

**Becoming a Mom: Intersectionality and Fashion Consumption for Millennial Latinas and
the Role of Social Media Influencers**

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Degree

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to *my parents* who came to this country with a dream – to build a wonderful life for themselves and their daughters filled with endless opportunities and unimaginable experiences. Mami y papi, WE DID IT!

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In the words of Sandra Cisneros: *“If you know two cultures and two languages, that intermediate place where the two don’t perfectly meet, is really interesting”* (Behar, 2008, para. 19).

ABSTRACT

When it comes to motherhood for women of color, the topic of women empowerment is scarce, and the media mostly portrays Latinas through traditional ethnic stereotypes. The advent of social media has presented women the opportunity to engage in identity formation as they exercise empowerment in choices and self-monitoring online. A good example of this transition in power involves fashion influencers who use their personal influence to change the meaning of motherhood, making it more accessible and realistic to women in general. However, a lack of diversity remains within the influencer industry as white women are the majority. Drawing upon Intersectionality theory, Performance studies, and Self-in-Relation theory, an interpretive inquiry of in-depth interviews and digital ethnography was used to explore and understand Latinas' multiple identities of themselves as women, mothers, and ethnic minorities, as they navigate through social media representations of womanhood. Five main themes were uncovered in the data: (a) Becoming a Mom, (b) Forming Motherhood Ideals, (c) Encountering Reality Checks, (d) Adapting To My Work in Progress, and (e) Referencing Fashionable Mother Influencers. The findings revealed that Latina millennial mothers' use FMIs' narratives to construct a more adaptive mothering style and to engage in effortless online shopping experiences. Importantly, as Latinas use technology to create and amplify their voices on and off social media, the misrepresentation of Latinas and lack of relevant stories can be diminished. Implications for academia and industry practices are also presented.

Keywords: intersectionality, Latinas, motherhood, social media influencers

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The popularization of celebrity moms such as Princess Diana in the 1980s and Demi Moore in the 1990s transpired as pregnancy images adorned the covers of *People* and *Us* magazine (Douglas & Michaels, 2005). This fascination is also reflected in the evolving concept of the *yummy mummy*, a demography of enchanting and fashionable mothers presented in the media who create aspirational yet wildly unattainable goals among ordinary women (O'Donohoe, 2006). The *Netflix* reality television show, *Yummy Mummies*, is a good example that represents the phenomenon in contemporary culture. The reality series centers on the extravagant lives of four expecting non-celebrity mothers in Australia (Bernardini, 2019) as they traverse through their distinctive pregnancies in glamorous attire and lifestyle (Blanton, 2018). Although these women engage in acts of resistance toward the traditional ideal of motherhood (e.g., sacrificing the self), the reality tv series represents limiting and distant portrayals of women's experiences (TV Week, 2019), particularly for Latina/o audiences in the US. In fact, leading culture ideologies on motherhood highlight the white, middle class experience (Gibson, 2019), further marginalizing certain groups such as Latina women.

When it comes to motherhood for women of color, the topic of women empowerment is scarce (Collins, 1994), and the media mostly portrays Latinas through traditional ethnic stereotypes. For instance, in the television series *Desperate Housewives* the storyline spotlights four women and mothers who, as they navigate domestic dramas such as unsuccessful nuptials, outlandish children, and intense love affairs, embody domesticity and femininity (Hill, 2010; Morgan, 2007). One of these characters, Gabrielle Solis characterizes a Latina homemaker who

is portrayed by Eva Longoria, a famous American actress of Mexican descent (Merskin, 2007). While Gabrielle's character represents a resilient and determined woman (Merskin, 2007), she furthers the *Hot-Latina* and *Exotic Other* stereotypes as she deviously utilizes her sex appeal to achieve her desires (Fernandez, 2015; Martynuska, 2016; Merskin, 2007). In prominent television and the US media in general, Latinas are either represented as selfless and virtuous beings or as cunning sexual femme fatales (Erba, 2018). Indeed, women of color remain underrepresented in US media, and when represented, they are disempowered, belittled, or oppressed (Merskin, 2011; Valdivia, 1998).

However, the advent of social media has offered these women the opportunity to engage in identity formation as they exercise empowerment in their choices and self-monitoring of their online presence (Carstensen, 2013; Shepherd, 2014). Social media sparked a transition in agency regarding self-portrayal and social dialogue (Chen, Pain, & Zhang, 2018). A good example of this transition in power involves fashion influencers who utilize their personal influence to change the meaning of motherhood, making it more accessible and realistic to women in general (Strugatz, 2018). As seasoned fashion influencers reach different milestones in their lives (e.g., marriage and motherhood), their content builds cultural meaning (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017; Duffy & Hund, 2015). Indeed, fashionable mother influencers' (hereafter FMIs) share discourses on how they balance diverse roles such as being women, mothers, and creatives who attract and influence a vast audience (Redazione, 2018). Still, a lack of diversity exists within the influencer industry as white women are majority (Graham, 2019).

This study highlights the importance of social media as a tool to construct and proclaim identity for Latina women alike the FMIs they encounter online. One example of ways women reclaim power is through fashion consumption choices. The current social presence of FMIs

demonstrates that self-fashioning is a foundation for self-gratification and allows women to proclaim their identity (Twigg, 2018). Banim and Guy (2001) contend that clothing functions as a means for women to rise from their roles as mothers. The reconstruction of a wardrobe, therefore, signifies women's transition into an unexplored chapter of their lives such as motherhood (Clarke & Miller, 2002). Considering the impact social media and fashion has on women's lives, this dissertation focused on exploring Latina millennial mothers as they navigate through life milestones while exposed to FMIs who portrayed their motherhood on social media. On one hand, young women define themselves by intersections among "gender and generation, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status" (Hewlett, 2017, para. 8). On the other hand, social media influencers (SMIs) share fashion expertise via social media which actualize into visual content with embedded and/or textual information that ultimately influences fashion trends and admiration (Abidin, 2016b; Sokolova & Kefi, 2019).

Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation is twofold: firstly, the exploration of Latina women motherhood experiences leads to uncovering how they view themselves through a lens of intersectionality. Alternatively, the exploration of SMIs-turned-fashionable mothers' online presence helps understand women in a world stimulated and encouraged by social media. I aimed to theorize the emerging and innovative phenomenon of the FMI to uncover the impact they have on Latina millennial women's identity construction. This study integrates a cultural understanding on motherhood to address millennial women's intersectional identities and consider how the exposure of other women's social media presence intricately influences motherhood construction.

Study Background

Sex Roles, Advertising, and Beauty Ideals: The Shifting Cultural Landscape

Traditionally, women were raised to believe their primary roles in adulthood to include wife and mothering responsibilities; such responsibilities embraced a supportive role for loved ones which resulted in a passiveness and lack of autonomy (Hall, 1990). Earlier scholars declared that sex roles were significantly impacted by biological factors; child-bearing limited women's power and ability whereas physicality and assertiveness enabled male dominance (e. g., Weitz, 1977). This perception was well reflected in television and advertising in the 1970s and the 1980s as messages played a significant role in shaping and perpetuating society's beliefs on suitable sex roles and expectations (Goffman, 1979; Signorielli, 1989). This disparity of social power among men and women of which is strengthened across advertisements and society's hegemonic beliefs is unquestionably associated to the powerlessness of women (Lindner, 2004).

With regard to traditional sex roles for women, becoming a mother comprises the organization of myriad obligations such as cleaning, cooking, handling the family, and balancing schedules (Stone, 2017). Oftentimes, women's sense of accomplishment in good mothering is achieved by sacrificing other facets of their lives such as their personal needs and aspirations (Gross, 1998). As a result, women's self-sacrifice often led to child-centered lives, spousal duties, and the negligence of personal passions (Hall, 1990; Johnston & Swanson, 2006). While women's participation in the workforce flourished over time, they undertook a double workload because society's continued expectations of them involved traditional sex roles (i.e., domesticity) (Weitz, 1977).

Alongside housekeeping and motherhood roles, women's physical beauty was normalized by society through beauty pageants and advertising imagery (Kitch, 2001). Such a

traditional ideals could be grasped from the *President of the American Federation of Labor* Samuel Gompers' words about the first Miss America pageant in 1921:

"She [Margaret Gorman] represents the type of womanhood America needs; strong, red-blooded, able to shoulder the responsibilities of homemaking and motherhood. It is in her type that the hope of the country rests" (Hamlin, 2018, para. 7).

These standards define cultural distinctions regarding female's ideal beauty in a way of highlighting youth and singleness and facilitated hegemonic ideals to certify that women focus on their wife and motherhood obligations; such contemporary enactments tended to define women success in the forms of fame or even marriage (Nicholas, 2015). This study then identifies the evolution of feminist waves and the rise of social media as significant catalysts that drive the shifting discourses of gendered roles, particularly, for mothers whose role are culturally and socially structured by their self-sacrificing characteristic.

Feminist Waves and Shifting Views of Gendered Roles

In understanding the shift in a cultural meaning of motherhood, feminist waves and the rise of social media provide important social and cultural backgrounds. To challenge advertisers' oppressive views on gender roles, feminist women fought for their voice through liberation movements (Lambiase, Bronstein, & Coleman, 2017). From living room meetings to marching the streets, the women's movement has raised awareness, and continues to do so, on matters such as employment inequality, economic disparity, and reproductive rights (Heller, 2018). Though feminist waves employed distinct agendas, they each contributed to redefining the meaning of being a woman (Kreshel, 2017).

The varying viewpoints on feminism added to the celebration of autonomy and distinctive ways of self-expression rooted in consumerism (Duffy & Hund, 2015). According to

Thomson and Kehily (2011), motherhood is deemed a multifaceted interchange among several facets such as negotiated knowledge, self-identity, choice, fashion, and shared ideologies of motherhood within society. These key facets also place relations, professions, and consumption as vital themes in women's construction of motherhood ventures (Thomson & Kehily, 2011). For this reason, feminist theory provides a valuable theoretical lens to explore how women materially and discursively identify themselves within social worlds as well as shed light on the breadth of power and inspiration (Jackson & Jones, 1998).

Feminist values consider individuals and collectives as equal, yet unique as differences are evenly valued (Hall, 1990). With the help of the Internet and social media, the feminism of today reflects a fierce union and embraces women's own means toward happiness, whether that involves career pursuits, motherhood, changing the world, or a mixture of all ambitions (Hewlett, 2017). Essentially, feminists' work has championed and influenced various social movements that result in change regarding men and women's behavior, attitudes, and values (Carden, 1974; Smelser, 1962).

Social Media Influencers and Self-fashioning

As social media takes precedence within consumer lives today, it has become a powerful tool particularly for women to disseminate their narratives and potentially drive change (Matich, Ashman & Parsons, 2018). In fact, research indicates that women are further inclined than men to share personal stories and foster relationships with peers online, they reference social media before making consumption choices (e.g., regard favorite influencer for advice), and they also take advantage of the opportunity to start a business with relatively a few resources such as smartphone cameras and editing applications (Hennessy, 2018).

In this regard, the emergence of SMIs is meaningful because their personal authenticity and friendliness simplified communication via social media platforms; this impacted consumers' shopping behavior and lastingly changed consumer culture (Vigo, 2019). For instance, enterprising femininity is a phenomenon that entails personal practice of encompassing adaptability, effective aptitudes, informal knowledge, and forms of self-fashioning embedded in today's consumer culture (Gray, 2003). In the era of SMIs, such individuals create an online identity through self-presentation strategies which allows them to gain a large social media audience (Khamis, Ang, & Welling, 2017; Kirwan, 2018; Senft, 2013). In particular, women as key influencers reveal individual thinking and add to women representation in current society through their social media content (Dobson, 2015; Hannam, 2007).

In regard to the autonomy that social media grants users, these women are capable of financially empowering themselves by individualizing their online presence (Duffy & Hund, 2015). Then, the marketing capability that they build through social media presence becomes strong as the SMIs uphold reliability with their audience through reworking their ideas and style as their self-identities evolve (Abidin, 2016b). Whereby celebrity endorsers in traditional advertising cultivate attachment to products and/or services promoted, social media influencers' authenticity allows audiences to be committed to them as personal brands (Abidin & Thompson, 2012). Because celebrity endorsers are utilized to build brand equity, they primarily influence consumers perceptions on the integrity of endorsed brands (Elberse & Verleun, 2012; Keller, 2005). The uniqueness of influential women's online presence then rests on the authentic experiences shared with audiences making their projected images seemingly attainable to the public (Duffy & Hund, 2015; McQuarrie, Miller, & Phillips, 2013). In addition, personal branding necessitates emotional labor which stimulates or controls beliefs to maintain a visage

that engenders emotion in others strategically (Hochschild, 1983). Ultimately, SMIs' relatable online presence coupled with expertise has fostered aspirations among followers/consumers that goes beyond the mere influence of consumption (Roose, 2019).

According to Morrison (2011), today's mothers powerfully proclaim a constructive connection between self-narratives and community discourses, simultaneously supporting and opposing a collective perspective of women's culture. Through personal stories women share online, they create intimate relationships with likeminded individuals on growth, struggle, and transformation oftentimes in relation to profound experiences such as motherhood (Morrison, 2011). Hemetsberger, Wallpach, and Bauer (2015) argued that the act of self-defining for women through important life aspects often occurs in the form of consumption such as fashion, beauty, and traveling experiences mainly before they enter motherhood. However, the shifting view of gendered roles and the rise of social media have jointly contributed to the recalibration of public perception of motherhood. In this regard, the emergence of FMIs on social media demonstrates the shifting cultural understanding of women, particularly, normative expectations for mothers' roles as their social presence portrays how they build their brand empires and their own families simultaneously (Strugatz, 2018).

FMIs have crafted a new crossbreed influencer through not only discourse on motherhood but also notable fashion and beauty collaborations (Strugatz, 2018). In the construction of self-identity and personal development, FMIs utilizes fashion as a tool to establish a specific identity (Orton-Johnson, 2017; Rawlins, 2006). Drawing from Belk's (1988) seminal work, objects such as clothing function as a part of the extended self because of the energy and self-formation invested in them. Therefore, the consumption and/or possession of things uncovers how we view ourselves individually, enabling us to create wholesome

personalities in which aid in understanding life in a meaningful way (Belk, 1988). Nonetheless, it is through different experiences and conflicting views that create reactionary movements and inclusiveness (Grady, 2018). Self-fashioning in FMIs' narratives thus characterizes the autonomy women have in the construction of the self, especially regarding what it signifies to be a mother today.

Purpose and Objectives

The central purpose of this dissertation rests on understanding the experiences and perceptions of Latina women in the United States relative to motherhood and social media. The goal is to utilize Latina women's own perspectives as they consume FMIs' social media presence to create a captivating, intricate motherhood narrative. Two objectives were developed to address the study purpose: (a) to explore Latina millennial women's identity construction and establish their self-perceptions in their motherhood and (b) to discover in what ways FMIs' self-performances on social media influence the motherhood identity formation for these Latina millennial mothers. Research findings provide insight on the changing meaning of motherhood in today's social media driven society with specific regard to a marginalized audience such as Latina millennial mothers.

Furthermore, the focus on female millennial consumers is exceptionally important to this study because as young individuals enter a transitional stage in their lives such as marriage and/or parenthood, they struggle to define the true identity of him/herself and often fight against traditional gendered stereotypes (Coleman & Hendry, 1999; Rawlins, 2006). Rawlins (2006) highlighted a significant role between consumption, fashion, and intergenerational relationship. Notably, the mother-daughter bond functions as a vital relationship in the process of young girls' identity formation (Rawlins, 2006). Researchers contend that the scope of such influence is

extended (Clarke & Griffin, 2007) because young generations' perception of normative expectations is greatly impacted by various media sources such as magazines, television, and social media (Russell & Tyler, 2002). Therefore, the exposure to women's motherhood, consumption, and fashion across diverse sources from the private (e.g., mothers) to the public spaces (e.g., social media) is likely to influence young females' imagined self in their motherhood. Grounded on this discussion, the research questions guiding this study are:

1. How are intersectional identities reflected in women's motherhood narratives among Latina millennial women in the United States?
2. How are intersectional identities of Latina millennial mothers reflected in their appearance management?
3. What is the role of FMIs' self-performances in Latina millennial women's construction of ideal motherhood?

Theoretical and Methodological Considerations

This dissertation draws from a feminist research tradition that involves gender issues within culture, women oppression by normative ideology, and the marginalization of women as other (Tyson, 2014). More specifically, a poststructuralist feminism thought was employed to deconstruct discourse to understand how gender identities cultivate as a realistic yet radical means (Lindlof & Taylor, 2017). A feminist approach is valuable for this dissertation in that it acknowledges the deconstruction of present gender discourses as young women are living and sharing their realities within media culture (Karlyn, 2011). In addition, it considers how such discourses are being performed by FMIs as they construct meaning whilst reacting to the settings of their lives and how said discourses are being embraced by those women who consume that content within a social media realm (Thorpe, Toffoletti, & Bruce, 2017). Through this feminist

tradition, I maintained a frame that focused on heightening women's voices as I employed the more context-specific theories of intersectionality, performance studies, and self-in-relation to comprehend the intricateness behind identity construction amid the rise of social media narratives.

Overall, the feminist tradition considers how gender forms power, privilege, life experiences, and institutional values; they promote that inequalities need to be uncovered in order to demolish (Lather, 1991). Furthermore, this dissertation takes a subjectivist/interpretivist epistemological standpoint to conduct semi-structured interviews and interpret secondary online data. That is, my goal lies in making sense of the meanings others hold concerning the world we live in (Saldaña, 2018). I aim to reflect on the beliefs and intentions I bring to this research and how it shapes the research process; to comprehend and elucidate, I focus on perspectives, practices, and understandings of the individuals in this specific context (Saldaña, 2018). To this end, meanings are manifold and lead guide the observation of the intricacy of ideas rather than reducing meanings into categories (Saldaña, 2018). To focus on Latina women's voices and the potential influence FMIs on Instagram have on their experiences, I engage in digital ethnography to capture the realities of both the viewer and the viewed. That is, digital ethnography allows for in-depth interviewing of Latina women who follow or read FMIs' content, whereas the observation of FMIs' Instagram give insight into the manifestation of self. In Chapter III, I discuss the collection of data via individual, in-depth interviews and social media content data methods. By centering on the experiences/views of Latina women who consume FMIs' agency in performing their particular roles online, this dissertation allows for the depth and thick, rich description of these women's personal experiences (Geertz, 1973). The interpretation of these

experiences was structured by a feminist approach to comprehend the values women ascribe to their online self-identity and, in general, being a woman in society today.

Scope and Significance

“Women come from a whole range of backgrounds.

If our visions of peace don’t include these differences, then our peace will be partial.”

-- Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw

The educational, financial, and cultural prosperity within Hispanic and American communities has largely been due to US Hispanic women, also referred to as Latinas (Báez, 2018). According to Báez (2018), Latinas’ ability to embrace their Hispanic culture as they succeed in America contributes to their strength and power within society and the consumer marketplace. The navigation between two cultures positions Latinas as productive consumers; they hold principal roles of decision-makers regarding consumption choices in their families, continue to obtain educational achievement, and develop connectivity with others via social media (Nielsen, 2013). Yet, as well-educated second-generation Latinas, they do not associate or relate to the socially-constructed images of Latinas in the US media. This causes them to become further marginalized individuals because their stories may be left unheard or misrepresented. Thus, intersectionality offers a lens to study the disadvantages women of color encounter because of their interconnected identities relating to ethnic/class and gender (Rosenthal & Lobel, 2011). Intersectionality is especially valuable to understanding both the privileges and oppressions Latina millennial women encounter; a unique stance that places them in a media world that diminishes their potential as professionals but also gives them access to tools such as social media to create their own narratives.

As formerly mentioned, Latinas continue to be misrepresentation in the US media, if represented at all. Literature extensively supports the overtly sexualized and hegemonic representations of Latinas in the media which often impacts the way Latina women view themselves (Báez, 2018; Barnes, 2012; Beltran, 2002). A better representation of Latinas is needed in popular culture, and can only be achieved by acknowledging their ethnic diversity and the distinctive forms of oppression they experience (Valdivia, 1998). The objective is to embrace bicultural identities to form bonds between Latina/o and American culture in order to eradicate the characterization of Latinas as Other within the borders of Whiteness (Martynuska, 2016; Valdivia, 1998).

Also, as social media communication endlessly evolve, research is warranted to understand the impact of the influencer phenomenon, especially among the expanding group of educated Latinas who are becoming mothers. Influencers aid communication and many times successfully influence audiences (Zackiewicz, 2018); the content disseminated online functions as a fundamental source for understanding and learning about women's values in today's world (Duffy & Hund, 2015). The *digital influencer industry*, which comprises fashion/beauty, home/family, travel/lifestyle, and food/beverage to specify a few, has witnessed a baby boom over the last few years (Jade, 2017; Redazione, 2018). Mainly, the fashion/beauty influencer market includes individuals such as fashion stylists and makeup artists who have filled their blogs with pregnancy declarations, gender reveals, and special motherhood experiences – ergo, the fashionable mother influencer (Jade, 2017; Strugatz, 2018). Because millennials are particularly impacted by social media marketing (Daniel, Crawford Jackson, & Westerman, 2018), and they continue to mature and have families, millennial moms specifically characterize

an extensive and distinctive market who either produce content for their personal blog or consume that of someone else's (Silk, 2018).

Today's culture is heavily influenced by social media (Renner, 2019), therefore making the mapping of Latina millennial women's narratives as a trajectory of behaviors and perceptions a beneficial source for industry professionals. To avoid consumer backlash and instead develop lasting relationships, this study informs on Latina women's values within motherhood and fashion consumption contexts. In this way, industry professionals not only build effective communication on social media platforms, but also invest in relationships (i.e., influencers and Latina/o consumers alike) built on relatability and emotional resonance. More importantly, implementing an intersectional analysis contributes to identifying the Latina/o culture as the diverse and intricate community it is rather than the homogenized descriptions formerly represented, if at all acknowledged (Valdivia, 2020) in the US media.

For academia, this study adds to the literature by theoretically illuminating Latina women's liberation of aspects of the self from traditional and cultural stereotypes through the use of social media and fashion as empowering tools. With the rise of influencers and increase in commercialized content, scholars argue that rather than cultivating a community who share the realistic experiences of motherhood, audiences are observing aspirational performances of motherhood by such influencers (e.g., Abetz & Moore; Hunter, 2016). Alongside these narratives, traditional media (e.g., television, film, and magazines) representations of mothers create unapproachable ideals of perfection without scope for flexibility (Lupton, 2011; Miller, 2018). By using a qualitative approach, this dissertation provides a necessary foundation to capture the essence of Latina millennial women's lives in the US as they encounter online representations of motherhood relentlessly connected to self-curation and consumption.

While existing research has increasingly focused on the social media influencer phenomenon (e.g., Abidin, 2016a, 2016b; Chae, 2018; De Veirman et al., 2017), largely exploring women's abilities and practices on digital spaces. Despite the growing popularity of media articles discussing SMIs becoming mothers, little research is available within the academic field on Latina women in the US as they experience motherhood during a time that social media shapes an individual's identity. Current studies relatively germane to the subject matter include Archer's (2019) work which concentrated on mom bloggers who incorporate their children into their curated and commercialized online posts; Abidin (2017c) studied family influencers who engage in tactical processes toward creating authenticity via their children in which fosters follower support, love, and envy; Mayoh (2019) considered pregnant women's unrealistic and idealized portrayal of their own bodies via Instagram resulting in the perpetuation of hegemonic ideals. Although these studies offer a great dimension within social media influencer research, there remains a conceptual gap. This dissertation therefore addresses a major gap in knowledge regarding SMIs relative to online identity within fashion and motherhood contexts in order to uncover how women construct their self-image that involves intersectional roles, and thus elucidate how this phenomenon is potentially changing the landscape/progression of Latina millennial women in the US.

Through a historical-cultural context, this dissertation tackles two issues concerning Latina millennial mothers who follow FMIs on social media: First, given the glamour that commonly embodies fashion consumption, FMIs may offer chic images of motherhood that inspire misleading aspirations among consumers (Denardo, 2016; Gill & Scharff, 2013). Second, while extensive media publications on the FMI phenomenon discuss FMIs' online presence as well as the impact they have on consumers, the academic setting lacks depth on Latina/o

audiences' experiences. Through a mix methods qualitative approach, this dissertation seeks to concretely understand Latina millennial women in the US as they experience motherhood, and the role FMIs play in their identity construction and consumption.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Grounded on intersectionality theory, this study explores the different experiences and identities women encounter with relation to ethnicity and gender to determine ways in which they are marginalized in society. Specifically, I draw from three major domains of intersectional identities among Latina women in the United States: being (1) a woman, (2) a mother, and (3) an ethnic minority. Intersectionality theory allows for this dissertation to delve into Latina women's experiences as Latina/o individuals, women, and mothers while taking into consideration the role FMIs play within women's intersectional experiences and identities.

Based on the extant literature, this chapter discusses what it is like to be a mother for Latina women based on their intersectional identities in the United States. The first section of intersectionality starts from discussing general views of woman and motherhood in the dominant culture in the US and narrows down to woman and motherhood perspectives among Latina females in the US. In this way, I depict Latina women's lived experiences of motherhood as a marginalized group from an intersectional perspective. The second section focuses on the influence of influencers' social media presence on Latina Americans' self-construction. In general, I draw from women's use of social media and approach the influencers' role as a tool toward empowerment and/or reconstruction. As Latina millennial mothers in the US navigate through digital spaces, the question remains how the current representations and/or narratives of motherhood impacts these women. I then utilize three overarching concepts – Intersectionality theory, Performance studies, and Self-in-relation theory – to weave together a conceptual framework throughout key ideas of this study.

Broadly, a brand's media communication conveys social values that motivates aspiration and inspires consumption (Davis, 2018; Sheinen, Thompson, McDonald, & Clement, 2016). Meanwhile, it also crafts a fairy-tale world, especially for women, who are bombarded by products and perfection that leave no room for the unattractive, overweight, and disabled (Scott, Cayleff, Donadey, & Lara, 2016). Women are then conditioned to constantly modify, enhance, and conceal themselves in attempt to meet ideal standards (Scott et al., 2016). Like so, women detach from their authentic selves and assimilate into the objectification because society objectifies them (Scott et al., 2016). According to Williamson (1978), advertising creates a cycle of consumption that leads individuals to produce their sense of self. i.e., we consume to create ourselves in accordance to what advertisers say who we are.

In the era of social media, a shifting landscape on female beauty ideals can be observed. From curvaceous mannequins in Nike retailers and models with skin disorders and disabilities in fashion runway shows (Burns, 2019) to everyday women and bloggers' postpartum bodies and stories on social media, the display of raw and real beauty seems to create women empowerment and self-acceptance (Brinkley, 2019). Importantly, the body positivity movement gives the opportunity to inquire about women's values and choices on motherhood because such outlooks impact the next generation of girls (Seligson, 2019). Therefore, it is imperative to survey how the representation of women, particularly regarding motherhood, has shifted alongside social movements and consumer culture in comparison to traditional mass media portrayal. This notion helps to understand the current state of women's representation and the role social media plays in changing personal narratives.

Intersectionality Theory

Intersectionality theory posits that inequality is often multifaceted and creates barriers that are not easily comprehended by conventional views on social structures in society (Crenshaw, 2018). Intersectionality theory offers understanding on how identities are constructed within structures of power and privilege and provides insight on social issues (Collins, 2009). To understand intersectionality, not only is it imperative to focus on individuals' personal identity but also by examining the social forces that contribute to identity narratives (Collins, 2009).

More specifically, the theory of intersectionality involves the interplay of various identities and experiences of marginalized individuals (Davis, 2008). This theory focuses on the experiences of individuals whose voices have been overlooked, allowing their lived experiences to function as a representation that identity is more than a single category (Crenshaw 1989, 1991; Shields, 2008). It denotes the interchange among gender, race, class, and other distinct categories in individuals' lives, societal traditions, cultural beliefs, and conventional systems (Davis, 2008). Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), intersectionality is studied intensely by feminism and anti-racism scholars to uncover the experiences and difficulties of women of color. That is, intersectionality was first devised in Black feminism (e.g., Crenshaw, 1989; Collins, 2000; hooks, 1981), and studied to uncover the oppression implicated by categories deemed inferior such as non-white individuals and women (Essers, Benschop, & Doorewaard, 2010).

In exploring intersectionality, the reclamation of the rights and identities of marginalized individuals is essential, and women are an important subject due to patriarchal normativity assumptions (e.g., social privilege and gender roles) (Kwan, 1996). According to Crenshaw (1997), social identity indicators such as race and gender are indivisibly connected to the societal schemes of marginalization. For example, Black feminists such as Crenshaw (1989) and hooks

(1981) highlighted feminism's inability to regard the experiences of women of color in a way that valued ethnicity, social position, and sexual diversity (Davis, 1981; Reagon, 1983; Collins, 2000). Feminist scholars have disrupted the idea of the woman as a unanimous being, maintaining that every woman's experience is comprised by diverse interests (Nash, 2008).

The concept of *double jeopardy* was developed in Black Feminism (Beale, 1979), and is applicable to Latina women's experience because of their intersectionality as a marginalized group in the United States. Coined by Beale (1979), the term *double jeopardy* depicts dual prejudice built on racism and sexism. The premise of double jeopardy centers on the effects of discrimination based on gender and ethnicity that women often encounter in society (Beale, 1979; Reid, 1984). That is, double jeopardy characterizes an individual with two or more interconnecting identities, and results in an additive representation of oppression (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). This notion is reinforced by scholars (e.g., Almquist, 1975; Davis, 1981) who argue that an individual with multiple devalued identities (e.g., ethnic minority women) experience more drawbacks than those with a single devalued identity (e.g., ethnic minority men).

Similarly, Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach (2008) coined the term *intersectional invisibility* to reveal that individuals who identify with devalued intersectional identities (e.g., Latinas who reside in the United States) are not well-suited within each of constituent groups (i.e., Latina/o, Americans, women), rendering them invisible in any group. These individuals often experience the misrepresentation of their intersectional identities and struggle with not fitting into prototypes of constituent identity groups (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). In brief, an intersectional lens is useful as this dissertation seeks to comprehend how young Latina mothers in the United States

reconfigure gender and intersecting structures through the consumption of FMIs' disclosure on social media.

Being a Latina Woman and Mother in the US: Poststructuralist Feminism Perspective

This sub-section scrutinizes in what ways three domains of intersectional identities shape the experience of a Latina woman who is a mother in the United States. Through gendered role (i.e., mother), ethnicity (i.e., Latina/o), and gender (i.e., woman), these social/political facets of one's identities provides a background on how they may create oppression.

In general, in the western culture, feminist agendas incrementally contributed to women representation beginning from the first wave to the fourth wave for the past century. The first wave feminist movement included suffragettes who advocated for women's voting rights, slavery abolition, and advocated for women's education (Wrye, 2009). Ironically, to gain women's sisterhood and male's approval for their agenda, suffragettes' strategies were rooted in consumer culture and feminine image (Murray, 2017). Ergo, the tension between feminism, advertising, and a woman's place in society commenced (Murray, 2017).

The 1960s brought the second wave feminist movement which created awareness on sexist representations and welcomed the validation of women's sexual lifestyles and desires (Lambiase et al., 2017; Wrye, 2009). In Friedan's (1963) book *The Feminine Mystique*, the author discussed women representations in the media and drew from conventional formations of femininity to elaborate on the dominance they wield over women's welfare. Friedan created a foundation for resisting the reoccurring portrayal of traditional femininity in popular culture (Munford & Waters, 2013). Thus, second wavers created awareness on how sexist representations limited to gender norms diminished opportunities for women (Lambiase et al., 2017).

To continue, feminist theorizer bell hooks tackled the intersectionality in feminism that Friedan unsuccessfully addressed (Lambiase et al., 2017). As previous feminist waves focused on white women's oppressions, third wave feminism during the 1980s and 1990s was committed to defying intersectional inequalities that stemmed from gender, race, and class (Snyder, 2008). Third wavers' feminism was engrained in Crenshaw's intersectionality theory that built on the intersecting oppression in women's experiences as a means toward achieving respect and equality (Grady, 2018).

Fourth wave feminists have challenged human rights injustices and insisted on an all-inclusive society that embraces body-positivity and gender-inclusivity (Cochrane, 2013; Grady, 2018). As feminist waves build on each other's agenda, they aim to nurture an inclusive space for all. Through a focus on inclusivity and diversity in sexuality and culture, today's feminism is personified by its multiplicity in purpose and dependence on the Internet (e.g., social media) (Baumgardner, 2011). Particularly, fourth wave feminists have used social media to disseminate their messages/claims (Cochrane, 2013) and facilitated social media-led movements such as *#metoo* and *Time's Up* offering women autonomy in expression (Alka, 2018).

Although an increase focus on inclusivity in feminist rhetoric has increasingly transpired (Fields, 2019), the invisibly Latinas experienced due to white or mainstream feminism in past decades brings tension in today's social movements (e.g., women's rights marches) (Bates, 2017; Hong, 2006). Adding to this tension, the lack of accurate representation of women of color (e.g., Latina women) within film endures (Kelley, 2019), while also overlooked within popular social industries such as the influencer marketing industry (Graham, 2019). For this reason, I breakdown some traditional gender roles and stereotypes Latina women encounter that have impacted their lived experiences.

In Latina/o and Latina/o-American culture, a woman is expected to get married and have children (Burgos & Diaz-Perez, 1986). Traditionally, a Latina woman takes a submissive role within a partnership; she caters to a man's desires, her male children hold superior status than her in the family, and her sexuality is a matter to be controlled and monitored due to her familial obligations (Gutiérrez, 2004). Latinas are also known as the main shopping decision makers (Báez, 2018), and in some cases they are contributing members of their household income (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1993). Such roles and decisions are often characterized as vulnerable rather than empowering because they are done within patriarchal familial ties (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1993). That is, Latinas' decisions are central to bettering the lives of others rather than themselves directly. For example, women's work in Mexican and Puerto Rican society are ingrained by ideologies of *machismo* (intense male superiority) and *marianismo* (potent feminine virtues) (Andrade, 1982; Clawson & Tillman, 1997). Through patriarchal ideals and roles of femininity, women and girls are molded into obedient, inferior, and disposable wives (Enoch, 2004).

Women's sexual behavior is regulated by the traditional values upheld in the Latina/o community (Gutiérrez, 2004; Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004). For instance, within Mexican American youth, desires for a partner are heavily influenced by important cultural ideals such as *respeto* (respect) and *familismo* (familism) (Flores, Eyre, & Millstein, 1988). These cultural ideals of respect and commitment to the family are often shaped by Catholic faith where the Virgin Mary functions as a symbol of subservience, self-sacrificing family commitment, bodily humility, and abstinence before marriage (Gutiérrez, 2004). According to Gutiérrez (2004), pre-marital virginity symbolizes suitable femininity and family honor. Upon marriage, Latina women are advised to maintain a desirable look and poised personality for their spouse (Enoch, 2004).

Latinas who unsuccessfully adhere to the expectations of pre-marital virginity and spousal subservience are deemed sexually immoral who are labeled as *putas* (whores) (Lopez & Chesney-Lind, 2014). Therefore, Latinas are classified either-or as a ‘good woman’ or ‘bad woman’ (Hurtado, 1998). While such categorization is not unique to Latina/o culture, it is heavily present because of ideologies of *machismo* and *marianismo* (Asencio, 2002).

The discussion of womanhood and identity brings the importance of post-structural feminism and its influence on Latinas’ experiences. Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), a pioneer of Chicana feminism, believes such concepts should be understood through one’s lived experiences. By introducing an expansion of selfhood, the new *mestiza*, Anzaldúa (1987) offers an intricate approach – one that embodies an in-betweenness of cultures and multiplicity in persona – to create opportunities for meaning-making. According to Villenas (2006), Latinas traverse between various borderlands that “come together and overlap . . . borderlands between cultural sensibilities and ethnicities . . . between generations . . . between meanings of ‘womanhood’” (p. 147). Latinas in the US experience cultural hybridity as they cross between expectations of being women within their own culture and those as American women (Nielsen, 2013). As Latina women hold onto their traditional upbringings, they also celebrate their successes as a part of the US population of women who accomplish higher education and thriving careers (Bonilla-Rodriguez, 2013; Germano, 2019). In doing so, the meaning of womanhood expands and variations in identity materializes (Segura & Facio, 2008).

Other ways in which intersectional identities shape the experience of a Latina woman in the United States include the following: A parenting role (i.e., mother) and ethnicity (i.e., Latina/o). In general, a woman’s life is overwhelmingly altered by motherhood (Chodorow, 1978). On one hand, the physical effects of childbearing cause women many fears and anxieties

(Affonso, Liu-Chiang, & Mayberry, 1999). Several studies have identified childbearing related worries to involve how a women's body is physically affected (e.g., weight gain or stretch marks), how the family dynamics are impacted (e.g., partner relationship), financial ambiguities due to family expansion, and decisions regarding career choices (e.g., part-time versus full-time) (Affonso, 1987; Fleming & Flett, 1988). On the other hand, motherhood causes worry regarding the time demands of mothering (Oberman & Josselson, 1996). Becoming a mother involves the management of countless responsibilities such as cleaning, cooking, delegating to and managing the family, and balancing schedules to accomplish everything (Stone, 2017). For this reason, while motherhood brings happiness and personal growth for many, it may also cause depression and anxiety (Marshall, Barnett, & Sayer, 1998; Ross, 1995).

Mothers who strive for intensive mothering experience excessive demands of dedication, emotional absorption, and financial burden (Gross, 1998). Additionally, women are raised to satisfy the needs of those around them, placing supportive as central to the development of children, men, and one's parents (Hall, 1990). The self-sacrificing of personal needs and desires has steered women toward lack of self-care and self-identity (Barkin & Wisner, 2013; Weaver & Ussher, 1997). Under such self-sacrificing circumstances, women identify themselves relative to roles rather than complete beings (Chodorow, 1978). As a result, Hall (1990) argued that women easily experience a sense of entrapment due to contradictions in roles ascribed to them as well as undertake blame for innate conflicts of those roles.

Feminist views on ideal motherhood involves a philosophy that values the availability of resources for the well-being of both children and mothers, as well as promotes childrearing practices that embrace community involvement (Ferguson, 1983; Kittay, 1983). Feminist researchers advocate that good mothering entails a feeling of self-efficiency and search of

personal desires that give women a place in society that is not ignored (Barnett & Rivers, 1998; Hanson & Sloane, 1992; Peters, 1997). The mainstreaming of this ideology can accomplish gender equality in reference to motherhood ideologies through pop-culture media outlets such as blogs and social media (Buzzanell, 1994; Kinser, 2004). For example, fourth wave feminisms utilize online spaces to advance their views and reconstruct representations that do not embrace equal opportunities and/or diversity in experiences (Kinser, 2004).

Existing literature has established that mothers navigate their life roles through material and social experiences (e.g., Martens, 2010; Hogg, Folkman Curasi, & Maclaran, 2004; Layne, 1999). Through daily consumption practices, the cultural discourse on motherhood describes women as creators of their personal maternal identities (O'Donohoe, Hogg, & Maclaran, 2013). For instance, extant research has studied the way mothers and their kids navigate around fashion (Boden, Pole, Pilcher, & Edwards, 2004), the meaning behind the creation of motherhood cultures through consumption rituals for festivities such as kids' birthdays (Clarke, 2007), and the impact financial backgrounds have on mothers' partaking in consumerism (Vincent & Ball, 2007). These studies emphasize that motherhood occurs in distinctive ways; although different paths are often controversial, it is important for women to make their own choices on mothering and themselves to break social norms (O'Donohoe et al., 2013).

In today's feministic view, the act of interiority emphasizes women's balanced focus on both family life and personalized consumption that is embarked on to manifest their authentic self (Dejmanee, 2016; Gill, 2007; McRobbie, 2007). In other words, women consume goods such as food and fashion as well as self-care practices not only to nourish their family but also to achieve autonomy (Dejmanee, 2016). From a post-feminist standpoint, such focus embodies cultural life through interconnected themes of the freedom in choice, alteration of the physique,

self-objectification, and individual empowerment through excess consumption (Gill, 2007; McRobbie, 2007).

An example of this movement is found in the mommy blogging community that promotes desirable and amusing lifestyles of which insinuate is the key for modern women to achieve work-life stability (Archer & Harrigan, 2016; Lopez, 2009). As Gill (2008) declares, dependence on agency and individuality as well as intensified focus on fashion and beauty are indirect forms of activism. It is essential to note that the acts of consumption involved in self-fashioning are empowering when the genuine self is presented to others through intimate storytelling (Dejmanee, 2016; Duffy & Hund, 2015).

Although traditional gender roles remain rooted in the Latina/o community, women's continuous increase in the workforce has brought a shift in motherhood narratives and conversations (Sole-Smith, 2019). As Latinas in the US continually pursue a higher education, they begin businesses at a quicker rate than white women, wait to start families, and have fewer children than generations before (DePillis, 2019). While mothers across the US discuss the need for equalization of parenting roles, it is an issue that creates complications for Latinas due to traditional gender roles and stereotypes (DePillis, 2019). Culture informs motherhood norms; individuals learn about suitable behaviors and standpoints regarding the dynamics of relationships and self-identity formation (Johnston & Swanson, 2003). Within traditional Hispanic society, a woman's identity is frequently positioned in relation to their husband, kids, and family, neglecting their individual selves (Guendelman, Malin, Herr-Harthorn, & Vargas, 2001). The following ten commandments of *marianismo* (i.e., ideal womanhood) that have been passed-on to many generations in the Hispanic culture demonstrates this notion well (Gil & Vazquez, 2014, pg. 8):

1. Do not forget a woman's place.
2. Do not forsake tradition.
3. Do not be single, self-supporting, or independently-minded.
4. Do not put your own needs first.
5. Do not wish for more in life than being a housewife.
6. Do not forget that sex is for making babies-not for pleasure.
7. Do not be unhappy with your man or criticize him for infidelity, gambling, verbal and physical abuse, alcohol or drug abuse.
8. Do not ask for help.
9. Do not discuss personal problems outside the home.
10. Do not change those things which make you unhappy that you can realistically change.

Although Latinas have rather progressed outside the self-complacency of *marianismo* while simultaneously upholding a connection to Hispanic traditions of *familismo* (i.e., familism), they continue to place their family's needs before their own (Gil & Vazquez, 2014). Along these lines, deep-seated cultural traditions from their family's home country influence women as they perform motherhood in the US (Roosa, Morgan-Lopez, Cree, & Specter, 2002).

Motherhood in the United States, however, encompasses a sphere beyond familial obligations (Plant, 2010). When Hispanics immigrate to the US, they encounter responsibilities associated with finance, marriage, and social elements (Gil & Vazquez, 2014; Morin, 2019). The Hispanic cultural traditions heavily engrained in women since childhood are challenged. Women's roles and performances change due to the societal expectations (i.e., motherhood work) in the US (Negy, Charles, & Synder, 1997). Success outside motherhood forms self-

reproach and self-doubt due to *marianismo* (Gil & Vazquez, 2014). Therefore, Latinas living in the US must reconstruct facets of their thoughts, actions, and ideals in order to adapt or navigate their hybrid culture (Perreira, Chapman, & Stein, 2006). Scholars contend that acculturation often creates more complexities for women of color as they juggle motherhood, work, and cultural contexts (Gloria & Castellanos, 2013; Anzaldúa, 1987).

Nonetheless, research points out that well-educated individuals have greater capability of acculturation (Sanchez & Fernández, 1993), which result in coping methods to navigate between two worlds (Torres, 2006). In general, motherhood in the US has undergone change as the percentage of working women continues to rise. Pew Research Center reported that American motherhood represents a group of women who are more educated than generations before, take part in the labor force while raising young children, and they provide sole or primary financial needs for their family (Geiger, Livingston, & Bialik, 2019). Specific to the Hispanic population in the US, college experiences (40%) and educational attainment (52%) have increased since 2000 (Flores, 2017). Taken together, the reality of US motherhood comprises a diverse generation of women who have embarked on professional and familial journeys.

Media representations of the *Mommy Wars* (the aggressive stay-at-home moms and the constantly working mother) create extreme demands to be superhuman that result in feelings of inadequacy among mothers (Warner, 2006). Since the 1980s, this motherhood metaphor has created tension among mothers as they chose conflicting routes in the labor force, their household, and raising their children (Darnton, 1990). Referred to as *Mommy Mystique*, Warner (2006) also argued that mothers in the US face a psychological heaviness that involves self-compliance; it is a notion that informs women on child-rearing ideologies, marital and gender roles that sustain the status quo, regardless of mothers' acts to condemn it. American motherhood

embodies expectations of self-sacrifice that deceives women into viewing financial goals or focus on career ambitions is selfish (Westervelt, 2018).

Young Latina/os navigate between the culture of their immigrant parents and the views they are exposed to as individuals born and raised in the US (Gamboa, Lilley, & Cahlan, 2018). For Latina millennial mothers, they are exposed to passivity and family unity ideals valued in Hispanic motherhood and superhuman ideals embraced by American motherhood. This merging of two cultures can create loss of Hispanic values (Lopez, Gonzalez-Barrera, & Lopez, 2017), a result that ensues as acculturation to the US that often cultivates family conflict and impacts sense of self (e.g., Céspedes & Huey, 2008; Miranda, Estrada, & Fripo-Jimenez, 2000). In her book *Reinventing Womanhood*, Heilbrun (1979) declared that women who transgress the status quo experienced a separation from society's expectations that fostered drive and fate for something different. In the case of Latina millennial mothers in the US, they are carving their own identity as they traverse two cultures as educated and successful women. Although self-sacrifice tropes are deep-rooted in both Hispanic and American motherhood, it is this bicultural experience that characterizes the uniquely constructed narrative of this generation.

Perpetuation of Latina Stereotypes in the US: Evidence from Mass Media

The advertising culture gives insight into how advertisers shape and/or stimulate women's buying choices. In general, the discourse they create in advertising forms women's perceptions of themselves that falls into two categories: motherhood/wifely duties or women as a sexualized object (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007). That is, historically, women inferred their place in society through aspirational advertising that limits them to traditional gender roles (McCall, 1977; Rosen, 2000). For instance, earlier print advertisements notably depicted women in

general as dependent on men, restricting their roles as women to happy housewives and sexual objects (Courtney & Whipple, 1983).

However, the women's movement for the past few decades has brought great concern toward the portrayals of women in advertising and made attempts to transform this trend. An example is the creation of *Ms.* magazine, a feminist print media forum that ultimately transformed advertisements from conventional views of women as housewives to lively, prosperous *girl power* icons (Gauntlett, 2002). As women attained financial autonomy, recent advertising has improved and altered norms in which women became informed about feminism through media forms such as magazines (Nicolosi, 2017; Rosen, 2000). Though feminism is deemed a social and political movement, it fundamentally helped form women's views about themselves and others, and ultimately influenced how they live and understand the world (Hannam, 2007).

Nicholas (2015) conceptualized the New Woman to characterize a contemporary view of women's status and self-description of womanhood in contrast to earlier views of this gender group which were confined by traditional gender roles. The New Woman absorbs herself in the creation and presentation of beauty maintenance via consumer goods such as fashion and cosmetics (Nicholas, 2015). For this reason, a woman's appearance (e.g., her body) became the path toward gratification and self-actualization and communicated ideal representations of a modern woman (Featherstone, 1982). According to Marchand (1985), advertising messages incite consumers to imagine themselves within a specific setting and therefore create aspirational goals rather than realistic happenings. With regard to women as consumers, feminist scholar Betty Friedan argues that advertising stifled women with socially constructed roles and thus consumption entailed fashion, appliances, and housekeeping products (Lambiase et al., 2017).

For example, in the 1920s, advertisers regarded the mother-consumer as someone who placed her children's needs above all and spent copious amounts of money to attain quality goods/services with them in mind (Cook, 2011). In the study of women, modernity, and driving, Mandziuk's (2019) reveals that 1920s' ads characterized the automobile as a means toward friendship, mobility, and notably aided women in fulfilling their motherly and wifely duties (e.g., retrieve their children from school and/or collect groceries). Drawing on the liberation potential of technology while strengthening the importance of domesticity and appeal of social status, advertisements defined women in relation to the automobile and consumption (Mandziuk, 2019). In this fashion, advertisements instructed women to triumph in their roles as mothers through the consumption of contemporary goods such as the automobile (Mandziuk, 2019).

More closely, fashion advertisements in the 1970s presented products to women through messages of liberation (e.g., the Liberated Wool Sweater) (American Wool Council, 1970). *Vogue* readers, specifically women, discovered ads that spoke to their autonomy in appearance and apparel; such advertisements expressed modern looks that gave freedom in movement and size (Craig, 1998). Second wave feminism, of which took place during the 1970s, played an important role in shaping the era of the working woman (Bailey, Barbarto, & Card, 2012). In the fashion realm, women transitioned into positions of power (e.g., fashion editor) that contributed to crafting images of the times (Bailey et al., 2012).

Furthermore, mass media advertising perpetuated patriarchal ideology that revealed a connection between femininity, corrective performances, and consumer culture (Abel, de Bruin, & Nowak, 2010; Nicholas, 2015). Consumer culture was shaped by the objectification of women's bodies; it socialized gender roles and impacted consumers' mindsets and behaviors (Belknap & Leonard, 1991; Nicholas, 2015). Within film and television media, women were

repeatedly portrayed in a way to please/satisfy males' gaze/desire; these male perspectives resulted in the lack of autonomy women possessed or utilized in constructing their own self views (Mendes & Carter, 2008).

In turn, a significant paradigm shift occurred during the 1990s and early 2000s. For instance, *She-bear* lingerie advertising creatively encourage consumption with their slogan, 'Wear it for yourself,' whereas the *Gossard* campaign exclaimed: 'If he's late you can always start without him' (Amy-Chinn, 2006; Gill, 2008). This lingerie ad presented messages of empowerment as women were encouraged to consume to please themselves rather than the male gaze (Gill, 2008). Meanwhile, Gill (2008) questioned whether such ads were truly about declaring one's sexual preferences or another way to achieve the male gaze. The sexualization of women's bodies took precedence in lingerie advertisements; rather than fulfilling roles of motherhood or caregiver prioritized by previous generations, a sexy figure was communicated as a vital basis for a woman's identity (Gill, 2008). For generations, advertising has promoted the belittling of women's aspirations by rendering women as objects for male enjoyment and desire (e.g. Cortese, 1999; Goffman, 1979; Kilbourne, 1999). Through sexual ambiguity and feminine appeal, magazines have advertised products and stimulated women to constantly alter themselves to match specific romanticized body and behavioral norms (Ross, 2010).

In popular culture, consumption and feminism often clash when the discussion and/or portrayal of a woman's dominance and independence rise (Scott et al., 2016). For instance, romantic comedies and reality television shows often portray female leads through traditional values that support the narratives of motherly beings and/or sexualized objects and therefore, might hinder the successes of the feminist movement (Green, 2013; Holtzmann, 2000).

As previously mentioned, the popular Australian reality TV show *Yummy Mummies* on *Netflix*, represents a contemporary example of idealized motherhood depictions. Through self-indulgence and designer labels, these glamorous mothers provide lifestyle ideals that suggest are requirements to carry out motherhood gracefully (McRobbie, 2006). Although such popular media continue to surface in Western society, young women increasingly achieve higher education and enter the workforce in greater quantities (McRobbie, 2014). According to McRobbie (2014), rather than parting with their professions as motherhood approached, women have the tendency to defer maternity, evade it completely, or take a short leave of absence. Thus, the wage-earning increase and variation in sexual and maternity decisions led to new practices of consumption (McRobbie, 2014).

On one hand, the consumptive mother, with regard to fashion, taste, and material practices, is characterized by her material performances (Clarke, 2014). The glamorous typecast is guided by consumption routines, communicative consumption, and opulent fashion (O'Donohoe, 2006). This typecast is produced and perpetuated by popular culture media (O'Donohoe, 2006) such as the *Yummy Mummies* reality television show and the *Desperate Housewives* popular television series. On the other hand, such typecasts motivate women to become consumers who make decisions with respect to their personal inclinations; she partakes in the realm of possessions to understand herself and be understood by others (Miller & Rose, 1997). As women navigate identities (e.g., partners, moms, and professionals), they engage in a series of consumption that leads to expressing themselves uniquely within each sphere (Hochschild, 2003).

While several strides toward women empowerment have suggested change within the advertising industry, Latina women living in the US remain conflicted due to media

misrepresentation and cultural norm expectations (Quinones Rivas & Saenz, 2017). In fact, *machismo* (i.e., intense male superiority) and *marianismo* (i.e., potent feminine virtues) are burdensome sociocultural structures which contribute to historically-embedded stereotypes about Latina women's desirability and motherhood in the US media, in humanities research and in organizational environments (Lopez & Chesney-Lind, 2014; Rosenthal & Lobel, 2020). According to Beltran (2002), European invasion and colonization of American land, previously owned by Mexican and Latina/o American people, resulted in the exploitation, rape, and narrative formation of Latinas as easily obtainable sexual things. In modern popular culture, remnants of these narratives continue as Latinas are portrayed and stereotyped to be behaviorally wanton, of easy virtue, or young, unmarried mothers with multiple children (Ghavami & Peplau, 2013; Rosenthal & Lobel, 2020).

When featured in films, tabloids, or music videos, Latinas are typically depicted as hypersexualized, foreign beauties, domestic personnel, or adolescent mothers (Barrera, 2002; Guzmán & Valdivia, 2004; Vargas, 2010). For example, renowned Latina celebrities such as Jennifer Lopez (of Puerto Rican descent) and Salma Hayek (of Mexican nationality) are blatantly sexualized in mass media because of their curvaceous figures (Molina- Guzmán, 2010). In movies such as *From Dusk Till Dawn* (1996) and *Wild Wild West* (1999) to name a few, Hayek has repeatedly portrayed the one-dimensional stereotype of a passionately impulsive, desirable, heavily accented Latina (Bardsley, 2020). In *Maid in Manhattan*, Lopez depicted a hardworking maid and single mother in a present-day performance of the Cinderella fairytale; an idealized and civilized narrative of domestic workers (Bowen, 2017). Latina maids and domestic workers in television and movies such as *Maid in Manhattan* are represented as spicy, yet tastefully dressed, and motherly figures (Molina- Guzmán, 2010; Vargas, 2010).

In advertising, Latinas are often portrayed by the virgin-whore complex (Báez, 2007; Hirshman, 2011). Hirshman's (2011) work on advertisements featuring Black and Latina women determined that Latinas are particularly targeted as mothers. Advertisers' focus on the Latina role as family matriarchs hinder the impact they can have in environments outside the household (Báez, 2017, 2018). Alike Latina representations in movies, additional research established that they are immensely sexualized in advertisements (Alaniz & Wilkes, 1995; Dávila, 2012). Sexualized ad images of Latinas are attained through body-hugging dress, uncovered bodies, voluptuous curves, animal patterns, and red clothing and makeup, particularly lipstick (Báez, 2017). The degrading of Latinas as sexual objects in advertising also involves the emphasis of women's hips and buttocks that consequently furthers the hot Latina stereotype (Báez, 2017; Valdivia, 2000).

Essentially, Latina representations in television, film, and other media are tied to sex appeal, desire, and bodily attraction which are cued through certain styles of attire, stances, vernacular, and performance (Merskin, 2007). This one-dimensional, stereotypical depiction of Latina femininity in the media does not fully represent dynamic lived experiences (Báez, 2017). Although recent representation of Latina women and mothers in television shows such as *Jane the Virgin* and *Cristela* center on ambitious Latina characters who become successful career women (Báez, 2017), it can also build an erasure of Latinas who are less adapted to such experiences (Beltran, 2002). Therefore, diverse Latina representation is warranted in order to empower Latina/o communities at large (Beltran, 2002).

Women in the Digital Space

This section acknowledges the way social media and other online spaces such as blogs function as tools for women to become empowered through fashion and self-construction. Social media

created an interconnected digital space that extends to marginalized groups. (Johnson & Callahan, 2013). Latinas are able to connect with the world through social media rather than remain confined by prototypes of Latina women as depicted in mass media. Mass media (e.g., movies, television, the Internet) has greatly influenced identity transformations and how individuals view themselves relative to social settings (Arnett, 2002; Schlegel, 2001). But because of the dualism of Latina/o Americans specifically, there's a lack of research on how social media narratives play a role in their self-identity construction or transformation experiences.

In substance, the power and omnipresence of social media overturned traditional mass media influence as consumers are now empowered to mold their own representations; this has resulted in insightful dialogue and significances around gender, race, and sexuality (Davis, 2018; Sheinin, Thompson, McDonald, & Clement, 2016). For women specifically, social media enabled them to instantly and universally communicate and express their beliefs, challenging the belittling and sexist narratives created and shared by the media (Lambiase et al., 2017).

Identity Construction and Visibility Labor in Social Media

The self is traditionally defined and restricted by characteristics such as gender, social class, and ethnic background (Rosenberg, 1979). The introduction of social media offered a platform in which traditionally oppressed groups such as Latina women can re-invent themselves and exert genderless possibilities (Hall, 2013). According to Hall (1990), identity is the foundation of our views, emotions, and performances that ultimately leads to the discovery and reinvention of ourselves. However, identity is both personal and impersonal and thus connects us to others through common values (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). In this manner, identity simultaneously embraces individuality and social assimilation (Brewer, 1991). Relative to women experience,

Hall (1990) stated that we understand womanhood better within the perspective of humanity in general. Nonetheless, when acting in line with our own interests rather than those of others, our identity is empowered (Hall, 1990). Therefore, when women become devoted to careers and other ambitions outside of traditional spheres such as family life, they are able to develop awareness of who they are amid the world in its entirety (Ireland, 1993).

Women's roles become progressively moldable as they build their identity through personal commitments toward higher education and professional achievement (Hall, 1990). While traditional commitments such as mothering remain important, contemporary women's personal interests align with the shifting demands of family life (Hall, 1990). As women participate in the workforce, they experience mental well-being for themselves and their families (Schwartz, 1994) as well as the ability to balance work and domestic life (Thompson, 1996). In her book *Women and Identity: Value Choices in a Changing World*, Hall (1990) thoroughly focused on and strongly defended women's right to live abundantly through both ethereal and material experiences:

“As they become more alive, women become more autonomous. They need no longer merely conform or deviate, agree, or disagree. They carve out a niche for themselves in which and from which they celebrate life and inspire others. Women are empowered to serve those who need to be served and are creative in all aspects of their lives” (p. 26).

The advent of social media enabled women to construct and disseminate their own content (Dobson & Kanai, 2016). For example, the continuous access to media production tools coupled with smartphones applications such as Instagram give way to women dismantling the notion they only consume media rather than produce it (Caldeira & De Ridder, 2017). Banet-Weiser (2015) contended that women are urged to discover themselves through inventive ways

and are stimulated to visibly present ambitious tendencies as they reach contentment and success within conformity of industry norms.

This process of self-production involves visibility labor which is defined as “the work enacted to flexibly demonstrate gradients of self-conspicuousness in digital or physical spaces depending on intention or circumstance for favorable ends” (Abidin, 2016b, p. 90). In the current microcelebrity culture on social media, visibility labor indicates a method of self-posture and careful selection of self-presentation to acquire the attention of noteworthy audiences such as prospective employers (e.g., brands), the media (e.g., Vogue), and followers and loyal supporters (Abidin, 2016b; Duffy, 2016; Neff, Wissinger, & Zukin, 2005; Wissinger, 2015). Moreover, visibility labor consists of emotional and strategic labor, which becomes a collective effort as followers recurrently interact with the influencer and each other, producing genuine interactions within these digital spaces (Abidin, 2016b; Polanyi, 1958).

Visibility labor becomes a valuable and necessary process to provide authenticity as fashion influencers’ content often focuses on the consumption of products/services (Marwick, 2015). While meticulous curation is time demanding, it is central to the consistency of style and message of a fashion content (Abidin, 2016a). Accordingly, the rise in buying behavior among girls and women as a means toward empowerment and self-confidence caused “the politics in visibility to [become] the economies of visibility” (Banet-Weiser, 2015, p. 55). Even so, social media empowers users, especially women, to commence on a journey of visibility labor to accomplish a self-representation that meets their own expectations (Caldeira & De Ridder, 2017). Ultimately, the woman of today achieves visibly by the essential approach of branding oneself (Banet-Weiser, 2012).

Feminist scholars argue that the blogosphere serves as a noteworthy space for a marginalized group to exercise their voices on delicate matters (Madge & O' Connor, 2006; McDaniel, Coyne, & Holmes, 2012). When it comes to today's FMIs, these women use the platform as instruments to defy socially termed gender roles and declare power over their own parenting stories (Antunovic & Hardin, 2013; Herring, Kouper, Scheidt, 2004). For example, mothers appear to utilize online space to resolve complexities and gain reassurance on diverse motherhood topics (Madge & O'Connor, 2006). McDaniel et al. (2012) discovered that women who blogged post-partum experience less depression and foster deeper relationships with family and friends. This example demonstrates that social media exchanges can be used to empower women by sharing their personal experiences with others, while strengthening unions with others who occupy similar concerns (Antunovic & Hardin, 2013). In doing so, FMI – a label used for women who discussed their children and families on social media – oppose the portrayals of motherhood in mainstream media by revealing a distinctive and more susceptible representation through their social media platforms (Lopez, 2009).

A Fashionable Mother Influencer: Fashion as a Tool for Self-empowerment

As formerly stated, through creative work (i.e., cautiously created advertorials), influencers not only motivate consumption, but also produce their own cultural meanings (Duffy & Hund, 2015). Specifically, as bloggers evolve into social media influencers with a recognizable number of followers, their personal stories that are inescapably linked to consumption, are transformed into a source of inspiration for their audience (Tomova, 2017). From a self-branding stance, Khamis et al. (2017) maintained that personal victories, commitment, and feminine subjectivity opened the door for new methods of brand marketing (e.g., influencer marketing). By dedicating time, money, and immaterial labor, influencers characterize aspirational workers who participate

in various practices of branding to construct a digital dream job (Duffy, 2018). In fact, a significant number of children and teens reported that becoming a ‘YouTuber’ is their dream job (Weiss, 2017). This demonstrates that the current influencer economy not only stimulates the consumption of material things but also cultivates a digital consumer culture in which individuals discover value in experience, self-worth, and even dream jobs (e.g., fashion blogging) (Duffy, 2018; Murray, 2017).

In today’s social world, the self and identity are constructed through individuals’ interaction and consumption practices (Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998; Cote, 2006). In forming an identity, the role of consumption functions as an education and socialization that aids young individuals to cultivate a self-image (Benn, 2004). It is through this consumption and reaction to marketing/advertising that individuals place themselves within society and create their personal identity as well as define/build a social association (Belk, 1988; Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998; O’Donohoe, 1994). In his book *Consumer Culture & Modernity*, Don Slater (1997) declared:

“The eminently modern notion of the social subject as a self-creating, self-defining individual is bound up with self-creation through consumption: it is partly through the use of goods and services that we formulate ourselves as social identities and display these identities. This renders consumption as the privileged site of autonomy, meaning, subjectivity, privacy and freedom” (p. 31).

Through material performances in the everyday lives of women, the interweaving of consumption and individuality abundantly transpires (Delhaye, 2006). Fashion consumption, in particular, has evolved into a means of constructing and expressing women’s individuality (Delhaye, 2006). The opportunities fashion offer for transformation and reinvention of the self are an essential aspect of identity formation (Rawlins, 2006). Additionally, fashion is a sign of

the times of which is continuously shifting; in agreement with changing times, individuals re-clothe and refashion themselves (Craik, 1994). In this way, such volatility mirrors the disposition of individuals' identities and sense of self (Rawlins, 2006). Somers (1994) asserted that the understanding of fashion relative to identity signifies an individual's chosen messages about self through dress. In other words, the selection of a specific outfit is aimed towards conveying meanings about oneself (Somers, 1994). The understanding or interpretation of others differs for person to person, and thus renders self-identity construction as a process that is socially constructed grounded in "time, space, and through relationality" (Somers, 1994, p. 629).

By means of experience and personal construction, individuals gain knowledge of themselves; this creates knowledge of self and allows for the recurrent formation of identities (Skeggs, 1997). Because identity construction is vastly fluid, fashion presents the option to demonstrate different traits of identity (Rawlins, 2006). According to McRobbie (1997), fashion is mainly a feminized industry as consumption and production is known to be a female domain (e.g., designers and magazine editors). For this reason, fashion consumption can represent intimate practices between women and material objects that reveal performances of identity (Parkins, 2008). For instance, in the 1980s women adopted men's tailored and sturdy-shouldered suits to exhibit power as they gained economic status (Phelan, 2018). During this time, the epitome of women's power was embodied by adopting a man's suit (O'Neal, 1999). The women of today, however, take empowerment a step further by not only adopting men's style but also reinventing it in a feminine way by using diverse colors and patterns to express individual attitude and personality (Phelan, 2018; Tarrant & Jolles, 2012).

With the continuous evolvement of digital media, the notion of identity construction through fashion consumption leads to the topic of social media influencers. Bloggers created the

rise of the social media influencer as they turned word of mouth into a successful business (Calfas, 2018). Through platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook to name a few, women were able to turn their daily practices into sponsored, yet authentic content that reached and resonated with many women (Calfas, 2018). Particularly, the highlight of fashion influencing entails millions of followers, a well-defined idea, and an authentic presence (Liao, 2019). Women who began their professional journeys as fashion social media influencers and enterprise foundations, now direct, design, and create their own clothing brands/businesses (Boyd, 2018; Liao, 2019).

As these fashion social media influencers arrived at new stages in life, they also became mothers and accordingly shifted into their motherhood roles whilst choosing fashion as an equally important part of their life (Murphy, 2018). And because Instagram is the leading platform for influencer marketing, influencers share stylish and appealing images of motherhood (Murphy, 2018). While some argue that such images have contributed to the shaping of young individuals life aspirations in terms of parenting (Murphy, 2018), others claim that the rise of picture-perfect motherhood has engendered “social media-savvy women [who] are reclaiming their roles as mothers on Instagram—all while making it look really, really good” (Przystup, 2017, p. 1). This globalization of the online self helps to understand the dominant ideologies regarding motherhood (Callero, 2003; Griffin, 2012).

The Role of Fashion Mother Influencers’ Social Presence in Latina Women’s Motherhood Experience

From a Lens of Performance Studies

This dissertation draws from performance studies in order to interpret FMIs’ social presence and the role of fashion consumption in their self-presentation and social exchanges on Instagram. As

stated by Papacharissi (2012), performance functions as a strategy toward navigating unyielding societal standards. Social media are considered a means toward the reproduction of social standards and/or the creation of unique and personal performances (Papacharissi, 2012). In this way, performances characterize identities of which can be restructured and decorated to communicate narratives (Schechner, 2003). Modifying and performing one's life roles relative to societal and individual situations requires time because it involves a lifetime of cultural conditioning on behavior (Schechner, 2003).

Schechner (2002) distinguished eight types of performance: (1) the arts, (2) ritual, (3) play, (4) athletic and popular culture entertainment, (5) commerce, (6) technology, (7) sex, and (8) daily life. In particular, within the arts, ritual, and play genres, performance implies putting on a show such as a dance or a concert (Schechner, 2017). In athletic and popular culture entertainment, commerce, technology, and sex genres, performance suggests performing to compete and to triumph (Schechner, 2017). Lastly, in daily life, Schechner (2017) suggested that cooking, socializing and mere existence define performances that are meant to impress or highlight a specific act for those observing. Essentially, whether through objects, media, or ritual, performance informs about the times (Schechner, 2002).

Performance engages the practice and presentation of acting, directing, emphasizing (Schechner, 2002). In postmodernity, individuals assert agency and navigate power within social constructs through the performance of self (Papacharissi, 2012). Performance is therefore a continuous reflexive vision of the self (Giddens, 1991). Modern-day performance theory scholars such as Madison and Hamera (2006) claimed that individuals give meaning to their lives by way of performance all the more than previous generations.

The central idea of performance studies lies in the reiteration of actions that provides real, yet historical background (Butler, 1990). Performance allows individuals to disclose social/gender roles and personal statements to illustrative capital through routinely performed and recreated identities (Papacharissi, 2012). By linking, combining, and cataloging events, such activities shape and maintain self-narratives (Gauntlett, 2002; Giddens, 1991). In this fashion, performances empower individuals to negotiate private/public spheres, personal and political declarations, as well as navigate individual to collective matters (Papacharissi, 2012). The possibility of such freedom guides Schechner (2003) to believe that performing is ‘public dreaming’ (p. 265). In the same way, a performance creates a link among the individual, their actions, and the audience (Butler, 1990).

In the context of this study, FMIs’ performances are studied to understand the construction of self within motherhood. That is, I looked into how fashion and/or the general consumption of goods help in making sense of themselves. This dissertation particularly focused on FMIs’ narratives as they communicate on Instagram through fashionable performances. By employing performance studies as a theoretical lens, I viewed FMIs as female performers by means of commodified selves to grasp a deeper meaning of the power behind identity construction within digital spheres such as Instagram.

From a Lens of Self-in-Relation Theory

Delving into theories of self-concept provides a foundation for understanding the ways in which FMIs may foster women empowerment through their fashionable performances on Instagram, and in turn, influence Latina millennials in their identity construction. In examining the concept of self and empowerment through the relationships we have with others, Surrey (1985) recognized that there exists a meaningful link between autonomy and creativity to women’s

relational experiences or network. Therefore, the development of relationships helps comprehend self-development; “personal empowerment can be viewed only through the larger lens of power through connection” (Surrey, 1987, p. 3).

The self-concept involves three central self-portrayals that include “the individual self, the relational self, and the collective self” (Brewer & Sedikides, 2001, p. 1). In other words, through distinctive qualities, interactions, and collective association, individuals aspire to attain self-identity (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). Specifically, the individual self is realized through differentiation such as holding an exclusive collection of qualities that set the individual apart from others within his/her social environment (Brewer & Sedikides, 2001). The relational self is attained through the adaption of meaningful relationships such as the intimate ties individuals hold with parents, children, romantic partners, and friends (Brewer & Sedikides, 2001). The collective self is accomplished by the embodiment within a social group that enables an individual to compare their self-concept relative to the in-group to those of other members of germane outgroups (Brewer & Sedikides, 2001). Put differently, the collective self involves the objective ties to others resulting from shared association with a collective (Brewer & Sedikides, 2001).

Particular to women, Miller (1991) further contended that sense of self becomes greatly rooted in creating and preserving relationships and associations. Significance thus rests on women discovering their individual voice in order to depict themselves to one another; women’s encounters particularly enable a relatedness that guides to an expanded concept of self, integrity, and interactions (Gilligan, 1982). According to Surrey (1985), the self as relational is crucial for women; the self is structured and established through valuable bonds.

With regard to FMIs, the self in relation allows for the understanding of how fashionable performances create meaning for young female consumers and their identity construction. Specifically, this dissertation examined the inner and exterior facets involved in FMIs and Latina millennial mothers' relationship that creates an empowering arena in digital spaces. By looking into Latina millennial mothers' experiences/thoughts regarding the self and digital domains such as Instagram, a deeper meaning for consumption is discovered.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

This dissertation approached the topic of millennial motherhood among Latina women who are exposed to self-made fashion influencers on social media who are also mothers. To obtain a rich perspective on their experiences and perceptions as Latina women in the US, I used a poststructuralist philosophy informed by a feminist lens. An interpretive inquiry of in-depth interviews and digital ethnography was used to explore and understand these women's multiple identities of themselves as women, mothers, and ethnic minorities, as they navigate through social media representations of womanhood. FMIs' social media performances were also explored to determine their role within Latina women's identity construction and consumption. The following research questions guided this research: (1) How are intersectional identities reflected in women's motherhood narratives among Latina millennial women in the United States? (2) How are intersectional identities of Latina millennial mother's reflected in their appearance management? (3) What is the role of FMIs' self-performances in Latina millennial women's construction of ideal motherhood?

I conducted two phases of data collection and analyses to address the research questions: The first phase involved in-depth interviews with the participants, and the second phase involved digital ethnography of FMIs and followers. I drew data from three sources: (1) In-depth interviews of Latina millennial mothers who subscribe to FMIs' content for Phase 1, (2) online participant observation of FMIs and their audience for Phase 2, and (3) secondary supplementary data such as participants' and FMIs' blog posts for Phase 1 and 2. These methods allowed me to improve understanding on the lived experiences of Latina mothers in the US as they encounter

FMI's on social media. Each source of data collection is explained in the following sections. This chapter also presents the sampling process and specifies details about the participants. Finally, the data analysis and interpretation process for each phase are discussed.

Phase 1: An Interpretive Inquiry of In-Depth Interviews

The main objective of interpretive research is to depict individuals' lived experiences as they contribute meaning to a social movement (Merriam, 1998). The data collection for this study was designed to cultivate understanding on the shift in motherhood experiences and meanings in today's cultural landscape as women's social presence on social media extensively grows. Within interpretive research, interviews function as purposive discussions utilized to gain relevant information and achieve a profound understanding of a person's lifeworld (Merriam, 1998, p. 71). Individual interviews produce detail narratives and permit the interviewer suitable authority over the dialogue to generate smooth communication (Morgan, 1997). Additionally, individual interviews allow for the clarification of accounts with minor effort from the interviewer as weight is placed on the interviewee to offer details of the topic in discussion (Agar & MacDonald, 1995). I conducted in-depth, face-to-face and video interviews with Latina millennial mothers who follow FMI's on Instagram. The purpose of in-depth interviews was to delve into (1) the experiences of Latina women as mothers in the US and (2) their thoughts and perceptions on FMI's they follow on social media. Because followers' intentions and perceptions are not clearly defined and presented within FMI's' social media platforms, in-depth interviews provided thorough narratives of the Latina audience regarding the FMI phenomenon.

The interviews began by briefly stating the purpose of the interview, followed by asking permission to record the conversation on a recording application in my smartphone. Once establishing the tone of the interview, participants were asked a grand tour question to encourage

them to converse and encounter calmness in sharing their truth (McCracken, 1989). In particular, the participants were asked to share a little bit about themselves. This allowed them to view the interview as informal and to establish a sense of openness. The interviews were semi-structured, and follow-up questions and probes were used to gain expansive descriptions and ensure clarifications. While the same list of questions were utilized for all interviews, the use of follow-up questions provided varied, yet unique statements. Interview data was transcribed using the Otter audio-to-text transcribing app. I edited and revised the auto-generated transcripts by comparing recorded voice files and the text. My personal smart phone was used to record the interviews and voice files were uploaded to a file saving service.

Interviews were conducted in English, but because of their cultural hybridity the occasional Spanglish (mixture of English and Spanish languages) would surface. Each interview lasted about 30 to 75 minutes. To obtain deep insight on the participants' experiences, photo elicitation (Harper, 2002) was utilized during interviews. In particular, photos were randomly chosen through a quick search on Instagram of FMIs I had previous exposure to. The fashion/beauty influencers' Instagram posts featured photos including fashionable style and motherhood stories with text captions. When interviews reached a standstill in conversation, I used photos to stimulate the participants' thoughts (Harper, 2002). These images were approved by IRB.

Participant Sample and Selection

In Phase 1, I interviewed 14 millennials who identified as cisgender, able-bodied, heterosexual Latina women, and mothers. This millennial demographic represents women between the ages of 23 and 38 as of 2019 (Dimock, 2019). Because millennials are impacted by social media marketing, and they continue to mature and have families, millennial moms characterize a

distinctive market who either produce content for their personal blog or consume that of someone else's (Strugatz, 2018). Also, Latina identity represents a hybrid culture when living in the US; "[it] remaps dominated hierarchies of identity and challenges popular notions of place and nation" (Guzmán & Valdivia, 2004, p. 214). As South Texas residents are heavily exposed to and surrounded by a large Hispanic community (Ura & Novak, 2020), cultural hybridity is greatly present and deemed Latinas of this area as ideal participants for this study. Drawing from intersectional theory, this study explored Latina women as marginalized individuals in the US to elucidate the uniqueness in their lived experiences.

The following criteria was used to determine eligibility for participation: (1) follow/read FMIs on Instagram, (2) first-time moms and/or have young children under 5 years old, (3) Latina women, and (4) millennial women. While mothers continue to experience self-development conflicts throughout their children's lives (Athan, 2018), the cut off age for mothers with children under 5 years old for this study stems from the idea that, on average, they begin school and gain a bit of independence from their mothers (Miller, Church, & Poole, n.d.). I began the sampling method by selecting two participants who were college friends and who had previously sparked conversations on the matters of motherhood. In fact, these women inspired the topic of this dissertation and thus functioned as suitable sources to begin the exploration into the lived experiences of Latina millennial mothers. I then followed snowballing strategy by asking the initially chosen participants for suggestions on prospective participants who met the study criteria (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The sample size was determined by purposeful sampling that, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), focuses on the amplifying of information. When themes began to repeat and no new data was derived from new interviews, saturation was reached. Thematic saturation was achieved with participant nine. Supplementary interviews were still

conducted to verify thematic redundancy and to respectfully stand by formerly scheduled interviews.

Interviews were conducted between December 2019 and April 2020. The participants were debriefed on the study purpose. I sent an initial e-mail with a casual description about my research topic and included my contact details. I engaged in phone and/or text conversations with some of the participants before conducting interviews. This allowed me to build a relationship with the participants. The first four interviews were conducted in South Texas cities and the remaining through video conferencing. In most cases, face-to-face interviews took place in the participants' preferred coffee spot. One of the participants was pregnant at the time and preferred to be interviewed in the comfort of her home. I transcribed the first few interviews before conducting the rest. I made annotations on issues to consider for the subsequent interviews I conducted through video conferencing. As a result, the interview questions slightly changed as interviews progressed to ensure emerging topics were thoroughly investigated. The interview guide is presented in Appendix C.

Description of Participants

The participants consisted of numerous subgroups of Latinos such as Mexican-descended, Puerto Rican-descended, and Central or South American-descended women. The sociocontextual and sociohistorical backgrounds highlight the array in realities between and within Latina/o groups. At the same time, the intersection of race and gender of Latina women offers insight into the similarities they share in double jeopardy (oppression as women and Latinas) experiences.

The participants interviewed consisted of women who, for the most part, were daughters of first-generation or foreign-born immigrants. Second-generation denotes individuals who were born in the US and who have at least one first-generation parent (Pew Research, 2013). As

Hispanic Americans, the participants had a bicultural identity that entails a union between two cultures. Pew Research Center (2013) analysis of second-generation Americans suggested that they claim a deep sense of identity with their inherited roots. This notion held true among the participants I interviewed who self-identified as Hispanic and drew from personal experiences inspired by their family's motherland (e.g., Mexican-American or Salvadoran-American).

Ethnicity self-identification gives an upfront observation into individuals views of identity and how they are connected to their cultural backgrounds (Lopez et al., 2017). However, cultural activities and cues experienced by Americans with Hispanic identity diminishes across generations, and also fades self-identification as Hispanic (Lopez et al., 2017). As second-generation Americans, the participants remained very in touch with their Hispanic identity, but struggled to keep it alive in their children.

The participants were middle-class, well-educated women; most had bachelor or master's degrees; one of the participants had a technical certificate; two women had high school diplomas with industry experience that enabled them to be successful managers and/or entrepreneurs; two women were full-time stay at home moms who utilized their prior professional abilities to teach their children. Their children ranged in age from babies to young children. Further, Pew Research Center (2013) suggested that second generation Hispanics place more importance than others on hard work and career attainment. Compared to their first-generation (immigrant) parents, the participants had access to many opportunities such as higher education and socioeconomic fulfillment, as well as access to health care related options such as therapy. This spoke to Latina millennial women's ability and choices to explore different sources for the care and wellbeing of their children.

Despite second-generation Americans' improved socioeconomic positions, research shows that discrimination experiences among first- and second-generation Latinos are similar (Pew Research, 2004). As the participants shared their experiences, they mentioned that Latina stereotypes persist in the media and thus accurate Latina/o stories are sparse. Therefore, better education and access to health resources enable Latina millennial mothers, as second-generation Americans, to build their own experiences and defy prejudices of Hispanics/Latina/os in the US.

In addition, Latina women professionals often need to balance family and career ambitions with cultural roles and ideals (Arredondo, 1991; Vasquez, 1982). The balancing of identities help characterize Latina mothers lived experience. For these Latina mothers in the US, the privileges (e.g., higher education) they hold and oppressions (e.g., ethnic/gender perpetuations) they experience form a unique narrative. Their realities help illustrate and guide other Latina women and brand marketers. That is, unique narratives increase the available resources for other second-generation Latina mothers to implement in their journeys of motherhood and consumption. For marketers, it offers better understanding to better resonate with the growing demographic of educated Latina mothers in the US. The following table provides a summary of the participants' information.

Table 1. Summary of Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Marital status	Education	Occupation	Children
Celina	30	With Partner	High school diploma, some college	Realtor	1 girl - 6-month-old
Faith	27	With Partner	Bachelor's in Political Science	Entrepreneur	2 boys - 10-month-old and 2 ½ year-old
Daniella	32	Married	Bachelor's in Elementary Education	Schoolteacher/stay-at-home mom	2 kids - 3 ½ boy and 5-month-old girl
Ariisa	30	Married	Master's in Occupational Therapy and Business Administration	Occupational Therapist in Early Childhood Intervention	2 boys - 4-year-old and 1-year-old
Olivia	32	Married	Bachelor's in Recreation Parks and Tourism Sciences	Realtor	2 boys - 3-year-olds
Daisy	30	Divorced	Technical School	X-ray technician/Stay-at-home mom	1 boy - 4-year-old
Isla	34	Married	Bachelor's in Advertising	Digital Communications Manager	2 boys - 1 ½ and 4-year-old
Ava	32	Married	Master's in Psychology	Behavior Analyst/Stay-at-home mom/Blogger	1 boy - 1-year old
Sophia	36	Married	High school diploma	Digital Design Agency Manager	1 girl - 4-year-old
Evelyn	30	Married	Bachelor's in Criminal Justice	Immigration Paralegal	1 boy - 5-month-old
Mia	33	Married	Bachelor's in Communication Arts	Schoolteacher	1 girl - 2-year-old
Grace	31	Married	Bachelor's and Master's in Communication Studies	Communications Manager, Digital Strategy & Marketing	1 boy - 16-month-old
Ruby	32	Married	Bachelor's in Communication Studies	Schoolteacher	2 girls - 2 ½ and 1-year-old
Sylvie	28	Married	High school diploma, some college	Bank Employee/Entrepreneur	2 girls - 4 and 2-year-old

Phase 2: Digital Ethnography of FMIs' Performance and Social Exchanges

The groundwork of digital ethnography rests on traditional ethnography (Varis, 2016). Rooted in anthropology, ethnography focuses on individuals' lived experiences and intends to generate thorough and positioned descriptions (Geertz, 1973; Varis, 2016). According to O'Reilly (2004), ethnography is a repetitious and inductive approach that regards human beings as part object/part subject through theory and the researcher's particular position. Because ethnography enables a researcher to understand individuals' lived experiences and positioned performances, a learning course that involves revelation in fieldwork encounters occurs (Blommaert & Jie, 2010; Varis, 2016).

In turn, digital ethnography represents a contemporary and digital counterpart of the traditional ethnographic methods; it fittingly details the fluidity recognized in present-day cultures (Masten & Plowman, 2003). As the digital space has become a key venue of individuals' everyday lives, digital ethnography embraces the immediate and seamless communication with individuals situated within their everyday lives and/or cultures in the Internet-mediated environment. This approach enables researchers to observe, listen, inquire, and produce elaborately written descriptions of individual experience (O'Reilly, 2004).

In social science, digital ethnography is used to communicate social stories by exploring both physical (e.g., face-to-face interviews) and digital spaces (e.g., social media and blogs) (Murthy, 2008). As a digital ethnographer immerses in a study context, the process of inquiry involves navigating interconnected digital and physical environments (Postill & Pink, 2012). For instance, social media discussions and archiving practices reflect the digital elements an ethnographer engages in, whereas sharing archival data with individuals in face-to-face

interviews exposes a more physical interaction (Postill & Pink, 2012; Pink, 2016). The manner in which qualitative inquiry is practiced and understood is therefore altered by digital media and requires reflexivity to comprehend human sociality in its wholeness (Baym & Markham, 2009; Postill & Pink, 2012). A strength in digital ethnography rests on the ability to demarginalize the voice of individuals who are observed and/or interviewed (Murthy, 2008).

This study adopts digital ethnography as interpretive inquiry. Aims of this study align with the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of interpretive methodology as the objective is to acquire a deeper understanding on contemporary women's self-presentation and social performance in their motherhood and the role of FMIs in self and young women's identity construction. Interpretive methodology focuses on making sense of the meanings that others hold concerning the world we live in (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Therefore, interpretive epistemology involves a subjectivist view on a phenomenon that encompasses socially constructed and historically positioned meaning (Crotty, 1998). It delves into the relationships between individuals and the historical and cultural settings people occupy to understand the phenomenon from an individual's perspective (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). As Heron and Reason (1997) illustrated, "to experience a world is to participate in it, simultaneously molding and encountering it (p. 3). An interpretive position through digital ethnography allowed exploration into FMIs' subjective reality on social media to determine how such realities impact and vary among individuals (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Data Collection from Online Observations of FMIs and Followers

As formerly stated, digital ethnography guided this inquiry. As an outsider or observer of motherhood experiences, I made sense of other women's worlds through speaking to Latina millennial mothers and created an understanding that makes sense to us both on the cultural

expectations and/or personal rituals (Olive, 2014). As an avid follower of FMIs, I consumed and observed fashion/beauty- and motherhood-related content on Instagram. I therefore consider myself an insider of the FMI community with a particular emic position about the field – beneficial as a source for this methodical ethnographic approach. As an insider to the experiences with FMIs’ social presence in the digital platform, I gained profound significance on cultural, spiritual, and political meanings and beliefs of these women.

In line with Merriam (1998), online observation allows a research to collect data within a natural setting that enfolds immediate occurrences of the phenomenon under study. Since my qualitative inquiry also focuses on FMIs’ social presence on social media, observations were situated online and consist of textual and visual field documentation (Burgess, 1982). As a digital ethnographer, it is important to incorporate the use of tech-savvy tools and/or software to better capture online activity (Murthy, 2011). Therefore, my toolkit for observations included screen recording using my smartphone, digital archiving available on social media, NVivo software, and the traditional written interpretations to bring every detail together in the form of field notes. The digital ethnographer is to capture continual observation within a digital setting and strive to represent multi-sided (e.g., online and offline locales) experiences of those observed (Williams, 2007).

In Phase 2, a list of FMIs was created to explore their Instagram presence (i.e., posts) from interviews conducted with Latina millennial mothers. To achieve online participant observations, I engaged on Instagram to follow and lurk (i.e., observe streams of images and videos) the posts and conversations that the audience engaged in within such posts. Instagram was selected as a study context because the platform is deemed one of the most effective for influencer marketing and is also known to stimulate self-expression and active follower

engagement (Mohr, 2013; Sanders, 2019). Instagram permits users to artistically integrate intimate visualizations into pictures, crafting and displaying entrancing narratives (Visual Creatives, 2014). As Instagram continues to develop technologically, users have the option to share content in diverse forms of communication, for instance, through Instagram Stories and/or their main feed (Rozario-Ospino, 2019). These different content presentations give way to important user behavior details: Instagram Stories are ephemeral, in-the-moment, and engaging, whereas Instagram Feed is eternal, curated, and perfect for communication reach (Rozario-Ospino, 2019). To capture the wholeness of FMIs' social presence, I screen recorded their Stories (i.e., ephemeral content) posted as well as archived regular posts from their main feed on Instagram.

The Instagram Posts and Stories of the FMIs were collected based on relevant information to discussed in the in-depth interviews. That is, to achieve triangulation, Posts and Stories (including text and images) of these women's fashion and motherhood experiences were collected to better understand Latina millennial mothers' perceptions. The Instagram Posts and Stories I analyzed were publicly available, and I did not include any identifying information about these individuals and/or their children in presentations or publications about this research. Instagram posts and videos of influencers (public information) were screenshot and saved in word documents. All files were saved to a file saving service supported by OIT.

Through the interview process, I compiled an excel file to make a list of the FMIs the participants followed. I first identified a total of 40 influencers. I took note of specific attributes and stories the participants shared relating to FMIs' motherhood and fashion topics. When interviews were finalized, I engaged in the elimination of influencers on the list. I focused on the

ones the participants discussed through personal experiences and details on Instagram content. This resulted in the identification of a solid group of 25 influencers.

Once themes were finalized in Phase 1, I used the following headlines in Excel to guide the organization of FMIs' images and text: Fashionable Mother Influencer, Instagram Handle, Sense of Solidarity Through Shared Experiences, A Time-Saving Shopping Reference, Shopping References For Myself, and Perceived Distance in Reality. The first column included the influencer's name as provided on Instagram, the second column included the link to their individual Instagram account, and the remaining columns included the links to the images deemed relevant to the theme after analyzing of images and text of each influencer.

In a separate Word document, thorough fieldnotes were made which observed and documented Instagram posts, images and follower comments associated to the social construction of fashionable motherhood. Information was organized in a way to reflect the stories shared during the participant interviews. The same headlines used in Excel were used as headings in the Word document and included visual, textual, and hashtag details used by FMIs on Instagram.

Screenshots of Instagram accounts provided information on the number of followers and profile bio, while screenshots of pertinent images (including emojis and hashtags) presented elements on FMIs' performances on the motherhood experience and fashion settings.

Additionally, field notes were used to record observational data. To capture FMIs' social presence, all field notes were methodical compiled, offering details on their content including Instagram Stories and main feed posts. Specific to Instagram main feed posts, field notes captured details on posting dates, settings, and the topics discussed within the FMI's profile. To document observations regarding Instagram Stories, I incorporated the screen recordings of randomly viewed videos. To gain depth on FMIs' social presence, I also documented some of the

conversations the audience had in correspondence to the content shared. Thus, field notes specifically devoted to the audience's comments were documented as well. Such documents provided details on the topic of conversations shared on Instagram pertinent to the experiences shared by participants during the interview process.

Description of FMI Sample

My analysis of the construction of fashionable motherhood on Instagram was achieved through online observation as a part of digital ethnography (Murthy, 2008) which identified 25 influencers from around the world who posted about fashion and motherhood. For the purpose of this dissertation, fashion was defined as styles of appearance and dress that includes body supplements (e.g., clothing, accessories, etc.) and body modifications (e.g., fitness, surgery). The Instagram presence of the FMIs in my sample focused on the display of clothing and/or style appearance. In most cases, fashion content was shared with some relation to motherhood. Most FMIs clearly defined the focus of their Instagram content in their bios; for this sample, topics of wellness, beauty, and fashion were common.

FMIs had a substantial following (from 7,998 to 1.4 million followers) on Instagram. According to Influencer Marketing Hub's (2020) definition of influencers, my sample included mega-, macro- and micro-influencers. Although the influencers in my sample had different levels of influence, there were no extreme disparities with regard to fashion and motherhood content. In fact, most of them self-identified as mothers in their Instagram bios; 5 out of the 25 only did so through Story Highlights about their children or family life. The sample of FMIs was comprised of diverse ethnic backgrounds, White influencers being the majority. More precisely: 12 white Americans; 6 Hispanic-Americans (Mexican and Dominican-descent) and 1 Mexican; 2 Asian-Americans; 1 English; 1 Canadian; 1 Kurdish-American; 1 unknown. Not all influencers clearly

defined their ethnicity in their Instagram bios. A thorough search of Instagram posts, media articles, and YouTube videos was implemented to determine ethnicities.

Secondary Supplemental Data

According to Bowen (2009), document analysis is a methodical process to review and assess documents such as diaries, journals, press releases, scrapbooks, and photo albums to name a few. These documents comprise text and images that have been chronicled without a researcher's interference (Bowen, 2009). Also referred to as social facts, Atkinson and Coffey (1997) contended that such documents are constructed, distributed, and utilized in a socially ordered means (i.e., as societal reference points). In combination with other qualitative methods, document analysis is commonly used for triangulating data to offer a multitude of corroboration that prompts credibility (Denzin, 1970; Eisner, 1991). For the purpose of this study, I reviewed media articles on influencer related topics as well as my researcher reflexivity notes documented throughout the interviewing process. Interestingly, one of the Latina millennial mothers I interviewed had her own blog. With her consent, blog posts related to the topics discussed in her video interviews were used as secondary supplemental data. Overall, these texts gave contextual evidence and additional background for the analysis and interpretation of in-depth interviews and online observation data.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

An interpretivist approach (e.g., Spiggle, 1994) guided the analysis of data. A thematic analysis was employed to understand the experiences of Latina millennial mothers in the US in relation to the cultural productions invoked in FMIs' Instagram presence. By doing so, I created an intricate narrative of motherhood for this unique group of individuals. As attested by Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a qualitative method that helps categorize, systemize, and

define themes uncovered within a large data set. I drew from in-depth interviews, online observation, and supplementary secondary data to capture the essence of the Latina mothers' identity construction when following FMIs. The data set included Instagram posts that featured visual and textual information. For analyzing images, I focused on FMIs' Instagram posts with the richest cases to elucidate the repetitively emerging themes in the interviews conducted with Latina millennial mothers (Schroeder & Borgerson, 1998; Pink, 2007; 2012). The same method of analysis was implemented when analyzing text in FMIs' Instagram posts and follower commentary.

To identify patterns in the various data sources collected, I used NVivo software. All documents including interview transcripts and social media posts containing images and videos were uploaded to the software in order to organize and structure into themes. I applied Spiggle's (1994) suggestions for data analysis and interpretation once data collection was completed. Spiggle (1994) argued that interpretation derives from profound exploration within the meaning of data rather than adhering to precise guidelines. To develop thematic interpretations, I engaged in an iterative process that entails a circular technique across several forms of data to cultivate theoretically rich interpretation (Spiggle, 1994).

Using In Vivo codes (Saldaña, 2015), I analyzed interview transcripts and online text featured in Instagram posts. As encouraged by Spiggle (1994), initial codes were compared and reviewed for similarities and differences. The first phase of codes was guided by succeeding data gathering and analyzing (Spiggle, 1994). For instance, the In Vivo code "mom life" emerged in first phase coding and guided the sampling of motherhood experiences and ideals described in the findings. A second phase of coding allowed for the elimination of double codes and the allocation of comprehensive codes into larger fragments of text. The categories classified in the

two phases of coding were abstracted into broader concepts (Spiggle, 1994). For instance, codes for motherhood identity creation such as “transformative journey” and “expressive mothering” were abstracted into the broader classification of “motherhood ideals.” Higher order evaluation was polished by reassessing codes as concepts were categorized. For instance, as the concept of the motherhood ideals emerged, motherhood identity formation codes such as “transformative journey” were re-categorized. To achieve theoretical saturation, I navigated concepts horizontally and phases of analysis vertically (Spiggle, 1994). Finally, the refutation process suggested by Spiggle (1994) was achieved by referencing supplementary secondary data such as pertinent media articles and blog posts which provided context in the thematic process.

Trustworthiness

Establishing precision in qualitative research is critical to confirm the veracity of the study findings and to dismiss the reproach that frequently succeeds this research method (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). Qualitative researchers must establish accurate, coherent, and thorough method of analysis as data is recorded, categorized, and disclosed; sufficient detail must be provided to allow the reader to define the research process as trustworthy (Nowell et al., 2017). To achieve trustworthiness, I address four criteria deemed crucial by Lincoln and Guba (1985): credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and reflexivity.

Credibility

To achieve credibility, research findings and interpretations must exemplify credible evidence culled from the participants’ original views and ideas (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Wallendorf and Belk (1989), member checks are a suitable technique to verify credibility as it gives participants the opportunity to comment and check viability on the researcher’s

descriptions and interpretations. For this dissertation, member checking was informally conducted with the participants throughout collection interviews and evaluation of transcripts to clarify any inconsistencies in statements. In this way, member checks in this research study certified that the participants' lived experiences were truthfully portrayed.

In addition, the triangulation of methods and data were executed to further determine credibility (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Wallendorf & Belk, 1989). Method triangulation indicates the usage of various approaches for data collecting (Sim & Sharp, 1998). Methodological triangulation was employed through the data collection of different methods including in-depth interviews, online observation, and field notes. This allowed access to distinctive vantage points regarding the FMI phenomenon. For instance, in-depth interviews created detailed narratives (Morgan, 1997) that helped understand the participants' daily life practices and unique perceptions in relation to the topic at hand; online observation provided supplemental data to both confirm and identify other unique facets the participants' experience with FMIs; detailed fieldnotes enabled the ability to methodically assess any inconsistencies when recollection of the participant interactions were not as well-defined (Wyer & Srull, 2014).

For data triangulation, multiple data sources in time, space, and persons were used to establish credibility (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Particularly, interview data was gathered through a span of five months in which gave insight into distinct experiences due to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic; data on the FMI phenomenon was collected from face-to-face or video interviews and Instagram content, giving consistency across different mediums; data collection from different types of persons (e.g., Latina millennial mothers and FMIs of different races and levels of influence) allowed for a thorough analysis of the FMI phenomenon.

Transferability

To achieve transferability, the researcher must accomplish generalizability of study through thick descriptions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Illustrating the context of behaviors and experiences is important to convey meaningful accounts to an outsider (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). As mentioned before, I explored the FMI phenomenon through the mix methods of qualitative inquiry such as observations, interviews, and supplementary secondary data to offer respectable groundwork for cultivating a humane, yet constructive process of learning. To offer perspective on the way this research was conducted (Korstjens & Moser, 2018), I disclosed the environments in which the study was carried out, the sample and sample size, the strategy implemented to arrive at the purposive sample, provided the participants' demographic qualities, outlined the criteria for the sample included and excluded, explained the interview process and topics discussed, and identified any modifications in interview questions hinged on the iterative research method. In this fashion, the findings of my qualitative research can be transferred to other settings or topics.

Dependability

In line with Tobin and Begley (2004), a researcher achieves dependability by clear documentation of the research process. Importantly, the facet of consistency is central to dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and requires gradual observation and clarification on modifications in the research process (Wallendorf & Belk, 1989). To achieve a logical and identifiable research process, I carefully outlined the steps of data and participant selection, inquiry, and the analysis implemented to arrive at theoretical interpretations. The consistency of the research design was achieved by allowing the research questions to guide in-depth interview inquiry in order to obtain the participants' unique stories and ultimately drive online observations

on the topics of motherhood and fashion. The triangulation of sources and methods brought on an iterative process of analysis that lead to changes in interview questions; such changes were addressed to provide transparency throughout the analysis process.

Confirmability

Confirmability entails the ability to demonstrate that interpretations and findings were drawn from the data (Tobin & Begley, 2004). According to Korstjens and Moser (2018), an audit trail is built to visibly explain the steps implemented from beginning (inquiry process) to end (interpretation of findings) of a research project. To achieve confirmability, I integrated an audit trail, outlined the study procedure, and thoroughly described the data collection process to avoid researcher bias. Through comprehensive notes and reflections documented on NVivo and Word documents, I kept track of the data collected (e.g., recordings, transcripts, and research materials adopted) that lead to my research findings.

Reflexivity

Keeping a feminist lens in mind, I drew from Goodall Jr. (2000) and engaged in reflexivity in order to reflect on my personal and academic connections to the participants. By doing so, I acquired a sense on what influences the questions I asked and the scholarship I produced on the topic of FMIs. In being reflexive, I allowed for self-referencing to inform how I interpreted the world and those around me. I therefore recognized that my forgoing experience with and familiarity of the social media influencer phenomenon influenced the research process. The objective was to enter every field with an open mind while also considering predetermined beliefs and ideas on the study topic/expected outcomes (Peñaloza, 2006). It is essential for a researcher to participate in reflexivity to determine one's own outlook and accept accountability for one's position in the research process (Peñaloza, 2006).

My identity influenced this research in several ways. My identity as a Latina helped me take a stance in solidarity with women who have experienced similar life challenges (e.g., familial expectations, sexual objectification as a Latina). As a bicultural and bilingual Hispanic, I understand the world of Hispanic immigrants and the goals they attempt to accomplish. This enabled me to be a "cultural broker;" someone who traverses both the immigrant experience and the life they hope to live in the home they selected (Royce, 1982). My identity as a woman, living in a male-dominated world, my experiences shaped my stance on how I view identity formation. That is, I view this study as critical space for gaining knowledge on how socially constructed ideologies impact our sense of self in today's world.

My research interests in consumer culture and social media also influenced this research. Specifically, my focus on digital self-performance, Instagram, and feminist perspective shaped my views on the meaning-making of Latina mothers in the US. My knowledge drove my optimistic standpoint on creating change through social media on societal stigmas such as women as sole caretakers and sacrificing self-care. Many controversial perspectives exist on motherhood ideologies regarding sexuality, choice, and even beauty ideals.

A more detailed account on how my personal experiences influence this research entail the diverse representation of motherhood I have consumed or second handily experienced. The motherhood stories that fueled my feminist approach stemmed from watching popular television shows that portray motherhood as glamorous compared to my sister's and friends' stories that reflected an exhaustive yet fulfilling experience. I therefore acknowledged that there is no correct way to approach motherhood and embrace the diversity in narrative. As cited before, I do not have direct experience with motherhood, i.e., I am a single woman with no children. It is through this respective newness that I engaged in a voyeuristic approach on motherhood and identity.

Voyeurism is conceptualized as information consumption concerning others' authentic and candid lives (Calvert, 2009). Such approach allowed me to curiously seek and learn about these mothers' lived realities.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

In this chapter, the 5 overarching themes with 15 sub-themes (Table 2) that emerged during the interviews with millennial Latina mother participants are discussed. I drew from a two-part data collection. Phase 1 centered on the themes that emerged from the analysis of the participants' experiences and perspective. It specifically considers the topics that shed light on women's intersectional roles as mothers, Latinas, and themselves as individuals, and how they intersect to shape their lived experiences as Latina mothers in the US. Phase 2 involves the role of FMIs who these Latina mothers follow on Instagram. In particular, Instagram content provides triangulation to verify findings from the interview data. Taken together, the two phases give insight into a transformed cultural definition of modern motherhood.

Becoming A Mom

“Being a mother has been everything. It’s been every emotion you can possibly feel. It’s been an incredible amount of responsibility to guide a tiny human to be the best possible person they can be.” – Daniella, 32

Motherhood has long been represented as a sacred institution that degrades and devalues mothers (Williams, 1984). As formerly mentioned, culture informs on the significance of motherhood, the adequate performances and positions associated in motherhood, and how it forms connections and individuality (Johnston & Swanson, 2003). However, as the cultural landscape changes, the construction of motherhood, especially in terms of dominant ideologies, takes minimal resemblance in mothers' lived social realities today. My findings of these millennial Latina

women's experiences demonstrate the reevaluation and negotiation of identity executed as they strive to become wonderful mothers; they also uncover some of the intricacies involved in such an event.

When the participants were inquired about their meaning of being a mom, they each had their own interpretation. In general, their experiences can be summed up to a particular phrase shared by several participants: "it's chaos." Becoming a mother reflected a series of hardships that eventually led to the bigger joy of watching their children feel loved and supported. These women's identity in terms of their gendered role consisted of reaching personal aspirations as mothers. The following excerpts illustrate some of views and labors experienced through the participants' journeys as mothers. To better understand these women's negotiations and reevaluations as mothers, sub-themes are explored within this theme, including (a) *Dealing With Whirlwind Emotions*, (b) *Negotiating Priorities and Roles For A Newly Chosen Lifestyle*, (c) *Learning To Be A Mom*.

Dealing With Whirlwind Emotions

In discussing their journeys of becoming moms, the participants expressed a significant amount of the emotional work involved. They described being a mom as something "chaotic," "tough," and "the most challenging" experience. All participants described the arduous and immense amount of physical and mental work they perform as mothers, and it surfaced the complex battles of emotions they go through. Participants' fears and anxieties originated from the work required of them to experience motherhood as fulfilling; it meant they had to deal with managing their mental readiness and letting go of their past lifestyles as women without children.

Olivia, an accomplished realtor and mother of twins, shared the overwhelming emotions she experienced in her attempt to be a more patient mother. Having battled anxiety her whole life, she often faces challenging moments when being a mother to her children.

... sometimes I do get very overwhelmed with the kids, but I know I can't lose control. Like, I have had to, ... lock myself in the restroom a couple of times when they're really just... testing me... I have to... lock myself in the room so that I don't... hit them... [until] I can calm down and then... once I can breathe normally, I'll be like, okay, ... they know you're locked in the restroom. You're showing them that they're winning and whatever game they're trying to play... and then [I] muster strength to [think] "I'm going to get out there and I tell them, show them who's boss and not let them run over me" and I kind of have to... brainwash myself to... be more strict because it's... ugh. It's so... unbalanced...

Olivia's narrative suggests that a mother is a vulnerable person, and becoming a mom requires constant self-training and implicit confrontation and negotiations with her kids that accompany a significant amount of emotional labor. Despite the draining aspects of motherhood, these women also found the beauty in their journeys; a rewarding experience with no comparison to previous elating life encounters. Faith, an entrepreneur of two successful businesses and a mother of two children under two years old, illustrated her motherhood journey thus far:

Being a mother to me has been incredibly difficult. Mainly because it was a role that I wasn't remotely ready for, nor was I mentally or emotionally ready for the roller-coaster it would be. There has been days where I've felt completely discourage, defeated, crying in a car parking lot because it was all too much, and nights like tonight, where my babies are asleep and I'm sitting here looking at pictures of them because I miss them... Even though it's been a difficult journey, it's been incredibly rewarding, my [heart] wants to

*explode at the thought of all the JOY they have brought into my life. They are my WHY.
They fill my life with purpose.*

In Faith's narrative, the roller-coaster is an important metaphor that describes her emotional labor as she is becoming a mom. As her narrative suggests, the main source of the fluctuating emotions is a lack of experience and mental readiness. While her realistic challenge and struggles make her feel distressed and cry, her children are something that she would miss once the daytime mothering war is over at nighttime.

Isla, an advertising professional and mother of two, shows another example of whirlwind emotions as she experiences motherhood. With few but memorable travel experiences, she observes her friends traveling and reminds herself that her children are her source of happiness.

I see my friends that travel all the time and I think wow they're having really cool experiences, but I remember... how I felt my highest high when I was studying abroad in Italy. And I think anytime I have those thoughts I think... my kids are a billion times greater... having them makes me feel way happier than those moments... I just think that there's no comparison. But at the same time, I'm very tired, very drained. They literally drain you of all your resources, money, energy, sleep.

Her narrative shows her conflict. Isla acknowledges that her life before children involved exciting adventures, but now she has to bring herself back to her present. She tries to remind herself that her kids give the greatest feeling. Although she expressed fulfillment in raising her children, she also shared the exhaustion that comes with the responsibility. This is consistent with the *roller-coaster* metaphor that Faith used.

Ava is a first-time mom and a part-time blogger. She started blogging to record and share her journey of becoming a mom. She loves to read other motherhood blogs and found them

helpful, which motivated her to share her journey as well to help others. The next excerpt comes from a post on Ava's blog, and it describes the complexity of emotions that are tied to her mother role:

Being a first time mom (& just a mom in general) is tough. Even with an "easy" baby! [My son] is such an easy baby to care for but I had no idea what mothers went through after birth until I gave birth myself. It's a whirlwind of emotions (good & bad), sleepless days/nights and a ton of other stuff ...Being a mother is probably the most challenging but rewarding thing.

Such sentiments reveal the recurrent balance of emotional and physical energy Ava experiences as a mother. In the data, motherhood was not expressed as entirely positive or negative and many times both facets were mentioned in the same thought. While each participant reflected different perspectives on the meaning of motherhood, they all declared that the good outweighed the bad. For example, Olivia narrated:

... it's become kind of... [a] pull and push type... emotion in me, where I'm kind of... getting a little resentful about... not about being a mom. Well kind of I guess. This is gonna sound terrible, but I have to... I'm a mom first. You know what I mean? And so, they need me to... navigate Earth and navigate life and so I have to be there for them. But everything else that is me, is put to the side... I love being a mom in somewhat... in a lot of ways, obviously.... having them there when they tell me they love me, watching them grow up, the way their speeches changing, the things they say... it's very fulfilling.

Isla also explained the journey of being a mother as a paradox between exhaustion and happiness:

So, everything hurts, [you're] falling apart, but they're wonderful... it's just both... you're just so tired all the time. But you're happy and you're... [you] just keep going. You don't have a choice.

The data analysis reveals that participants see motherhood as a journey that encompasses all the possible emotions a human being can experience, and they feel like being on a pendulum swing. While illustrated in diverse ways, it is clear that these women alternate between happiness and distress in their roles as mothers; an emotional roller-coaster that ultimately arrives to meaningful and gratifying sentiments.

Negotiating Priorities and Roles For A Newly Chosen Lifestyle

This theme depicts the participants' struggles to negotiate their priorities and roles as their identities as a self and a mom start intersecting each other. For example, before Olivia became a mother, she always placed her career goals as priority and strived to feel accomplished in her professional work. After having kids, however, she started to feel frustrated because she could not focus on her career and stay on the right track toward her desired fruition. She narrated,

... I just had this conversation with my mom... I got emotional because I want to be doing so much more... with my career wise... I love being a realtor.... So right now, I'm like, what's my passion?... what the hell do I want to do with my life?

Olivia's narrative illustrates that sacrificing her career ambition in exchange of becoming a mom disorients her sense of self. Olivia later continued and showed that she tries to justify for negotiating her priorities in the status of marriage and motherhood. For example,

When I first graduated [from a university], I helped my brother with his dream... and now my husband has started his construction company, and it's going really well. And, now I feel like, He needs my help... so now, I'm going to help my husband with his

dream. And so, where do I fall into all this? ... this is gonna sound terrible, but just like, I have to, like, I'm a mom first. You know what I mean? So, they [my brother, husband, and kids] need me. I have to be there for them. But, everything else that is me is put to the side.

Ultimately, Olivia described her life after becoming a mom as “tug of war,” but, after all, her negotiation ended in giving her first priority to her kids:

I could get [a nanny], for sure. But ... when am I going to spend time with my kids?... when I go pick them up from school and take them home for like, an hour? and then I have to get back to work. ... to me that's not, that's not something I would do. That's not something I could do... my kids wouldn't know me... and I don't want that.

In her motherhood blog, Ava described how her former occupation working as a behavioral analyst for children had largely absorbed her focus and identity. This led to the fear of losing herself in motherhood when she was expecting her first child. When she became a mother, she negotiated her professional role in order to meet her own expectations in placing her son as a priority. Interestingly, in altering her lifestyle from working mom to stay-at-home mom, she utilized her professional expertise to mother her child. In her own words:

I used to tie part of my identity with my career as if it were the end all be all. I've been working since I was about 16 and not because I had to but because I wanted to. I enjoy routine and having a schedule. My mind just works better that way. Having a kid shook that up for me. I got out of that mindset because in reality, life is constantly evolving and so are people. I say, I found myself [in motherhood] because I found what truly makes me happy. Right now, I have evolved into another version of myself, as a mom, raising my son (and possibly more children, God willing). I went from teaching other people's kids

some useful skills to teaching my own kid useful skills. I've always thought child development was intriguing but now I get to experience that with MY own child.

Like Olivia, Ava also experienced a shaken status of a sense of self when her motherhood dismantled her routine and required adjustment to a new lifestyle. While she recognized and respected the amount of work it takes to be a working mother, Ava chose to completely focus her energy on motherhood. She shared the meaning behind her negotiation:

I think I'll work again eventually but for now I'll enjoy the enchanting moments of motherhood... I just think that sometimes moms let themselves go and they're like, "Oh, you know, I have like all these kids and I don't have time for it." But I mean, it's just the same, ... you make time for what you want to make time for. Right? ... some moms work out all the time, some moms don't, some moms still hang out with their friends, some moms don't. So, I just think it's, what you make time for.

While Ava changed her career from a full-time behavioral analyst to a stay-at-home mom who blogs, Isla started blogging as a hobby before entering motherhood. With her career and networks in advertising, she grew passionate about developing her blog on a professional level. However, as she became a mom, Isla decided her personal aspirations as a successful blogger would take a back seat to balance between roles such as mother, a profession, and a self:

I sometimes tell my husband; I go back and I say... I think I could have been a really good blogger... if I continued doing it. I think I could of, if I really focused on it, I think I could have killed it as a blogger... It was when I transitioned into motherhood even after [my son] or maybe like a year after I had [him]... I still did it because I was only writing for once a week. But when I was doing that... I was working and I was testing products

and I was writing and I was taking my own photos. Every time I had to do shoot photos at home, it was just... a hassle every time so I had to eventually back out of it.

As a hardworking law professional and new mother, Evelyn also shared her experience to describe the difficulties in negotiating her many roles of mother, wife, and worker. As she thoroughly illustrates her experience, it is evident that her mother role takes precedence.

Uniquely, this battle in negotiating her roles is made more difficult because it took place during the COVID-19 pandemic; a lack of structure in her daily routine added pressure.

I am a new mom. So that's pretty much where everything's transitioning towards. It seems like that's all I do now. I either look for things that are going to help me out... be able to kind of manage my time better I guess, because I do have a baby ... but I am still working full time. And I have a dog and have a husband. And so it's like trying to figure out now how to balance everything and be able to, still be able to do everything as best as I can, basically, so whether it applies to [my son] or it applies to getting things done around the house, because I mean, we still have to keep up with things that the house needs. And then, of course, I also have my professional side. So, it's like trying to keep up with work. And, especially right now being in quarantine and staying at home... everything is just kind of like, there's no structure... everything's now just piled up.

My data clearly shows that motherhood is limiting and continuously negotiated with the individual's former experiences and ideal future (Wolf, 2003). This is prominent especially for first-time mothers because these women need to renegotiate their womanhood as they encounter complex changes as they become a mom (Alike Hemetsberger et al., 2015). The constant negotiation of priorities and roles is pervasive in the participants' motherhood journeys. Through

their reflections, it is recognizable that these women engage in the practice of identity negotiation between womanhood and motherhood.

Learning To Be A Mom

Data analysis of the participants' narrative revealed that becoming a mom is the process of learning. Through the process, the participants diligently and proactively referenced various types of resources that they felt served as ideal guides. For these women, providing their children with the best opportunities for growth was a priority. To learn ways to best mother their children, they studied discipling techniques, sleeping methods, and feeding efficiency. Amongst the resources referenced, the participants read articles and sought doctors' and other professionals' advice in order to create their own motherhood approach. At the same time, a recurring issue that drew the participants to internal conflicts in mothering their children was the overload of information available and in some instances, push back from their own mothers. For example, this excerpt provides a detailed account of Olivia's pressures in making the right decisions to raise her kids.

When I was pregnant, and throughout their life, I like reading articles about childrearing. And what's the best way to deal with a problem or what's the best way to deal with willful kids and so, you try to apply what you read, which... [says] don't work and spanking doesn't work and like you have all these... new different ... psychological information... So, you can't apply what worked for your parents [because] now you know better. You read the article... you read all these articles. Spanking is not good, it doesn't work. Screaming at your kids is not good, it doesn't work. Timeout is not good for your kids... it's not gonna do anything to them... [they] teach you different ways to deal with [a] situation... talking to them and addressing the problem and assessing why they're

getting cranky and why they do this and that and so now it's... you have the information that your parents gave you and try to apply. But you also have all these, all this other... information of the articles that you read about. Oh, if you do this, you're gonna fuck up your kid... if you scream at your kid all the time, they're going to become violent... woman beaters. So, ... you have... all this stuff and you're just... trying to apply... the techniques that won't fuck up your kid.

In her narrative, Olivia illustrated that she looked to several resources available online to determine the ideal method for disciplining her children. As a mother of “willful” twins, articles on child discipline and the possible psychological outcomes helped her decide what works best for her children.

Similarly, Isla recounted her and her husband’s decision to take parenting classes. In applying what they learned, she experienced an unfavorable reaction from her mother.

We keep the house cold... my house is like 60 degrees, 69 degrees at any given time. We all sleep better that way. And before kids were born, we took a bunch of classes and one of the things they told us was kids sleep best in cold temperatures like 68 to 72 degrees... so when I told my mom...we're going to start having the house cold, she was like, “You're crazy. Why would you do that? They're babies.” And I told her doctors tell us this, she's [says], “well, they're idiots.”

Isla’s narrative provides insight on how learning new mothering methods enables control over creating her own motherhood journey. In seeking parenting classes, she adapts her mothering style rather than following her mother’s ways. Isla gains advice from experts to make informed and tailored decisions on her parenting.

In her blog, Ava shared her thoughts on the availability and access of child rearing information online.

Everything I do with my child; I research it thoroughly. I also ask my mom and my son's pediatrician if I have any concerns. If I need advice, I ask for it. There is so much information out there about every single thing related to babies. Why not use new technology and new practices? It's 2019 after all...

With regard to breastfeeding, Ava recounted the painful bodily changes that caused difficulty in efficiently feeding her son. She gave a detailed account on how doctors and specialists helped improve her challenging experience.

We had our first appointment with our super awesome pediatrician. She asked about nursing and helped [my son] latch but I told her the extreme pain I was feeling. She referred me to a lactation specialist... The lactation specialist came to my house a couple of days later. She watched me nurse, weighed [my son], taught me some tummy time stretches and oral motor exercises. She made me feel comfortable and was extremely knowledgeable. She told me it seemed as if [my son] had a tongue tie because there was little range of motion in his tongue. I was pretty devastated but at least I knew that breastfeeding was still an option!

As she continued, Ava discussed that doctors/nurses' advised on a surgery procedure to improve her experience in breastfeeding and enhance her son's eating abilities. Despite the pain endured by both her and her son, she found validation in her choice to receive advice on this delicate matter because better health was the end point.

... The possibility of future issues because of the lip tie and tongue tie outweighed my fears. My husband and I decided to continue with the procedure the same day and within

10 minutes, [my son] had his lip tie and tongue tie corrected with a water laser procedure. It was awful. I could hear him crying at the top of his lungs from the room across the hall! I cried. I felt terrible. I second guessed my decision. Afterwards, I nursed him and he fell asleep. Dr. Bloggslove and the staff were patient and super professional. I would recommend Dr. Bloggslove time and time again. Looking back, it was the best decision we could have made.

Within this theme, the participants also discussed the realization that motherhood entails many unknowns. Therefore, often experiencing trial and error, they learned that studying external informational resources cannot prepare them for motherhood because their own experience occurs in unexpected ways. For example, Grace, a well-versed communications professional and soon-to-be mother of two, makes every effort to prepare for everything she does. While she attempts to prepare for her motherhood journey through Facebook groups and other online resources, she admitted:

As much as I want to be a planner, nothing goes as planned. So, I tried to prepare as much as I could with not just looking things up online, but also reading books a lot too, and having friends that are pregnant now they're asking me, "well, how did you do? What did you do to prepare? What books did you read? What blogs Did you follow?" I mean, like I said, Nothing really prepares you. You just kind of have to learn as you go on your own.

For Daniella, a schoolteacher turned stay-at-home mother with a continuous love for learning and teaching, also depicted motherhood as a journey with unexpected occurrences.

I think motherhood is a transforming experience because it changes your outlook in life. You can read on different parenting styles but nothing really prepares you to become a mother until you have your baby.

These narratives highlight that a one-fits-all theory for child rearing does not exist, and for this reason learning to be a mom never stops. Therefore, being a mom is not a static status, but rather a continuous process of becoming. The data analysis clearly shows that motherhood involves copious amounts of research and teaching moments. For millennial mothers, the use of ample resources from different channels functions as a way to acquire resources tailored to their own experiences. As well-educated women – both academically and professionally – the participants were aware of their privilege in having access to online information and opinions. This awareness allowed them to make a difference in their mothering; an opportunity many of their mothers did not have when raising them. As Latina millennial mothers living in the US during a pervasively digital era, the participants utilize the available resources to adapt and reconstruct their unique motherhood journeys.

Forming Motherhood Ideals

Motherhood is a central means of storytelling that is commonly linked to the gendering of Latinidad (Molina- Guzmán, 2010). Latinidad involves the assigning of gender roles in connection to collective cultural experiences of Latina/o American individuals; it surpasses geography as it links cultural identity among pan-ethnic and Latina/o groups outside Latin America (Alemán, 2018). Although parenting is not regarded as a culturally shared experience (Imamoğlu & Karakitapoglu-Aygün 2006), motherhood is a dominant trope to the ethos of domesticity and family dynamics in the US, and the motherhood role is greatly entrenched in cultural beliefs (Ruddick, 1989). The findings of this theme reveal that motherhood anecdotes

and ideals provide a lens into the influences of Latina/o culture and immigrant experiences on millennial mothers' motherhood journeys. In the diverse Latina/o background, (e.g., Mexican- , Salvadoran- , or Puerto Rican- descended), the participants shared many commonalities in their experiences with their Latina mothers. Still, despite shared viewpoints, participants attributed, accepted, and at times rejected roles and realities differently. As such, three topics surfaced as important to understanding how participants both embrace and/or reject their Hispanic roots: (a) *Striving To Reach Motherhood Ideal*, (b) *Telling My Mother's Story: Motherhood of the First-Generation Immigrant*, (c) *Breaking The Cycle: Second Gen Motherhood*

Striving To Reach Motherhood Ideal

In my data analysis, a specific set of ideals surfaced as the participants reflected on ways they aspire to be better mothers to their children. When asked what kind of mother they want to be, these women frequently focused on improving communication between mother and child, lessening the projection of their own anxieties onto their children, and providing them with the opportunities to take their own paths in life. For instance,

Daniella: *I want to have an open relationship with my children. I want them to be able to talk to me if they have any problems or issues. I want to be my children's first teacher.*

Ava: *I want to be a mom that is always there for her children... always, supportive and loving... in every aspect... letting them [know], it's okay to come to me even if they make mistakes knowing that I'm not gonna [to] shun them for making those mistakes... With every aspect, school aspect, their personal life, their friendships, work whenever it gets to that point.*

These narratives illustrated that the participants set motherhood ideals and strived to reach them. Their endeavors are related to how they want to be viewed by their children. Arissa, an occupational therapist and mother of three, described her mother ideal.

I want my children to look up to me and admire the mom/ woman I am and are not too proud to say to their friends, “That’s my mom.” I want them to be able to come to me with any problem or situation without being afraid.

As a working mom with multiple small children, it makes sense for her to place importance on the perception her children have of her. Juggling between motherhood labor and professional duties can be demanding. Striving to achieve admiration and openness in her mother-child relationship is an ideal she intends to work toward. In a similar way, Isla sought to tackle her anxiety to achieve a positive perception of herself for her children’s sake. Her narrative depicts:

I’d like to be a little bit calmer for my kids... I deal with a lot of anxiety. Just personally from having protective Latino parents growing up with that fear instilled in me of everything. So, I’d like to feel a little bit calmer, because sometimes I do think that my son picks up on that a lot, and he responds to it.

Analysis of participants’ narratives showed that their motherhood ideals are formulated based on experience with their mothers in the past. For example, Daisy, a stay-at-home mom who enjoys the quality times she gets to spend with her son, narrated that she tried to put herself in her kid’s shoes to understand him. She resentfully stated that her mom did not do so and merely scolded or nagged without trying to understand what she was going through. Her desire to improve her mother-child relationship was based on the discouraging experience she had with her own mother growing up. Likewise, Faith expressed her desire to be a mother who shows openness

and builds an emotional relationship with her kids because she did not experience the relationship with her own parents and/or mothers.

Often times I don't feel like his mom, it's still hard to see myself in this light. But after two years of having the privilege of being his mom, I can say more than anything that I want to be a loving mom. Someone who is accepting of them, of who they are, who they want to be, how they want to live. I feel like I didn't receive this from my parents. I always knew they loved me but they never really expressed it or showed it... Emotionally, I want my kids to feel a strong connection with their mom, a strong bond, I want them to know that I am their safe place, their biggest cheerleader, their word of reason, their provider, their compass, their backbone, their best friend, etc.

Also, the participants' motherhood ideals were established from their own life lessons. For example, Sophia, a full-time working mom who built a strong career as a manager, described her desire to adjust to her child's needs. Having not attend college herself, she narrated her intended openness in her mothering.

I want to be the kind of mom that adapts to the needs of my daughter ... make sure that I give her the opportunities to do whatever she wants to do, whether it is the same path that I'm taking or not. And I feel very strongly about that because I didn't take the regular path... graduating and going to college and... doing all these things... I took my own path and whether she wants to take the... graduating, going to college and becoming something different or trying something new for herself. I want to be the kind of mom that allows her to do something like that.

My data analysis revealed that the reality does not allow them to constantly accomplish their motherhood ideals. The participants experienced anxiety when they did not meet their own expectations. For example, Olivia reported:

I have a lot of anxiety. And I feel... that shows with them sometimes when they're... making a mess or when they're not listening to me or... I scream and then I'm noticing that they're doing it too... they get very frustrated when they can't get something done. And now they're screaming in frustration the exact same way I do it when I get frustrated. And that... breaks my heart because... they're watching me and they're learning from me. I wish I could just maybe pay more attention to those things. I don't want them, my... I don't want my faults to become their faults ... I want my kids to remember me as a loving understanding nurturing mom, and I'm trying my best.

This notion is echoed in Sophia's excerpt:

Whenever you become a mom, you're always going to be feeling guilty about something that you could have done better do this or do that or you didn't do or, and it's always an interesting challenge to find that balance and not blame yourself about... stuff in general.

Overall, the participants gave an array of responses regarding the motivations that inspire the motherhood ideals they seek to achieve. In building these motherhood ideals, the participants revealed a disconnect between the mother they are and the mother they strive to be. Because motherhood is a continuously evolving journey, it is reasonable for them to experience anxiety when they do not meet their own motherhood ideals. This anxiety can negatively impact their ability to guide their children toward a path of greatness and instead result in disruptive emotion, character imperfections, and below-par experiences (Warner, 2006). While the participants set motherhood ideals to be better mothers, pressures from their own expectations create a complex

cycle. The following two themes depict how their intersectional identities of growing in the immigrant family impacted their motherhood ideal building.

Telling My Mother's Story: Motherhood of the First-Generation Immigrant

Participants' views on Latina mothers revealed narratives on respectable characteristics. They exposed how their Latina/o culture has shaped their views and/or experiences relating to motherhood. With much admiration, the participants process their feelings as they share the values their mothers instilled in them. From a rather general perspective on Latina mothers, Faith stated her view:

Latina moms are one of a kind. They are very true to their roots and traditions... In my opinion Latina moms are very fierce, strong, sassy, attitude-driven, hardworking ladies. But I do believe, at least my mom's generation that moms are very stuck in their role as just being a house-mom or wife.

While Faith's view on her mother's role stemmed from a stereotypical frame of Latina moms, she admired how she performed her role.

My mom is housewife who has spent her whole life putting everyone else before herself. This is probably the attribute that I admire the most about her, that she so selfless, especially when it comes to her kids...

Similarly, Arissa briefly explained how her mother has had an impact on her approach on being a mother. She elaborated on her plans to emulate her mother as a head strong matriarch.

I want to have some attributes of my mom when raising my kids. I want to be strong willed like my mother.

In a thorough account, Olivia illustrated her mother's rearing efforts and revealed the immense work attributed to Latina mothers. Although she touched on the harmful impact neglecting the self has on a mother, she did so in a way that acknowledged her mother's actions.

... she leaves no room for error. And that's how we were kind of raised also... but she was a very caring mom, she definitely shaped us to be who we are today. I give her more credit than my dad because... my dad worked a lot. And so, she had to raise four kids on her own and now I understand... when [we] were younger, why she would get so hysterical sometimes because... dealing with four kids is a lot... I told her, "Mom, I look back and I might I get why you were always so frustrated because you never took time for yourself... your whole world was your children" ... she would never buy herself new clothes, everything was about her kids... I remember her wearing the same clothes for decades, for years. And so, everything she did was for her kids. And I tell her... now I know why you were so hysterical and pissed off all the time. She said, "you think I was angry all the time?" I'm like, "you were mom... you were always yelling at us about something or upset about something. But it's because you never had time to yourself."

When asked about their mothers' stories, the participants displayed much emotion as they described how their mothers' ambitions enabled them to be prosperous Latina women in the US. All the participants spoke wonders and praises regarding the values they learned from their mothers. This brought to light the immigrant experience as most of their mothers came to the US with the American Dream in mind. That is, they immigrated to the US with the hope for better opportunities to succeed (Hochschild, 1995). My data analysis showed that the participants, as second-generation immigrants, are conscious of the hope their parents translated into their future. The transnational experiences of the participants, their mothers, and those around them help to

interpret the values and ideals they hold as Latina mothers in the US. In speaking of the immigrant experience, the participants proudly shared the hard work, strengths, and sacrifices of their mothers. For instance, Olivia narrated:

She came here as an immigrant... and she has accomplished so much and... it makes me feel so proud because... I have this... incredible woman that came here without even speaking English. She started by cleaning, ... hospitals and after people and then she got a job as a parent educator... And then she just... worked her way up.

From Olivia's narrative, it is evident that she has a high regard for her mother, especially regarding her professional successes. Isla echoed pride in her mother's accomplishments. In doing so, she touched on the power behind such accomplishments as a Latina in the US.

She has been promoted... time and time again, she's done pretty well. And she... sometimes it just amazes me because sometimes she'll freak out because the cursor on her computer disappears. And [she'll say], "I don't know how to get the cursor back" or... they're very... basic computer things that freak her out, yet [she] managed to become the director of sales at this company... after this guy... his name is Jack Johnson... he's a white man, she took the job.

Sophia reflected on her mother's immigrant experience in connection to keeping the Latina/o culture alive in her children. She explained:

I think [Latina mothers] are very remarkable women in general because they have added challenges that other moms don't have. And I think that not only applies to Latinas, but any immigrant mom that is... struggling to teach their kids their first language and... making sure that in a country that's not theirs, they have a little bit of your history and culture but also being respectful to the culture that you're in and making sure that... they

have a lot more opportunities and... a broader view of the world than you did, in a nutshell."

Sophia's narrative highlights the unique experience Latina/os in the US have as they navigate two cultures. Enfolded by struggle and opportunity, her motherhood ideal may be influenced by the immigrant experience.

Echoing similar sentiments on the immigrant experience, Sylvie, a dedicated entrepreneur and mother of two, drew from both her father and mother's work ethic. As a means toward upholding feelings of gratitude, she recalled her parents' pleas.

She would constantly tell me... be trying to remind me [that my] dad worked so hard... he's always working hard... "your dad doesn't deserve you to be... doing bad things behind his back or [behind] my back." So, she would never let me forget that... she was constantly telling me... "your dad's working all day in the sun.... just remember... so you could have nice things and just so you could... have pretty things." So, ... I feel she was always trying to remind me... every day... he tells me, "we struggled a lot to grow or to, ... get to where we are right now."

Finally, Daniella shared the admiration she has for her mother, she elaborated on her immigrant mother's experience and defined the essence of the American Dream.

I admire my mom because she left her country with my father to give us (my sister and myself a better life) she could have easily stayed there but she knew there was no future for us there. I think that is selfless and so brave, coming to a country without knowing the language and being undocumented. She was a stay at home mom and dedicated her life raising us. She was there for every school event. She took the time to eat lunch with us. She cooked dinner for us every night. She was a mother completely dedicated to her

family. When I was twenty-one I petitioned for her residency. After years of living in the shadows she finally became a resident of the United States. That was one of the happiest days of her life.

Sylvie's and Daniella's excerpts function as a lens into the appreciation and anxiety that comes with being a child of immigrants. On one hand, it fosters admiration for the hardships and selflessness their mothers experienced in order to give them a chance at a better life. On the other hand, although hardship and hard work are not specific to Latina/os, immigration is a profound experience that in many ways impacts children of immigrants. There exists pressures and challenges to succeed in order to justify the struggles parents endure, and the difficulty of coping with life changes (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001) – in this case, as a Latina mothers in the US. Through their life trajectory, the experiences of their first-generation immigrant mothers influence how they seek to mimic and reject certain motherhood ideals.

In sum, it is clear that these women recognize their mother's actions in the US as extraordinary feats. The mothers who raised them set in motion countless opportunities for the next generations in their families. In the words of Ruby, a schoolteacher and mother of two who takes great pride in her cultural heritage, *[My mother] grew up as a migrant and... she made promises and made sure that... I didn't have to struggle as much as she did. She put me through school. And I think always raised me to be a very headstrong person.* In describing the sacrifice and hard work of their mothers, the participants' revealed the values they appreciate in Latina/o traditional motherhood.

Breaking The Cycle: Second Gen Motherhood

These millennial mothers belong to a completely different generation from that of their own mothers and are situated uniquely between two different cultural boundaries – Latina/o and US.

Mothers are influenced by social pressures and bring with them expectations and experiences learnt through the course of their lives (Mayall, 2001). Thus, cultural and life experiences inform a mother's view; one that ultimately helps to understand and construct an individual motherhood experience for the future generations of mothers (Rawlins, 2006). Although the participants appreciated the sacrifice and hard work from their first-immigrant generation parents, they avoided certain mothering qualities that they experienced from their own mothers; this method of tweaking allowed them to create their own, unique motherhood identity.

As the participants reflected upon their transnational experiences, that is, exposure to Latina/o and American motherhood models, they revealed the type of mothers they wanted to be for their own children. Specific to their Latinidad, they are aware of some unpleasant practices in Latina/o traditional culture with regard to motherhood; thus, they strived to alter their motherhood to fit their own ideals. While not completely stripping away the influences of their culture, especially their immigrant mothers' hardships, these women shift perspective and create their own paths. This theme is specific to the taboos within motherhood in Latina/o culture such as therapy and other delicate topics. For instance, Isla narrated:

... it's kind of hard to put us into a bucket because the way I see it now it's just so different for all of my friends who are Latina moms. I think Latina moms nowadays are more comfortable with talking about the difficulties of motherhood than the moms of my mom's generation.

Also, with respect to meaningful mementoes, she explained how she attempts to alter her mothering in order to express her affection to her children in the future.

My mom never held on to anything. She basically after a couple years is like, "all your trophies are gone and all your plaques and metals and that that collage that you made

that one third place in the city-wide art festival. I threw it away.” ... why would you do that? ... My mom has never been a clutter person. She gets rid of everything. So, I'm trying not to be as severe as her in that regard because I do want to hold on to some of the things for them.

Arissa explained her mother's past influence and, as result, impacted how she aims to change her method in raising her children when it comes to their freedom to fail and/or succeed.

... I do want my children to be more independent than I was growing up. That's one thing about my mom, I wish she gave us more independence instead of holding our hand through every situation. I want my kids to figure things out on their own.

Faith described how the lack of affection has been passed down in the generations of mothers in her family. She also explained how she intends to adapt her mothering to be better for her children:

My mom always said that my grandma was very “seca” [dry] or “fria” [cold] and it's true, when we would go to Mexico to visit she really wasn't the sit on my lap kind of grandma, she didn't even play with us. So, now that I'm a mom, I make it a point to hug and kiss my kids, to tell them how much I love them, to tell them how strong, brave, kind, funny, smart, loving etc., they are, I try to give positive reinforcement because I didn't receive that for myself.

Interestingly, Faith was one of the few participants to refer to her Latina mother as distant in affection. She further explained how she aimed to adapt her role as one that encompasses more than mere domesticity.

... I would like to be more present and involved in their lives. I remember having soccer games, and both my parents wouldn't go to them, they went to some of my honor nights,

but I think it's important to celebrate your children in everything that they do. I think it's important to be present as much as you can, especially in this digital world we live in. In general, in terms of the household she set the gold standard, but motherhood is so much more than that.

In recounting her mothers' lack of self-care, Olivia realized that such neglect contributed to her mother's angry temper. She stated how she intends to change her behavior to break the cycle of projecting negative emotions onto her children:

I'm sorry, mom... I love you. I respect you. I love everything you did for us. But I don't want to be that mom. I don't want my kids to remember me as an angry mom. I don't want my kids to remember me as being... a mean mom. Because... I just don't want that... I want my kids to remember me as a loving understanding nurturing mom, and I'm trying my best.

In the same line as Olivia, Isla spoke to her experience on self-care. In particular, she elucidated Latina/o culture's stigma on therapy. Nonetheless, as it becomes more acceptable to seek help for motherhood related matters, she intends to do so herself.

So, this past year, just because after you have a baby, you go through... postpartum, breastfeeding, your hormones, I started going to therapy. And when I told my mom that I started with therapy, she was like, "I never did that... I never had to go talk to someone." And, and I [said to her], "well, because... you guys just had to deal with that you didn't, you weren't allowed... to have a difficult time or struggle." But... so we have the access and we have the means so why not do it? So, I think Latina moms now are more comfortable with talking about those things, but they still do face some of that... criticism or that's stigma... you're not good. It's not normal and it's not okay. Whereas I feel like

non-Latinas are probably like their moms [and] probably went to therapy and have access to it. I also think a lot of that has to do with the financial factor. Latina moms... or my mom's generation or older moms probably didn't have the means to go. So, they never even considered it. So, ... I think Latina moms are also finding themselves to be a little bit more empowered now.

On the matter of delicate topics, Ava recounted her experience and sentiments when her mother placed her in the light of perfection.

She can be very... too loving if that makes sense... [like] I can do no wrong in her eyes. Sometimes it's uncomfortable because I know I'm not perfect and she... not acts like I am but it seems like she knows that I am, which is really weird... in her mind. But it can be uncomfortable sometimes.

For this reason, she avoided sharing difficult conversations with her mother. She expressed her efforts in changing that behavior with her children:

I wasn't or couldn't be super open with my mom about certain topics, including... friendships or relationships because again, she had that certain view. And it was a little bias. That I was always right. So, I want that to change with my kids...

Lastly, Daniella clearly stated how she would do motherhood differently from that of her mother's approach. Intriguingly, a stay-at-home mother and former schoolteacher, this participant continues the use of her teaching abilities with her children.

The main thing I would do differently is the way I communicate with my children. As a mother it is my responsibility to educate my children, I feel like growing up we had a lot of taboos, things we didn't talk about such as sex, drugs, and alcohol. I feel like these are important topics that I should be able to discuss with my kids.

By pursuing self-care, mental health support such as therapy, and open communication with their children, these women try to break the cycle of passing down distress patterns they perceived from their mothers and onto their children.

The findings of these themes illustrate that the participants construct their own motherhood as a reflection of their mothers' hard work while rejecting the behaviors they deemed adverse. In this regard, my finding suggests that second-generation motherhood of these millennial Latinas involved the rejection of certain motherhood practices. As these women reflected on their experiences growing up, they recognized and clearly outlined how they intend to negotiate past learned behaviors. This theme also supports the notion that Latina/o immigrant families emotionally traverse intricate experiences of existence and nonexistence as they strive to maintain cultural stability and reconstruct cultural spaces (Falicov, 2002). This reflects a transnational motherhood that involves illusory concepts of mothering and are often categorized by a Western, white middle-class system (Kaplan, 1994). In this way, these Latina millennial women attempt to defy conventional structures of motherhood as they navigate their transnational geographies while negotiating their identities as mothers. Motherhood ideals centered on the emotional connection with their children through open communication, the act of selflessness, and the avoidance of anxiety projection onto their children.

Encountering Reality Checks

The participants' motherhood ideals mainly involved the improvement of emotional connection with their children. In order to be mentally and emotionally available however, the need for self-care is crucial for mothers to restore energy and be better for their family. A discrepancy in their motherhood ideals and realities is uncovered as they reflect on norms and stereotypes regarding Latina women. As I interviewed the participants, they shared cathartic experience in their

journey of becoming a mom. Through much emotion and pride, they reflected on their own meanings of motherhood and being Latina women. In doing so, the participants realized the impacts both personal and social forces can have on their experiences. While these women strive to reach the motherhood ideals as the previous themes showed, they often found obstacles in reality checks. The following two themes emerged in the data illustrating how the participants were reminded of the reality of their lives and those around them: (a) *Implicit Pressures of Latina/o Norms Regarding Women Appearance Management*, (b) *Lacking Time For Self-Care* and (c) *Resisting Latina Women Stereotypes*.

Implicit Pressures of Latina/o Norms Regarding Women Appearance Management

The vast majority of the participants mentioned their mothers' Hispanic upbringing as an influence on their appearance management. They illustrated their attempts to avoid looking "fodonga" (unkempt) and/or "descarado," (slutty) due to cultural expectations. This often led to troubling sentiments. For example, Evelyn felt pressure to look good for those visiting her at home. On the other hand, she realized it feels good to look good; she then keeps up with her appearance for own benefit.

As a mom, I think we can get really carried away with just... sweats and... pajamas... at the beginning, it was just [a] constant battle of... okay, yes I'm a mom and... I need to clean the house and I need to take care of [my son]. But I also needed to take care of myself... I was never one to be... fodonga [unkempt]. I think that's part of... being Latina, where... you want to be able to do everything, but at the same time, ... you don't want to look fodonga [unkempt].

When asked to expand on her thinking, she referred to her mother's upbringing, and how that's now an expectation for her as a mother.

She grew up [thinking], ... yes, you're going to clean your house but you also have to be presentable. At any moment... you never want to be caught... being in your pajamas when people are coming or especially with... the new baby... people are going to come, want to meet your baby, so you have to look good. So, it was... there's a little bit of pressure in that... I feel... as a Latina mom... that is something that's expected out of you. And so, you do tend to also make sure that you're... keeping up with that... I think in the Latina mentality ... if you look good, you'll feel good.”

Mia, a schoolteacher and mother of one, expressed her mother’s influence as the reason she continues to keep up with her appearance.

I've always been used to... at any age, I just enjoy dressing up and doing my makeup when I'm going to go somewhere... my mom is the type even right now, ... even though she's... getting close to her 60s... she won't go to HEB without... makeup or a nice shirt on. She's just always been like that. So that just might be also... kind of what I learned from her, ... a learned behavior. I'm a bit more lenient than what she is... just because... she really does care, ... even when she comes to visit me... I'll tell her... we're just gonna go to HEB... no one knows you. Just, “Oh no, I'm not gonna wear a T shirt”

Later in our conversation, she discussed her shopping habits. In doing so, she revealed that she hardly wears the same outfit to different occasions. She consciously shopped at boutiques to avoid having the same outfit as someone else. She illustrated:

I've always thought that's... a Hispanic thing [to get new outfits for each occasion] ... I'll never wear the same dress to.. Okay, if I wear this one dress to a wedding, ... another wedding in another month, I'm gonna buy a new dress... I'm not gonna wear the same dress... I don't know if my mom necessarily told me... that's what you have to do. But I

feel... she always said,... anytime there was... something she [would say], “Okay, let's go buy you a new dress.” And so, I guess I always just... thought that was normal... So, I still do that. [If] so and so is having a wedding or so and so is having a birthday dinner... [I think], well I wore that dress last time, I need a new one... growing up and knowing... whenever there was something, like an occasion... my mom always told me to find a new dress. So, just... I grew up that way.

In a way, Evelyn's and Mia's narratives revealed this *keeping up with appearances* mentality Latinas greatly heed to. Maintaining a polished and stylish look is common practice in the Hispanic community (James, 2019). In a similar vein, Olivia spoke to the expectation of being a respectable looking mother. Particularly, her experiences stem from her Mexican father, she explained:

Since becoming a mom. It's definitely changed. I guess I used to... my favorite part of my body has always been my legs. So, I would always wear... short stuff like short dresses, short shorts, my short skirts and,... now that I'm a mom and... I try to wear these things. I'm like, this doesn't look right.... my legs are still the same. They're still, you know, muscular. They're defined. They're nice, but... I just don't feel like it's appropriate.

When I asked her to clarify what she meant by such style not being appropriate, she explained that it has to do with her Mexican culture. In her own words:

I think it has to do more with... the culture... Well, my dad. And my husband, also... I don't know if it's because they're Mexican. But it has to do with my dad more than anything [he] says, “it's not respectful to your husband, or ... why do you show so much... You're a mom now,... you shouldn't dress like that.” And so, it does,... when you're shopping you're like, Oh, well, I'm gonna be probably wearing these clothes when

I'm hanging out with my dad... the other day we had a wedding to go to and I know my parents were going to be there and I tried out... this really pretty dress. It was... a wrap dress. But it was kind of... low, up to here. And... I don't have big boobs, and I've always liked not having big boobs because I can wear certain clothing. And it doesn't look descarado... it doesn't look... provocative... so I have boobies but they're not huge to where... if I wear [a] low cut top, it's gonna look... like I'm trying to be out there. It looks nice. It looks classy... it looks pretty. And so, ... I was able to wear stuff like that. But now... I tried on the dress and it was really low and I'm like, I like it... I don't have... cleavage or anything [to] worry about, but then I [thought], oh dad's gonna be at the wedding. I can already hear him... "why are you wearing that, put a sweater on... you're being disrespectful to your husband... you're gonna make him upset." So, I was like, forget it. I'm not gonna buy this dress so I ended up buying something else.

Olivia's narrative depicted the machismo culture that remains prominent in the Hispanic community. To please her father's expectations of her as a Latina mother and wife, Olivia altered her style when around him. Finally, Ruby reiterated on the importance of looking appropriate and keeping up with her appearance as a part of her Hispanic upbringing. In sharing the way motherhood changed her body, she illustrated cultural influence in her dress change:

I think I was a little more open to using fitted clothing. And I think now this whole trend with... high waisted jeans. I'm trying, I'm working on the pouch... because it's a cute look, and I always tell this to my girlfriends... 'man, ... Why weren't mid drift tops a thing when I had a cute tummy?' ... I was thin, I could have totally rocked this pre baby... now... I've lost my baby weight. So, I think I'm a little more comfortable. I still wouldn't

show belly. I would definitely not wear a two piece anymore, it's just kind of with age, it's... the appropriate thing to do.

When I asked to elaborate on what she meant by “appropriate” she responded:

[It] also has to do with... the way my mom raised me; my mom is also very conservative. So, my mom was always like, your bikini is too revealing or it's not... you have to take care of yourself. You should be covered up so that the men can respect you and I think that has a lot to do with our culture... I'm half white. So, my father was Anglo or is Anglo, and my mom's Hispanic, but I was raised more on a Hispanic upbringing... my mom would always say “Yo me cuelgo hasta los sartenes” [I even hang pans on myself]. My mom always liked jewelry. My mom is always very put together. My mom's very bold with her jewelry and her dress. And I think that's just [the way] I was raised. And now I see that in my daughter, my oldest, at least.

My data analysis showed that many of the participants experienced social pressures from Latina/o cultural expectations. That is, as mothers, they expressed the need to “do it all” while looking “put together.” Although these women faced complexities with the pressures of appearance management, most of them realized that upholding a well-groomed appearance developed a positive impact on their mentality. It is recognized, however, that the extent to which appearance management was implemented varied across the participants.

Lacking Time For Self-Care

While the previous theme reveals that the participants felt the pressure of appearance management, they also expressed their frustration that comes from a reality check that they do not have sufficient time to meet the social and cultural norms for women’s appearance. As the participants navigated motherhood duties and professional obligations, they realized personal

time was very limited. When asked about personal interests, Evelyn shared how new motherhood has impacted her hygiene and self-care practices.

Just simply... being able to... fix your hair... do a little bit of... manicures pedicures. Even, I mean I know I don't have as many... long,... close friends [who are moms] but I would think that... most moms will tell you that once you start having kids it starts getting a lot harder to just even be able to find time to... shower in a way where... you're able to... even shave. Because for me I felt that... my showers were limited. Okay, [if] he's napping I probably have like a 10, 15-minute window max before he... wakes up and realizes that I'm not there. And so, most of my showers [are] more down to the basic... shampoo conditioner if I had time but most the time was just... get the shampoo in there. Get the soap, rinse. And it's like you don't really think about [it]... [I] used to even do... face routine where... if I was in the shower, I tried to... use... a deep scrub. And... my... facials, things like that. And once you have a baby, it's like you don't have time for that kind of shower... you get in and you get out.

In Evelyn's narrative, it is apparent that new motherhood brought time constraints to engage in extensive relaxing hygiene practices. For other participants, life before motherhood entailed interests in makeup. In speaking of her personal interests, Faith talked about her love for makeup.

All I knew at the time was that both of my jobs weren't making me happy and beauty and makeup did. I had absolutely no training, but it was something that just came quite naturally, and it didn't feel like a job, I would literally wake up every morning and play with makeup. I love how transformative makeup can be both inside and out. Obviously the physical enhancements makeup creates are the most visible, but it also does

something internally, it gives you a confidence boost, it makes you feel good, bossy, sexy, pretty, put together, fierce, etc., The reactions were always the best!

Faith's narrative gives insight into the psychological meaning of wearing makeup. For her, wearing makeup functioned as a meditative practice (Stalder, 2020). However, she shared that she often does not have the time to practice this form of self-care.

... I don't really have the opportunity to [pamper myself], because I always place my children's needs and cares before my own. Since having the babies I've NEVER had my nails done, I probably go in for a haircut twice a year, facials maybe twice if I'm lucky. My idea of pampering is when I escape from mom life a little and do my makeup at night, given if I'm not entirely tired from long day with the boys and work... watching YouTube, while doing house chores really helps me relate to the moms I watch, or when I worship music, it really lifts my spirits, and when I watch [influencer] makeup tutorials [it] really inspires me to play with makeup and recreate [the] looks!

This narrative suggests that personal interests took the back seat as women embarked on their motherhood journey. Some of the participants approached appearance management as only necessary for special occasions, while others preferred to continue a routine to maintain sense of self and Hispanic social norms. For instance, Isla, like Faith, spoke on her love for makeup.

I was very into makeup [before having a baby]. I am very good at doing makeup actually. I'm still very good. Still wear makeup from time to time, but I used to... sit down at my makeup table and do... a two-hour makeup look. And then I would blog about it. And I would follow these people who would do these makeup looks. And now that I have my kids and [I'm a] little older, I'm thinking well, that's not even realistic. It's way too much makeup. Nobody looks like that on a daily basis. Nobody needs to look like that on a

daily basis. I think it's just... having kids made me have to reduce the time, the amount of time I spent on myself, and also made me think... I could use my time more wisely... I still care about the way I present myself anytime we have a party here... I do put on red lipstick and fake eyelashes. I... get really into it as much as I can. And I still love it. I just in my daily life. I don't necessarily have time for it.

Faith's and Isla's excerpts above indicate that the lack of time for self-care results in a sense of frustration. Whether a routine or special occasion practice, day-to-day responsibilities interfere with caring for the self. Amid motherhood ideals and cultural norms in appearance, the struggle to keep up creates conflicting feelings. These women revealed how their intersectional identities as second-generation American mothers form complexities as they experience reality checks.

Sylvie talked about how motherhood impacted her outlook on getting "dressed up." Uniquely, she shared that appearance management is no longer a priority. It is no surprise for such decision because this participant is an entrepreneur of two successful businesses.

I was talking to my friend... the other day, I was telling her... I can't believe a pair of shoes used to make me so happy... I'm literally wearing pantuflas [slippers] all day every day... all the time now... I used to work at... I had like an office job. So, I was always... wearing heels. And... I felt like I was always dressed up. And now I'm not. I'm always... in just leggings and a T shirt.

When I asked if she dressed the same way on her outings with her husband or to attend special occasions, she responded:

I don't dress up either. And it's very rare when we even do leave the house honestly... [At] family parties... I do dress up... if it's something like a special event, obviously, right... I wear heels and stuff. And I'll... tell [my husband] I used to always wear heels

and... I could be in heels all day without complaining. And now... when we do leave the house. I'll [tell him], Okay, I'm gonna wear heels, so you're gonna be the one chasing the girls.

Sylvie's narrative showed that appearance management is something she reserved for special occasions. Motherhood changed her self-care practices from fashion consumption to moments of quiet time. She further explained:

I think [self-care] is important because... even something so simple like sometimes I tell [my husband]... I just want to be... alone... even though I'm not doing anything... I tell him... I just want to be alone. [When] we need milk, [I tell him]... I want to go get the milk... I want to get out of the house. I want to go by myself... and... it's crazy because... even going to the dollar store... something so simple like that, to me is... it helps me because I can be... in a bad mood and then... I'll just... drive somewhere and I feel... I can go back to being a good mom.

As Sylvie shared her experience, she revealed how simple methods of self-care help deal with the realities of motherhood. The lack of time for self-care led her a new approach to maintain rationality in mothering.

As a schoolteacher, Mia places importance on the way she presents herself. Her narrative revealed makeup as a source for her self-care routine. While she illustrated the importance of routine, she also revealed the time constraints experienced to maintain her self-care practice. In describing how she made the most of little windows of time to accomplish her routine, Mia disclosed cues of urgency. This gave indication of the lack of time available in her day for self-care.

So, ... early on when... she was first born... the first three months for example, ... I hardly got ready because I was here at home, but when I went back to work... she was still waking up in the middle of the night. I would make sure to... get up when she did... put her back to bed and then I would just stay up so that I could... do my makeup, do my hair and get in time ready for work versus... some of my other friends, for example, ... [would ask me], "Why do you care to do that? I'll just wake up and go to work." But... I feel... that just wasn't... who I was. And so, in order for me to feel... back to who I was, I felt... that was just really important to me to make sure... that I stayed somewhat in the same routine, but learn how to keep it... now I'm having a baby. So, ... if she was taking a nap, I would... go straighten my hair. Or... she would take another nap. I'm like, Okay, now I'm gonna do my makeup. So, I would... stop the times as far as, ... getting ready. So, I feel... it would take... half the day to get ready almost.

In the same way, Grace echoed the sentiment of getting “dressed up” as a routine to feel like herself; a method she implemented to hold onto her identity:

... because I work in higher education. I always have to dress for the job... but even... right now working from home, I tried to still wake up, get ready, do my hair and makeup just so I can feel a bit more like myself, and that's something that I picked up even right after coming home with a newborn. There, most moms I know they would just live in leggings, sweatpants and leggings and a sweater and, and I didn't feel like myself. So in order for me to feel a little bit more like myself, more of my identity and not losing myself, just waking up and putting on makeup, ... getting my hair done, or something just kind of made me feel more... normal, especially during the first couple weeks of having a newborn because once you give birth, you just kind of feel like you lost a part of you but

really, it's just kind of rearrangement of who you are and a regrowth. So, I'm just having a, just making sure that I don't lose myself by, by dressing the way I would normally dress or dressing appropriately really. Maintaining some sort of some sort of style.

It is important to point out that Grace's "rearrangement" and "regrowth" as a person allowed her to gain self-control amid the difficult changes brought on by motherhood. Her attempt to maintain a routine reflected the realities of being a mother who wants to look stylish and presentable.

My finding demonstrates that the lack of time for self-care can be detrimental to a mother's wellbeing as she strives to be a "good mom." Aware of the changes motherhood has caused, the participants' reflection on personal interests and self-care practices allowed them to realize the positive impact it has on their lives. Although self-care is a simple idea, it can often be neglected, especially by women striving to be great mothers and not lose themselves in the process. In sum, reality checks reminded the participants of constraints that stemmed from hectic schedules and cultural norm expectations.

Resisting Latina Women Stereotypes

Previous themes demonstrated that the participants in this study embody Latin American hybridity whose motherhood experiences uncover how they displace and negotiate harmonized perceptions of identity and culture. A central point that recurrently appeared through these interviews as I discussed topics of motherhood, Latinidad, and sense of self with the participants was the notion that, "everyone's journey is different." As a marginalized group of Latina millennial women, they desired to embrace highly regarded cultural values their parents carried on, while also trying to break the cycle as a new generation to avoid negative perceptions of certain cultural values. For instance, Ava offered her opinion on taking motherly advice:

While I appreciate advice from other mothers, not all advice applies. Not all advice is even based on anything that's been proven to be effective. What works for one child, may not work for another child. What works for one mom, may not work for another mom. What worked for YOUR family may not work for mine.

Relatedly, Sophia discussed her inability to compare her mother's experience to her own path. She stated that it's a practice that requires adapting.

I think that my mom did the best that she can and I will do the best that I can. [It's] different circumstances, ... I'm raising my kid in a different country. So, it's not apples to apples. And even... if I was back home, it's just, it's just different. You have to adapt to the changes in the world and, ... and how things are now.

To create unique motherhood paths, these Latina millennial mothers looked to social media for information tailored to their experiences. However, the lack of Latina/o resources as well as the existing Latina stereotypes made the path toward individualization a bit complicated. While representation of Latinas in the media is changing, there remains room for improvement. As educated Latina mothers, the participants sought to create a narrative that represents a more accurate perspective. For instance, Ava shared her thoughts on Latina stereotypes. By doing so, she revealed the change that is occurring within her friend group of Latinas.

... I've seen on TV and media... that they're always portrayed as, ... maids or nannies. And now, ... you're seeing that role kind of change with the media. So that stereotype is changing, but for the most part, that's what I've seen before... it's a little annoying, especially being that I'm not like that ... and a lot of my friends aren't like that either. They're not maids, and they're not nannies and, not that anything's wrong with that, but I

think... we're the fastest growing population and we're starting to be... more focused on education and traveling and just, it's just changing.

For Ruby, her thoughts on Latinas as “well put together” was something she took pride in. At the same time, she acknowledged that such perception is due to celebrity culture.

If you look at Latina moms in, I guess you would say like on television,... the way they're perceived by society. Latina moms are always very well put together. If you look at like Sofia Vergara, you look at Jennifer Lopez you look at I mean, you always see these... granted, they're celebrities [they] are going to look 100% all the time. But I think even as moms, they still look, like when they aren't caught off guard, I think a Latina mom is always and maybe not always, I think it's just the way they're perceived. A fashion forward Latina mom I would say, is always, well put together.

In Sophia’s experience with Latina stereotypes, she felt they represent women as uneducated workers. As a someone who worked her way up to her managing position, these negative stereotypes upset Sophia.

People think, and I don't think that but people think that... Latinas are a little bit lazy or not as educated or intelligent or as capable as other people, to do things, so,... they look at Latinas, and most of them because it's... what they can find or whatever is they have jobs where not a lot of their brainpower and skills are needed. And so that's what they're used to, [not] seeing somebody in a different position or... running a business the way some of us do.

Arissa expressed her concern for the lack of Latina/o representation on social media.

I just wish Latinas would have more a voice in the Instagram world. I want to see more of their content hope that one day we can promote our family lifestyle and culture more freely through social media.

On one hand, her narrative gives awareness on the lack of resources available for Latina mother. On the other, it provides understanding on the potential influence online sources have on their ability to making sense of their lives as Latina mothers in the US.

Overall, the participants experienced a reality check on the contrasts between their ideal motherhood and the realities of their lives with respect to self-care and Latina motherhood figures. These revelations allowed them to resist Latina women stereotypes in order to create a space for them to be valued as self-sufficient, take-charge, and educated individuals. Although Latina women are known to be tough and fierce, these attributes are not often related to positions of power. While these Latina millennial women are well-educated and professionals, they remain marginalized by misrepresentations in the media. Accordingly, the participants follow FMIs to build their own paths in motherhood and in their sense of selves. To follow FMIs meant they could work toward solving the problem of Latina misrepresentations that often attempt to define their experiences. Alike Alexander's (2001) work on the reclaiming of identities and mother imagery in novels, the participants looked to othermothers, in this case FMIs, to become individuated in their own journeys.

Adapting To My Work In Progress

Motherhood brings a tremendous amount of change to a woman's life and how she views herself (Weaver & Ussher, 1997). In fact, as their social relations are impacted, women's perceptions of themselves steadily change, as well as their aptitude to face their many responsibilities (Nicolson, 1986). This theme provides evidence of the participants' experiences of getting

through the reality check as they encounter conflict between the changes in their lives and sense of self. My data analysis clearly shows that these women view themselves as mothers first. It is therefore inevitable for them to feel as they run the risk of losing themselves in motherhood. At the same time, they wrestle with social and/or personal influences as they make sense of who they are. In Daniella's words, *Being a mother is life changing, it transforms you. The way you perceive the world is different.* The participants engaged in a transformative experience that involved the re-evaluation of their lives and perspectives on dress and appearance management.

While the previous themes show the participants' reality checks as they strive to reach their motherhood ideals, three sub-themes in this section illustrate what the ever-evolving work is like as they go through the process of becoming the mother they desire to be. To enhance comprehension on these women's experiences as they navigate their daily lives and make sense of themselves, the following themes are explored, including (a) *Juggling Acts* and (b) *Building My Mom-Mode Style*.

Juggling Acts

The practice of building one's sense of self in order to cultivate as a mother is essential. This is apparent in Ruby's anecdote as she illustrated how motherhood changed her life and brought the endless balance of roles; from mother to worker and ultimately herself, she makes time for self-care to perform her roles effectively. In her own words:

... so obviously the athleticism side of my motherhood was kind of cut down. It, it became a challenge taking on the role of... having that balance between work, becoming a mom, and still managing you, like that self-care. And... it wasn't maybe until I've had my second child that I was able to kind of get back into the groove and feeling a little bit more secure about myself... your body changes and... you kind of take a hit, ... you start

to be a little more less selfish. You can't be selfish; you have to be more self-less, that is really what happens. And a lot of it is just about the kids and... in the midst of it, you try not to lose yourself. So, making sure that you kind of upkeep and maintain you. I think that's important... making sure you've got that self-care. And so, for me, that was a big component is making sure that I can take care of myself while still taking care of my kids.

When I asked why self-care was important to her, she replied:

I think in order to be an optimal Mom... have an optimal state, to take care of me before I'm able to take care of my babies and my husband.

This theme then develops into a reflection of the participants daily routines as they seek personal activities to help maintain their sanity among all the chaos. For example, Faith illustrated her juggling acts as a mother, worker, and woman who exercises. She explained,

I wake up at 5 or 6 am., I typically decide if I will get up to go the gym or do a house chore, like laundry or wash dishes etc.... while [my youngest son] naps either I continue my work or do a house chore, or play with [other son], but it's constant juggling act or what needs my immediate attention, depending on the day we either have doctors' appointments, target, HEB runs, I have makeup apps or bridal trials, and by the time I'm done with that it's usually time to start dinner.

In order to tackle the juggling of duties in her day to day, she sought exercise as a personal therapy session.

The gym is my happy place, can't say it's always fun, but I look forward to going because it's very therapeutic for me. It's the one hour of the day that I don't think about the million and one things I have to do, and just blast my music and get lost in that.

Unlike their own mothers, millennial mothers such as Faith and Ruby find time for physical activity as it functions as an avenue of self-care. This notion is reflected in Olivia's narrative. She echoed the struggles of balancing many roles, it results in the lack of ability to genuinely invest in her personal dreams. She contemplated the need to sacrifice her gym time.

I just wish maybe there was more time in the day to... really hone in on what I want,... or maybe I just need to change my life... not go to the gym and be in the gym for... four hours but I don't know. Being a mom is cool, but it's also very limiting when you're... an ambitious person.

To keep her “sane,” Olivia described what her personal time represents.

The gym is definitely me time because that's... I enjoy going to the gym in the mornings because then I know that when I get home, no one's home. I actually get to shower... on my own time not having to rush to the shower. And then just getting ready... without having kids tugging at me and... asking me for things while I'm... midway with eyeliner,... I get to just; I look forward to coming home with no one being there. And so that's [what] I consider the me time...

In part, the allure of “me-time” activities was due to the time away from their kids. At the gym, these women could unwind and completely focus on themselves for a change. In walking me through her routine, Isla also revealed she allotted time for the gym:

And on days like now when I'm not working... I'll drop them off at school and I'll go to the gym and I'll come home and then I treat the rest is like my workday ideally. But there's a lot of stuff that needs to be done around the house right now... I'm trying to get the garage organized. I'm going through the boys clothes, things that I don't typically get to do when I'm working. um, cooking throughout the day while also job hunting and all of

that but then come five o'clock my husband gets home with the kids and then it's the same thing as before bedtime routine. So, [it's] kind of crazy...

However, complete focus on herself was often left for the end of the day.

I go to bed really, really late. And I think it's because I'm done by like 930 or 10pm at night .. with the things you have to do. And at that point... I just want to decompress. So, I'll turn,... the TV on and watch TV for like an hour.

Similarly, Ava described how the beginning stages of her transition into motherhood impacted the time she took for herself. Through a to-do list, she illustrated her emotions and struggles:

I didn't exercise during the baby's 30-minute naps because I was too busy doing his laundry, crying, cleaning, dealing with anxiety, pumping or trying to catch a nap. Who wants to exercise with all of that going on? I'm proud of where I am now, even though I haven't lost all of the baby weight but I've worked hard to get to where I am. I'm working hard to continue losing the weight.

Alike other participants, Ava's "me-time" did not come until the end of the day. Time for herself entailed an evening of decompressing activities.

...when he's asleep, I catch up on my own things, whether it's blogging or working out or eating or showering. Basic things. And then when he's up, I'm playing with him again, and then he goes down. And then I get my me time, at the end of the day... lately, it's just consisted of watching TV or spending time with my husband. We'll do some things in the evenings.

Finally, Sophia gave an in-depth description on her juggling acts. Interestingly, as a working mother who manages logistics in her professional job, she described her motherhood work similarly.

I'm just making sure that all the logistics are taking care of, especially when you're a working mama and I'm guessing not just working mama but for every mama, right, making sure that everything gets done and typically we have a lot more on our plates than anybody else in the in the family. So, if you know there's... a project or a damn t shirt that she has to wear to school, or a concert at 10am... and we're both working and going to parent teacher conference. If there's no school and I need to find somebody to pick her up or for, for example, today the schools closing a little earlier because there's... a storm coming in... it's like improvising and making sure that somebody is there to pick her up...

When asked about what she may do for herself, she responded:

You end up sacrificing a lot of yourself and your time and your interests just to tend to somebody else... when I [do] have [time for myself] ... I like to go to the movies by myself. When I can.... I don't have a lot of 'me time' to be honest with you. Sometimes I take baths when I have... a little bit of extra time, but most of the time, I'm just... running an errand or doing something for somebody else to be honest with you.

The participants lived experiences revealed the challenges that surfaced as they navigated between multiple roles. This finding suggests that their desire to be an *ideal* mother creates many complexities. This gives insight into the contradictions of motherhood associated to the aspiration of *doing it all*. Such notion originates from dominant ideologies of motherhood regardless of ethnicity. Still, the participants narratives showed that they are continuously trying to improve themselves to become better women and mothers. In brief, this theme reflects the participants' constant efforts to balance between their motherhood and sense of self.

Building My Mom-Mode Style

As the participants described their daily battles on juggling multiple responsibilities, such complexities revealed the changes in dress and appearance they also experienced. Particularly, lifestyle changes within this theme reflect wardrobe modifications due to undertakings of mommy duties such as running after their kids and the neglect of dress because of time constraints. For instance, when asked how motherhood changed her style, Olivia shared that after becoming a mom, she hardly had time and occasions to dress up.

I used to be able to, I had events all the time, mixers, networking, and... I always bought pretty outfits... I mean, I still have them. I have dresses and stuff and skirts and shirts that still have the tags on them because I have nowhere to wear them to... So, I have a lot of pretty dresses and clothes in my closet that I can't... I haven't even worn... And so, I bought a lot of emerald dresses, and... three of them still have tags on them. Because I was like, for the Christmas parties... we were invited to the Christmas parties [and] we either didn't find babysitters or my husband couldn't... stay out late because he had to work early in the morning. So those dresses are still there.

As this narrative illustrates, Olivia's involvement in a social life changed after she had a kid; she used her fancy outfits less often. Daisy also shared on the change in her appearance after becoming a mom. Once she had her son, she found herself breaking her former dress habits:

I used to always be dressed up... even if it was a Monday or a Tuesday or Wednesday during the week... And now it's like I get up, shower, cook for [my son], take him to school y ando fodonga todo el dia [I walk around unkempt all day]... before, I couldn't walk out of my house without blow drying my hair, straightening my hair and doing my

makeup. Now... I leave my house without drying my hair. With my hair wet. And that was something that I just would never do. And now I feel that I'm always rushed.

While the journey into motherhood changed her style to be more casual, Daniella explained how she felt carefree in her appearance.

Before I was their mom, I was just a girl who loved fashion. My style has definitely changed, but I love it!... I was a teacher for eight years before I became a SAHM [stay-at-home mom] so I had to meet the dress code at work. I had to wear slack and button-down shirts. Sometimes we were allowed to wear jeans on Friday and everyone was always super excited about that. Now I throw on some leggings and some Adidas during the week, and I'm ready to go. I don't need anyone's approval, and I love it!

This excerpt illustrates that becoming a mom exonerated her from social pressure for appearance as a career woman. This finding demonstrates the conscious of wardrobe changes that becoming a mom created. The participants adopted and defined new fashion norms for themselves as mothers. They became conscious of needing clothing that allowed motion range and helped them feel comfortable in adapting to their body changes. The changes in dress revealed different sentiments and individualities among the participants. For instance, Daisy revealed feelings of distress as she shared the transition of her appearance from dressed up to *fodonga* [unkempt]. Oppositely, Daniella relished in the ability to take agency in her appearance from formal to a casual style. On the topic of style and individuality, Ruby's perspective gave insight into the role of dress: *when it comes individuality, I think it has to do with the way you work it. I think you can still influence a style and influence a style of dress... but I think you, your personality and your confidence is what makes it.* To this end, Daisy's distress hindered her ability to maintain her

individuality through dress whereas Daniella's gratification enabled her to become empowered by it.

Within this theme, the participants discussed how motherhood brought body changes and impacted their wardrobe choices. For instance, Sophia's narrative uncovered the meaning of dress as she had transitioned into motherhood.

My main concern when I was getting dressed or like picking out something from the closet, it was like easy access to my boobs because I was breastfeeding. So, I would go into.. a dressing room or even when I went shopping, ... the first thing I did was [think], how easy is it gonna be for me to... make sure that I [can] breastfeed. I think that was honestly my biggest concern. I didn't really care about anything else... At that point, I really didn't care, ... anything that fit anything that was comfortable. And anything that I could pop my boob out easy was good enough for me.

Her priority and responsibility as a mother meant focusing on wearing comfortable clothes. For Grace and Evelyn, their transition into motherhood exposed them to changes in dress due to bodily changes. Their narratives described the meaning of style for a new mother.

Grace: ... definitely the jeans I have to wear high waisted jeans. that's definitely changed... just to feel a little bit more comfortable. I think it's something that I was probably a little bit more so conscious after giving birth, trying to feel like I had to give back in shape into form fitting that I felt the only thing that made me feel okay or good were high waisted jeans and so when I discovered high waisted jeans right away I was like, "oh I feel I feel okay." rather than living in... I would right away... I would put the band around because I had a C section so I had to put a band around to make sure all my organs stayed in place. And everything went back to normal. So, I kind of didn't want to

live in that in that band around me. But... high waisted jeans really is something that changed and I love now... The loft high waisted jeans are my favorite. And finding the right pair of jeans... I think that's the jeans is a first thing that you notice when you're pregnant that no longer fit. That's... the first thing that I had to do. Tossed, got rid of those low waisted, tiny jeans and then being able to as soon as I found a pair of jeans that I could fit into and feel comfortable, then that's when I was thinking, "Okay, I feel normal and I'm back to myself." Which is weird because it's just a pair of jeans.

Evelyn: Your body is different after you've had a baby, ... your waist isn't the same. So maybe... a tight... skinny dress isn't going to look as good as maybe it did before you had kids, ... so making sure... if I wouldn't want to look... unattractive... then I rather not wear it. Because I noticed like it's not going to look the same then how I was before. And so that's one of the things I can think of. Also, ... because you're a mom, now you're often... having to bend down... picking up your baby. So, ... you don't want to be showing too much cleavage. [Not] that I have a lot to show anyway. But... that's another thing that... I find myself thinking about. And then the same thing because you are moving around a lot. Sometimes... maybe a short dress wouldn't be something that I would necessarily pick as my outfit because if I do have to, ... get on my knees to... pick something up, then everybody's gonna see all my business.

In the transition of their dress behavior, functionality of carrying out multitasks is indicated as an important factor. For example, Mia described her style in relation to her multiple roles. In particular, she shared how she adapts her style for each of her three “modes.”

Because I am a teacher, I love to dress up but also make sure that it's... going to be comfortable... So, when I'm able to get to work [I'm] a little bit able to go back to... what I used to wear, versus if I'm at home or working to go out with her. I tend to wear a little bit more like comfortable shoes instead because I know I'm gonna be running around with her. But if it's... a date night I mean, me and husband, I'm able to... go out in the heels and kind of dress up a little bit more just because it's a little bit more comfortable to be in those clothes like when I'm not having to chase her or even follow her around. So, I guess what you would say is... I have three different styles. It's... work mode, mom mode and then... life mode.

Similarly, Faith touched on the multiple roles she takes on daily, and how they determine her dress choice:

Multi-faceted because it truly is a little bit of everything, leggings or workout clothes are like your uniform when you are a mom because you love the comfort it provides, but you still need an LBD [little black dress] for a date night with your partner... It doesn't mean you just let yourself go in a t-shirt full of drool, snot, chocolate stains, etc., you still can put yourself together.

This narrative indicates that although Faith had to adjust her dress choice which made comfort wear as staple to perform her mother role, she still strives to keep a balance by not giving up a refined dress. Herein, Faith's little black dress is a means of defying loss of self in motherhood and keeping sense of self. This finding is well reflected in Olivia's narrative as well:

I like that I can express myself through my clothes because I like to keep it casual during the week. My go to is athleisure! I love a good pair of leggings, Lululemon or Athleta. Something I can chase my two kids comfortably in. On the weekends, before the

coronavirus my husband and I would get out for a date night. I loved being able to flip the switch and rock some mom jeans with some pumps. Clothing allows me to express myself and it gives my life a balance.

In becoming aware of the changes brought on by motherhood, these women adjusted to new forms of dress in order to perform their day-to-day affairs. They encountered physical challenges (e.g., running after their kids) and emotional sentiments (e.g., self-consciousness in bodily fluctuations) relative to clothing. As motherhood alters a woman's physique and the relationships with others and the self (Ogle, Tyner, & Schofield-Tomschin, 2011; Patel, Lee, Whearcroft, Barnes, & Stein, 2005), it is understandable that these women experience a shift in priorities when it comes to dress. Nonetheless, majority of the participants achieve to maintain specific styles for the different roles they take on; this reveals that dress remains an important part of a woman's identity as she experiences motherhood.

Referencing Fashionable Mother Influencers

Audiences are often inspired and encouraged to imitate digital performances (Khamis et al., 2017). Correspondingly, consumers pursue continual transformation in material objects and their identities (Shankar, Elliot, & Fitchett, 2009). In fact, performances help structure reality through language, practices, and images (Austin, 1975; Schechner, 2006). Whether performances are cautiously crafted or genuinely shared, they highlight and convey identities within culture (Austin 1975; Butler 1990, 2010).

The participants followed FMIs who provided a sense of relatability and aspirational content. They looked to someone who shared a similar lifestyle with regard to motherhood (e.g., having children in same age group) and fashion (e.g., ideal styles and fashion trends). Through genuine accounts and curated experiences, the FMIs studied performed visibility on motherhood

and fashion topics on Instagram. Accordingly, the participants followed FMIs to learn ways to either incorporate the information shared into their lives or merely watch/read for an escapist experience.

When asked what Instagram FMIs they followed, the participants shared stories on those they devotedly referred to and gave note on the facets that attracted them to follow/read their content. To gain a holistic lifestyle viewpoint on motherhood, the participants looked to FMIs on various reference points. For instance, Faith shared:

When I look at her page, I feel like she highlights the beautiful moments of motherhood, and since I've had such a difficult time stepping into this role as a mom, referring or seeing some of her post reminds me to find the beauty in it.

Daniella shared FMIs' role in her life:

I feel like they are all very different and I follow because I feel like I learn something new from each one.

Olivia admitted she started following FMIs once she got pregnant; she did so to gain exposure to helpful sources on social media:

When I was pregnant with twins is when I started following moms that had like, multiples, right? And I'm like, Okay, I'll be able to learn more from them.

To enhance understanding on these women's perceptions as they look to Instagram FMIs for relevant information, themes that emerged in the interviews were (a) *Sense of Solidarity Through Shared Experiences*, (b) *A Time-Saving Shopping Reference*, (c) *Shopping References For Myself*, and (d) *Perceived Distance in Reality*. Two phases of data analyses, interpretive inquiry and digital ethnography, demonstrated how FMIs' self-performances influence Latina millennial mothers on their journey of becoming a mom:

The participant interviews provided insight into how they consume FMIs' performances on Instagram through the intricate visual and textual information; online observation offered a further detailed interpretation of how FMIs' performances give Latina millennial mothers a sense of solidarity in motherhood struggles and useful shopping information on fashion and children products. It also shed light on how FMIs' self-performance provide inspirations for participants' appearance management as it matured through their motherhood journey. The analysis of FMIs' social media content was also conducted for triangulation to validate and depict the participants' narratives within this theme. The FMIs mentioned in the participants' interviews were the focus of such analysis. Some of the participants revealed validation on multifaceted fashion styles, while others appreciated the easy access to consumption ideas for themselves. In this way, the intricacies involved in motherhood and fashion are exposed.

Sense of Solidarity Through Shared Experiences

A palpable theme of the lived experiences of following FMIs on Instagram was the bonds that the participants formed with these social personalities. Most bonds were through experiencing the relatable content FMIs shared that provided a sense of unity regarding the several challenges of motherhood. By using a photo elicitation of a random FMI Instagram post, the topic of postpartum depression surfaced sentiments on the appreciation of such vulnerable moments of motherhood. For instance, Daniella shared:

I love her honesty and vulnerability in this post. Postpartum is difficult for a lot of moms and I think it is motivating to see her track her progress. It is important to remember we are each on our own journey.

Daniella's narrative gives insight into the role FMIs play for these women in their motherhood journey, especially regarding delicate topics. Ava's and Sophia's narratives reflect this finding as well:

Ava: It was relatable. Especially having gone through that myself... I thought it was really cool that she was, ... transparent... it's really hard to share photos like that. And it also shows... her commitment to working out.

Sophia: this is something that's relatable specifically to any mom that has gone or I mean are most moms that have... gone through... pregnancy and how your body changes and transforms and... how hard it is to get back to. I don't want to say where you were because I don't think that ever happens, but to a place where you can accept and be content and comfortable in your own skin... it definitely brings back feelings. It also makes me feel... some sort of solidarity like... you're not alone...

The relatability these women experience as they follow FMIs allowed them to process feelings of struggle as well as engender the ability to discuss difficulties. This notion reflects back to how the participants break the cycle in less-than-ideal mothering by referencing external resources. As Olivia reflected on her journey raising multiple kids, she discussed how she does not feel alone because of FMIs' presence on Instagram:

She would... talk about her rough days... with the three of them and how it was overwhelming and... okay, I don't feel like a monster. Right? Because... other moms feel this way too. And I feel... it's more acceptable to talk about this, ... now... knowing that I'm not the only one that feels like this.

More specifically, she described the role FMIs played in her experience as a mother of NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) survivors. She further elaborated,

I connected with... these moms that had NICU babies because we kind of went through the same experience ... being in the NICU is something that is... very traumatic. And so, ... not a lot of... parents can connect to this in that level... in the fear we had... from their birth until... they were one we were literally... in survival mode... are they gonna live or they're not gonna live? If they get sick, that's it, they died... it was an everyday thing while they were in the NICU for two and a half months... one day they're good the next day they're not. And then the morning they can be okay. And at night, it could be [that] they're not breathing. And then the next day they'll be okay. And then the next day, they've lost five ounces. And that's a lot for NICU baby. And it's like, well, what's wrong with him? Why did he lose so much weight?... is it my milk? did I eat something that... wasn't good for them? And so, it's... a lot right? And it's... very draining and so I felt like it was important for me to find moms on Instagram that went through that same experience or were going through it at the same time as I was. Because they did kind of give me... my own little community of... hurt or something... we're all hurting. We're all suffering together.... we're all going through the same thing.... I'm not the only mom going through this, ... when you're there you kind of feel like why is this happening to me? Why is this happening to us, why do we have to go through this? So, ... finding other moms that were going through it, kind of was like okay, ... we're not the only ones going through this right now like, there's other people, we are not being targeted by God.

In similar fashion, yet not as profound, Mia shared her experience in following FMIs:

... they're pretty relatable as far as... lifestyle... we kind of have the same lifestyle right now at the moment. So just kind of hearing... hey, they're going through it too, ... as far as... raising a toddler and... it's funny just to kind of... my friend from Ohio she... since

our babies are close in age,... we're potty training and it's kind of the same thing I'm doing with my daughter. So,... following along with... her posts or... things that she's been doing that are working or are kind of interesting to follow and... [to] just get more information or more... opinions... having those things in common is nice to follow.

When I asked her to elaborate on her feelings on the content she viewed as relatable, she described:

If anything,... it makes you feel like, hey,... they're going through the same thing as I am,... they don't have... the perfect days or the perfect lifestyles... how sometimes it looks like on Instagram, at least they're a little bit more vulnerable to... show you... okay,... it was a rough day with my two year old... they don't have... that perfect lifestyle that sometimes on Instagram... you see and so it gives you a little bit more outlook into... their real life and... who they are.

Ruby echoed sentiments of solidarity in following FMIs:

It's always refreshing to have people that you can admire for the way they dress their style and approach to their lifestyle... But it's [also] a nice resource,... you could say to have when you're in a rut for things, some people are very open online about the way they live their lives and the way that they... struggle with certain things. So, it's a nice outlet when for those individuals who don't necessarily open up as much. So, it's refreshing for some things that you think... you're the only one that's struggling with.

Nearly all of the participants looked to FMIs who had children the same ages as theirs or were experiencing similar developmental milestones. By doing so, the participants shared experiences with FMIs as they implemented key rearing methods. For instance, Celina is a full-time mother and realtor who enjoys having a flexible work schedule in order to witness her daughter's growth

and moments of discovery. She described how FMIs' content on Instagram serve as a reference for her:

Let's say her babies [are] doing something I will... [I] try, ... I'll ask my chiropractor what I can do to make [my daughter] roll more... it directly will make me think, okay her baby is like 4 days older than my baby, [I] feel like we should be on the same page.

Celina's narrative revealed a unique contradiction to the "everyone's journey is different" phrase that herself and many other the participants expressed. She is comparing her child to that of the FMI she follows, wanting her daughter to be at the same developmental stage. Still, this contradiction gives meaning to one of the reasons why the participants follow/read FMIs' content; to acquire pertinent information to their individual situations and build the best approach for their children to grow and learn. Evelyn also cited FMIs as a source for learning tips on how to feed her child as he transitions from liquids to tangible food.

I started to follow for breast feeding tips but it didn't work out but now I like to watch her baby food making ideas... she feeds her baby girl homemade stuff and I'm starting to try that with [my son] now that I can introduce food.

Lastly, Faith shared that FMIs helped validate the sentiments she experienced when encountering difficulties in motherhood. In her own words,

One of the influencers that I follow shared a session with her speech therapist in a vlog and it just allowed me to get insight on how I could approach [my sons] speech delay better, and it really helped to validate some of the emotions I was feeling with [him]. They went over how important play time is with your kids and intentional play, and how much they truly learn from playing... Other moms that I follow share meals idea, [my son] by far has given me a difficult time with each developmental milestone, and eating

was no different, he really became a picky eater and watching videos on that subject help with new meal ideas, so talked through how important it is for the parent to continue to expose the child to veggies even if they don't like them, even gave ideas on how to incorporate veggies in meals where the child might not even notice.

Based on the above excerpts, one can gather that FMIs' performances on Instagram function as authentic expressions that developed a comradery for the participants concerning motherhood. While the importance of authenticity in Instagram influencers' presence has been considerably proven (e.g., Audrezet, De Kerviler, & Moulard, 2018), the participants' experiences reveal that it is a critical component for women as they navigate the struggles of motherhood. Through a sense of solidarity, FMIs' content allows the participants to gather information that is tailored to their own experiences.

This theme is well demonstrated in FMIs' social exchanges with other moms on their Instagram platforms. As described by the participants, FMIs offered "real" experiences that encouraged them to believe, "it's okay to mess up. Not everything is perfect." This is clear in influencer Shut The Kale Up as she shared a personal account on mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic (image 1: https://www.instagram.com/p/B_Nd-j9pCUt/). Through an up-close barefaced selfie, she described her struggles as she navigates many roles (e.g., "teacher, chef, friend, classmate, ass wiper, snack carrier, etc.") and offered some pointers on how to cope. Her Instagram post explicitly upheld the importance of being vocal through personal hardships. This message corresponds with the participants' interest in breaking the cycle of generations past on discussing taboo topics such as mental health and therapy. Through FMIs content, they were able to feel less alone on their motherhood journeys as well as improve their wellbeing by

reading up on sentiments alike theirs. The comments on Shut The Kale Up's post also reflected solidarity in shared experience:

Right there with you, mama. It's been a really rough time the past week with more tears and screen time than I'd like to admit. Hang in there - hopefully we'll come out on the other side soon! 🤞❤️

feeling the same way

same. Same. Ugh

In their interviews, the participants stated that postpartum journeys as a topic of discussion is a recent development on Instagram. Greatly focused on aesthetically pleasing content, it is no surprise postpartum was not previously discoursed in its entirety on Instagram. The FMIs studied shared their experiences with postpartum in two ways: through raw yet posed bodily images accompanied by text on the physical changes endured and a wholesome aesthetic complemented by text on the newness of their experience. Influencer Jaimee Scope (image 2:

https://www.instagram.com/p/B_yVf1Bno24/) shared her postpartum experience through an image where she wore a post birth pad and bared her healing stomach. In her text, she described the painful healing process while encouraging mothers to embrace the hardship that gave them their children. The rawness in this discourse provided the participants as well as other followers the ability to relate and gain insight on the matter.

I'm gonna give birth for the first time in 5 weeks 😊 it's so nice to follow you and get an idea of what to expect 😊

Such beautiful and comforting words, coming from a momma to be who needs these sweet reminders ❤️

For influencer Sarah Clement, (image 3: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B5YhKxQgzl3/>) her Instagram post featured a candid and color coordinated image of herself with her children. The bohemian style and brown hues gave a warmth to the tender story she shared with her followers. Her text described the struggle with the pressures of getting back to her pre-pregnancy body. The postpartum journey for Sarah entailed emotions related to relinquishing appearance expectations and embracing her role as a mother instead. This aligns with some of the participants interviewed as they primarily focused on being mothers to their children through ideal attributes of emotional connection. Namely, their wellbeing and that of their children was priority over societal expectations.

Lastly, influencer Rachel Parcell fostered a sense of solidarity through her IVF (In vitro fertilization) journey (image 4: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B1pmPq1Jfdz/>). Her Instagram post presented an image of her in a pink pajama set lounging on an off-white couch. The aesthetic she presented included neutral tones and presented a picture-perfect setting. Her text illustrated the refreshing feeling she felt as her followers showed a camaraderie in their own IVF experiences. Uniquely, the comments on Rachel's posts were very in-depth compared to other influencers studied. The following gives a glimpse into the discursive space this FMI creates for her followers:

It took [a few years] for me to have a successful 2nd pregnancy. Not nearly as long as some but I was ready to give up. I already had a daughter and had decided that was enough for us. Then all of the sudden not even a month after I decided to turn it over to God and let whatever needed to happen, happen I got pregnant with "twins" we went through all the ultrasounds and testing and had "two" healthy babies. I went into the hospital because my water broke [earlier than expected] and was devastated that I didn't

make it to [full term]... before I delivered we found out we were having triplets! My husband always wanted 4 kids, and I honestly didn't think that my body could do that.

But here we are with 4 beautiful healthy kids and a very chaotic life! 😊

I'm experiencing secondary infertility too. I thought I was handling it well but I'm realizing I'm not. Every time it seems like it is just around the corner there is a massive set back. But you have it right, keep trying and do whatever it takes until your family is complete. I want to start looking into adoption but it is so much money. If anyone has tips on adoption let me know. I have looked into fostering and will keep it as an option, right now it would not work.

I'm so sorry you're going through this. We struggled with secondary infertility for [several] years... before God completed our family through adoption last year. It was such a lonely road and it felt like no one understood my pain. I wish I could say I was full of faith during that time, but the truth is, sometimes it felt like I was hanging on by my fingernails. But the good news is God doesn't expect us to have perfect faith, and He is big enough to take our anger and deepest hurts.

You're not alone. 💜

The vulnerability shared in Rachel's post on the hardships of infertility opened up a dialogue for other women to share their own struggles. This supports the narratives shared by the participants interviewed on the sense of solidarity FMIs offer as they increasingly discuss the different struggles of motherhood. Through a refreshing perspective on hardship, FMIs offered the participants as well as their followers, a "community of hurt" to help cope with and process their own traumas.

Overall, FMIs provide a sense of community for mothers by sharing delicate stories on postpartum, mental health, and other motherhood matters. Through hashtags, FMIs built a positive discourse around motherhood #empoweredbirth #postpartumrecovery #postpartumjourney #uniteinmotherhood #motherhoodthroughig, and most significantly created unity. At the same time, most FMIs tag the brands of the clothing and jewelry they wear, and the products germane to the discourse in the post (e.g., postpartum recovery kits). FMIs also tag Instagram accounts that support and provide powerful birthing stories and special motherhood moments.

A Time-Saving Shopping Reference

Hectic lifestyles as a result of motherhood led the participants to seek “time saving” efforts online. With little time to squeeze in shopping trips, one of the main reasons the participants followed FMIs was to gain quick access to shopping information. Many of the participants looked to websites such as Amazon and other online boutiques to do their shopping. In fact, Daniella mentioned she was an avid Amazon shopper, even calling herself an “Amazon mom.” While a visit to the Target retail store was a common favorite among these millennial mothers, information discovered beforehand through FMIs often made shopping trips more efficient.

FMIs’ provided the participants with easily accessible information on products and brands. Evenly, for example, learned about brands she had not been exposed to such as Shein. Through detailed accounts on styling tips and tricks, she also found the courage to be more confident in shopping for clothing and makeup online.

We're... moms, so we have less time to do things but [I'll] try to work around the little time that we have to make the best of it kind of thing. So, ... if they're showing an outfit... okay, what do I already have in my closet that I can make it work with, ... what's trending

right now without having to go... buy something because... I don't maybe have time to go buy a whole new outfit because I am a mom and maybe time for that there's... not as much time for it. So, it's... working around. So that's one thing that I like. And then another thing... is that they also do a lot of... what did they call it? Where you unbox things that they like sent you. So, it's like a lot of those... online wardrobes... websites that you can... buy things online without having to... actually go to a store. [With the brand] Shein!.. [They show you] "Look, this is what like can work for you." And... they... show it to you. Because sometimes... I feel like maybe at first... I was a little bit skeptical about shopping online... especially when it came to... clothing, because I always felt like I had to go to the store to... put it on and like try it on and see how it looks. But by seeing these... girls go online and... show you, "Look, this is... something that could work for you," even... sometimes give you tips, "look, this is maybe... more of a style that you want to look for because certain... let's just say... if you know you have a V neck and somehow... it hides... it makes you look more curves," things like that... they talk about tips. The same thing for... makeup.. you often felt... you had to go into a store... to try it on. And so, they really make you feel comfortable knowing that... it's not as hard as maybe... you made it seem... you thought it would be. And right now, as... as a mom, I feel... that's really where... you want to try to save as much time as you can.

Evelyn's narrative gives insight into a mother's dilemma with shopping. One on hand, she resorts to online shopping because it suits her frantic motherhood life. On the other, she experiences uncertainty with online shopping because of fit and styling aspects. For this reason, FMIs serve as a quick and relatable source on motherhood fashion.

In describing the FMIs she follows, Mia shared that they provide a simpler path toward price comparison through links and the discovery of new boutiques.

I'm interested in... I'll go to the links... I think you have that thing. It's [called], Liketoknowit... link. [Tells you] how much like things are and... what website they're from. And so that helps because sometimes there is stuff that's... pricey in my opinion that I wouldn't spend that much on.... and then there's other things that I'm like, hey,... that's actually pretty affordable for... the way it looks,... so I do like [the] things they link. Now, necessarily,... do I buy things that they link? Not all the time, but I would say that I've maybe... browse them and then... maybe to look, compared prices... at other websites. Or if I really do like it... I'll buy it... I do a lot more online shopping with... boutiques... Just because like I appreciate... the small businesses but I also do like that they're very... unique, more so than... going to just... Dillard's or Old Navy, which I love to. I shop there still. I do run into the problem of... having the same shirt or... seeing shorts on somebody else and... especially like if I want to go out... somewhere special... I always... usually more so shop at local boutiques or... look on their Instagram. I would say that... social media helps because... when you see,... a story with... a new shirt or... a new blouse,... oh, that's really pretty and... you click the link it takes you to their boutique, and then you end up finding more stuff. So,... I feel... definitely... Instagram is one of those that I use more so to... look up styles there.... trends and stuff.

Mia's narrative revealed her support for local boutiques and love for unique clothing pieces. An FMI's role for her is associated to quick shopping references to maintain exclusivity in dress.

As they navigate the online spaces of Instagram for fashion related content, some of the participants also focused on purchasing products for their children than for themselves. Still,

quick shopping references remain important. For instance, Sophia briefly shared the valuable sources on feeding methods she gained from an FMI,

Sasha specifically, she talks a lot about... food and she recently had a daughter and... [I look to] what methods she was using for feeding and recipes and... shit like that, that I don't have time to sometimes look up...

Evelyn referenced FMIs to obtain first-hand purchase experiences rather than reviews. In her own words, she explained the baby products she was in the market for:

I was buying, ... a car seat... there's a ton of car seats and... you can look at reviews, but sometimes to... going back to... I didn't have a lot of friends that were parents. So yes, I could look at reviews, but I also kind of wanted somebody that had... more... they could actually... recommend something for me. And so, since I didn't have any friends, it was... looking for these... women that... are going through the same thing or... had recently gone through the same thing of... searching for the right product. And so, they... would post... 'I tried this product and... maybe this will work for you because I found it easy because it can do like one, two and three things' or whatever.

It is clear that FMIs provide useful information for these women to accomplish their online shopping. Even more importantly, they do so in a way that fosters relatability, and at times, friendship. This notion is reflected in Faith's narrative as she shared how an FMI helped her in shopping for her kids' clothing. Grace's narrative also depicts an FMI's effectiveness in information sharing:

Faith: We both have 2 babies, 2 under two, and love how she styles their wardrobes, her aesthetic in general is very neutral but something about it is so pretty. I've even messaged her a couple of time asking where she bought her son's shoes or where she

shops for his clothes, etc., and she always takes the time to respond, and typically end up having a mini convo and to me it just makes her feel so personable and genuine...

Grace: With one of them, she did a Target haul of all these baby boy clothes that she bought for her son because he outgrew his clothes. So, she showed all of the Target clothes she bought him. And as I'm watching the video I paused, open up my phone, open up my Target app and start looking for those clothes because we can't go into the store to go look at them in person so I'm just adding stuff to my cart, order it, Target drive up and there I go. So especially over the past couple of weeks, a lot of the toys that I have bought have been from... me been influenced by all of these youtubers which is hard on our bank account probably.

For Grace, FMIs brought her convenience during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Target products linked in the FMI's Instagram allowed her to safely, and easily make her online purchases.

Essentially, the participants sought and obtained quick, relevant information on products and brands from the FMIs they followed on Instagram. The information most useful for these women consisted of fashion styles, brand or product discovery, and valuable recommendations on baby products. Whether hectic motherhood schedules or pandemic restrictions, FMIs helped the participants to conveniently accomplish their shopping during times of chaos and distress. Through quick references on different options, FMIs help mothers who do not have time to navigate different stores and brands. Examples of FMIs' postings that provide time-saving shopping reference are found in digital ethnography analysis as follows:

The links shared in FMIs Instagram posts made the lives of Latina millennial mothers easier. Motherhood comes with a long to-do list and social media links help with time management. For instance, influencer The Miller Affect (image 5:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/B1PKCbEFz1b/>) shared tips on helping children transition from soft foods to solid foods. From a personal narrative, The Miller Affect provided a link to her blog post on the specifics on feeding techniques; she also tagged the baby products that enabled a smooth process. This type of information not only allowed FMI followers to quickly obtain shopping information, but also the ability to engage in conversation with others on helpful resources and personal reviews. For instance,

Sounds like she is doing so great with trying new foods! As far as learning to take a sippy we started with a squeezable honey bear-and-straw combo. You squeeze the bear and the water goes up the straw. The idea is that this will teach them how to suck using the straw once they understand there is water in there. I got this recommendation from [@feedinglittles](#). After about three days of offering the sippy and squeezing the honey bear, my little guy was able to suck out of the straw on his own! 🙌 I think this will make the transition from bottle to sippy so much easier when the time comes. Good luck little M! ❤️

Follow [@madaleighblog](#) and [@babyledweaningideas](#). I don't have a baby yet but I follow them for the research and ideas! ❤️

thanks babes 🙌🙌 well done on u for researching xx

The comments above revealed how FMIs help mothers and mothers-to-be with a time-saving information search for germane resources and/or products and brands. In Phase 1, the participants interviewed shared the anxiety involved when having access to excess information. Therefore, FMIs Instagram presence exhibits how they aid in relieving such angst by providing time-saving references for shopping.

Time-saving shopping references often included the use of LIKEtoKNOW.it, a mobile application that provides an easy way to shop and compare price via Instagram likes and screenshots of influencer photos (Miller, 2015). Influencer Amanda Loochtan (image 6: <https://www.instagram.com/p/Bkf2JrvFVkw/>) was pictured with her infant daughter in color coordinated outfits as they sit on a clean white carpet. She shared that her daughter drools and puts everything in her mouth which results in chapped lips and cheeks. The FMI consciously positions the organic products she used for her daughter's chapped lips as her hashtags featured #ad indicating her post is sponsored by the brand. Nonetheless, her text described a personal account that led her to use the brand's balm products; she tagged the LIKEtoKNOW.it page to allow her followers to shop the brand and their products easily.

As fashionable mother influencers, not only do they link children products and brands, but also fashion and style resources for mothers. For influencer The Sister Studio IG, shopping references mainly focused on disseminating information on sales and price comparison of apparel via LIKEtoKNOW.it. In fact, several of the participants interviewed in Phase 1 considered FMIs as primary sources for helpful links in shopping and browsing. With motherhood in mind, The Sister Studio IG habitually shared different styles in one Instagram post on casual looks. She is posed in front of a mirror to display three different ways to style comfy dresses (image 7: https://www.instagram.com/p/B_Bfdi4hcN9/). Her text described the style and fit of the dress; she also linked more information regarding casual styles in her Instagram bio (the designated area under a user's name to share details about themselves). Follower comments reflected the FMI's influence and their gratitude for the information shared:

Not sure how I got so lucky to score this black dress today at Target! I've been eyeing since you shared it but my size has been sold out online. Tried it on when I got home and absolutely love it! It will be one of my favs this summer! 💜🥰

Please do a quick tutorial on how you tie up this dress! I recently got the black and camo but can't seem to tie it cute-lay like this!

I purchased this dress and I love how comfy and cute it is. Thank you [@thesisterstudioig](#)

Additionally, her Instagram post touched base on mom life when she asked about movie suggestions for her children. This gives indication of the interwoven nature of fashion and motherhood for some women, and how FMIs serve as a source to incorporate the two as they navigate life. As motherhood ensues a balance of many roles and responsibilities, quick links and information are central to mothers' ability to purchase material objects.

In Phase 1, some of the participants mentioned they felt FMIs validated their choice in certain new fashion trends that aligned with their motherhood such as wearing tennis with skirts or messy buns. Influencer Emily Ann Gemma is pictured as she posed in front of her mirror (image 8: https://www.instagram.com/p/B_OYzexJfC7/) wearing fitted jeans, a white top, heels, and a messy bun; the background of the image displays clean patterned floor and window curtains in a color coordinated manner of white and neutral tones. Her text described two things: her appreciation of the “in” trend of messy buns and the details on the bracelet and top she was wearing. She linked all the details for her followers to shop via LIKEtoKNOW.it. The comments on her post further support the notion that FMIs facilitate quick shopping references. Importantly, they do so through a relatable lens of motherhood and at the time of this post – the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I love those jeans!!! I did my hair today but not my makeup, makes such a difference in my mood when I put in a little effort during this lockdown!

You have sold me on the bracelet! LOL

Immediately ordered this top thru your link! Thanks 🥰

Largely, the time-saving references shared on Instagram by FMIs involved links and descriptions of baby products and brands, and fashion styles and deals. Through hashtags, they formed a light-hearted yet relatable narrative on motherhood and fashion: #igmotherhood #motherhoodinspired #uniteinmotherhood #childhoodunplugged #realfoodforbabies #casualstyle #comfy #casualoutfit #casualfashion. A glimpse of the intricate narrative of motherhood and consumption is seen through the language and images shared by FMIs.

For the Latina millennial mothers interviewed, the quick references and information FMIs function as a means toward coping with reality checks. Specifically, it allowed them to have more time, and therefore focus on bonding with their children or allocate time for personal self-care. For instance, Grace mentioned FMIs helped her avoid long trips to find the baby products she researched: *[Instead of] driving all the way to... the nearest Buy Buy baby to test all these products, seeing [FMIs] do a review online... really helped.*

For Sophia, FMI links helped with shopping online and avoided wasting her time in order to do more valuable things. In her own words: *Following [FMIs], it's easy because most of this stuff, they linked stuff and they make it so easy for me without having to go and browse and think and all that stuff. I just don't have time for that. So, it's easy for me. I could either spend the time at the store... [Go]... shopping, an hour and... fighting people at the time that I can go and... dealing with parking and shit or I can come home and play with my daughter. So, I much rather do that.* In essence, the above example Instagram post and comments provide further justification

of the role FMIs play as Latina millennial women seek to solve time constraints brought on by motherhood.

Shopping References For Myself

While time-saving references offered some aspect into fashion and styles trends, this theme further delves into how fashion is incorporated into motherhood. By doing so, FMI followers gain shopping references for themselves. Motherhood infringes on a woman's time to shop in general, but it mostly impacts the ability to explore instore shopping options for herself, particularly when she is with her kids in tow. Participants expressed that they do not have time to take care of their shopping needs, and navigating FMIs' social media content offers them time for escaping from their family-tied responsibilities and indulging into their own wants. Thus, FMIs represent a means toward product and brand discovery, and fashionable suggestions that make the life of these mothers a bit easier. For instance, Isla explained how FMIs help steer her into a journey of online product search and sharing.

Eva Chen works at Instagram, she posts so much [that] I'm literally going through her stories and I'll see a product right, and then I'll start... looking up the product.... or I'll start... sending her stories to friends...

For Ruby, FMIs exposed her to a brand she ultimately became an avid shopper of. Good quality and prices encouraged her to continue shopping at Shein.

I think Shein has been... my big "I didn't know it was that economic." And it's just, it's that I think that website is probably been one of my go to's. I think I can't remember who exactly shared it which influencer I follow shared it but it was... one particular outfit and I was like what this? And I ordered I ended up ordering... a ton of stuff. Some was a hit or miss. But the majority of it was pretty good. It was decent quality. Good price.... So,

I'm a regular on Shein now... I've gotten... toy bins for the girls, a little shoe rack for the girls from there. I've gotten, I've gotten a couple of baby shoes, or for the girls shoes. I've gotten stuff for myself. Summer dresses, little tops. The denim wear I'd pass on.

Everything else was pretty good.

Grace shared her experience of product discovery through FMIs' Instagram Stories. Instore visits to Target did not allow her to explore merchandise for herself; FMIs then offered her detailed accounts on new and fashionable clothing. She shared:

Whenever there are sales... if they share anything that's on sale.... or if they do... Target try-ons and they share on their Instagram story. All the clothing items that they try on at Target that I had no idea, I had no idea that Target has fashionable cute affordable clothes. I usually go to the Loft or Banana Republic, but Target has affordable clothes but I have no idea because when I go to Target, I'm usually straight to the baby section or straight to the toddler section that I don't make time to go browse with time and I don't have time to go browse through the women's clothing. So, seeing Instagram, these mom Instagrammers share these Target try-ons on their Instagram Stories kind of tells me Okay, so there is [and] that outfit. And that's the only time that I actually buy stuff, whenever I see them try on stuff, or if there's a sale. I also love whenever they share Loft try-ons too because I usually don't really pay attention to the emails when there's a sale. But it's usually whenever... when they bring out any merchandise to the store. I mean, when I worked in retail, I knew exactly when a new floor set came out and new clothes new merchandise came out. So, I knew exactly when that time of the month or a year with new clothing came out but now I don't work in retail. I don't really now. So, whenever there's Instagrammers that are sharing these clothes with here are the new clothes and

new spring items, and there's a 50% off deal. That's when I use my lunchtime at work to go over there and actually shop just because it's the only time I have time to show, lunchtime at work.

Mia's narrative echoed Grace's experience. Although not specific to one retailer, FMI's helped her acquire fashion ideas and discover styling options for when she does shop for herself.

I enjoy... seeing their... clothes because I feel... most of the time like my cousin for example, she's always posting... stuff that I might have not picked, on my own. But... seeing the new trends and what... up and coming kind of... helps as far as like, Okay, well, I like that but [I] wouldn't wear it that way. Or... maybe I can find another way to wear it. And so, I enjoyed that just kind of... seeing new trends and maybe stuff that I personally... wouldn't pick but then when you actually see on somebody else it looks... it kind of attracts you to looking at those styles a little more.

Sylvie shared that ever since she became a mom, she rarely splurges on herself. However, when she comes across impressive sales or irresistible products she is influenced into buying things.

She learned about a Nordstrom sale from an FMI she followed and explained:

I bought myself, Nordstrom was having a sell. So, like I bought myself some Hunter boots. And then I was like why am I buying myself Hunter boots... I honestly... was convinced into buying them right because I was just like, Okay, first of all, it doesn't rain here... I mean it does rain here but... not to the point where you need to buy yourself rain boots, right? But then I was like, okay, Hunter boots are \$155 regular price. And then I was like they're on sale for \$35.... why am I not gonna buy them? So,... I bought myself Hunter boots...

In another instance, Sylvie recalled a time she was influenced into buying sunglasses for herself.

I follow this girl on Instagram who was always wearing... super pretty stuff, glasses. And they were that brand, I don't know if you follow them it's the QUAY. I don't know if I'm pronouncing it right but I think that's how they pronounce it. So, I bought myself glasses from there just because I see them... wearing those glasses.

In sum, without time/space restrictions, FMIs' posts help the participants to have indirect experience of products/brands. Consumption-related information such as new brands or shopping links make online shopping convenient. More importantly, mothers oftentimes place their children as priority and their own needs and wants lack significance. For instance, Faith described her viewpoint on shopping for herself:

Clothes and appearance are important to me, but I find myself taking a back seat in this department... because I would rather spend that money on new shoes for the boys or new clothes. I see meme about moms all the time, you might see me look like shit, but not my kids. And that's the best way I could describe it.

Therefore, this revealed the significance in the participants ability to gather fashion ideas for themselves in order to maintain presentable appearances or simply treat themselves. While the realities of motherhood create complexities, referencing FMIs is a solution to accomplish shopping goals.

Findings from digital ethnography analysis of FMIs' Instagram and followers' responses verified this theme. Through *outfit of the day* posts, FMIs provided followers with shopping references for fashion and brand discovery as well as styling tips for the bodily changes brought on by motherhood. This was achieved through posed images in dressed up ensembles and casually styled outfits. Still, fashion brands and products were tagged in images to provide

awareness. For dressed up ideas, style inspiration mostly featured heels, makeup, and some type of accessory. For instance, Influencer Sazan Hendrix (image 9:

https://www.instagram.com/p/B8_VuYn3FR/) wore a monochromatic look as she paired a neutral toned top with sweatpants and similar colored high heel boots; she accessorized the outfit with a hat and straw purse in the same color family. In her text, she described her style as cozy chic as it helps her transition from being socially active to being a mom. She asked her followers about their go-to styles, and they responded:

I feel like my style changes from day to day based on what I feel like and what I am going to be doing! 😂 But mostly comfy!

Need more of this content in my life, Saz. I'm tired of living in leggings and oversized tees
😂 LOVE THIS OUTFIT

From the comments above, it is evident how FMIs foster a space for women to discuss their lives in relation to fashion. This also coincides with the narratives shared by participants interviewed. Particularly, it supports the notion that FMIs expose followers to new ways of wearing fashionable clothing pieces.

Interviews with the participants in Phase 1 revealed fondness for FMIs' Instagram Stories on styling and Instagram posts on affordable brands. In the following Instagram post, influencer Mamaa of Tres (image 10: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B1PruG8A0p2/>) posed in an alleyway to show off her thrifted mom shorts of which she paired with a blue gingham patterned blouse and tanned heeled shoes. She accessorized her outfit with a big brown belt and a white hat. In her image, she tagged the brands she wore to inform her followers. In her text, she described a positive mindset through an inspirational quote and shared the act of thrift shopping and

repeating clothes. Comments on her post provided a vivid example of followers' interest in Instagram Stories focused on styling and affordable brands.

I saw your try ons in your stories 🙌

Beauty! Loved the little haul you did in target! I need those shorts 😍

Where can I get this top ? I need this nice Full sleeve top

it's a dress babe. Except the dress was too short on me so I made it into a top.

It's from forever 21 ❤️

oh really . It looks perfect on you 💙 love your style always and glad to

see your stories that you are now sharing it with us 😊 Good luck 👍

Other ways FMIs provided shopping sources for the participants interviewed was through casual fashion and mom style images. Dressed down yet put together looks gave followers examples of how to style clothing in a comfortable way and still be able to run after their children. Such performances unlocked references on fashion shopping and browsing information. Influencer Alexandra Garza (image 11: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B8cBOlhABXt/>) posed outside wearing a Henley shirt paired with cutoff denim shorts. She accessorized with Louis Vuitton earrings and a bag, and aviator sunglasses; all brands featured in her image were also tagged. Her text described her outfit as “easy and comfy” as she briefly shared about the sunny days in Nashville. The comments on her Instagram post revealed the appreciation of comfy style and accessorizing.

Love how you always manage to step up your simple & classic everyday looks whether it's adding a cute bag, a pair of stylish shades or a piece of jewelry ❤️

Can you please do a video on your updated luxury collection? Or even just lv? Love the handbag and sunglasses!!!!

Love these shorts...need all the high waisted clothes [#momlife](#) 🤔👏

It is evident that this influencer's style is a bit more luxurious than those of others. This coincides with the participant interviews which revealed they referenced different FMIs for different things; that is, fashion deals versus luxury fashion. At the same time, the comments offer influences of FMIs' fashion styles on motherhood. This also concurs with FMIs' as learning sources for integrating fashion into motherhood.

Finally, influencer Courtney Shields (image 12: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B-fOGWvpzoL/>) posed in front of her mirror to show off her cropped denim jeans that she paired with a knotted white tee and white tennis shoes. Alike other mirror pictures shared by FMIs, her bedroom is clean and decorated in all white décor. In her text, she shared how Good American jeans were ideal for comfortable days indoors during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Style please??!! Or can you link it? There are so many choices but like these.

Ugh I've wanted to try good American for so long. Might be the time! ❤️

These jeans are awesome!!! Super flattering ~ I need these in my life! 😍😍😍😍

what size are you for reference?

The role FMIs play in their followers shopping experiences can be observed in the comments above. From specific brands to sizing references, followers look to FMIs as sources for shopping and browsing. The styling tips and brand discovery followers are exposed to coincides with the participants interviewed who learned about affordable brands such as Shein (an affordable brand of women's clothing online). Notably, the two participants who became avid shoppers of the brand have deeply entrenched Latina/o values on appearance management. Although Latina/o

references and resources lack on Instagram, these women manage to use FMIs' information to uphold Latina/o expectations regarding appearance.

Through hashtags, FMIs build an interwoven narrative on fashion and motherhood through affordable and luxury fashion styles as well as dressed up and casual outfits: #outfitoftheday #styleinspo #ootn #momstyle #momfashion #shein #thelookforless #outfitdujour. This narrative agrees with the participants' interviews as they gain validation in their preferred styles as they follow FMIs on Instagram. For instance,

Faith: I think the fashionable content presented in influencer moms shows you that just because you are a mom doesn't mean you still can't be hot, (Alexandrea has video titled "Moms can be hot too") or even just the person you were before you became one.

Olivia: It's been kind of awesome because now... sneakers... are in and flatware... flat shoes and stuff... this is so cool because that's, I can literally wear that. And... it's fashionable and stylish... I can wear a dress with sneakers and it's fine. It's acceptable. And so that's kind of cool. And that's something... I started seeing on Instagram then I'm like, okay, doesn't look too bad.

Example excerpts further justify how millennial Latina mothers refer to FMIs as sources for fashion ideas for themselves, expanding their fashion references to incorporate fashion into motherhood.

Perceived Distance In Reality

Women's sense of self is established and molded through relationships (Adams & LaFromboise, 2001). For these women, FMIs function as reference points for them to situate who they are.

Through social sharing and exchanges, they arrive at knowing oneself and others. However, the

process of knowing themselves in relation to others also reveals how the self is affected by social location or class. That is, the participants become aware where they are situated within the glamorous lives of FMIs. Being aware of the difference in realities is important for Latina millennial mothers to foster self-confidence and empowerment to create their individual identities. For example, Faith narrated:

When I view fashionable mother influencers on Instagram [it's] both good and bad. On one hand, it gives vision for what I would personally like to look like. It makes me excited to put more effort in myself because I want to look good too. It makes me feel like wow they are moms and they look like [that]?! But on the other hand, those same feelings take a turn and it makes me feel bad about myself, because they are moms and somehow they manage to look like that, to put effort into themselves, they find time to prioritize themselves. And personally, it just makes me feel like I let go of myself, that I stopped trying, that I look sloppy because I'm always in leggings and t-shirt. But, I usually tell myself at that point that comparison is the thief of joy, and I should idolize what is out of social media because usually, it's only the picture-perfect moments.

Comparably, Arissa echoed:

I just enjoy looking at their lifestyle. They are able to stay home, promote these goods and services, and get paid for doing it! It's simple but probably difficult to get into. I wouldn't have time for it, working fulltime... When I view fashionable mother influencers on Instagram I get jealous because here I am working a 40-hour work week while they get to stay home, travel, or come and go as they please while making money... In terms of their content, I view it as glamorous. They have time to do their hair, nails, and makeup

for their content and I seem to leave the house with a tussled bun and sweatpants every day. It amazes me!

These excerpts illustrate that the participants compare their lives to those of the FMIs they follow and particularly feel a distance in appearance and lifestyle aspects. Through amazement, the participants enjoy viewing/reading FMIs content, especially for topics on appearance and style. However, those same interests leads them to realize that their motherhood and 9-5 professional duties impede the glamorous lifestyle they much enjoy consuming on social media – oftentimes leading to feelings of guilt and jealousy. In a rather unique experience, Olivia shared about the time she was on bedrest during her pregnancy. When following FMIs, she discovered a disparity in the realities of their lives.

I was on bedrest, and so then I started... living vicariously through her... her baby shower... how she set up her kids nursery rooms and... so many different things. And I'm... I wish I could do all that... but right now I'm not working. It's just my husband. We have to save money, ... I can't even get out of bed. And so, ... you kind of just... watch them live their lives and... but she, everything she posts is very perfect.... it's just very, ... dreamy and the kids never get dirty type thing. I know that's not real life. obviously, ... but it's cool to see her page it makes you feel... like you could accomplish it... if you tried.

Olivia's narrative demonstrates the perceived distance in reality with regard to the perfectly styles moments FMIs share on Instagram. She acknowledged that picture-perfect moments do not reflect the hardships that life as a mother often entails. At the same time, this perceived distance functioned as an outlet for aspiration during a risky pregnancy situation.

Isla echoed the vast differences in her lifestyle to that of the FMIs she follows. Interestingly, she touched on coping with mental health when deciding who to follow. Alike

Olivia, Isla acknowledged that FMIs create an aspirational space through the glamorous images they share. While such content fostered a sense of wishful thinking among Isla, the perceived distance in reality led her to sporadically unfollow FMIs in order to keep a healthy mindset. That is, aspirational influence sometimes guided consumption as a means to keep up with certain lifestyles. In her own words:

I mentioned to you that I unfollowed a bunch of them a couple years ago. And I recently started following a few again, I did that for... my own mental health and sanity. I think after I had kids and I couldn't focus on the beauty blogging and my career... I just, I felt like following mom influencers, just made me want things that I couldn't have that I didn't really need to want. And so, I unfollowed a bunch of them and then I slowly start started following them again... I've done a few like Instagram hiatuses where I get off Instagram for like two weeks here and there, just to clear my brain. And now that I feel like I'm getting a handle on... what's actually important. I started following a few more influencers with... a better perspective... [Some of them are] very aspirational... I think everything is just so over the top of gorgeous. And you still want to go in that direction as much as you can, even though you'll never actually achieve it.... [It's] something you aspire to, but... I'm trying to keep it healthy, like that perspective. Understanding that I'll probably never have [that]... But,... looking at it. It's just so beautiful. And you think, well, this is the kind of home that I would like to have one day.

Finally, Sophia shared her viewpoint on FMIs. In doing so, she believes they “only show a glimpse of... what all of us are struggling with...”

It's organized chaos. I think that they just... make it seem a little bit organized. But being a mom is still chaos. So, it's just again that they're showing the part where their little angel is sitting down and eating instead of... finger painting the whole house...

Understanding a distance between their realities and those of FMIs allowed the participants to distinguish what is realistic and what is aspirational. This way, they make consumption-related decisions that reflect reasonable yet pertinent styles and prices. While cognizant of the “staged,” “picture-perfect motherhood lifestyle” represented on Instagram, most of the participants regarded FMIs as avenues for an escape from their own realities and an outlet to enjoy the interesting lives they live. At the same time, some of the participants experienced “a tinge of jealousy” because of the extravagant lifestyles portrayed online. For instance, Isla enquired, “how did she become so famous?! How did she become so wealthy, she has this massive house in Utah... cute clothes and all that. But there's also a little bit of... Well, why?”

To this end, the participants develop and understand a sense of self in the context of their relationships with FMIs. They frame emotional connections with FMIs on motherhood struggles and recognize the misrepresentation on perfect motherhood that functions as entertainment. With regard to consumption, they identify a threshold in consumption as they are aware of what is attainable for them and what is not. In this way, excessive, out of price range spending is avoided; they pick and choose what fashion products and other consumption is achievable. The lifestyle and consumption practices of the middle-class and aspirational higher-class are central and overtly displayed on Instagram (Abidin, 2016; Marwick, 2015). Cognizant to the differences between real life and instances presented on Instagram, the participants interviewed in Phase 1 described a perceived distance in reality. In particular, picture-perfect homes and

glamorous photos of themselves dressed to perfection drove the participants to acknowledge a disparity in their realities. This was evident in FMIs' Instagram posts.

For instance, influencer Emily Ann Gemma shared a photo of her perfectly decorated master bedroom including white bedding and headboard, light blue decorative pillows, gold accents, pink flowers, and a Dior book for her bedside table (image 13:

https://www.instagram.com/p/B_gZk6gJdHC/). Her text described the love for random things and provided the links to her blog post and LIKEtoKNOW.it where followers can buy such things. The comments on her Instagram post exposed how her followers consider the realistic aspects of their lives as mothers when viewing perfectly decorated bedrooms, especially those featuring white décor.

Love this!!! Sad thing is it only stays that neat for two seconds with kids!! 🤔😅🤔👩

How do you keep your white bedding so white?! Between the babes and dog, that's always my biggest struggle 🤔

Interestingly, the FMI responded to her followers to maintain an authentic presence. She shared that keeping things neat and clean when having kids involved a great deal of work.

it's a constant battle! 😅💕💕

I wash it a lot!!

The findings from my Instagram observations are consistent with the participants I interviewed. Aware of the discrepancies between their lives and those of FMIs on Instagram, the participants keep in mind the hard work behind achieving picture-perfect homes. At the same time, most FMIs they chose to follow still maintain a sense of truth, thus encouraging the consumption of their content.

Another example of picture-perfect moments was featured in influencer Dulce Candy's Instagram post. The photo she shared displayed a mostly white decorated patio space including bright green plants and giant double doors that gave a view into her spotless home (image 14: https://www.instagram.com/p/B_iO9gHhQaX/). In her text, she described the positive vibes that come with homeschooling her kids in the sunny outdoors. Alike the previous FMI content, the perceived distance in reality between FMIs and their followers is revealed in the comments.

One day boo!, GOALS

I legit thought this was one of my interior design pages I follow at first glance 🤩 so beautiful 🙌

The above comments touch on the aspiration and beauty that is largely presented in FMI Instagram content. Despite the evident distance between ideals and reality, FMIs' followers, including the participants interviewed, appreciated the aspirational facet of consuming positive and unflawed content on social media. That is, oftentimes FMIs served as entertainment because of the different perspective their social location in class offered. It was a mindless activity to surf through FMIs' content.

Other ways FMIs conveyed a clear distance in reality from their followers was through the choice of certain brands, and focus on *outfit of the day* photos over difficult conversations on motherhood troubles. For instance, influencer Kate Irene Blue shared an *outfit of the day* photo (image 15: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B5jRTQgHR6E/>) where she posed outside her front door dressed in a snakeskin patterned dress and accessorized with sunglasses, a Gucci belt, high knee boots, and a Louis Vuitton purse. In her text, she briefly described her recent challenging days as she cared for her sick children. She then shifted focus to a positive discourse by sharing on fashion deals and LIKEtoKNOW.it information. This revealed how the FMI shifted the

conversation from tough topics to feelgood conversation. As a result, the comments on the post mainly fixated on the outfit the FMI wore. Also, the luxury brands she chose to wear as well as the shift in conversation indicated the influencer's high class and privilege status.

Influencer Leeexlieee (image 16: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B6B2Mk8JLB0/>) posed in her unborn child's nursery, styled in a Fashion Nova little black dress and wore heels, makeup, and the popular mom bun. Through a witty manner, the text in her Instagram post described her excitement to welcome her son into the world, but also her attempt to take advantage on dressing up before she may not be unable to. That is, she implied the idea that postpartum might interfere with her ability to dress up. Nonetheless, the style featured in the above image was consistent across her entire Instagram presence; this indicated her affinity to incorporating fashion into motherhood. The comments on her Instagram post reflected her followers amazement in Leeexlieee's appearance management.

I don't know how you do it girl. You always look beautiful and made up! 🥰

You look so good! How much have you gained threw this whole pregnancy? You look all belly girl!! 🤰 I'm a little over six months in and I feel like I'm all neck and thighs ahahaha 😂

Wow your looks great! You rocking so heels too, girl you bold! 🍷❤️🥰🤔

How are your feet not swollen? Mine were like an elephant 🐘

Your dedication to put yourself together like this especially this close to delivery is amazing. I did none of it. Haha 😏

Alike Instagram comments, the participants' narratives in Phase 1 resembled the reference points they used to make sense of who they are in motherhood and fashion, revealing the distance

between aspiring ideals and reality. That is, picture-perfect homes and put together mothers and their kids is not easy to achieve when factoring in motherhood. The white décor and extravagant houses, as well as the stylish pregnancy and outfits photos built an aspirational motherhood narrative.

Within this theme, the hashtags for posts regarding fabulous homes primarily included #nordstrom #masterbedroom #happyathome #homedecor #marblefloor #interiordesign. For outfits posts, the following hashtags were used: #gucci #realoutfitgram #americanstyle #target while others simply tagged @fashionnova. Particularly, the hashtags and comments on fashion brands added to the perception of distance in reality; there was a strong difference in Hispanic and American style for FMIs as mothers and Instagram aesthetic. While FMIs varied in style, when the hashtag *American style* was used it mostly presented expensive and neutral toned clothing while the few Hispanic influencers in the sample played a bit more with colorful fashion. Interestingly, colorful clothing has stemmed from traditional wear in the Hispanic (especially for Mexican culture) community and continue to influence fashion trends today (Morel, 2016; Sharma, n.d.).

Although FMIs differed in number of followers, aesthetic, and focus, they introduced ways to juggle motherhood and fashion; some realistically, while others somewhat out of reach and thus, aspirational. The images in the sample of FMIs featured outfits that revealed a particular style (e.g., casual and affordable or expensive and luxurious), but simultaneously displayed motherhood roles by reflecting on milestones and struggles. Through images of *outfits of the day* and motherhood discourse, FMIs offer mothers a space to speak on life realities and thus, enable women to observe, learn, and connect with other mothers. As most women support

each other in the good and bad moments in motherhood, they empower each other to do the best they can.

Overall, my findings revealed how FMIs visually attracted their followers on matters of fashion and style, while textually relevant discourse on motherhood pulled them in emotionally. Similar to McFarlane and Samsioe (2020), influencers married their self-performances to emergent social discourse on important matters such as mental health. This is notably significant considering mental health continues to be a stigmatized topic among the Hispanic community and often result in generational conflicts (Mental Health America, n.d.). Such notion was apparent in the excerpts the participants shared on their attempts to break away from cultural stigmas. Also, the hashtags used by FMIs gave a glimpse into modern motherhood – one that is linked to coping mechanisms, expression through style, personal mothering practices, and one-stop shopping efficiencies.

Figure 1 below visually shows the relationship between the higher-level themes that define the participants' motherhood journey. The theme of *Becoming a Mom* was central to the participants' experiences and identity construction. Becoming a mom changed their lives in a way that required dealing, negotiation, and learning. This transformative journey led them to *Form Motherhood Ideals*, which represented the traversing between personal ideals and cultural expectations, ultimately arriving at the decision to end negative learned behavior patterns. However, the realities of societal and cultural oppressions i.e., *Encountering Reality checks*, they experience as Latinas and the immense work that motherhood i.e., *Adapting To My Work in progress*, requires allowed the participants to acknowledge the complexity in achieving their motherhood ideals. To solve the discrepancies between reality and their ideals, as well as aid in

their work in progress as women and mothers, the participants looked to FMIs on Instagram for references, i.e., *Referencing Fashionable Mother Influencers*.

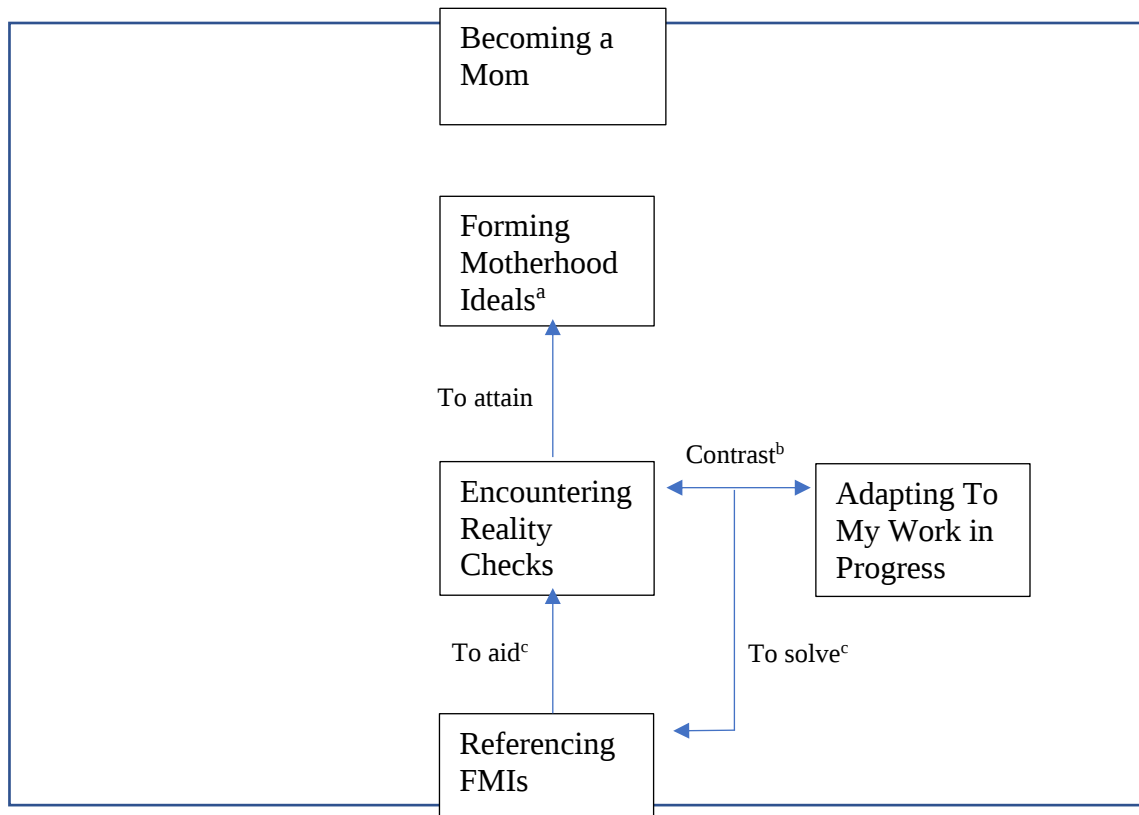


Figure 1. Visual representation of higher-level themes

*Relationships between higher-level themes

^a to address RQ1

^b to address RQ2

^c to address RQ3

Table 2. Themes: Sub-themes and Example Quotations

Themes	Sub-themes	Example Quotations
Becoming a Mom	Dealing With Whirlwind Emotions	"Being a mother to me has been incredibly difficult. Mainly because it was a role that I wasn't remotely ready for, nor was I mentally or emotionally ready for the roller-coaster it would be." "It's a whirlwind of emotions (good & bad), sleepless days/nights and a ton of other stuff ... Being a mother is probably the most challenging but rewarding thing."
	Negotiating Priorities and Roles For A Newly Chosen Lifestyle	"I could get [a nanny], for sure. But ... when am I going to spend time with my kids?... to me that's not, that's not something I would do." "I think I'll work again eventually but for now I'll enjoy the enchanting moments of motherhood..."
	Learning To Be A Mom	"When I was pregnant, and throughout their life, I like reading articles about childrearing. And what's the best way to deal with a problem or what's the best way to deal with willful kids..." "Everything I do with my child; I research it thoroughly. I also ask my mom and my son's pediatrician if I have any concerns. If I need advice, I ask for it."
Forming Motherhood Ideals	Striving To Reach Motherhood Ideal	"I want to have an open relationship with my children. I want them to be able to talk to me if they have any problems or issues. I want to be my children's first teacher." "I want my children to look up to me and admire the mom/ woman I am and are not too proud to say to their friends, "That's my mom.""
	Telling My Mother's Story: Motherhood of the First-Generation Immigrant	"I admire my mom because she left her country with my father to give us (my sister and myself a better life) she could have easily stayed there but she knew there was no future for us there." "I have this... incredible woman that came here without even speaking English. She started by cleaning,... hospitals and after people and then she got a job as a parent educator... And then she just... worked her way up."

Table 2. Continued

Themes	Sub-themes	Example Quotations
	Breaking The Cycle: Second Gen Motherhood	"... I do want my children to be more independent than I was growing up. That's one thing about my mom, I wish she gave us more independence instead of holding our hand through every situation." "I'm sorry, mom... I love you. I respect you. I love everything you did for us. But I don't want to be that mom. I don't want my kids to remember me as an angry mom."
Encountering Reality Checks	Implicit Pressures of Latina/o Norms Regarding Women Appearance Management	"I was never one to be... fodonga [unkempt]. I think that's part of... being Latina, where... you want to be able to do everything, but at the same time,... you don't want to look fodonga [unkempt]." "I've always thought that's... a Hispanic thing [to get new outfits for each occasion]... I'll never wear the same dress to.. Okay, if I wear this one dress to a wedding,... another wedding in another month, I'm gonna buy a new dress."
	Lacking Time For Self-Care	"[I] used to even do... face routine where... if I was in the shower, I tried to... use... a deep scrub. And... my... facials, things like that. And once you have a baby, it's like you don't have time for that kind of shower..." "Since having the babies I've NEVER had my nails done, I probably go in for a haircut twice a year, facials maybe twice if I'm lucky."
	Resisting Latina Women Stereotypes.	"I've seen on TV and media... that they're always portrayed as,... maids or nannies. And now,... you're seeing that role kind of change with the media. So that stereotype is changing, but for the most part, that's what I've seen before... it's a little annoying..." "People think, and I don't think that but people think that... Latinas are a little bit lazy or not as educated or intelligent or as capable as other people, to do things..."

Table 2. Continued

Themes	Sub-themes	Example Quotations
Adapting To My Work in Progress	Juggling Acts	"... so obviously the athleticism side of my motherhood was kind of cut down. It, it became a challenge taking on the role of... having that balance between work, becoming a mom, and still managing you..." "... it's constant juggling act or what needs my immediate attention, depending on the day we either have doctors' appointments, target, HEB runs, I have makeup apps or bridal trials, and by the time I'm done with that its usually time to start dinner."
	Building My Mom-Mode Style	"I think it's something that I was probably a little bit more so conscious after giving birth, trying to feel like I had to give back in shape into form fitting that I felt the only thing that made me feel okay or good were high waisted jeans." "Your body is different after you've had a baby,... your waist isn't the same. So maybe... a tight... skinny dress isn't going to look as good as maybe it did before you had kids,... so making sure... if I wouldn't want to look... unattractive... then I rather not wear it."
Referencing Fashionable Mother Influencers	Sense of Solidarity Through Shared Experiences	"She would... talk about her rough days... with the three of them and how it was overwhelming and... okay, I don't feel like a monster. Right? Because... other moms feel this way too. " "If anything,... it makes you feel like, hey,... they're going through the same thing as I am,... they don't have... the perfect days or the perfect lifestyles... how sometimes it looks like on Instagram, at least they're a little bit more vulnerable to... show you..."
	A Time-Saving Shopping Reference	"We're... moms, so we have less time to do things but [I'll] try to work around the little time that we have to make the best of it kind of thing. So,... if they're showing an outfit... okay, what do I already have in my closet that I can make it work with..." "I'll go to the links... I think you have that thing. It's [called], Liketoknowit... link. [Tells you] how much like things are and... what website they're from. And so that helps..."

Table 2. Continued

Themes	Sub-themes	Example Quotations
	Shopping References For Myself	"... seeing Instagram, these mom Instagrammers share these Target try-ons on their Instagram Stories kind of tells me Okay, so there is [and] that outfit. And that's the only time that I actually buy stuff, whenever I see them try on stuff." "... seeing the new trends and what... up and coming kind of... helps as far as like, Okay, well, I like that but [I] wouldn't wear it that way. Or... maybe I can find another way to wear it. And so, I enjoyed that just kind of... seeing new trends ..."
	Perceived Distance in Reality	"In terms of their content, I view it as glamorous. They have time to do their hair, nails, and makeup for their content and I seem to leave the house with a tussled bun and sweatpants every day. It amazes me!" "I started following a few more influencers with... a better perspective... [Some of them are] very aspirational... I think everything is just so over the top of gorgeous. And you still want to go in that direction as much as you can, even though you'll never actually achieve it."

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

In this mix method qualitative study, I used an intersectional analysis to explore and interpret the lived experiences of 14 Latina millennial women in the US who take on multiple roles. Through inductive research, I sought to represent the experiences of these women and highlight how they construct and navigate their roles and identities as mothers, Latinas, and sense of self. I studied how such roles and identities fall at the intersections of their biculturalism (i.e., Latina/o-Americanism) within the context of motherhood ideologies and social media performances. By doing so, it unearth the complexities Latinas live as educated and ambitious individuals who are recurrently influenced by cultural expectations and misrepresentation in the US. According to Dill, McLaughlin, and Nieves (2007), intersectionality embraces the notion that individuals have multi-layered identities leading them to experience both oppression and privilege. For these women, the fluidity in their lived experiences as Latinas in the US hinged on personal ideals, cultural expectations, and the realities of motherhood. Importantly, navigating their multiple identities when exposed to the self-performances of FMIs on Instagram allowed them to shape their identity as they adapted to their roles as mothers. Key findings are discussed below alongside the research questions that guided this study, and are followed by implications for theoretical and practical domains.

Discussion of Findings

RQ 1: How are intersectional identities reflected in women's motherhood narratives among millennial Latina women in the United States?

The participants' narratives illustrated that their intersectional identities (Latina/o-American, womanhood, motherhood) are fused to establish their sense of self. Becoming moms particularly hurled them into the complexities of motherhood as they learned about their new role and adapted to the many changes in their lives, both physically and mentally. When embarking on their motherhood journey, the participants dealt with many emotions that consumed them. Oftentimes, these emotions ranged from feelings linked to fatigue and being overwhelmed. Congruent with Warner's (2006) book *Perfect Madness: Motherhood in the Age of Anxiety*, mothers engage in extensive emotional labor to manage their many roles in a way that still allows them to be as present as they can when raising their children. Regardless of their challenging experiences as mothers, they always arrived at feelings of bliss and fulfillment. This notion fits with identity literature that suggests the most present role in a women's sense of self is that of being a mother (Thoits, 1992). Therefore, motherhood for these Latina millennial women resembled a pendulum swing as they traversed a *roller-coaster* of emotions.

Motherhood journeys also brought the participants to negotiate their lifestyles to fit the needs of their children. In doing so, they strived to find themselves in motherhood as they juggled their roles and aspirations as good mothers and ambitious women. As Hemetsberger et al. (2015) affirmed, the need to rework womanhood because of the changes motherhood brings proves to be a challenging experience for a woman. The complexity of this experience is often due to the incessant negotiation between past and idyllic selves (Wolf, 2003). However, through informational resources such as parenting articles and professional advice, these mothers made

conscious choices to learn to be mothers. It exposed how, as educated Latinas, the access to such resources gave them the privilege to better themselves in their journeys as mothers. This finding identifies how Latina millennial mothers are empowered by information to uniquely construct their own motherhood and break the disparity in resources available to the mothers of their families' generations past.

In addition, the participants' lived experiences revealed the influences their Latina/o culture and parents' immigrant experiences had on their motherhood journeys. As Latina women in the US, they simultaneously held onto and reputed their Hispanic heritages revealing the hybridity in their existence. This notion fits with Falicov's (2002) description of Latina/o's experiences in the US; immigrant families psychologically navigate complex experiences of presence and absence as they struggle to uphold cultural steadiness and rebuild their ethnic space. While the participants admired their immigrant mothers' sacrifices and valued their hard work ethic, they evaded and changed past learned behaviors such as closed communication and mental health avoidance.

As Mayall (2001) notes, mothers are swayed by social forces and carry with them cultural expectations. While these influences advise mothers' visions, it also aids to build their own motherhood journeys (Rawlins, 2006). To create an individualized and tailored motherhood identity, the participants engaged in fostering motherhood ideals that would break past generational mothering practices. Through flexibility and fluidity, these Latina millennial women sought to be mothers who always listened to their children's needs while also making space for themselves to deal with the many emotions attached to motherhood. As Tiemann (2009) states, nurturing your self whilst rearing kids is important; it aids to "start with self-care, move through creativity, and [ultimately cultivate] women's leadership" (p. 2). By striving to reach their

motherhood ideals, these women negotiated the first-generational mothering they experienced as children and the methods in which they intended to better their own mothering styles.

Essentially, the intersectional identities in women's motherhood narratives among Latina millennial mothers in the US were represented in the main themes of *Becoming a Mom* and *Forming Motherhood Ideals*. The dealing, negotiating, and learning they experienced in their motherhood journeys allowed them to become aware of who they aimed to be. The constant self-development and reflection on their past experiences relative to cultural background and personal ideals guided the construction of their individuality. For these millennial mothers, although they held their children as central elements in their lives, they largely materialized their identities from self-description and the negotiation of roles. Typically, motherhood and professional careers are viewed as two separated roles, but for women of color, they are interwoven performances that help uphold their families (Collins, 2016). As the participants' narratives revealed the work that goes behind making sense of their identities as mothers, they gave insight into the manifestation of Latina millennial motherhood.

RQ 2: How are intersectional identities of Latina millennial mother reflected in their appearance management?

The intersections between ethnicity and gender brought to light discrepancies in the participants' motherhood ideals due to cultural norms and Latina stereotypes, especially regarding appearance management. In fact, mothers hold great influence within their families and often wield guidance on their daughters with regard to appearance values (Báez, 2018). For such reason, many of the participants expressed clear avoidance of looking unkempt and/or slutty to escape judgement; this expectation on appearance stemmed from Hispanic cultural ideals. Through reality checks and working to better themselves in motherhood and womanhood, these Latina millennial

mothers' quickly learned that doing it all while looking great was a challenging realization. Traversing between motherhood, careers, and for some personal aspirations left little to no time was for self-care. As noted by Nicolson (1986), motherhood impacts a women's social relations, self-perceptions, and abilities to meet all their responsibilities. As the participants reflected on the lifestyle changes motherhood elicited, appearance management and self-care practices became crucial to maintain their well-being.

To achieve their motherhood ideals, they sought to create a unique motherhood identity; one that differed from their mother's ways. The participants referenced social media to individualize themselves in motherhood and womanhood. Similar to Alexander's (2001) research on motherhood images in books and their role in women's individuality, the participants in this study referenced othermothers to develop uniqueness in their experiences. Yet, they faced a lack of Latina/o resources online and were frequented by prevailing Latina stereotypes. Still, following FMIs allowed them to create individuality in their identities rather than be defined by misrepresentations of them online and other media domains. In addition, bodily and lifestyle changes led the participants to modify their wardrobe due to emotional thoughts such as insecurity in bodily changes and physical tasks such as chasing after their kids. Scholars note that motherhood alters a woman's body resulting in a changed relationship with herself and others (Ogle, Tyner, & Schofield-Tomschin, 2011; Patel et al., 2005). The participants embraced and defined fashion norms for themselves as mothers in order to adapt to their active lives and altered bodies. To this end, the juggling acts between motherhood and womanhood led the participants on paths of transformation with regard to clothing. Struggling to making space and time for themselves, building their mom-mode styles and dress for other occasions (e.g., date night) helped in their self-development in motherhood journeys.

The intersectional identities of Latina millennial mother's related to appearance management were reflected in the main themes of *Encountering Reality Checks* and *Adapting to My Work in Progress*. As they set had ideals to be mothers who were openminded and always present for their children, they realized that a lack of time for self-care as well online resources for Latina mothers made things difficult. Also, Latina/o expectations on appearance management had conflicting impacts on the participants' self-perceptions. That is, while looking presentable added more work to these mothers' to-do lists, oftentimes looking good made them feel better about themselves. In her work regarding Latinas' pursuit for belonging, Báez (2018) noted that beauty practices such as getting a manicure or styled haircut often function as self-care and dazzling experiences amid a challenging day (Ruíz & DuBois, 2000). This complexity between much effort and leisure was also present as the participants defined their style of dress amidst juggling daily tasks attached to motherhood. Nevertheless, in navigating an array of roles and responsibilities, they realized that they are gradually transforming and improving themselves as mothers and women. In this way, appearance management represents an outlet for self-care and/or a means to recreate themselves through style.

Overall, intersectionality provided a lens to delve into motherhood life and struggles, generational differences on matters of mothering, the prevailing stereotypes of Latina women in the US, and the self-conflicts that arise as millennial women try to keep up with cultural expectations and personal ideals. Oppressed by both their ethnicity and gender, Latina mothers expectations are held to cultural standards within their own Hispanic culture as well as white dominant motherhood ideologies. This onsets anxieties to be the best mother while trying not to lose themselves in motherhood. Fundamentally, they are privileged as educated women, and oppressed as Latina mothers in the US.

RQ 3: What is the role of FMIs' self-performances in millennial Latina women's construction of ideal motherhood?

To manage the reality checks they encountered and adapt to their self-development as individuals, the participants utilized FMIs to attain their motherhood ideals. Through performances on Instagram, FMIs' offered these Latina millennial mothers a sense of solidarity in motherhood and valuable information for shopping preferences on fashion and children brands/products. Much of the performance studies literature states that language, performances, and images aid in making sense of reality (e.g., Austin, 1975; Schechner, 2006). For the participants of this study, they referenced FMIs' performances on relatable motherhood stories to solve issues on topics deemed taboo within the Hispanic culture and to aid in their improvement regarding open communication with their children.

Specifically, FMIs provided a sense of unity regarding challenging topics on post-partum depression, IVF difficult journeys, and mental health as a mother amid a pandemic. Such performances offered realistic representations of motherhood that fostered a comradery with the participants. As noted by Madge and O'Connor (2006), new mothers obtain confidence and comfort in knowing that others experience similar difficulties. Shared experiences greatly influence a mother's mindset, especially regarding sentiments on normality (Brady & Guerin, 2010). Thus, FMIs' performances allowed the participants and other followers to process their personal battles and at times, build the courage to voice their struggles online. This addressed the participants' intentions to create their own motherhood paths by referencing outside sources and ultimately breaking the cycle of the unpleasant mothering practices they experienced as children. In line with Moon, Mathews, Oden, and Carlin (2019) work, mothers value the power of collecting boundless information and opinions on social media in a way that is tailored to their

own experiences. Interestingly, almost all of the participants referenced FMIs who had children in the same age groups as their own or who were facing comparable child-development markers. The exposure to relatable content enable the participants to learn and implement helpful rearing techniques.

To solve the lack of time issue they discovered through the realities of motherhood, the participants referenced FMIs as sources toward convenient shopping. Congruent with Setyastuti, Suminar, Hadisiwi, and Zubair's (2019) research on millennial moms and social media, internet use for purchasing decisions is preferred for this group of women as it requires minimal time to achieve. As a result, the participants were able to free time to accomplish their motherhood ideals; particularly, making time to engage in self-care and/or build a connection with their children to be an optimal mother. The central motive for following FMIs was to obtain immediate and useful shopping information to appease their frenzied motherhood lives. This notion fits with recent consumer reports that confirm millennial moms' came of age with technology and thus, effortlessly use social media influencers as useful sources in their consumption decisions (Hernandez, 2019). The most valuable information for the participants entailed fashion styles, brand or product discovery, and helpful references on baby products. Time-saving efforts often involved shopping references through the use of the LIKEtoKNOW.it mobile application. Ultimately, FMIs' quick references enabled the participants to utilize such information to cope with the realities of motherhood such as focus on bonding with their children or allocate time for personal self-care.

To aid dilemmas of appearance management, the participants referenced FMIs for shopping references regarding style and fit. This allowed them to adapt to their mother role and altered bodies, ultimately enabling them to create their mom-mode styles. Oftentimes, they chose

between laid back or dressed up style ideas that were aimed at achieving individuality or keeping up with trends for special occasion. Because motherhood impacts a woman's ability to shop instore and explore shopping options for herself, FMIs offered fashion and style trend information. Consumption-related information such as unique brands and/or shopping links helped these mothers to conveniently online shop. Crucially, FMIs' *outfit of the day* posts offered the participants and other followers with informational references on fashion and new brands as well as styling tips to help mothers dress their altered bodies. The beginning of the motherhood journey involves clothing choices that are centered on motion range, pleasantness, and taste (Sheeshka, Potter, Norrie, Valaitis, Adams, & Kuczynski, 2001). Still, establishing their identity as newly minted mothers concerns clothing choices that assist in presenting their reformed style (Brown & Hodges, 2019). While some influencers' styles were more luxurious than others, they each uniquely gave insight into ways to incorporate fashion into motherhood. The participants referenced different FMIs for different things such as adorable fashion, luxury brands, or a combination of both.

In referencing FMIs' performances on Instagram, the participants acquired a perceived distance in reality. Recognizing realistic versus aspirational motherhood allowed these Latina millennial mothers to see the beauty in their own experiences. Extensive literature on the topic of social media recognizes the excessive display of aspirational content on Instagram (e.g., Abidin, 2016; Marwick, 2015). At the same time, motherhood on social media has exposed the role in a different light for newer generations; one that defies traditional motherhood ideologies and embraces creativity in being mothers and career women (Przystup, 2017). Thus, FMIs served as comparison for the participants to reflect on and establish who they are. They became conscious of where they are located within the world of curated glam on Instagram. Awareness on the

disparity in realities between themselves and FMIs enabled the participants to nurture self-confidence in their strengths and become empowered to construct their unique identities. Mindful of the “picture-perfect motherhood” frequently shown on Instagram, these women followed FMIs as way to escape from the challenging realities of motherhood. They forged emotional bonds with FMIs on relatable motherhood struggles and recognized impeccable motherhood descriptions as mere entertainment.

Largely, the role of FMIs’ self-performances in Latina millennial women’s construction of ideal mothers was represented in the themes of *Sense of Solidarity Through Shared Experiences*, *A Time-Saving Shopping Reference*, *Shopping References For Myself*, and *Perceived Distance in Reality*. For the participants, FMIs provided aesthetically appealing images on matters of fashion and style that helped with consumption choices, whereas textually pertinent stories on motherhood offered an emotional outlet and community. Consumption was directly situated within motherhood and womanhood, taking symbolic meanings that represented the participants’ self-perceptions as Latina mothers in the US. Based on Babin and Harris’s (2015) consumer behavior research, one’s self-image performs a vital part in identity construction. The participants’ fashion and motherhood consumption preferences revealed how they viewed or aimed to view themselves.

For fashion consumption, these women followed FMIs to obtain different vantage points on styling. They desired brands and products that allowed them to fulfil clothing options deemed suitable for them as Hispanics and as mothers. Also, they paid attention to an influencer’s vibe and particular lens on styling such as affordable or luxury fashion information to enable the mixing of high and low-price points. Whether planning a date night with their partner/husband or attending a child’s birthday party, the participants utilized FMIs’ content to simplify and achieve

stylish attire. For motherhood related topics and consumption, they viewed FMIs' content as beneficial sources to help them shape their own paths on mothering. Whether the participants were experiencing motherhood for the first time or learning how to "start all over again" with a second child, FMIs' personal stories helped guide them in their own struggles and milestones.

Interestingly, many of the participants followed FMIs who were white women, only few were Latinas. This findings is important to mention as it informs on the lack of representation of Latinas in the influencer industry. Nonetheless, these women utilized white FMIs as online resources to create their own unique motherhood experience; one that represents their Latina/o American hybridity. For Latina millennial mothers, the exposure to predominantly white or American motherhood stories (Gibson, 2019) allows them to understand where they fit in these narratives, how to navigate their bicultural (i.e., Latina/o American) identity, and ultimately create their unique motherhood journey. Access to social media enables Latinas to *talk back* (hooks, 1989) to the online performances of white motherhood narratives through analysis in order to construct their own depictions (Báez, 2018) in their transnational identity. Social media gave mothers of newer generations the ability to find validation in life experiences through varied interpretations, implement online resources in their methods for mothering, and simultaneously obtain a sense of community and differentiation (Gibson, 2019; Sawyer & Chen, 2012).

In essence, FMIs' self-performances on Instagram gave these women access to an online space filled with individuality and relatable stories. They were able to explore tailored information for their mom style, preferred appearance management practices, and motherhood life discourses. At the same time, feelings of envy and wishful thinking surfaced among these women because of the extravagant and entertaining content they experienced. This complexity

gave insight on the dynamics of the picture-perfect motherhood portrayed on Instagram and the real and raw motherhood the participants experienced and understood. In this fashion, the participants situated themselves within the influencer world forming a comradery with other mothers with like minds or similar stories, and acquired a perceived distance regarding extravagant lifestyles and unrealistic motherhood depictions.

Theoretical Implications

Intersectionality

The findings revealed theoretical implications on motherhood realities and fashion consumption on social media for Latina/o audiences. The participants' motherhood experiences were heavily engrained by cultural expectations and commonly influenced by personal ideals and outside sources such as FMIs on Instagram. By drawing from intersectionality theory, this study contributed to understanding the relationships and issues that Latina millennial mothers experience in reference to social and cultural spheres. Acknowledging the intersectional identities of Latinas reveals the forms of oppression they experience as women and ethnic minorities and provides an ample account of the invisibility that often defines them. Thus, intersectionality theory guided interpretation of how Latina women in the US make sense of their motherhood narratives and appearance management. Findings gave a clear indication of the influence cultural expectations and prevailing stereotypes can have on a woman's sense of self – both in understanding and recreating themselves.

Moreover, Latina mothers in the US engage in double the work compared to their American counterparts in order to be seen as competent individuals and appreciated for their motherhood labor. In fact, the dual prejudice they experience on the basis of gender and ethnicity (Beale, 1979) presents understanding of the historical (i.e., misrepresentation in historical

accounts) and cultural invisibility (i.e., lack of diversity in cultural representation) (Crenshaw 1991, 1992; Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008) Latinas continue to encounter today. This intersectional invisibility uncovered how Latinas in the US continue to be oppressed by the perpetuation of stereotypes and underrepresentation in the media, and the impact it has on the way society views them. For most of the participants in this study, such devalued perceptions of Latinas motivated them to continue being the ambitious women they are and utilize the resources they have accessed to. In this regard, intersectionality also exposed how these Latina millennial mothers experienced privilege; being educated women with access to resources allowed them to construct their own motherhood paths.

Lastly, intersectionality theory helped to understand how white feminism has defined social norms for women in the US and how it has contributed to undervaluing the lived experiences of women of color (Bates, 2017; YW Boston, 2017). As previously stated, white FMIs were prominently represented on social media and most followed by the participants interviewed. This finding informs how motherhood in America is still very white. However, the emergence and increase use of social media function as tools that enable marginalized individuals such as Latinas to share and construct their personal narratives. The oppression and defiance of social identity structures, such as race, gender, and class, are often connected to forming lived experiences (Crenshaw, 1991; Gopaldas & Fischer, 2012). Therefore, the use of intersectionality theory expounds the importance of Latina Americans interactions with social media in relation to motherhood and fashion consumption.

In summary, the study of Latina millennial women's experiences in relation to motherhood and FMI performances on Instagram offered an intricate narrative of modern motherhood. While ethnic diversity in women's motherhood lacks representation on social media, mothering as

versatile and vulnerable has gradually transpired. This occurrence served as a source for the women in this study to utilize in constructing and making sense of their identities as Latinas in motherhood and womanhood. To answer Gopaldas and Fischer's (2012) call for research on the topic of intersectionality and consumer behavior, this study provided insight on how the intersections of social identity structures can be reshaped and empowered by the use of social media.

Performance Studies

Through performance studies, the role of FMIs as sources for matters of fashion, appearance management, and motherhood stories was established. According to Schechner (1992), performance involves many life facets such as societal, cultural, and historical ideologies. Performance can therefore function as education because it constitutes knowledge and creativity (Schechner, 1992, 1998). This invites individuals to utilize performances to develop consciousness of their personal viewpoints in conjunction to those of others, and decide whether to continue or alter those views (Schechner, 1992). In this study, performance studies guided the interpretation of FMIs content to determine how they offer women ways to diversify their dress and motherhood; to accept and/or resist Eurocentric ideologies as they see fit. For these Latina millennial mothers, FMIs' performances aided in constructing their ideal motherhood, and evolve their fashion styles to adapt to motherhood life. Access to FMIs' social narratives enabled the participants to use them as sources to build their own mothering practices while also fulfill the need for solidarity in motherhood struggles.

A significant contribution of this present study regards how performance studies adds perception on the underrepresentation of Latinas as fashionable women and mothers in the influencer industry. This is noteworthy because it is known that influencers have a great impact

on young women (Daniel et al., 2018), especially regarding appearance matters. When there exists a lack of representation for a certain group, in this case, Latina millennial mothers in the US, it needs to be addressed to not only make space for their stories, but to also provide other women befitting resources to more closely reference. There are countless ways to appreciate and employ performance as a means for enlightenment and amusement (Benjamin, 2015). In this study, FMI performances functioned as entertainment on affairs of extravagance, as cultivators of community on motherhood experiences, and as means for therapy and educating on delicate topics such as post-partum depression and mental health.

Self-in-Relation

The self-in-relation theory further guided the understanding of how Latina millennial mothers utilized FMIs' self-performances to make sense of their own experiences. Adams and LaFromboise (2001) noted that, the gendered self for females is situated within a structure of empathy, bonds, and interactions; "they develop and grow a sense of self in relation to others" (p. 26). Social media offers access to an abundance of information in modes of self-presentations and self-performances; it can impact women in positive and/or negative ways, especially when discussing motherhood ideals (Pedersen & Lupton, 2018). In this present study, the participants made sense of their motherhood by relating to others who experienced similar experiences and/or comparable fashion styling preferences. With regard to taboo discussion topics in the Hispanic community, social media created a space for mothers to defy learned behaviors by having and/or reading delicate conversations online. However, the perceived distance in reality with respect to lifestyles created negative thoughts for most of the participants. They asked themselves questions such as "Why can't I have that? How can I have that?" Such questions often led to thoughts of jealousy or the consumption of things that didn't meet a particular need.

For relationships to continue developing there needs to be reciprocity in admiration, sincerity, support, and appreciation in order for individuals to form the ability to care, develop courage, and take action (Jordan, 1991). This notion described the relationship the participants formed with FMIs on Instagram. They related to FMIs when online stories reflected motherhood and fashion in applicable and attainable ways. When coming across unattainable and unrealistic stories, however, a disconnect ensued, as did discouraging reflections. Notably, as educated Latinas, the participants recognized the difference in realities and utilized information pertinent to their lives accordingly. This finding is important to the social media influencer literature because it informs on the types of stories that resonate with followers and those that fall short on fostering relationships.

Above all, self-in-relation theory helped to understand how Latina mothers in the US take FMIs' social performances and implement them into the process of constructing their own identities. Through navigating motherhood and fashion, as well as Hispanic and American identities, the participants methodically incorporated FMIs' competencies to meet their preferences in brand and style consumption choices.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study provide insight on Latina millennial mothers who navigate multiple roles and traverse bicultural identities as Hispanic Americans. By understanding the ways in which this group of women experience motherhood and engage in fashion consumption, it allows for brand marketers and retailers to not only learn about the uniqueness of these individuals' behaviors, but it also provides the opportunity for the industry to accurately represent Latinas in marketing communications. For influencer marketing, it is important for the industry to

challenge the current position of the fashion market, one that is predominately white, by hiring and collaborating with Latina influencers.

As the findings revealed, the participants experienced many changes in their lives when they became moms. These changes were reflected in chaotic lifestyles and transformed dress/appearance management routines. When the worlds of fashion and motherhood collide, it makes it difficult for women to discover a personal style (Morris, 2018) that now fits their busy schedules. FMIs are well-versed in the fashion department, and as many of them begin to embark on motherhood they represent suitable fashion guides for mother consumers. The findings revealed that these Latina millennial mothers seek out FMIs to aid in their hurried online shopping experiences fashionable and trendy clothing suitable for their mom life. This tells brand marketers and retailers the role of FMIs play among this particular group of consumers as they navigate such a transformative experience in life.

Also, the participants followed FMIs to gain a sense of solidarity in their motherhood. They particularly enjoyed reading stories about vulnerable topics such post-partum depression and mental health for mothers today. Such narratives helped these Latina women, who didn't experience open discussions on sensitive topics, the ability to process a whirlwind of emotions brought on by motherhood. This is an interesting finding because Instagram is known for its visually appealing and lighthearted content, and is now experiencing a shift in the type of content shared. While the invisibility of new motherhood on Instagram is still present through posed images and lighthearted stories (Meyerson, 2019), a growth discourse on postpartum depression is happening, leading to the expanding product line consumption of these women as they follow FMIs. Importantly, a recent report by NFR suggested that millennial parents shop brands that uphold the same social and political values as they do (Cullen, 2018). As the cultural landscape

of Instagram begins to change, it's important for brand marketers to consider the values Latina mothers in the US hold dear.

With regarding race and ethnicity, the need for representation in the current climate of our society is crucial. Not to say that it was unimportant before, but as social media gives individuals the power to voice their stories and opinions, excuses for lack of representation are not acceptable. In a recent article by *Gen Medium*, the girlboss culture is called out as a white-centric feminist perspective of millennial women in the workplace who are ambitiously seeking success (Stein, 2020). It is a short-cited approach toward feminism because it only focuses on contributing to gender inequity, while ignoring racial inequity (Stein, 2020). Where does this leave race or ethnicity? It's important to learn about the experiences of Latina women in the US, especially those who are educated and successful. It makes room for and helps amplify their voices, and ultimately disrupt the underrepresentation of Latinas within influencer marketing.

As mentioned before, Latina millennials are a part of an influential group of individuals that is expanding. Not only are they Hispanic consumers, but also South Texas residents. This is particularly significant to consider since the Hispanic ethnic group is projected to exceed white populations in Texas by 2021 (Ura & Novak, 2020). Also, more Hispanic women start businesses compared to white women (Perez Segura, 2020). This was reflected in the sample of interviewed Latinas in this study. For instance, two of the fourteen participants were entrepreneurs of more than one successful business. From a consumer perspective, this discloses the great purchasing power of Latina millennial mothers because they consume for their roles as businesswomen, mothers, and fashion-interested women. It is significant for brand marketers and retailers to acknowledge the opportunity to adequately market to this unique group of mothers.

Lastly, this group of Latina millennials faced having to adapt to new schedules, pull back from the demands of work to also embrace motherhood. This brings to light the different shopping behaviors this women have compared to past generations, especially considering the constant presence of technology and social media today. A fairly recent NFR consumer report confirmed that millennial parents are more likely than other generations to use subscription services; they also use smartphones to research products and brands, and are seldom without technology (Bandaranayake, 2018). The findings of this study support the consumer report uniquely highlights the popularity of mobile applications such as LIKEtoKNOW.it, Target, and Amazon among these Latina millennial mothers' shopping preferences. Particularly, the LIKEtoKNOW.it helped them search for and purchase fashionable clothing. As working and ambitious women, these millennial mothers don't have time to shop, or to do much of anything social. While it is easy to search google, these types of searches do not provide information in a social way that informs on trending styles. This notion emphasizes the significant role of FMIs. One of the reasons the participants followed FMIs was because of a particular style and/or vibe. The shopping process was made easier when Instagram FMIs were used as a main source, and even simpler when brand and product information was linked through LIKEtoKNOW.it.

Limitations

A limitation of this study involved generalizability. My findings were inescapably linked to the study background as is the situation in interpretive research. I demonstrated how the identity construction of Latina millennial mothers occurs amid components of motherhood, ethnic culture, and the social media influencer phenomenon. It is important to consider study limitations to provide a direction for future research.

Limitations of Sample

All participants were from South Texas. Perhaps, Latinas in different parts of the US might have provided a different narrative on motherhood and fashion. The findings were also specific to lived experiences of millennial educated and business savvy Latinas. Many of the participants were well-versed on the influencer industry, often focusing on the dynamics of good advertising. This contributed to the educated perspective of this narrative on motherhood and the privilege experiences they encountered as educated women. Conceivably, a less proficient sample of participants on advertising and the creative industry of influencers might have uncovered entirely different motherhood experiences and ideals, and different perceptions on FMIs.

Future Research

Additional research is warranted to understand Latina mothers' consumption experiences in their identity formation. Exploring the narratives of Latina mothers of different geographic areas and socioeconomic backgrounds may uncover greater insight on the concept of intersectionality and its connection to identity and consumption. A recommendation for future qualitative research is to investigate Latina women from different parts of the US to see how their cultural experiences and acculturation may differ with regard to motherhood ideals and consumption. This approach may reveal added challenging dynamics associated with being Latina mothers and women in the US, and how it impacts perception and behaviors relative to consumption in general. Also, it would be valuable to understand how Latina mothers from lower socioeconomic positions approach their motherhood journey and consumption experiences; this would give insight on the types of resources they have access to construct their identity, and whether appearance management remains important.

To further expand this research topic, future investigations should focus on the motherhood experiences of other underrepresented groups of women such as Black and indigenous millennial mothers. This would offer a comprehensive perspective of the oppressions and privileges experienced by modern mothers in their identity construction journeys and resulting consumption performances. A focus group would help to uncover how women of color view motherhood and womanhood as essential facets of identity and how they are regarded within their respective communities. In this way, possible dress and appearance management practices may reveal cultural and personal ideals, as well as distinctive consumption patterns.

As mentioned in the findings of this study, it was revealed that FMIs fostered discourse on difficult motherhood matters such as postpartum depression and mental health. It would be valuable to focus on the role and influence social media influencers have on young mothers with particular regard to mental health, workout routines, and other well-being practices. A future study should study social media influencers who focus on workout and activism to determine their impact on women as they engage in identity construction. In addition, further exploration should be directed toward understanding mothers' experiences with Instagram Stories as a main source for "real" and behind-the-scenes content. The participants in this study discussed the picture-perfect motherhood they experienced on their Instagram feeds and how they enjoyed the realness of FMIs' Instagram Stories. Thus, it would be noteworthy to study the variances in motherhood realities performed on Instagram and how such images impact mothers as they strive to be the best mother, wife, and self.

Finally, the use of self-in-relation theory in this study focused on the relationships the participants formed with FMIs on matters of motherhood. While this approach led to understanding of how Latina millennial mothers confronted personal challenges and made sense

of them in relation to FMIs, it is by no means reflects an exhaustive description of all relational experiences. Future research on mother-daughter relationships for Latina Americans and the differences in generational motherhood practices may reveal sociohistorical and social class differences in consumption.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to uncover an intricate motherhood narrative by exploring Latina millennial women's experiences and perspectives as they navigated motherhood and FMI content on Instagram. Findings illustrated that Latinas navigate, juggle, and adapt to motherhood as it reflects an ever-evolving journey influenced by personal ideals and cultural expectations. The concept of intersectionality allowed to gain insight on the oppressions and privileges of these women. Particularly, Latina millennial mothers in the US are oppressed by media misrepresentation via demeaning stereotypes and underrepresentation within the influencer industry, and cultural expectations on appearance management practices. However, they are privileged by their education and professional expertise that allows them to defy such oppressions and create their ideal motherhood and preferred approach toward appearance management and personal styles. The role of FMIs' social performances functioned as sources for identity construction among these women; they helped guide motherhood and fashion consumption choices.

This qualitative study is significant because it discloses a comprehension on intersectionality that has not been studied in existing literature. Through the exploration of Latina millennial mothers living in the US and their motherhood journeys amid the age of social media, this study revealed how they navigate their oppressions and privileges. The role of FMIs in identity construction and consumption highlighted these women's unique approach toward

creating their own motherhood narratives. By focusing on the participants' own words about their motherhood struggles and gratifications, as well as their personal ideals and ambitions, the voices of these Latinas are amplified.

The findings shed light on how relationships with mothers and others, in this case FMIs, shaped different ways of understanding and embracing each other's experiences. Additionally, the participants' cultural hybridity distinctively showed how they traversed cultural meanings regarding motherhood and femininity, and preferred consumption choices. This study adds value to both scholarly and industry domains; it provides understanding of Latina millennial mothers' use of FMIs' narratives to construct a more adaptive mothering style and to engage in effortless online shopping experiences. More importantly, as Latinas use technology to create and amplify their voices on and off social media, the lack of Latina/o resources and representation can be diminished. As previously mentioned, young Latina/o generations such as these Latina millennial mothers, are using technology in a way that past generations did not. In this way, there exists hope to break taboos to create more open and accepting ways of living. As Latina/os become the largest demographic in the US (US Census, 2019), it is crucial to share and amplify their voices to create resources for these communities to flourish.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL



December 16, 2019

Leslie Cuevas,
UTK - Coll of Education, Hlth, & Human - Retail, Hospitality, and Tourism Mgmt

Re: UTK IRB-19-05555-XM

Study Title: The Fashion Mommy Influencer: Performance Toward Women Empowerment on Instagram

Dear Leslie Cuevas:

The UTK Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed your application for **revision** of your previously approved project, referenced above. The IRB determined that your revision application is eligible for expedited review under 45 CFR 46.110(b), and that your study remains eligible for **exempt** status. The following revisions to your project were approved as complying with proper consideration of the rights and welfare of human subjects:

- Participants will be compensated with Visa OR Target \$20 gift cards for their interview.
- UTK Knoxville Main Campus IRB Application – Version 1.3
- Consent for Research Participation_revised - Version 1.0

In the event that subjects are to be recruited using solicitation materials, such as brochures, posters, web-based advertisements, etc., these materials must receive prior approval of the IRB. Any alterations (revisions) in the research project must be submitted to and approved by the UTK Institutional Review Board prior to implementation of these revisions. In addition, you are responsible for reporting any unanticipated serious adverse events or other problems involving risks to subjects or others in the manner required by the local IRB policy.

Sincerely,

Institutional Review Board / Office of Research & Engagement
1534 White Avenue Knoxville, TN 37996-1529
865-674-7697 865-674-7400 fax: info.utk.edu

BIG ORANGE. BIG IDEAS.

Flagship Campus of the University of Tennessee System

Colleen P. Gilrane
Colleen P. Gilrane, Ph.D.
Chair

Institutional Review Board / Office of Research & Engagement
1514 White Avenue Knoxville, TN 37996-1529
865-974-7897 865-974-7400 fax irb@utk.edu

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Flagship Campus of the University of Tennessee System 

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT

Consent for Research Participation

Research Study Title: The Fashion Mommy Influencer: Performance Toward Women Empowerment on Instagram

Researcher(s): Leslie Cuevas, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Dr. Heejin (Jeanie) Lim, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Why am I being asked to be in this research study?

I am asking you to be in this research study because you are a millennial mother who follows or reads fashionable mother influencers' content on Instagram.

What is this research study about?

The purpose of the research study is to learn about your experiences in consuming fashionable mother influencers' content and how it impacts your perceptions.

How long will I be in the research study?

If you agree to be in this study, it will involve one interview that can last approximately 45-60 minutes at a mutually agreed upon location.

What will happen if I say "Yes, I want to be in this research study"?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to meet me to answer a few interview questions. The interview can be scheduled around your best convenience. If you are unable to meet in person, we can schedule an interview through Zoom or Skype video conferencing, a software that provides remote conferencing services. The interview will be recorded.

What happens if I say "No, I do not want to be in this research study"?

Being in this study is up to you. You can say no now or leave the study later. Either way, your decision won't affect your relationship with the researcher or the University of Tennessee.

What happens if I say "Yes" but change my mind later?

Even if you decide to be in the study now, you can change your mind and stop at any time. If you decide to stop before the study is completed, please contact Leslie Cuevas at lcuevas2@vols.utk.edu and explain that you want to have your information removed from the study. Your interview will be deleted and withdrawn from the study.

Are there any possible risks to me?

This research study carries minimal risks. It is possible that someone could find out you were in this study or see your study information, but I believe this risk is small because of the procedures I use to protect your information. These procedures are described later in this form. I don't know of any additional risks to you from being in the study. If any questions during this interview make you feel uncomfortable, you are welcome to decline answering.

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Are there any benefits to being in this research study?

I do not expect you to benefit from being in this study. Your participation may help to learn more about how fashionable mother influencers on Instagram are important in today's digital world. I hope the knowledge gained from this study will benefit others in the future.

Who can see or use the information collected for this research study?

I will protect the confidentiality of your information by pseudonyms (fake names) and not collecting any visual information (like photographs). If information from this study is published or presented at scientific meetings, your real name will not be used.

I will make every effort to prevent anyone from knowing that you gave me information or what information came from you. Although it is unlikely, there are times when others may need to see the information I collect about you. These include:

- People at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville oversee research to make sure it is conducted properly.
- Government agencies (such as the Office for Human Research Protections in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), and others responsible for watching over the safety, effectiveness, and conduct of the research.
- If a law or court requires us to share the information, we would have to follow that law or final court ruling.

What will happen to my information after this study is over?

I will destroy your information once this study is over.

Will I be paid for being in this research study?

You will be given a \$20 Visa or Target gift card for your participation. You do have to complete the entire interview to receive payment.

Will it cost me anything to be in this research study?

It will not cost you anything to be in this study.

What else do I need to know?

About 50 people will take part in this study. This information is important because of the small number of participants in this study, it is possible that someone could identify you based on the information I collected from you.

Who can answer my questions about this research study?

If you have questions or concerns about this study, or have experienced a research related problem or injury, you may contact the Principal Investigator Leslie Cuevas, lcuevas2@vols.utk.edu or the Faculty Advisor on this project Dr. Heejin Lim, hlim@utk.edu

For questions or concerns about your rights or to speak with someone other than the research team about the study, please contact:

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Institutional Review Board
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville
1534 White Avenue
Blount Hall, Room 408
Knoxville, TN 37996-1529
Phone: 865-974-7697
Email: utkirb@utk.edu

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the chance to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have more questions, I have been told who to contact. By signing this document, I am agreeing to be in this study. I will receive a copy of this document after I sign it.

Name of Adult Participant

Signature of Adult Participant

Date

Researcher Signature (to be completed at time of informed consent)

I have explained the study to the participant and answered all of his/her questions. I believe that he/she understands the information described in this consent form and freely consents to be in the study.

Name of Research Team Member

Signature of Research Team Member

Date

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APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction

- Researcher will introduce herself and share a brief description of the purpose of the interview. *Learn about your experiences as a mom and in following or reading fashionable mother influencers.*
- A definition of fashionable mother influencers will be provided. *Fashionable mother influencers are fashion bloggers/influencers who are mothers and may document their motherhood journeys in a stylish manner.*
- Participant will then be asked to share about herself (e.g., education, employment (if any), age, and interests).
- Participant will be asked to walk the researcher through a typical day in her life.

Motherhood Experiences

- What is being a mother like to you?
- What are Latina/o moms like in general, in your opinion?
- What kind of mom do you want to be?
- Tell me about your mom? What's her story? What values did you learn from her?
- How did your life change when you became a mother? What do you do for yourself now?
- What is being a mother to you?

Appearance Experiences

- Can you describe your daily look?
- How did you dress before having a baby? What are you conscious of when it comes to dress/clothes now that you're a mom?
- What do clothes mean to you?
- What impression do you want to give through your clothes?

Influencers Followed on Instagram

- What fashionable mother influencers do you follow/read about on Instagram? Why?
- What is it that attracts you to these fashionable mother influencers?
- Can you describe what she is like, and what her Instagram content is like?
- How do you feel when you view fashionable mother influencers' on Instagram?
- Based from your experiences with fashionable mother influencer content, how do you define motherhood?

On Influencers and Fashion/Style in Particular

- When following these fashionable mother influencers, what are your thoughts on clothing? Their styles of appearance?
- What are your experiences with these influencers' finds (e.g., fashion or any products)? If so, what are they?
- (Photo elicitation) What do you think about this picture of this influencer? How about how she is dressed?

Closing

- What comments or questions do you have for me? Is there anything you would like me to explain?
- What do you think overall about what I showed you today? And just to remind you, I'm really interested in what *you* personally think, and how it applies to *your* own personal circumstances.
- Is there anything we have not covered that you would like to add?

APPENDIX D

INFORMAL STUDY DESCRIPTION

You are invited to participate in a research study about your experiences with fashionable mother influencers on Instagram. I am reaching out to several individuals who (1) follow/read fashionable mother influencers online, (2) are first-time moms or and/or have young children, (3) are Latina women, and (4) millennial women. The purpose of this study is to learn about your experiences with fashionable mother influencers' content and how it contributes to perceptions. Fashionable mother influencers are fashion bloggers/influencers turned mothers who may document their motherhood journeys in a stylish manner. Participation in this study will include answering questions about your opinions and experiences related to fashionable mother influencers as well as sharing your own experiences on fashion and motherhood. Your total time commitment will be between 45 to 60 minutes. The location of the research study interview will occur at a quiet place of your convenience (e.g., coffee shop) or via Skype/Zoom.

If you have any further questions about the project, you may contact me, the Principal Investigator, Leslie Cuevas from the Department of Retail, Hospitality, and Tourism Management at the University of Tennessee Knoxville via email at lcuevas2@vols.utk.edu or via telephone number (956) 325-6667. You may also contact my Faculty Advisor, Dr. Heejin Lim via email at hlim@utk.edu.

VITA

Leslie M. Cuevas was born and raised in San Juan, TX. She received a Bachelor of Business Administration from St. Mary's University in 2011. Prior to receiving her Master of Science in Merchandising and Consumer Studies from Texas State University in 2016, she worked in the retail industry in store management for a few years. During her Ph.D. program at the University of Tennessee, Leslie was the instructor of record for RCS 376: CRM and Retail Analytics, and served as a teaching assistant for several retail and fashion related courses in the RHTM department. She was also awarded a Graduate Fellowship from the university in the Spring of 2020. Her research interests lie in consumer culture, online consumer behavior, and marginalized consumers. During her PhD, she co-authored a paper that was published in the *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*. Starting Fall 2020, she will serve as an Assistant Professor in Retail Management at Texas Tech University.