

**Dissecting the Social Construction of Motherhood:
The Use of Facebook and How it Affects the Maternal-child Relationship**

By

Hallie Jordan

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Kristen Karlberg, Sponsor

Carina Vocisano, Second Reader

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Abstract:

This virtual ethnographic study explores the social journeys of motherhood, and how technology impacts the social journey. The goal of this research production is to dissect the mother's use of Facebook and to uncover if it has an interference between the maternal and child relationship. This is a non-participant observation study that observes the social structures of motherhood within a social platform that involves mothers and caregivers their right to socially exercise themselves within a social group. Through endless literature research, the interpretation of parenting and technology, moms filling different social gaps and the influence of social media on motherhood; allowed curiosity to disclose if there is an interference in the reality performance of motherhood between the mother and child. The data recorded and observed allowed analysis on how mothers interact with each other in virtual environments in order to gain an understanding of the contextual atmosphere. The results indicated logic behind the mothers use of Facebook forum's for the purpose social identity along with the concept of performative motherhood which was facilitated through Erving Goffman's theories. However, this study contained many limitations within its data structure. This derives from the inability to contextualize if moms were withdrawing from parenting to participate within the social forums. This was not incorporated into the methodology which formed difficulty to find conclusions.

Introduction:

Motherhood is the long-term journey of encompassing the embodiment and the social role of a mother. The role of a mother is socially constructed through the ideas of sex, gender and sexuality that gives origin to an infant or child with nurturing qualities. Through a sociological

lens, the construct of motherhood is the process of being a mother that contain principles of political and social order within social institutions. The sociology of motherhood involve ideologies that shapes thinking, experiencing and practicing. With the use of technology and social media today, a new social construction of motherhood has emerged overtime. This new social construction include local (or distant) moms coming together in a virtual form to exercise the contemporary ways of communicating through technology such as Facebook. Over the last decade this path of communication has been in popular demand and is now embedded as a form of dominant communication within society. This research will explore a) the mothers use of Facebook and b) whether it has an affect on the maternal-child relationship. The anatomy and role of motherhood has always been a fascination too many which this study will unfold.

Literature Review:

The transition into parenthood can be very difficult emotionally, mentally, and physically. Motherhood is overwhelmingly challenging because of its imperatively crucial role within any age or stage of a child's life. While there are many social roles involved in life and in parenthood, being a mother is the most significant because of the act of ongoing nurture and strength of influence this role has over a child's life. During this time the social pressures of motherhood are at their highest and ideas of perfectionism surface from the pressure of society's viewpoint. Access to the internet and online parenting such as Facebook has provided parenting and new mothers another medium to gain and share information of motherhood along with their personal experience. In this section, content of literature pieces will explore (a.) How social media has emerged into the daily life of motherhood and parenting? (b.) How the social

construction of Facebook has affected motherhood and does it have an affect on the maternal-child relationship/interaction in present day?

This literature review will present insight of researched descriptions along with summaries of relevant studies that involve the impact of social media and how it has affected the style of parenting into a new social construction. It will also cover how children are subjected to their mother's use of social media outlets. I have discovered various reasons as to why mothers and parents (in general) used social media excessively and how it has become a common point of question but contain many limitations within most research. The most common topic that was reoccurring within the found literature are how parents "use of social media as a form of online social support and identify which social media sites parents use for parenting and why." (Haslam, 2017) For example, in one study conducted by Haslam in 2017, a "total of 523 parents complete the Australia-wide online survey. Results indicated that parents endorsed Facebook, parenting websites and blogs as the most frequently used social media sources". Yet, "new parents' efforts at social connection and validation play out in cyberspace as well as on the playground. For new mothers in particular, the opportunities for connection and affirmation that Facebook promises may be especially attractive."(Schoppe-Sullivan, avorsky, Bartholomew, Sullivan, Lee, Dush, & Glassman, 2017) Yet, research has failed to show rich and supporting details of how the techno-interference of social media use within mothers; identify less parent-child interaction.

Goffman's Theory

The theory that best coincides with this research was through sociologist, Erving Goffman's theories of the symbolic-interactionism. This perspective is laid out through the dramaturgical approach which worked best through the simple act of observation. This approach works well within the research of the social use of media (i.e. Facebook) for mothers/parents because of the social interaction of posting on online forums which stimulates the role of motherhood for resourceful and communicative purposes. However, the potential of this interaction can be a harmful intrusion between the social role of motherhood and the socially developing child. Society's expectation of a mother's daily performance consists of fulfilling every nurturing want and need to a child under the age of 14. This performance includes active and organized play to keep the child entertained at every possible moment to create social, learning and sensory skills. Creating nutritious meals multiple times a day is also part of a mother's daily performance. While the expectation of this is rigorous and is similar to a full-time job, the presumption of this performance is very limiting on the social role of motherhood. "Although standing, broadly in the symbolic interactionist tradition, and concentrating attention on face-to-face phenomena, Goffman's interest lay in displaying how even our most minute and apparently insignificant activities are socially structure and surrounded by ritual." (Jary et al, 2006)

Presentation of Self

Goffman's theory of Presentation of Self, aids explanation of society through the everyday interaction of people and how all people are actors playing a social role within society. This also analyzes everyday behavior between people to explain society's functions. Interaction

is a societal framework of people living in a world to create social meaning to social objects. This approach works well within the social use of media (i.e. Facebook) for new mothers/ mothers/ and parents because of the social interaction of posting online stimulates the role of motherhood for resourceful and communicative purposes

Technology use and Distracted Parenting

Technology use has been conformed into daily life. Majority of the population has a mobile phone that is present with them at every moment. Technology devices and the use of social media have been infiltrated into family life to the point where it has radically altered how we live, communicate, share and produce knowledge. This infiltration is pervasive and yet invasive to the social construction of family life. Traditional family life is characterized to be sacred with intimate, daily, face-to-face interaction with meaning and value; yet has now been modified to the succumbing of digital interaction. Digital interaction leaves absolutely no room for privacy or proper social bonding that is essential to child growth/development within a social dynamic. The theory of family in the socialization of children is pivotal for a child's growth in social development. In order to be an active social agent within society, there needs to be constant activities with facial and physical interaction within the family; in order to understand and perform relevant social behaviors in society's social institutions (i.e. outdoor settings, relationships/friendships, school, religion etc). With the interference of technology use and excessive hours on social media between parents and children; these interactions become limited and less meaningful. This then can intervene with a child's understanding of what it means to be an active social agent and how to conduct these behaviors appropriately according to their social setting. The new parental-interaction style can interrupt an ancient emotional cueing system,

whose mark is responsive communication and the basis of most human learning. “Child development experts say, the “serve and return” style of communication is the vocal pattern parents tend to adopt during exchanges with infants and toddlers marked by a higher-pitched tone, simplified grammar, and engaged, exaggerated enthusiasm is what developing babies can’t get enough of. “One study showed that infants exposed to this interactive, emotionally responsive speech style at 11 months and 14 months knew twice as many words at age 2 as ones who weren’t exposed to it.” (Christakis, 2018)

The emotional cueing system is so essential to early learning that with the increased use of mobile devices, it is interrupted. The establishment of smart-phone impaired strollers operator seems to be another developing matter for the future of parenting. There is now a designated spot for caregivers smartphone that directly separates the parent/caregiver to the child. “One consequence of such scenarios has been noted by an economist who tracked a rise in children’s injuries as smartphones became prevalent. (AT&T rolled out smartphone service at different times in different places, thereby creating an intriguing natural experiment. Area by area, as smartphone adoption rose, childhood ER visits increased.” (Dean, 2014) These findings attracted a little amount of media attention due to the physical dangers posed by this concept of ‘distracted parenting’, but we have been slower to reckon with its impact on children’s cognitive development. Not only does it raise concern for injury but interfere with the child ability to recognize their face of their caregiver if there is now a designated spot on the stroller that blocks the ability for facial recognition.

The concern of the emotional cueing system being impeded through the mothers/parents use of Facebook via technology, an even bigger burden is the long-term behavioral affect that

can discontinue at an early age; if the child is unable to resonate with an emotion and not able to process it behaviorally. McDaniel and Radesky, conducted a study in relation to the techno-interference in correlation with parenting and in-depth interviews revealed that “parents reported having more difficulty multitasking between children and their mobile device, making it more difficult to read and respond to child cues and effectively manage difficult child behavior (Radesky et al., 2016). This concept is supported by naturalistic mealtime observations of children escalating their behavior in order to get the attention of their mobile device using care-givers, who then sometimes responded with anger or frustration (Radesky et al., 2014). An alternative explanation for our findings is that mothers who perceive their children as more behaviorally dysregulated may use digital technology during parent–child activities as a means of withdrawal (Nakamura, 2015), taking a break from difficult social interactions so that they can lower their stress levels.

The online world is an emerging field site for mothers and parents that offer a vast amount general information resources and human experiences. However, the immoderate use of social media through technology interference is a point of concern. When how much consumption of social media use is too much? On the behalf of parenting and the well-being of the child. According to a study conducted by Pew Research, that sampled telephone surveys interviewed parents (2,007-individual participants) across the United States, found that “Moms who use Facebook are more likely to check the platform several times a day compared with dads (56% vs. 43%). Young parents (those under the age of 40) also are more likely to use Facebook one a daily basis than are 40 and older.” (Duggan, Maeve, et al.) There are limitations in research supporting the struggles of technology interference that were not faced in past decades and how

this can weaken the family relationships and foundation. It is now extending to the level where it is permanently fixed into our society as a new form of social construction. The way its refining our methods of communication i.e. texting, calling, face-timing, pictures via social media via digital technology is astonishing. “Indeed many adults respond that they cannot live without technology (such as cell phones, the internet and Facebook) (Popkin, 2011; Rainie & Keeter, 2006), and qualitative interviews reveal that many individuals experience discomfort when they have to temporarily disconnect (i.e., turn their phone off for a period of time) (Jarvenpaa & Lang, 2005). In other words, individuals are developing strong emotional attachments to their technology that did not necessarily exist in our society in the recent past.” (1.2 Technology Use)” (McDaniel, B. T., & Coyne, S. M. et al, 2016) Another study reported by Ante-Contreras, conducted on ‘how distracted parenting through social media affects the parent-child attachment’. This study’s data was organized by surveys and personal interviews in “hopes to understand whether the correlation between the amount of hours a parent uses social media and any number of parental qualities.”(McDaniel, B. T., & Coyne, S. M. et al, pg iii) However their findings included research limitations as well because most of the personal interviews involved in data collecting conveyed confirmation bias; which hindered raw evidence from what they study needed.

The considerable pattern I am acknowledging throughout these studies is that all of the individual studies are being performed through surveys and personal interviews which result in limitations because they all include to have a substantial amount of confirmation bias of the participant’s personal beliefs of parenting along with their perception and experience through

parenthood. This makes it exceptionally difficult for researchers to decipher truthful data in regards to similar topics.

Mother's use of Facebook to Fill Different Social Gaps for Social Support

This work will highlight the journey of motherhood and how social media, like facebook, instagram e.t.c fulfills social gaps for social support. With the rising use of social media within the journey of motherhood, forms of communication habits has changed drastically, so much that the sensation of the fingers on a digital screen is more meaningful than face-to-face interaction. Two studies have supported this argument of social support in parenting and that this can be very beneficial to the parent to seek new techniques and ways of parenting to benefit the child. Mother's use this form of communication for many purposes, most popularly for seeking parental advice. The use of Facebook provides the opportunity for mothers to access social support online. "On Facebook parents can post their own concerns and receive likes or comments on their own page, but they can also join topic specific parenting groups where a range of topics can be discussed simultaneously and where friendships can develop." (Haslam, 2017)

In a world where new parenting education emphasizes administering parenting as a skill, mothers remarkably use online parenting for peer support as a way of making sense their parental identity and skills. "By exchanging experiencing and advice with others (e.g., on difficulties of infant sleep, breastfeeding, and balancing work and family), parents are able to normalize their own experiences and find their own strategies for handling everyday parenting. (Hall & Irvine, 2009; Madge & O'Connor, 2006; Nicholas et al, 2009; Plantin & Daneback, 2010)." (Sjöberg, Lindgren et al) This targets young mother's, especially between the ages of

nineteen and twenty years old, to be active within social media platforms and participate in social forums as it will serve to be pragmatic and instrumental in their journey since society's social stigma around being a 'young parent' is vigorously degrading of their success of parenting.

“Through online support and information, parents are able to get information concerning their child's normative development and what they, as a parent are encountering at that instant (Dworkin et al., 2013, Warren, Allen, Okuyemi, Kvnasy & Hecht, 2010). Another study where 154 women and 150 men (couples) were interviewed in a larger study in the Midwest on the use of Facebook in the transition process into parenthood, which indicated that “mothers perceived an increase in use of over the transition. When more mothers' Facebook friends were family members or relatives, and when fathers reported connecting with more of their Facebook friends outside of Facebook, they reported better parental adjustment. For mothers, however, more frequent visits to Facebook accounts and more frequent content management were each associated with higher levels of parenting stress.” (Pg. 455, Sjöberg, Lindgren et al)

Social Media Influencing ideas of Perfectionism within Motherhood

“Maternal identity confirmation is conceptualized as the extent to which a mother seeks external validation of her domestic roles (Allen and Hawkins 1999), which is characterized by a focus on home, family, and domestic work.” (Schoppe-Sullivan, S., Yavorsky, J., Bartholomew, M., Sullivan, J., Lee, M., Dush, C., & Glassman, M. et al, 2017) With new mothers especially held by unyielding expectations on how to behave once a newborn is in the picture turn to Facebook for both support in fulfilling those expectations and validation.

Social media use within motherhood is thought to communicate idealized images and discourses of motherhood. “As such, it may present a risk factor for poor mental health in

mothers who strive for perfection and compare themselves to the ideal presented in social media.” (D., T., & L. et al, 2018) Within new mothers this can be a major sign of postpartum depression and instablized mental health especially with women who associate with a specific type of perfectionism . “The present study examined the influence of Facebook and Instagram on the relationship between perfectionism in mothers and their mental health. A sample of 201 mothers completed an online survey. Two dimensions of perfectionism were assessed: Self-Orientated Parenting Perfectionism (SOPP) and Societal-Prescribed Parenting Perfectionism (SPPP).” (D., T., & L. et al, 2018) The results to this study revealed that the amount of time the mothers used social media had no impact but mothers who exhibited SOPP contributed to symptoms of anxiety and depression which is common in postpartum recovery. A prevailing admiration for this kind of behavior is flaunted and romanticize on social media where celebrities and high class individuals expose their life and journey through pregnancy and their transition into motherhood. This is portrayed through posting pictures and locations of attending mommy-and-me classes, breastfeeding with no pain or problems and having lunches with other mommy’s pretentiously making ‘mommyhood’ look easy. This projects ‘performative mother’ through social media channels, “where mothers endlessly browse through social media platforms, “combined with a virtual flood of content from brands, is in danger of becoming a form of oppression, rather than a source of inspiration, for mothers. According to parenting website BabyCentre 2016 ‘21st century Mum’ report, first time mother-to-be spend 7.8 hours a day online, up from 7.5 hours a day in 2014. Almost half (45%) of women with children below the age of five agreed they ‘need to check social networking sites daily.’ While social media has provided a creative outlets and sense of community, in many ways the burdens on new mothers

can be worsened by its insatiable demands, endless and unfiltered information, unwarranted expression of opinions and airbrushed imagery.” (Kemp, N. et al, 2016)

Mothers who seek greater external validation of these roles are believed to have more strongly internalized cultural expectations for motherhood and their mothering identity hierarchy and more central to their notions of an ideal self. (Brenner et al. 2014)” (Schoppe-Sullivan, S., Yavorsky, J., Bartholomew, M., Sullivan, J., Lee, M., Dush, C., & Glassman, M. et al 2017) As social media is evident to be a form of escapism by a study conducted through “qualitative interviews, many stay-at-home mothers reported using digital technology as a way to “escape” the boredom or frustrations of childrearing, or to regulate their own emotions or arousal”(Radesky et al., 2016). However society’s perspective of disengaging in this manner is perceived as “bad parenting” when in reality there is really no indication of being a ‘proper’ or ‘bad’ parenting unless it is in the result of complete abuse or negligence. “The recent growth of easily accessible social networking sites has further facilitated social comparison behaviors (Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert et al, 2009). Given the link between perfectionism and poor maternal mental health, social networking sites such as Facebook and Instagram may present as a particular risk factor for mothers who strive for perfection and compare themselves to the ideals presented on social media.” (Padoa, T. et al) Due to the social comparison theory of mothers comparing their experience of motherhood to other mothers online, the positive and negative self-evaluations that are being performed to via social channels is becoming more common for analyzation during a times of stress and/or change. “Although limited in number, studies have emerged examining new mothers’ engagement with Facebook use. For instance, a recent study found that new mothers engaged in Facebook to promote images and behaviors that align with

the motherhood ideal (Schoppe-Sullivan et al., 2017). More specifically, Schoppe-Sullivan assessed societal-prescribed parenting perfectionism and Facebook use in mothers. According to their findings, it was not the quantity of time spent on Facebook, rather the quality of the interaction that impacted on the mental health of new mothers.” (Padoa, T. et al)

The awareness of pressure to fulfill society’s high standards of parenting is an ongoing cycle for women who satisfy this role. This especially is present during the most vulnerable period which is the transitioning period into motherhood that can most likely lead to symptoms of postpartum depression. A unique study performed by J. Collet was designed as a preliminary study of how mothers say they confirm their own identities as well as shape the impressions other have of them through the management of their child’s appearances. “The article also discusses responses surrounding the importance of first impressions, differences in meanings attached to children's spoiled appearances, and the sacrifices made in motherhood. Results show that women do use well-dressed and groomed children to enact and confirm identities as “good mothers” and to protect and enhance their own self-concepts during the course of everyday social interaction.” (Collett, 2005) The maternal idea of first impressions itemizes the importance that mother’s have on society’s social outlook on children as well as their social role within real life and online culture. Which then discloses that Goffman’s theory of the presentation of self is also vital within this research because of how engraved it is within the social regulations, values, and rules that we have that place meaning on society. However, the physical appearance of how their child looks is valued and shared; by the portrayal in person and online through pictures or videos that are shared and connected through these online social

forums. This reaches and connects with other moms who share the same social pressures and feelings.

Methodology

This research was designed to be a virtual ethnographic study where I part take in non-participant observation and observe the social structures of motherhood within a social platform this being, Facebook; that involved mothers/caregivers their right to socially exercise themselves within a social group. I actively participated in observational research methods online through Facebook. I recorded and observed data on this research on two social mom forum's that were within close geographical range within two different counties. This allowed me to analyze how mothers interact with each other in this social environment in order to understand the culture. The counties that these social groups are located in are in the Hudson Valley of New York. One forum resided within Dutchess County while the other was based in Lower Westchester County. The name of the social forum's I observed within Facebook were the "Dutchess County Moms" group which involved around 8,177 group members and "Bronx & Westchester Moms' Group" which contain 2,574 members. I kept a record of a weekly checklist along with field notes of how many posts were made on the group page within a day and a overall consensus count of how many posts were made at the end of the week. The forums had interesting descriptions into relation to its purpose for the social group, it captions: "You have just joined an awesome group of supportive local moms here. Please take a moment to familiarize yourself with our rules below: The Dutchess County Mom's Group is intended to talk about local events, plan meet-ups and chat with other local moms. While we rarely have any

issues with keeping conversation pleasant, we ask that you keep your comments respectful at all times and same rules apply as kindergarten here, if you have nothing nice to say please say nothing at all. This is NOT the place to sell things or promote a business (unless asked within a post). While we do our best to notify you and/or ask you to reword your post, posts may be deleted without a notification.” (Dutchess County Moms Group, Facebook) I begin to observe how the ideals of this social framework is expected within this forum and how this outlet contains many social rules within a small construction. This forum shares a reference guide on what matters are acceptable to share, for example; news or happenings that are published in the local news paper (only); utilizing the search bar to share recommendations for professionals and experiences; no use of profanity; and no professional soliciting. While the Bronx & Westchester Moms’ Group title’s about the same in regards to soliciting but not as lengthy and descriptive of expectation or requirements the group holds as a collective. This group looks forward to meeting other moms within the local community as well as their children.

The collection of data was determined by referencing the recorded data to the checklist that contained variables in relation to the variety of posts along with fields notes that were coded precisely to emotion and sequence. This was established by the classification of social interaction that was on the forum and whether it pertained to the social role of motherhood, in the regards of their child, or through sorted miscellaneous social interaction/bonding with other group members.

Results

The social forums were actively monitored over the course of three weeks with daily observation in both of the social forums and weekly field notes that were summarized by the recorded data for that week. Along with field notes were screenshots of posts that were documented on the forums that helped me articulate the data I was receiving. The data recorded throughout the weeks in the Dutchess County Moms' Group had a substantial more amount of social interaction within the group in comparison to the Bronx & Westchester Moms' Group. The average total for the three weeks contained around one-hundred and eighty posts within the DCMG, which do not include the social interaction in which these posts received. Within the Bronx & Westchester Moms' group consisted on an average of one-hundred and twenty posts over the course of data collection which is substantially less than what the DCMG was engaging.

DCMG (Dutchess County Moms' Group)

Within the recorded weeks, an average of 60 posts were recorded for each week. Forty-four of the posts were not in relation to a child or in the matter of motherhood but contained miscellaneous social interaction such as, seeking recommendations to venues, aestheticians, specialist doctors and where to find certain products (that were the best). This incorporates the social discourse of social identity within this social forum. Motherhood is a full-time and a minute to escape from the social discourses of motherhood, is something easily cherished and meaningful to exercise. Some responses throughout the data collection during February 2019 were:

“Have any moms looked into or have done laser treatment? Im looking into getting above my lip done. Is it one time or something you need to maintain?”

Responses were in the context of recommendations and experiences from others within the forum.

“Best thing I’ve ever done.... U have to go back several times bc the hair grows in different stages its been prob 10 years and the only thing I’ve ever had to do is tweeze or shave off a hair or two when it randomly grows in.”

Other posts were also within the same context of this one. Some direct examples:

“Hey Mom’s! My husband has a milestone birthday coming up. I was torn between throwing him a party and going away overnight trip or weekend with NO KIDS! I asked friends/family their opinion. The trip away won. My question is, where is a great spot to get away for a few days?”

“Hi! I need help finding a hypoallergenic mascara and eyeliner! I’m allergic to everything! Thank you in advance” ----- (DCMG, Facebook)

This is allowing the moms within this forum to socially connect on a materialistic levels. I recognize how posts and comments were similarly correlated to these kinds of subjects of recommendations and other moms joining in to input their personal encounters with materials such as beauty, products, locations throughout the entire process of observation. This concept of ‘performative mother’ was highly demonstrated throughout the process of data collection. Rather than viewing the performance of motherhood biologically, but rather emphasizing upon what mothers do self-consciously. Most of these recommendations for venues and activities require a

household with a steady income to freely engage within these activities. Perhaps, the posts are an example of symbolic interactionism where moms socially interact by commenting briefly their opinions which symbolizes they know where to go and what to do because they have done it before and had a great experience. As a collective group of moms this develops their social identity on these forums which in foresight is an important aspect within their social peers because they will engage within the post much more frequently. Performance of maternity online is purposeful in defining who they are and how they live through the form of branding online. This new version of motherhood that positions itself in front of an audience seeking reward, an identity, beyond motherhood itself.

B&WMG (Bronx & Westchester Moms' Group)

Within this group over the recorded weeks an overall total of ninety posts were recorded over the course of three weeks. This averaged out to thirty posts per week in the social forum. Twenty out of the thirty posts per week strictly pertained to motherhood, this was determined by the checklist of what the post was, if it pertained to motherhood and how much engagement it received. I was able to acknowledge through the data collected the social bonding that occurred within the posts and responses. Yet, I found less engaging activity on the forum in the terms of post. B&WMG exhibited much more of an intimate environment in the use of messaging and seeking motherly advice from others. For example:

“Anyone ever use Astor counseling services here in the Bronx? I will be taking my 4 y.o. This week and hoping it will be a good place for his emotional problems he’s been having. Any other recommendations just in case it doesn’t work out?”

“So i stopped breastfeeding when my son was a month old. I regret it.. i noticed yesterday i still have some milk in my breast mind you my son is going on 4 months old. Is there anything i can do to try and restart breastfeeding or is it too late? Im hoping i still have a chance since i saw some milk and today i tried pumping and even tho i didn't fill not even an ounce with both breast still i was able to get milk out from both.”

“Hey ladies! Throwing a birthday party in the house for my soon to be 5 year old. What food can I get for about 20-25 people for like \$100 besides pizza. Want Easy food bc it's for kids but feel like we always have pizza!!”

“Hello! I would love to help a mother in need or a shelter. I have an infant car seat, a play pen, and a high chair. If anyone knows of anyone or any shelter I can donate these to, please let me know!”

This forum authentically supported my literature review, in the essence of mothers remarkably using online parenting for peer support as a way of making sense their parental identity and skills. Not disclosing that the DCMG forum did not display this quality of posts, it did, though it was substantially less than what I observed within the B&WMG forum. As Abramson states, “these real connections are becoming more important. Clare Groombridge, founder and own of social-media and marketing agency South Coast Social, believe that the rise of instant video-sharing through social platforms, will lead to a shift to more genuine reviews of experiences, products that mothers can identify with in a positive way, and help brands forge a more personal relationships.” (Abramson et al, 2018)

Discussion

To understand the social construction of motherhood on Facebook that has shaped ‘new’ techniques of social interaction toward motherhood in the social media atmosphere is to understand the ideas of performative motherhood. This is exercised through Goffman’s theory presentation of self while conforming to a social identity in which “the expression of these identities may be done through self-presentation in which individuals choose to convey a desired image through information that is either (a) *given* (i.e., directly stated) or (b) *given off* (i.e., indirectly communicated through cues and other information; Stryker, 1959).” (Schoppe-Sullivan, Yavorsky, Bartholomew, Sullivan, Lee, Dush, & Glassman, 2017) This is through the performance of self through the interaction of people and how all people are actors playing a social role within the social realm of society.

The goal achieved of this research was to obtain a social identity within the social forums to create more of an engaging presence online with other mothers. This took place within the DCMG through the concept of ‘performative motherhood’ which coincides with the conclusion of social media promoting beliefs of perfectionism within the performance of motherhood. Mothers on the DCMG participated in social interaction that contained branding through the consumption of products, locations, material possessions and recommendations. This was examined through the posts that shared views of ‘having it all together’ while being able to afford and find personal time or luxury time within the socialization of family. This correlates back to the literature of Haslam on the maternal ideas of how “first impressions itemizes the importance that mother’s have on society’s social outlook on children as well as their social role within real life and online culture.” The B&WMG supported the notion of moms using Facebook

to fill different social gaps. This was also examined through the personal and intimate messages through posts that were shared socially within that forum. The mom's on this forum exhibited valid responses in regards to Sjöberg article in the sense that when these moms "exchanging experiences and advice with others (e.g., on difficulties of infant sleep, breastfeeding, and balancing work and family), parents are able to normalize their own experiences and find their own strategies for handling everyday parenting. (Hall & Irvine, 2009; Madge & O'Connor, 2006; Nicholas et al, 2009; Plantin & Daneback, 2010)." (Sjöberg, Lindgren, et al)

Limitations

Be as it may, the literature provided authenticity to parts of the research, yet there are still many limitations. As there is evidence of 'performative motherhood' influencing ideas of perfectionism and moms using Facebook to fill different social gaps; there was no evidence of the use of technology through Facebook that caused distracted parenting. Perhaps this was a result due to the kind of study that was produced considering the lack of data structure. It was difficult to contextualize whether or not moms were withdrawing from parenting to participate within these social forums. However, through this production, there was no way of constructing or recording how much Facebook use the mother was consuming given the type of study this was that was solely supported through observation. There is no probable cause within this study of how moms withdraw from parenting to be socially active on social forums, unless that was recorded through voluntary and monitored participants that are willing to be tracked.

Conclusion

Mothers social use of Facebook is evidently used within the Dutchess County Moms' Group for the social construction of performative motherhood. Given the contextual messages

from this group specifically, this influenced the concepts of perfectionism in motherhood in the virtual atmosphere. While the Bronx & Westchester Moms Group is used to create social identities to fulfill social gaps within motherhood. This is developed through the research production of the observation of the social structures of motherhood in the social platforms. Despite the research limitations, the potential of uncovering the answer to the interference of the reality performance of motherhood between the mother and child relationship is still applicable for future research.

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