



TEACHERS ON INSTAGRAM: CHALLENGES AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

PROFESSORES NO INSTAGRAM: DESAFIOS E IDENTIDADE PROFISSIONAL

DOCENTES EN INSTAGRAM: DESAFÍOS E IDENTIDAD PROFESIONAL



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ABSTRACT

Instagram is a social network that provides a diversity of interactions and uses that go beyond connecting people and providing information. Nowadays, we are witnessing an expansion of the pedagogical practice and a resignification of its public nature through the accounts of teachers who generate and share contents for educational objectives. The purpose of this study is to characterize the use of Instagram with pedagogical purposes and to identify which aspects of teachers' professional practice and identity are involved in the use of this social network. A qualitative methodology is used to access the experiences of 20 Chilean teachers through a questionnaire and in-depth interviews. The study concludes that the main pedagogical use of Instagram is to create digital educational communities to share didactic resources and classroom experiences, transforming it into a tool for the development and construction of digital professional identity. The challenges are related to the selection of contents, the didactic transposition pertinent to the digital context and the critical and non-commercial and naive professional positioning in the face of the seduction of social networks.

Keywords: Internet. Teacher. Identity. Chile.

RESUMO

O Instagram é uma rede social que proporciona uma diversidade de interações e usos que vão além de conectar pessoas e fornecer informações. Atualmente, assistimos a uma expansão da prática pedagógica e a uma ressignificação de seu caráter público por meio dos relatos de professores que geram e compartilham conteúdos com objetivos educacionais. O objetivo deste estudo é caracterizar o uso do Instagram com fins pedagógicos e identificar quais aspectos da prática profissional e da identidade dos professores estão envolvidos no uso desta rede social. Uma metodologia qualitativa é utilizada para acessar as experiências de 20 professores chilenos por meio de um questionário e entrevistas em profundidade. O estudo conclui que o principal uso pedagógico do Instagram é criar comunidades educacionais digitais para compartilhar recursos didáticos e experiências em sala de aula, transformando-o em uma ferramenta para o desenvolvimento e construção da identidade profissional digital. Os desafios estão

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relacionados à seleção de conteúdos, à transposição didática pertinente ao contexto digital e ao posicionamento profissional crítico, não comercial e ingênuo diante da sedução das redes sociais.

Palavras-chave: Internet. Professor. Identidade. Chile.

RESUMEN

Instagram es una red social que ofrece diversas interacciones y usos que van más allá de conectar personas y brindar información. Actualmente, asistimos a una expansión de la práctica pedagógica y a una resignificación de su carácter público a través de las cuentas de docentes que generan y comparten contenidos con fines educativos. El propósito de este estudio es caracterizar el uso de Instagram con fines pedagógicos e identificar qué aspectos de la práctica profesional y la identidad docente están involucrados en el uso de esta red social. Se utilizó una metodología cualitativa para acceder a las experiencias de 20 docentes chilenos mediante un cuestionario y entrevistas en profundidad. El estudio concluye que el principal uso pedagógico de Instagram es crear comunidades educativas digitales para compartir recursos didácticos y experiencias de aula, transformándola en una herramienta para el desarrollo y la construcción de la identidad profesional digital. Los desafíos se relacionan con la selección de contenidos, la transposición didáctica pertinente al contexto digital y el posicionamiento profesional crítico, no comercial e ingenuo ante la seducción de las redes sociales.

Palabras clave: Internet. Profesor. Identidad. Chile.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, and especially during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, pedagogical work has expanded to digital environments, where teachers create, share, and promote educational resources beyond their nearby communities (Casado Expósito & Ciudadreal, 2021). This phenomenon can be observed in social networks such as Instagram, which today position themselves as spaces for 'collective thinking' (Shelton et al., 2020), extending teaching practices outside the traditional classroom. These platforms are redefining professional development and interaction, facilitating access to learning opportunities, and inaugurating a new 'digital teachers' room' (Carpenter & Harvey, 2019) where experiences are discussed and relevant public identities are constructed to understand and analyze (Godoy, 2023; Marcelo-García et al., 2022).

While researchers such as Reza et al. (2023) highlight the potential of social networks to democratize knowledge and position teaching work in global spheres, others warn of risks. On the one hand, platforms such as Instagram are perceived as tools to improve educational quality by promoting innovation (Godoy, 2023); on the other, their indiscriminate use could trivialize pedagogical practices or expose teachers to commercial dynamics (Shelton et al., 2020).

This scenario requires teachers to develop technological skills that go beyond their role as users, moving towards a critical management of social networks as didactic and professional tools (Navarro-Medina et al., 2022). This implies not only creating content, but also discerning how it impacts their professional identity and their relationship with diverse audiences, this being the line of research on which this study is based in the Chilean context.

Recognizing the possible pedagogical potential of social networks merits, among other challenges, a firm commitment to the development of technological skills in future generations of teachers to ensure a critical management of social media as tools for the development of didactic knowledge (Navarro-Medina et al., 2022).

This recognition would imply stressing the public nature of the pedagogical task, since the knowledge shared on social networks puts on the table for discussion how this knowledge or, at least, information, is mediated by ideological and commercial interests (Reid & McKenzie, 2023), of which teachers must be aware. In this regard, studies that analyze teachers' social media profiles point to a concern about the possible displacement of the reflective and critical character of teachers in the face of non-pedagogical interests but commercial and dissemination in digital environments (Carpenter & Harvey, 2019; Chun, 2018; Díaz-Herrera et al., 2022; Foltyn, 2022; Nash, 2021; Pelosi, 2024).

On a more individual level, there are misgivings among teachers regarding the use of social networks for professional purposes (Díaz-Herrera et al., 2022). Ahoo and Eraye (2024) show that interaction between teachers can be affected by the excessive use of social networks, as spending time on them could reduce the quantity and quality of face-to-face interactions.

This study seeks to characterize how Chilean teachers use Instagram for pedagogical purposes, identifying how their practices on this social network configure—or tension—their professional identity. Through a qualitative approach, the shared contents, the ways in which they are shared, as well as the ethical and commercial dilemmas that emerge in this digital space are analyzed.

INSTAGRAM FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES

In recent years, Instagram (IG) has emerged as the preferred social network among teachers, surpassing platforms such as Twitter or Facebook in its pedagogical use (Marcelo-Martínez et al., 2023). This phenomenon is not uniform and is marked by the gender variable, given that it is women who prefer IG to share teaching resources, while men tend to prefer the Twitter platform for the same purpose (Marcelo-Martínez et al., 2023). This gender and generational gap suggests that the dynamics of use are linked to sociocultural and generational factors, given that coincidentally it is the most used social network among younger teachers.

But what does Instagram offer that makes it the preferred social network in education? When comparing the user interfaces of the main social networks, a fundamental characteristic emerges, since unlike text-based networks (e.g., Twitter), IG prioritizes visual and interactive content—such as reels, stories, and carousels—that facilitate the dissemination of pedagogical resources (Reza et al., 2023). For example, the platform's algorithm promotes educational content tagged with hashtags such as #aprendizajesignificativo or #innovacion, connecting teachers from similar disciplines or interests. In addition, tools such as 'live' allow replication and sharing of continuous training dynamics, such as real-time workshops where materials are co-created.

Collaboration on Instagram stands as a central pillar of its pedagogical use, articulated in three key ways according to Carpenter et al. (2020):

- Information search, where teachers with high pedagogical commitment explore resources through the platform's tools, such as hashtags, stories or reels to access innovative methodologies;

- Resource exchange, led by professionals who, thanks to their self-efficacy – confidence in their technical skills – share downloadable materials or tutorials;
- Co-creation, energized by communities of teachers or leaders in personal accounts, who organize workshops, challenges or other instances associated with the exchange of strategies or collaborative materials.

However, this characteristic of pedagogical use on the platform contrasts with a critical research gap: there is no clarity on how these practices shape the professional identity of teachers, particularly in Latin American contexts, limiting the understanding of phenomena such as the tension between pedagogical autonomy and the monetization of content, frequent in accounts with thousands of followers. Carpenter et al. (2020) and Shelton et al. (2020) point out that it is imperative to address these gaps, not only to add to and enrich teacher training, but also to contribute to the construction of a critical digital literacy that makes visible, questions, and allows for a full understanding of the algorithmic and commercial logics of platforms such as Instagram.

PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY OF THE TEACHER AS AN EDU-INFLUENCER

The construction of teacher identity in social networks is an emerging field of research. While recent studies explore the ways in which platforms such as Instagram expand educational spaces (Foltyn, 2022), analyses of opinion leaders or 'edu-influencers' remain limited (Shelton et al., 2020; Singh & Islam, 2019). These teachers, according to Chun (2018), carry out 'public pedagogical practices' – educational actions visible on social networks – that outline professional identities in a way that is sometimes much more decisive than traditional interactions in the classroom. In Latin America, this phenomenon lacks research that addresses its cultural and ethical particularities.

Research in Spain (Marcelo-García et al., 2022) identifies common patterns among teachers active in social networks: horizontal collaboration, in which resources are exchanged without hierarchies or institutions that mediate such exchange. Similarly, constant updating to be aware of local or global trends allows the expansion of networks by incorporating strangers and promoting the horizontality of their professional relationships.

Although these teachers develop aspects of their professional identity on social media, they show a negative assessment of the concept of influencer in educational settings, as they consider that the concept not only does not identify them, but is banal and commercial (Marcelo-García et al., 2022). Thus, what encourages them to be part of social networks is not to be what we could call edu-influencer, but to create collaborative spaces

or communities in which solutions are built together, which does not deny the positive impact on self-esteem as a result of the recognition of their peers.

These characteristics are consistent with those identified by Hidayat et al. (2020) in their analysis of the teaching identity of teachers who use Instagram, detecting four key aspects that profile it: responsibility, commitment, authority, and the need for recognition. The combination of these aspects in the use of social networks has been related to the promotion of interaction, participation and multimodal communication among teachers, contributing to teacher training, identity and professional development (Aslan, 2024).

One of the features of the professional identity that is built on social networks, beyond the educational field, is the commercial nature that the content can acquire. Shelton et al., (2020) question the 'entrepreneurial spirit' that emerges from the analysis of teaching accounts since focusing on the material benefits of promoting a service or product may contravene pedagogical convenience. In other words, the necessary teacher autonomy is put at risk, which must seek the learning and well-being of students and not the commodification of educational content (Davis & Yi, 2022) that is observed, for example, in some teaching accounts associated with websites of didactic products.

In their study, Shelton et al., (2020) also detected that product promotion includes, in many cases, the self-promotion of edu-influencers that transforms them into 'micro-celebrities' with highly stereotyped verbal and visual messages. Ruiz-Sepúlveda et al. (2020) exemplify this media character, in the line of pedagogical celebrity, with the case of a teacher who won the Global Teacher Prize and has more than one million followers on the networks.

From a different perspective, Chun (2018) warns about the use of social networks for learning, since together with it, content is proposed for which critical pedagogy is required. Online spaces, according to this author, can be used to construct hegemonic and naturalized social representations that merit non-naïve professional attitudes. In this regard, Reid and McKenzie (2023) discuss the scope and need for research that addresses public pedagogy in social networks and media, not only to position anti-hegemonic discourses, but also to confront the restrictions and censorship of the corporations that own them.

Finally, it is important to recognize that what a social media user shares in their publications affects the public perception that others build not only about their accounts, but also about their personality (Singh & Islam, 2019), and that this, in the case of teachers, also outlines a professional identity that circulates publicly.

CHALLENGES OF THE PEDAGOGICAL USE OF INSTAGRAM

The use of Instagram for pedagogical purposes poses personal and professional challenges for teachers who share content. The research by Díaz-Herrera et al. (2022) accounts for both, pointing out that from a personal point of view, the way in which content is consumed on IG (feed, stories, reels) generates the need to continue consuming content, due to the addictive resources of the platform.

On a professional level, the use of the platform by pre-adolescents and adolescents within the school system generates the challenge of expanding the logics and communication models that are presented on the platform, so that the content present on it is not the only ones on which knowledge is built, in view of which the promotion of critical thinking for the verification of sources and data is essential.

The distrust detected in this study has an impact on the fact that there are many teachers who are reluctant to participate in the production and/or distribution of pedagogical content on the networks, precisely because of concern about the quality of the content. Other critical points pointed out by these authors are the risk of generalizing pedagogical practices or putting in tension the relationship between personal and professional uses of social networks without clarity of the limits of each of these.

Studies by Shelton et al. (2020) years earlier had already brought to the fore the difficulty of the work of edu-influencers associated with the quality of information. In their study with 48 teachers from different countries, a series of difficulties related to online communication were identified, for example, misunderstandings due to not having face-to-face feedback, diffuse turns to participate in conversations or not being able to make ideological opinions known as they are public spaces. Like the study by Díaz-Herrera et al. (2022), difficulties related to the pedagogical quality of the publications were detected, such as inaccuracies and conceptual errors.

In this regard, Ezquerro and Villamor (2019) conclude from their research with future primary school teachers that it is imperative to develop skills that allow them to search and, above all, handle information that comes from social networks and that require specific management regarding how content is categorized or tagged, with tools such as tags and hashtags.

A not insignificant challenge is related to ethical dilemmas and professional identity, such as knowing one's interlocutors in dimensions that go beyond professional work or being valued not by the profession but by personal behavior. The difficulty of establishing clear boundaries between personal and professional time-spaces is also detected as a problem, as well as the need to dedicate excessive time to networks (Foltyn, 2022) and to

the learning that comes with being up to date in them, to the detriment of their face-to-face pedagogical practices.

In this context, this research analyzes how Chilean teachers address these challenges when using Instagram, identifying which aspects of the teachers' professional identity are related to the use of the platform. Through interviews and content analysis (publications), we identify how a professional identity is configured in a digital space where the educational and the personal collide.

METHOD

This study is framed in a qualitative methodology that accesses teaching experiences and assessments through their discourses, so an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study is sought (García, 2023), without wishing to generalize. Based on its objective, this research has two approaches:

- Characterization of the use of Instagram accounts of Language and Mathematics teachers who work in educational establishments in Chile.
- Analysis of the understanding of professional identity that can be glimpsed from the motivations of teachers regarding the use of Instagram.

PARTICIPANTS

Initially, the universe of the study was made up of all graduates of the Basic General Pedagogy (primary education) career of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile between 2005 and 2020 who had a professional Instagram account. The time range responded to the possibility of comparing graduates of two curricular proposals that have been developed in these years. To make up the sample, an invitation was sent to graduates between those years through an institutional email. However, the response rate was not as expected, which led to an expansion of the universe to graduates of the Pedagogical Training Program for Graduates in both disciplines: language and mathematics for secondary levels, and to graduates from other universities who had studied these careers.

Finally, it was possible to constitute a sample of 20 teachers (18 women and 2 men) who agreed to be part of the study. Informed consent was obtained from each of the teachers before participating in the different stages of the study. Table 1 presents a brief description of the total group of participating teachers.

Table 1. Characterization of the participants

University					Racing			
Location			Financing		School Level		Subject	
Teachers	Capital	Region	Public	Private	Basic	Stocking	Language	Mathematics
	15	5	4	16	13	7	15	5

In the case of the interviews, 5 teachers participated. The selection criteria for this subsample was that the teacher's account had a high frequency of use and that his posts were directly related to the teaching of language or mathematics. The following codes were used to anonymize the interviewees: PL1, PL2, PL3 and PL4 (language teachers 1, 2, 3 and 4); and PM1 (mathematics teacher).

INFORMATION COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

The data collection strategy consisted of the application of two instruments, digitally asynchronous and synchronously. First, a Google Forms© questionnaire was applied to each participant with closed questions (single selection, several options, scales) and short answer questions, which inquired into aspects such as general account information, target audience, content, ethical safeguards, linking with other accounts and use of the social network in the context of the pandemic (see annex 1). An invitation to participate in the study was sent, once the teachers accepted, the informed consent was sent to them by email and then the link to the online questionnaire. This questionnaire was approved by the ethics committee of the University in which the researchers work and was validated by 3 experts. This validation allowed adjustments to be made in the wording of the questions, in the use of concepts and in the length of the instrument.

For the second stage, a semi-structured interview pattern was used that aimed to explore the experiences, perspectives and practices of teachers who use Instagram for pedagogical purposes to delve into the professional identity shared on this social network. The interview pattern included three dimensions: a. Teacher characterization; b. Characterization as an Instagrammer; and c. Didactic challenges in the use of Instagram (see annex 2). This guideline was also approved by the ethics committee and reviewed by 3 expert judges. The interview was conducted online through a videoconference session and was recorded in audio to be later transcribed. The duration of the interview ranged from 25 to 40 minutes.

ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

A thematic content analysis (Abela, 2018) of the results of the online questionnaire was carried out to establish response patterns. The transcribed interviews were analyzed using the Atlas.Ti software, following a coding and categorization process that allowed the identification of emerging themes and patterns. The analysis was performed inductively, allowing codes and categories to emerge from the data themselves.

RESULTS

First, the results obtained from the application of the questionnaire to the 20 teachers to characterize the use of their Instagram accounts are presented; secondly, the analysis of the interviews applied to five of them is reported in order to delve into aspects related to the experiences and motivations to use GI for pedagogical purposes, the generation of communities and the construction of professional identity. These categories emerged from the qualitative analysis and were triggered by the dimensions of the interview pattern.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Characterization of Instagram use

Asked about the purpose of the IG account, the participants pointed out a variety of objectives, among which are the use of the platform to share experiences, interests and pedagogical resources that contribute to the reinforcement of disciplinary content; They also point out that they use it to generate communities of participation, critical reflection and virtual learning that allow collaboration and innovation through the democratization of knowledge. Some teachers stated that they seek to inspire other professionals to make changes in their pedagogical practices or convince students of their abilities.

Regarding the type of pedagogical content published on IG, 8 alternatives were proposed, and more than one could be selected.

Table 2. Type of educational content of IG accounts

You upload content related to:	N	%
1. Explanations of disciplinary or pedagogical content	15	75
2. Workshops, discussions, lives or other collaborative instances	16	80
3. Teacher Training Material Recommendations (articles, books, videos, among others)	18	90
4. Pedagogical reflections	16	80
5. Proposals for activities or exercises	17	85

6. Teaching material	15	75
7. Tutorials on the use of technologies or the construction of pedagogical material	11	55
8. Education-related news	17	85

As can be seen in Table 2, the most selected option is the publication of "Recommendations for training material for teachers" (90%), followed by "Proposals for activities or exercises" (85%) and "Education-related news" (85%). In turn, the least selected option is the publication of "Tutorials on the use of technologies or the construction of pedagogical material" (55%). These responses are consistent with those linked to the purpose of the accounts, especially in terms of sharing resources.

Regarding the origin or source of the published resources, most of the participants indicate that they build and compile resources to publish them (80%), some indicate that they build them (15%) and only one participant who compiles them.

In relation to the source from which the information is published, 90% of the participants collect content from other Instagram accounts, or from search engines such as Google; 75% collect content from social networks other than Instagram; and 85% state that they consider academic sources (books, articles) to select the information they publish. These results account for the positioning of information search engines and social networks as sources that are considered 'academic' and the decreasing use of sources traditionally recognized as such. Another relevant result is that all participants consider other colleagues as a 'source' to generate pedagogical content that they publish on Instagram.

Regarding the criteria for selecting the pedagogical content to be published on IG, the teachers evaluated seven options with a frequency scale ranging from 'Always considered' to 'Never considered'.

Table 3. Content selection criteria

Criteria for selecting content	Always	Almost always	Sometimes	Never
Do you consider that the needs or preferences of your target audience are a reason to select content in your account?	7	10	1	2
Do you consider that curricular relevance is a reason to select content in your account?	9	7	3	1
Do you consider that curricular prioritization is a reason to select content in your account?	3	8	3	6
Do you consider that "viral" content on social networks is relevant inputs for selecting content on your account?	3	6	9	2

Do you consider that the content not addressed in formal education is relevant input for selecting content in your account?	5	11	3	1
Do you consider that the dissemination of your disciplinary area is a reason to select content in your account?	13	5	2	0
Do you consider that the dissemination of successful pedagogical experiences is a reason to select content in your account?	16	2	2	0

When analyzing the results of Table 3, the most valued criteria in the selection of contents are the dissemination of pedagogical experiences that are considered successful, the dissemination of the discipline and curricular relevance. On the other hand, the least valued are the contents that are linked to the curricular prioritization proposed during the pandemic and the contents considered viral on social networks.

It is interesting to note that although it is valued that the contents are curricularly relevant when selecting them, the proposal for prioritization of learning objectives promoted by the Ministry of Education is not valued to the same extent, an issue that was being widely discussed at the time of the study.

Faced with the question What are your challenges when disseminating pedagogical-disciplinary content?, the participants point out that accessibility, selection and the creation of their own content are relevant.

Table 4. Challenges of publications

Challenges	N
Make content accessible	12
Select the content and adapt it to the platform	12
Create your own content	12
Find appropriate resources for each content	6

As can be seen in the table, the challenges are of various types and are linked to aspects such as the search and selection of resources, as well as their creation and accessibility.

The study also investigated the ethical dimension of the use of Instagram for educational purposes, asking them if they took any kind of ethical safeguard in the use of their account. They were proposed various options associated with copyright, care and self-care in digital environments and source verification. The following table presents the data related to these ethical safeguards.

Table 5. Ethical safeguards when posting on Instagram

Ethical safeguards	N
I cite all documents that come from another source	9
I refer through tags to the authors of the information I publish, when this is possible	15
I restrict followers on my account	1
I verify the veracity of the information prior to its dissemination	13
I avoid posting images or videos of minors or I have permission from their legal guardians to do so	17
I request authorization to disseminate images or videos of other people.	11

Considering that participants could select more than one option, it is found that ethical safeguards include aspects such as the non-use of images or videos of minors (85%), safeguarding the authorship of the published content (75%) or verifying the veracity of the information (65%). Participants added other safeguards in addition to those proposed; for example, requesting authorization from other professionals if their content is shared, studying before publishing information if it is not known or not publishing information that has been given to them in their workplaces.

Pedagogical use of Instagram in COVID19 context

Since the research was carried out during the pandemic, Instagram's contribution in the context of distance education was also investigated. The answers to this question were very varied; however, ideas related to communication and training are reiterated; for example, that IG allows conversation with teachers from different parts of the country and abroad or that it encourages the creation of a collaborative community of teachers.

The participants also point out that Instagram was a platform that allowed them to learn about and share pedagogical resources and experiences contributing to teaching innovation; disseminate activities that can be done in a face-to-face or virtual context or access to various resources not only by teachers, but also by students who only had free connectivity to social networks; which made it possible for them to receive content or reinforcement of what they saw in online classes during the quarantine. It is also pointed out that Instagram has become a space for continuous training, as it allows Democratizing learning spaces that were previously only associated with traditional institutions; develop training processes in terms of strategies in online classes; the enhancement of creativity for the construction of didactic resources; and even to meet very specific and pressing needs of teachers, quickly and free of charge or at a low cost.

Finally, it is argued that Instagram allowed them to reflect and question the teaching they do, make visible the reality of teachers during the pandemic and be a space to socialize the professional problems that were caused by remote work.

Although it was not the focus of the study, the contributions of Instagram to direct work with students were also pointed out. For example, a teacher points out that thanks to this social network he was able to motivate my students:

"[...] I invite them to send me messages with their doubts, I upload stories of things I do for them, so that they can prepare to receive some material, I explain some of the content I teach, among others. At the same time, I propose small mathematical challenges so that the time they spend in front of the screen is not wasted time, but also leads them to think and/or reflect" (PM1).

INTERVIEW RESULTS

Motivations and teaching experiences

As for the motivations for using Instagram for pedagogical purposes, these are diverse and are mainly linked to specific personal and professional situations. For example, for one teacher the reason was the social outbreak that occurred in Chile in October 2018 and the subsequent non-attendance at school by many students; for another, it was a complicated health situation that made her question where the contribution and learning achieved as a teacher would be if something happened to her. Another teacher points out that she opens her account as a way of separating the personal space from the professional one, while for a teacher opening it was a way of making these two spaces compatible, to the point of placing it on her curriculum vitae within her application process for jobs in schools.

Regardless of the initial motivation, the participants point out that IG accounts allow teachers to connect with their students, being especially useful in contexts of precariousness, since as one interviewee points out: "Instagram is free, it is with data, they don't need me to follow them, they can follow me and talk to me" (PL2).

The participants positively characterized their trajectories as Instagrammers teachers; they value positively the use of Instagram as a tool for professional development, especially in the most critical moments of the pandemic, as it allowed them not to feel 'lost', constituting themselves as a community of socio-emotional support. By using IG accounts as a way to connect with other teachers in the same situation, they felt part of a community that was going through the same thing. In this line, they affirm that they were comforted to receive positive comments from colleagues or university colleagues about classroom activities. Sometimes, those comments were accompanied by an invitation to dare to share more, which reinforced the initial motivation to open the account.

Communities: on IG and in schools

The concept of community in IG emerges among the participants as a meeting space for teachers and professionals from the world of education, but which can also be integrated by parents, mothers and fathers, and even students and alumni. In cases that are characterized more as a community of teachers, it is indicated that their purpose is to share ideas and experiences to improve professional performance.

One of the interviewees (PL1) comments that through her IG account she has organized teacher improvement workshops and that she has been able to form a teaching community with which she continues to communicate and from which she continues to receive feedback that helps her to improve professionally. In this type of community, the content shared is usually successful classroom experiences, references to teaching resources or quality books. They state that the success of a piece of content is not measured by the number of interactions that the publication has; Although it is recognized that it is positive to see comments and read direct messages from followers, it is valued as a contribution that someone serves such content.

In relation to the levels of knowledge and involvement on the part of the educational community (management, parents, colleagues and students) with the teachers' GI accounts, three positions are clearly distinguished in the participants' statements: a) knowledge and active interaction on the part of the educational community, which is produced by intentional or unintentional actions on the part of the teacher; b) intentional ignorance in the sense of "keeping the spaces" of GI and the work environment separate; c) Neutrality or tensions regarding the knowledge of the account, including "resistance" on the part of the management to publicize the social networks of its teachers.

Teachers whose accounts do not have a high level of interaction with their school administration and their students' parents are generally less self-censoring, and are more willing to express political, ethical, and national opinions. A teacher points out in this regard that, although she worries about the repercussions of what she may publish, she will not stop saying what she thinks, "let what has to happen happen" (PL2). In the face of controversies that may arise with users of the community within the IG account, they feel shielded and supported by the rest of the community of teachers who have IG, which serves as a moderator without having to do so.

Teachers whose accounts have more interaction with their educational communities, on the other hand, feel more "observed", so they are more careful with the content they publish, or they avoid controversial content altogether.

Professional identity at IG

As for the development of professional identity, this is affected by the necessary evolution and growth of Instagram accounts, which implies a "professionalization" of the content, either by learning to make better graphics, taking advice to better plan the publication agenda, knowing about subgenres, formats and operation of the IG algorithm, to mention a few examples.

Among the interviewees there is no consensus on the place that accounts have in relation to work and professional identity as teachers; For some teachers it is a hobby, for others a job and a source of material or monetary reward. The same happens with the decision to plan days of uploading content: sometimes it is useful, other times it is too much work and takes away from the spontaneity of the account. Growth and self-criticism leads teachers to judge the quality of their content, and tend to want to systematize their content in order to generate a "brand", with a certain visual aspect and certain values:

"And I started to define my own brand but for a matter of me understanding where the bike was going... How to know what kind of content I was going to share, what kind of content I wasn't going to share for anything in the world, how to know what my contribution could be in this community that was growing, to define myself" (PL1).

In relation to the construction of a professional voice on Instagram, the interviewees refer to various practices of communication and self-censorship. For example, for a teacher it means not uploading publications to IG account that are very controversial, but that does not mean that she does not have opinions and expresses them in person if necessary; for another, it means not posting about controversial topics, so she avoids them as much as possible, even when it causes her to stop collaborating with other teachers who post content on Instagram.

From the interviews, it is clear that self-censorship is also related to the generation of a climate of respect within the communities of each IG account, and also with their colleagues. It is pointed out more than once that having a position on what are good teaching practices will generate at some point that another colleague will feel criticized. This causes a lot of thought before publishing any type of content.

Finally, the participating teachers address the use of Instagram as a business, highlighting collaborations with companies. Although almost all experiences of collaborations are positive and desirable, no teacher interviewed has expectations of supporting themselves financially through them. In any case, it is positively valued that there is a remuneration for all the work invested in their IG accounts.

In this sense, it is expected that collaborations with companies will make sense; that is, they are companies that are related to the area of education, such as publishers, factories of teaching materials or educational platforms, or that have some relationship with the participants of each Instagram community.

It is also essential for teachers to inquire about each company; for example, by reading user experiences, since every teacher who uses social media knows that by partnering with a company they are putting their reputation and "brand" at stake. One interviewee explains it as follows:

"I have some collaborations but I'm still very careful with that because first my Instagram is not just a showcase, so I wouldn't be all day uploading products and things. And the second thing is that before accepting or not accepting, deciding, I see that it has some relationship with what I do and with the people who follow me" (PL2).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The results that emerge from the analysis of the initial questionnaire and the in-depth interviews allow us to characterize the type of pedagogical use that a group of Chilean teachers give to Instagram, as well as to identify their motivations and how these aspects are related to the configuration of the professional identity of teachers.

The main pedagogical use of the interviewed teachers is to be able to create digital educational communities, sharing diverse educational resources and experiences, both in disciplinary and general pedagogical content; this result is consistent with previous research carried out in other contexts and educational systems (Reza et al., 2023; Richter et al., 2022; Shelton et al., 2020).

To do this, they use academic sources inherited from their initial or continuing training, as well as non-academic sources that can be found in internet search engines or the social networks themselves, given the tools they have depending on the dissemination and massiveness of certain content according to the algorithm that is built.

The use of sources obtained in social networks not only validates the dissemination tools of these networks, but is also aligned with the objective of publicizing effective experiences for disciplinary teaching and learning, with a didactic transposition relevant to the context of dissemination. This is evident in interactions (quotes in hashtag format, reposts, among others) and the download of content in descriptions or comments.

In this process, the challenges that teachers recognize they have to do with the accessibility of the content, its selection and/or creation. There is a clear concern in the care of the exposure of students and even of their own personal or professional positions,

according to the level of exposure that their account has in relation to their educational community.

The motivations of teachers who use Instagram are varied; some refer to personal, professional or even social situations, but all were linked in one way or another by having another way of supporting their students and/or teaching colleagues through educational content relevant to individual criteria.

The different interactions made possible by this social network have allowed teachers to consider Instagram as a tool for professional development through teaching communities, which have also found support and containment networks to face critical situations. However, with respect to the educational communities in which they are immersed, there is discrepancy about their relationship with them, with some teachers being more reserved when it comes to communicating their digital activity in their schools, which leads to generating processes of self-censorship so as not to generate adverse work climates.

These aspects and the development and maintenance of IG accounts generate certain aspects of professional identity, such as self-criticism regarding the quality of the content processed. The permanent and intensive use of social networks exposes participating teachers to dynamics external to the educational field, such as the fact of monetizing their production through paid collaborations with external companies. In the case of participating teachers, strong efforts are made to ensure that these collaborations are relevant to the context and content of their accounts.

In relation to the professional identity that is built in IG, the study states that, although the interviewed participants are young teachers and are familiar with social networks, it involves high rates of learning about their tools and possibilities, especially if there is an expectation of moving towards a 'professional' and not a personal use. In this learning process, the expansion or resignification of the public nature of the teaching task is identified as tension (Reid & McKenzie, 2023), to the extent that not only other teachers, but also students, families, or school directors can enter IG. The commercial nature (Carpenter et al., 2020) acquired by some IG accounts and the search for peer recognition in a space in which the horizontality of professional relationships is rather promoted are also observed as challenges.

This study provides evidence on the use of the GI social network in Latin American teachers, particularly Chileans, which expands on similar findings from previous research (Carpenter et al., 2020; Díaz-Herrera et al., 2022; Marcelo-García et al., 2022; Marcelo-Martínez et al., 2023; Richter et al., 2022; Shelton et al., 2020), allowing us to account for



similar experiences and, above all, patterns of use, motivations, tensions, and qualities of the teaching identities that are constructed and circulate in this type of network. However, the study has limitations given the size of the sample (20 teachers), the focus on two school disciplines (language and mathematics) and the use of GI in the context of distance education triggered by the pandemic.

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