'sTalkMentalHealth), promoted by the Spanish Ministry of Health, emphasizes the need to raise visibility of mental health conditions and reduce associated stigma.

It started in 2021 as part of the 2021–2024 Mental Health Action Plan driven by the Spanish government.

Only Spanish-language messages from these campaigns were selected, and the analysis period spans from 1 January to 1 December 2024. It is important to note that, as previously mentioned, not all campaigns began at the same time, but all are currently active and have a substantial number of followers. The year 2024 was chosen for study because it is the present year, and within virtual social media, social events and circumstances shape the ideas and comments expressed.

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis details the data collected from the four campaigns analysed. Overall, the four Instagram campaigns amassed a total of 1,016 posts. During the analysis, metrics associated with each hashtag were identified, resulting in a total of 75,306 likes and 1,649 comments. Specifically, the data for each campaign are presented in the following table:

Table 4. Comparative data of campaigns per *hashtag*

Campaign	Hashtags used	Posts analysed	Total likes	Total comments
Salud Mental (Mental Health)	#SaludMental (#mentalHealth)	440	34.248	349
	#saludemocional (#emotionalhealth)			
	#bienestar (#wellbeing)			
	#ansiedad (#anxiety)			
	#saludmentalyemocional (#mentalandemotionalhealth)			
	#trastorno (#condition)			
	#depresion (#depression)			
	#mental (#mental)			
Haz Tu Parte (Do Your Part)	#HazTuParte (#DoYourPart)	312	8.879	143
	#ansiedad (#anxiety)			
	#trastorno (#condition)			
	#depresion (#depression)			
	#mental (#mental)			
	#saludemocional (#emotionalhealth)			
	#bienestar (#wellbeing)			
	#SaludMental (#MentalHealth)			
#Influencers	#Influencers (#Influencers)	77	6.313	524
	#SoyInfluencer (#IAmInfluencer)			
	#HazteInfluencer (#BecomeInfluencer)			
	#inclusion (#inclusion)			
	#inclusión (#inclusion)			
	#discapacidad (#disability)			
	#capacidades (#abilities)			
	#accesibilidad (#accessibility)			
#Barrerism (#Barrerismo)	#discapacidad (#disability)	187	25.866	633
	#inclusion (#inclusion)			
	#accesibilidad (#accessibility)			
	#discapacidades (#disabilities)			
	#capacidades (#abilities)			
	#accesible (#accessible)			
	#Barrerismo (#Barrierism)			
TOTAL		1.016	75.306	1.649

Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

The Salud Mental campaign is the most significant, with a total of 440 posts, generating substantial interaction with 34,248 likes and 349 comments. This campaign has achieved wide reach, and the general public shows considerable interest in the topic, although the number of comments is low compared to other campaigns. Another campaign related to mental health and mental health conditions,

Haz Tu Parte, has a lower number of posts (N=312), with significantly fewer likes (8,879) and comments (143), indicating that this campaign was relevant but had a more limited reach.

When analysing the data from the two campaigns aimed at raising awareness about individuals with disabilities, the results are also noteworthy. The #Influencers campaign has a very limited number of posts, only 77, yet it has generated significant interaction, with highly active audience participation on social media, evidenced by a total of 6,313 likes and 524 comments. The final campaign analysed, #Barrerismo, comprises 187 posts but, like the previous campaign, despite the relatively low number of posts, it has sparked considerable interest and participation, with 25,866 likes and 633 comments.

When comparing the campaigns in terms of raising awareness about individuals with disabilities and those with mental health conditions, the analysis reveals that all generate substantial interactions and have significant impact. However, those focused on mental health garnered more likes, indicating greater reach, while the others generated a higher number of comments, suggesting they fostered more conversations. The data are presented in the following table:

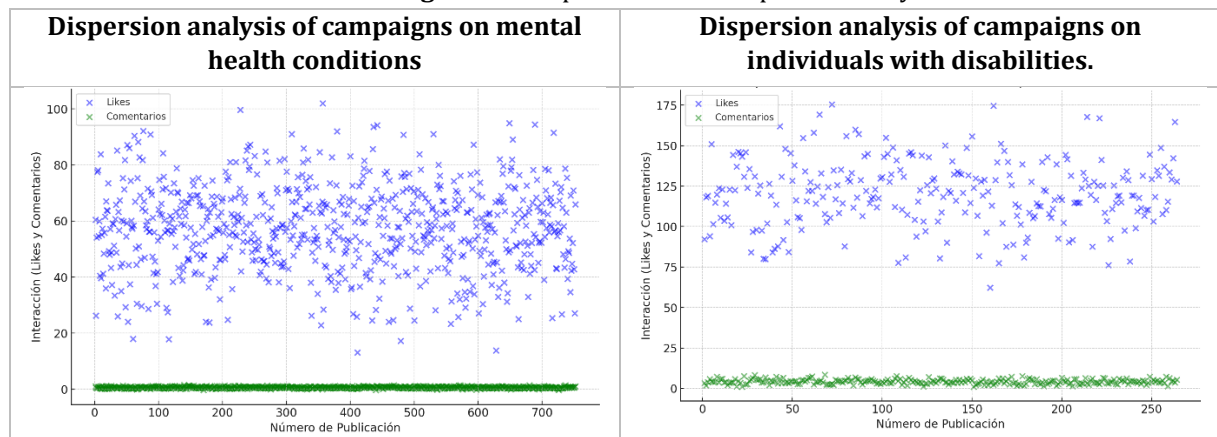
Table 5. Comparison of campaigns per group

Campaigns targeting	Hashtags used	Posts analysed	Total likes	Total comments
Mental Health Conditions	#SaludMental (#MentalHealth) #saludemocional (#emotionalhealth) #bienestar (#wellbeing) #ansiedad (#anxiety) #saludmentalyemocional (#mentalandemotionalhealth) #trastorno (#condition) #depresion (#depression) #mental (#mental) #HazTuParte (#DoYourPart)	752	43127	492
Individuals with Disabilities	#Influencers (#Influencers) #SoyInfluencer (#IAmInfluencer) #HazteInfluencer (#BecomeInfluencer) #inclusion (#inclusion) #inclusión (#inclusion) #discapacidad (#disability) #accesibilidad (#accessibility) #discapacidades (#disabilities) #capacidades (#abilities) #accesible (#accessible) #Barrerismo (#Barrierism)	264	32179	1157
TOTAL		1.016	75.306	1.649

Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

All campaigns have achieved significant reach and popularity; however, there are notable differences depending on their focus. Those targeting mental health have generated 2.85 times more content compared to those aimed at raising awareness about individuals with disabilities. There is also a difference between the two types of campaigns when analysing the degree of dispersion and trends. The following figure presents the data analysed graphically, showing the comparison:

Figure 2. Comparison of the dispersion analysis



Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

Blue symbols indicate the number of likes per post, while green symbols represent the comments obtained. As shown in the previous figure, campaigns on mental health conditions maintain an average of 57.3 likes with stable variability, compared to campaigns aimed at raising awareness about

individuals with disabilities, which, despite greater variability, achieve an average of 121.9 likes. Regarding comments, the same trend is observed: posts from campaigns on mental health conditions have an average of 0.65 comments per post, whereas campaigns aimed at raising awareness about individuals with disabilities, despite higher dispersion, have values averaging around 4.38 comments per post. These data demonstrate that campaigns focused on raising awareness about individuals with disabilities achieved greater participation and generated more debate among Instagram users. These findings are further supported when calculating the Instagram Engagement Rate for each campaign type, as shown in the following table:

Table 6. Comparative Engagement Rate

	Engagement Rate
Campaigns on mental health conditions	58.01%
Campaigns on individuals with disabilities	126.36%
OVERALL TOTAL	75.74%

Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

This confirms that campaigns aimed at raising awareness about individuals with disabilities achieved significantly higher engagement than those targeting mental health conditions. These results indicate that the volume of posts does not always translate into high impact per post, as campaigns with fewer posts have generated substantial participation and interaction on Instagram, suggesting they have successfully connected with their audience.

3.2. Content Analysis

To delve deeper into the research and achieve the established objectives, the content analysis focuses on the following issues presented in the categories, addressing the secondary objectives. These are represented more visually in the following table:

Table 7. Relationship between objectives and content analysis categories

General objective	Examine the socio-educational impact of discourses generated in various campaigns on the Instagram platform regarding individuals with disabilities and mental health conditions
Secondary objectives	Categories
05. Analyse Instagram campaigns as a virtual setting where stigmatising behaviours towards individuals with disabilities and mental health conditions occur.	Behaviours: Presence of stigmatising or ableist elements, such as infantilisation, condescension, or trivialisation of mental health issues.
06. Understand the differences in the socio-educational impact produced by social media campaigns targeting individuals with disabilities and those with mental health conditions.	Discourse impact: • Positive (expressions of support, empathy, or recognition through emoticons and/or messages) • Negative (disagreeing opinions, criticism, or content perpetuating prejudices) • Neutral, when no clear opinion is expressed, discourses that do not generate significant reactions, or information that fails to make an impact.
07. Describe the strategies employed in these campaigns to identify those with the greatest impact in benefiting these vulnerable groups.	Actions and Strategies: • Type: Informative, Educational • Medium: image, video or commentary • Content:

Source: Own elaboration, 2024: Own elaboration, 2024.

In this way, this section is subdivided into the content analysis based on each of the categories outlined above, which have been analysed using the MAXQDA Analytics Pro tool (version 24.7.0).

3.2.1. Behaviour

The narrative of posts in campaigns addressing mental health focuses on aspects related to raising awareness and highlighting the importance of discussing and showcasing mental health issues to break down social prejudices and preconceived notions, thereby reducing stigma. These campaigns promote

mental health through information encouraging self-care, emotional well-being, and personal development, while also emphasizing messages that highlight the need to seek professional help for affected individuals and underscore the importance of societal support and empathy towards this group, which helps dismantle prejudices. In this regard, it is acknowledged that suicide is a public health issue requiring collective action to advocate for comprehensive health, emphasizing the need for socio-educational initiatives that raise awareness about this topic and contribute to suicide prevention.

Regarding the comments generated by these posts, no discriminatory messages or evidence of hate speech were identified. The analysed comments demonstrate empathy, hope, and advocate for collective action, particularly in suicide prevention. These messages reflect non-stigmatising behaviours towards this group, focusing on the need to promote mental health, emotional well-being, and support for individuals experiencing these conditions.

Examples of comments that support these behaviours include:

"Today we highlight the importance of talking about depression, a topic that may seem invisible but weighs heavily on those who experience it."

"Acceptance is a value that acknowledges, understands, and values others' differences without judgement."

"With care but directness, we can ask and support individuals going through difficult times and/or who have made requests for help."

"Everyone—individuals, communities, organizations, and governments—has an important role in changing the narrative around suicide."

"Share a conversation, share your support, share this message."

"We must end the stigma of prioritizing your mental health."

The narrative of discourses in campaigns aimed at raising awareness about individuals with disabilities addresses issues such as eliminating physical and social barriers to strengthen the right to equality for people with disabilities. Consequently, these posts emphasize the importance of accessibility and universal design to promote educational and workplace inclusion. These campaigns aim to increase visibility for this group, fostering their empowerment and highlighting their diverse abilities, characteristics, and needs. It is particularly significant that both posts and comments include advocacy-focused messages, particularly cantered on:

- Ensuring that physical and digital environments are inclusive and enable full participation for individuals with disabilities.
- Implementing programs, incentives, and adaptations that facilitate access and retention in the labour market and educational system.
- Promoting research, development, and innovation in assistive technologies and products that improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities across all domains.
- Advocating for attention to the needs of organizations and movements representing individuals with disabilities.
- Promoting the participation and leadership of individuals with disabilities in decision-making processes that affect them, ensuring their voice and representation in positions of power and public policy formulation.
- Working towards transforming attitudes, beliefs, and prejudices.

Examples of analysed comments that reflect these behaviours include:

"A feeling of helplessness, contempt, and being deceived."

"Building from scratch with #accesibilidad (#accessibility) and universal design criteria is not more expensive and is highly beneficial for society."

"Help us end #Barrerismo (#Barrierism)."

"We need more #Influencers (#Influencers) to help highlight that 3 out of 4 people with disabilities cannot find employment."

"Let's work together to reduce stigma and discrimination."

No hate speech, mockery, satire, or comments that undermine the dignity of individuals were observed in the analysed comments for either campaign type. Neither campaign contained messages with stigmatising or ableist elements, nor instances of condescension or trivialization of the needs of individuals with disabilities or those with mental health conditions.

3.2.2. Discourse Impact

To address the second secondary objective, “to understand the differences in the socio-educational impact produced by social media campaigns targeting individuals with disabilities and those with mental health conditions,” several methods were employed. One of these was a descriptive study, and as previously noted, it was evident that campaigns addressing mental health accounted for a higher number of posts and likes, representing 74% of the total, compared to 26% for the other campaigns. However, despite these figures, campaigns aimed at raising awareness about the needs of individuals with disabilities accumulated a greater number of comments. These data suggest that campaigns addressing mental health, despite having more posts, generate less interaction.

Nevertheless, a qualitative analysis of these results is necessary, as understanding the sentiments elicited by the posts is crucial for obtaining comprehensive insights into the socio-educational impact. To this end, a qualitative analysis was conducted, focusing on the category of “Discourse Impact.” This category enabled the evaluation of whether the messages and comments generated in the Instagram campaigns had a positive, negative, or neutral impact. The results indicate that the majority of messages had a positive impact, accounting for 61% of the total. These messages were characterized by:

- Expressions of support, empathy, and recognition towards these groups through comments and reactions.
- Discourses promoting awareness, consciousness, and the elimination of prejudices and stigmas.
- Calls for collective action and community participation to support individuals with disabilities and mental health issues.

These findings suggest that, overall, the analysed campaigns successfully generated a positive and empathetic discourse towards these groups, raising audience awareness and mobilizing support. However, neutral messages were also identified, particularly in campaigns addressing mental health, which failed to achieve significant impact, indicating the need to develop more effective strategies to engage the community and foster meaningful social change.

3.2.3. Actions and strategies

To address the third secondary objective, “to describe the strategies employed in these campaigns to identify those with the greatest impact in benefiting these vulnerable groups,” an in-depth analysis was conducted, and codes were developed in MAXQDA to categorise the types of posts shared. In both cases, the posts primarily focused on information. However, the messages within campaigns aimed at raising awareness about individuals with disabilities included a higher number of posts advocating for the rights of this group in physical and digital environments, as well as disseminating positive stories that enhance understanding of their potential, increasing their visibility and empowerment. Autonomy and the promotion of a normalised lifestyle were central themes in many messages.

Regarding the medium used for disseminating content, it was observed that campaigns aimed at raising awareness about individuals with disabilities featured more videos narrating stories, while campaigns addressing mental health included a greater number of images, many of which were posters and infographics with informative messages.

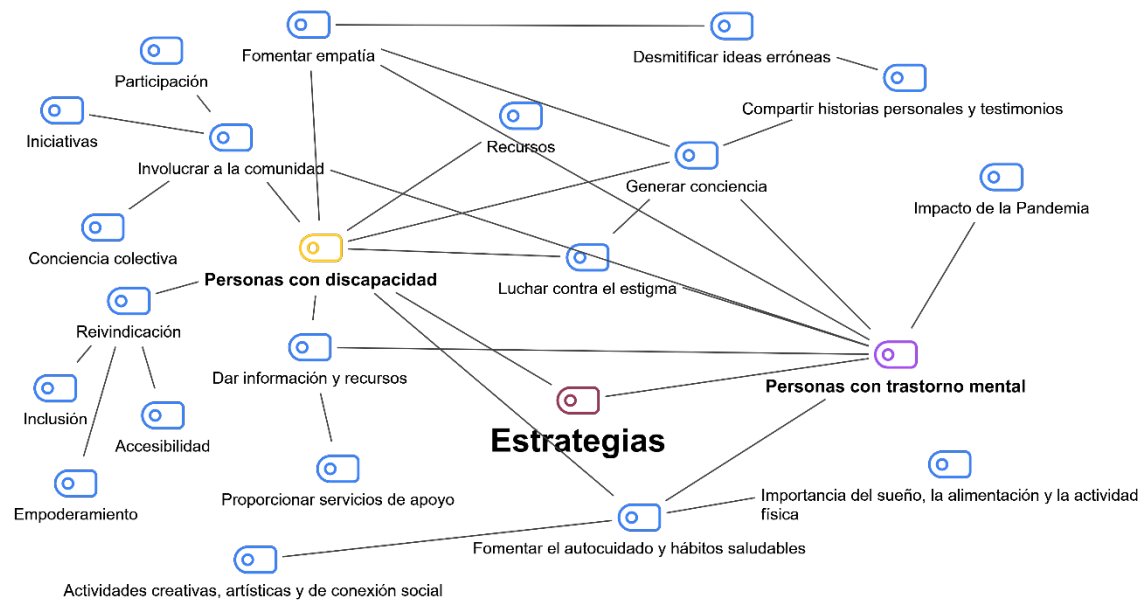
Regarding the content of the strategies underlying these campaigns, it can be stated that they share the goal of reducing prejudices, combating discrimination against both groups, and seeking to create inclusive spaces in various domains, such as the labour market or education.

The content shared in campaigns targeting mental health focuses on the following pillars: raising awareness of the issue, promoting well-being and self-care, providing information about resources and warning signs, and encouraging community participation as a means of fostering social empathy. Within this content, there is a particular emphasis on promoting emotional well-being and self-care, encouraging healthy lifestyle habits, and fostering the creation of solidarity and mutual support networks.

The content shared in campaigns aimed at raising awareness about individuals with disabilities has a strong component of advocating for the social rights of this group. The concept of *barrerismo* stands out, understood not only as architectural barriers that hinder mobility but also as societal obstacles that prevent full inclusion in the labour market, democratic participation, and equality of rights. Through these campaigns, empathy is fostered by increasing the visibility of this group and presenting their life stories positively, thereby debunking erroneous and preconceived notions. Additionally, universal design is promoted, alongside demands for compliance with laws ensuring inclusion and equality.

The following figure graphically illustrates the elements highlighted in the analysed campaigns:

Figure 3. Campaigns content analysis.



Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

All analysed campaigns share the need to raise public awareness and promote collective action. However, campaigns addressing mental health focus on creating safe spaces for dialogue and emphasize the importance of emotional well-being, whereas the other campaigns concentrate on advocating for inclusion and eradicating stigma through accessibility, visibility, and empowerment of this group.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

The results highlight that campaigns focused on activism regarding mental health conditions and individuals with disabilities achieved significant outcomes in terms of dissemination and user interaction, combining awareness-raising with information and resources, promotion of self-care, and more. This phenomenon is closely linked to the growing importance placed on mental health, where the roles of psychologists, psychiatrists, and other support professionals are increasingly valued compared to previous years (García-Pérez et al., 2024). It is also connected to the empowerment process for individuals with intellectual disabilities (DI), where authors such as Mampaso Desbrow et al. (2014) and Moraleda Ruano & Galán Casado (2024) emphasize the importance of disseminating positive stories that foster an appropriate understanding of this group's potential, with autonomy and the development of a normalised lifestyle being fundamental elements in promoting a view of disability based on respect for difference.

Likewise, these campaigns demonstrate that social media can serve as crucial tools for combating stigma, conveying messages of empathy, support, and calls for collective action against prejudices. In this regard, authors such as Moral et al. (2020) highlight how virtual environments help eliminate discrimination and support individuals with specific needs, fostering community participation. Similarly, Moraleda Ruano et al. (2023) underscore the significant platform that social media provides for interventions aimed at changing attitudes and dispelling false beliefs, serving as a key framework for raising awareness in a coherent and realistic manner.

On another note, the analysed messages, while showing no evidence of hateful or harmful content, do express ideas related to social advocacy. As Torres Nabel (2015) notes, social media enables users to voice their demands and call for solutions to everyday or institutional issues. This is partly because digital tools provide a platform in the face of limited resources, organisational structure, and formal recognition available to citizens. Along these lines, Castillo Esparcia et al. (2023) suggest that the potential of virtual environments enhances the appeal of social media but also introduces greater risks, as demands are amplified and intensified online. To illustrate this reality, Alomair et al. (2024) found in their study that mental health awareness campaigns elicit both positive and negative comments, with cultural and political factors, alongside prior experiences, shaping individuals' perceptions of this issue.

Furthermore, the use of secondary hashtags and thematic diversification was more significant in #SaludMental (#MentalHealth), where tags related to self-care and emotional education were pivotal. Despite this, there was no significant engagement, highlighting that in such campaigns, promotion and dissemination are key and should be conducted through various media and channels (Ontsi, 2023). Emotional content and personal narratives, as seen in the #HazTuParte (#DoYourPart) strategy, have greater impact. Additionally, it must not be overlooked that the internet serves as a global showcase and a model where children, young people, and adolescents seek role models to emulate or draw inspiration from (Martínez Pastor & Vizcaino-Laorga, 2022).

Regarding the primary response of users who viewed these campaigns, the absence or low level of interactivity (92.5% across both groups) stands out. This translates into “neutral messages,” meaning users show support through a “like,” but do not engage further, limiting the campaigns’ broader dissemination. Studies such as Sanzón et al. (2015) indicate that this information is crucial for identifying opportunities to improve or reshape a campaign’s image to enhance its social impact. In this context, the role of “influencers”—individuals with established digital reputations whose content reaches millions of followers—is vital for encouraging greater user participation (Martínez Valerio & Mayagotia Soria, 2021). It is also essential to seek support from other public or private organizations for dissemination, leveraging their greater reach. However, the limited budgets faced by most non-profit organizations must not be overlooked, as they adapt to their needs due to the low cost of social media compared to other advertising or awareness-raising strategies (Velasco Rueda, 2011).

Finally, it is crucial to propose a specific socio-educational initiative to enable social media users to identify and detect movements or campaigns that are unhealthy or inappropriately focused. Experts in public health and social media agree that a significant portion of movements, campaigns, or specific products can be harmful (Moreno & Luque, 2014; Ortega Navas et al., 2023), promoting inappropriate information that poses risks. Therefore, it is more necessary than ever to heed the proposal “Program or be programmed” by Rushkoff (2020), which emerges as an essential source of critical perspective on our relationship with technology. In a digital environment, it is vital not only to understand how our digital tools function but also how we can use them to reinforce our human and social values.

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