The Impact of Instagram Mommy Blogger Content on the Perceived Self-Efficacy of Mothers

Eloise R. Germic1,2, Stine Eckert2, and Fred Vultee2

Abstract
The prominence of social media in contemporary life has led more mothers to search for parenting information through various Internet and social media channels. The following study examines the impact that Instagram mommy blog content has on the perceived parenting skill of the typical American mother. In this experiment, participants were exposed to one of two types of Instagram motherhood blogger content. The first type of content did not address the struggles of motherhood (referred to as an “alpha-mom” blogger content), while the second type of content (referred to as a “realistic” blogger content) did. After reviewing the content, participants will be asked a series of Likert-type scale questions to gauge their perceived parenting skill. We hypothesized that participants who were exposed to the “alpha-mom” content would have a lower belief in their own parenting skill than those who were exposed to content from the “realistic” blogger. The hypothesis was not supported. However, we did find that participants who received some of their parenting information from Internet sources had a lower belief in their parenting skill than participants who did not receive their parenting information from online sources, regardless of the content to which they were exposed.

Keywords
Instagram, motherhood, social media, mommy blog, social comparison

Introduction
The rise of the Internet and social media has allowed for a new group of people to start to shape public ideals and perception. These people are referred to as social media influencers. Freberg et al. (2011) state, “social media influencers (SMIs) represent a new type of independent third-party endorser who shapes audience attitudes through blogs, tweets, and the use of other social media” (p. 90). This rise of social media influencers has allowed for a variety of different types of influencers to emerge, including the motherhood bloggers and motherhood influencers who write about their experiences and beliefs pertaining to motherhood. A popular motherhood blog can experience around 50,000 visits per day (Lopez, 2009). Many motherhood bloggers and influencers are new mothers (Thompson, 2007). These motherhood bloggers often gain their popularity through chronicling their pregnancy and experience with new motherhood (Lopez, 2009).

Furthermore, many parents look to online sources for parenting tips and tricks. This has resulted in a rising concern from health professionals on the quality of health-related information that can be found online. However, mothers find significant value in the information found through online resources and communities. Specifically, they have been shown to value information that is based on personal experience (Xie et al., 2021). Thus, mothers may highly value the information shared by motherhood bloggers and influencers because it is based on personal experience (Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005).

The following study will examine the impacts of posts by Instagram motherhood bloggers on the perceived parenting efficacy of American mothers. Previous research has shown that social comparison on Instagram can have both positive and negative impacts on general emotion (de Vries et al., 2018). The present study uses social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) more explicitly to examine the impact of

1University of Illinois Chicago, USA
2Wayne State University, USA

Corresponding Authors:
Stine Eckert, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI 48202, USA.
Email: fq0936@wayne.edu
Fred Vultee, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI 48202, USA.
Email: vulteef@wayne.edu
two specific types of Instagram mommy blogger posts on task-based efficacy (Bandura, 1989).

**Literature Review**

Motherhood blogging and Instagram celebrity has become much more than a hobby. Often, content creation is a career for many Internet celebrities. A significant amount of digital labor goes into the creation of this content and the assurance of its success. In the case of family-based Internet celebrities, they strive to promote an image of a united, happy family (Abidin, 2017). This begs the question of the impact of these types of posters on the self-perception of the typical American mother.

While motherhood blogging can take on many forms, two different, oppositional types of motherhood ideals will be examined in this study. The first, a type of intense, all-in, perceived perfect motherhood, goes by a few different names. They are related to a concept called the “mommy wars” in which mothers compete against each other to be the best mother (Abetz & Moore, 2018). One of these types of motherhood is referred to as intensive mothering. Intensive mothering requires the mother to be the primary caregiver of the child, spend a large amount of money on the child, and raising of child must be separate from paid work (Hays, 1996). Chae (2014) writes about the “alpha-mom.” The “alpha-mom” is educated, tech-savvy, and usually a Type A personality. The goal of the “alpha-mom” is to excel in her motherhood, as well as all of the other aspects of her life. Finally, there is the concept of “new-momism,” which, similar to the concept of the “alpha-mom,” expects mothers to excel in their mothering and their careers (Douglas & Michaels, 2005).

In contrast, there are motherhood bloggers and influencers who show a more “realistic” side of motherhood. This form of motherhood and motherhood blogging has not been researched as much. However, researchers argue that showing a more “realistic” image of motherhood online is a feminist and empowering act because women are fighting back against the ideal that mothers must be perfect parents and perfect people (Chen, 2013). When motherhood bloggers or influencers share their “realistic” unedited version of motherhood, they are showing that it is okay to have weakness and share their struggles (Chen, 2013; Lopez, 2009). The “realistic” motherhood blogger will be elaborated upon in the following sections.

Three main theories that focus on the understanding of self and motherhood will inform this research. First, self-efficacy theory as explained by Bandura (1989), will be used. This theory asserts that if people believe they can perform the task they are performing, then they will actually be better at performing it. This theory relates directly to this research because it explains the impact of perceived skill on an actual task. If this research provides evidence that viewing motherhood blogs impacts perceived parenting skill, then self-efficacy theory would suggest that this change in perceived parenting skill could have an impact on actual parenting skill.

Next, social comparison theory will be employed. Social comparison theory asserts that individuals compare themselves to others to better understand themselves (Festinger, 1954). This theory has its roots in psychology and will be integral to this work because it is examining the ways that mothers compare themselves to motherhood blogs. This theoretical framework will be important because research has shown that people tend to compare themselves to the dominant image of their peers (Festinger, 1954), which, in the case of motherhood is a form of perfect motherhood (Abetz & Moore, 2018).

Finally, feminist theory will be employed in this research. Three main works on feminist theory in communication will be examined, as explained by Campbell (1973), Dow and Tonn (1993), and Spitzak and Carter (1989). Feminist theory will be used to examine what is deemed work and how motherhood is constructed. In addition, since the majority of motherhood bloggers and influencers are women, feminist theory will be used to examine the impact that their construction of motherhood and womanhood has on the average American mother. (The average American mother has evolved in recent years. Today, she is between the ages of 20 and 34, and is more likely to be unmarried; Livingston & Cohn, 2019.)

**Importance of Parenting Self-Efficacy**

It has been shown that perceived parenting skill can have a direct impact on actual parenting skill. According to Bandura (1989), if people believe that they can perform a task, the better the performance of that task will be. Therefore, it can be assumed that if mothers believe they are capable of being good mothers, then they will end up being better mothers. As explained earlier, motherhood is much more nuanced act than simply performing a task. However, this theoretical lens can still inform the way we understand motherhood.

The theoretical lens of self-efficacy theory was used to examine perceived parenting skill in adoptive gay, lesbian, and heterosexual couples. This study found that heterosexual and lesbian women both saw themselves as more skilled at parenting than men. In addition, gay men saw themselves as more skilled at parenting than heterosexual men (Goldberg & Smith, 2009). This will be important to keep in mind while perceived parenting skill as a whole is being examined.

Another study on parents’ self-efficacy found that mothers believe themselves to be more effective parents than fathers (Reece & Harkless, 1998). This research is important in showing general levels of perceived parenting skills. However, it is also important to understand the ways that today’s society may be impacting the perceived self-efficacy of parents. Today’s digital age has allowed for an entire new medium to impact individuals (Freberg et al., 2011). This study will examine the ways that social media can impact...
perceived parenting skills of mothers. Specifically, the impact of two very different categories of motherhood blogger or influencer content will be examined.

When becoming parents, many parents may not be fully confident in their ability to be an adequate parent. It was found that the experience of childbirth can affect the perceived parenting self-efficacy of mothers but not fathers (Salonen et al., 2009). Since the theoretical lens of self-efficacy asserts that a belief in one’s own efficacy is an important predictor of actual efficacy (Bandura, 1989), these findings make it even more important for the perceived parenting skills of mothers to be examined.

The transition to parenthood is one of the most intense transitions that an individual may go through in their lives. A belief in one’s own parenting skill is a key aspect of successfully navigating this transition. A parents’ self-efficacy is inherently tied to their confidence in their parenting skill, and both are influenced by outside factors such as reinforcement from others and parenting role models (Vance & Brandon, 2017).

During the early days of parenthood, parents must juggle a variety of difficult tasks. Parents and babies must adapt to a new type of lifestyle. For a seamless transition to parenthood, it is important for parents to believe they are capable of the tasks they must perform. Believed parenting self-efficacy can be influenced by a variety of factors, including health, expectations, and education. (Salonen et al., 2009). In addition to perceived self-efficacy influencing a parent’s confidence in their parenting skill, social comparison can have an impact on an individual’s perception of themselves. The lens of social comparison will be further explored in the next section.

**Social Comparison and Parenthood**

Today’s digital age has made it much more common for people to compare themselves to things they see online. It has been found that women are more likely to compare themselves to the images and people they see online (Lewallen, 2016). The same study found that women are more likely to fantasize about their lives replicating the images they see on social media. In addition, it was discovered that captions on social media posts can impact the way women view their bodies and self-worth. It can be assumed that the same may happen when women are engaging with posts about parenthood and assessing their own parenting skills.

Social comparison occurs in two ways. First, upward comparison occurs when an individual is comparing themselves to someone they deem above them (Festinger, 1954). Upward comparison has been shown to result in negative emotions in some mothers (Tosun et al., 2020). Downward comparison occurs when someone compares themselves to a person they perceive to be below them or in a worse situation (Festinger, 1954). Downward comparison has been shown to result in more positive emotions in mothers (Tosun et al., 2020).

Previous research by Coyne et al. (2017) used social comparison theory and found that mothers are likely to compare themselves to the images and posts they engage with on social media. The following study aims to uncover if mothers are viewing blog content from “alpha-mom” bloggers (thus engaging in upward comparison), they are likely to feel worse about their parenting skill. However, if mothers are viewing more “realistic” motherhood blog content, they may believe themselves to be adequate parents. The two different, oppositional types of Instagram motherhood blog explored in this study will be explained shortly.

**Social Media as Community**

Prior to the rise of the Internet age, community was thought of as inherently tied to physical space. Today, the Internet allows people to connect with others who share similar views and experiences, no matter the distance (Katz et al., 2004) Furthermore, social media has the ability to minimize the gap between public life and private life (Swart et al., 2018). In one regard, social media and mediated communication may be understood as a space for community and connection, instead of as a space for comparison.

In fact, many social media platforms rely on the notion of friendship or connection in the jargon of their platform (i.e., friend on Facebook, follower on Instagram). Through the use of this community-based rhetoric, these platforms highlight the ability of meaningful community and connection to be formed via the platform (Chambers, 2017). The connections made via a mediated platform can be just as meaningful as the connections that can be made via face-to-face communication. In addition, mediated communication platforms allow users to maintain connections that they have made in the outside world (Katz et al., 2004). All of these affordances of social media and mediated communication could benefit mothers in navigating their parenthood experience.

Even though the use of social media can be beneficial in the creation of community, it still has the ability to invite comparison between users. For the purpose of this study, the comparison that mothers experience in regard to “alpha-mom” Instagram posts and “realistic” mom Instagram posts will be examined. These two types of posts and posters will be outlined in the following two sections.

**“Alpha-Mom” Motherhood Bloggers and Influencers**

The ideal image of parenthood is one that has been socially constructed throughout history (Chae, 2014). Today, this ideal image is shaped by the motherhood blogger and the celebrity parent. While not every single mother is an active user of motherhood blogs, and thus a frequent viewer of the ideal image of motherhood, it has been shown that social media is becoming a popular method for sharing health information, in part because more than half of US adults use the Internet to find health information. Social media
specifically is used to find health and wellness information by 34% of people who search for health information online (Korda & Itani, 2011). In terms of the ideologies promoted in the health and wellness niche of motherhood blogs, the celebrity mother, specifically, is seen as excelling in both her motherhood and in her career (Chae, 2014). It can be assumed that most mothers do not have the means to replicate the image of the celebrity mother promoted online.

As mentioned earlier, there are a variety of different motherhood constructs that fall under the “alpha-mom” category. However, almost all of them are considered unattainable for the typical mother. First, is the “alpha-mom,” who is expected to be good at everything she does (Chae, 2014). Next, is new momism. New momism is often considered a return to traditional family values and expects the mother to excel in her parenting and career (Douglas & Michaels, 2005). Finally, the concept of intensive mothering is very present. In the construct of intensive mothering, the mother is the primary caregiver of the child and spends a significant amount of time and money on the child (Hays, 1996). Clearly, these ideologies have a significant amount of overlap and are much intertwined. The unattainability of this image and the “picture-perfect” nature of the expectations are what unite these expectations of motherhood.

Press (2006) argues that today’s motherhood ideals have made parents inclined to continually compare themselves to these unattainable images of parenthood. Even though parents are aware that the images they see online and in the media are unattainable, they continue to compare themselves to these images. This comparison often results in mothers harboring feelings of inadequacy in different aspects of their lives (Press, 2006). When writing about the comparison, Press (2006) writes that it is, “so hard that most internalize permanent feelings of failure both on the work front as well as on the mom front” (p. 235).

In the following study, posts from the “alpha-mom” blogger often include edited pictures and captions that gloss over the struggles of motherhood. Overall, they make motherhood seem like a perfect, easy experience.

“Realistic” Motherhood Bloggers and Influencers

All motherhood blogs do not fall into the “alpha-mom” category. As mentioned earlier, there is a sector of motherhood blogs that present a more “realistic” image of parenthood. Lopez (2009) argues that these “realistic” motherhood blogs are changing the entire climate of motherhood blogs in general.

Instead of the vision of the loving mother, we see women who are frazzled by the demands of their newborn baby, who have no clue what to do when their child gets sick, who suffer from postpartum depression and whose hormones rage uncontrollably. (Lopez, 2009, p. 732)

Often, this is an image that more parents can relate to. When “realistic” motherhood blogs have been examined, they have often been examined as a feminist act (Chen, 2013). This is because the act of showing the grittier side of motherhood is considered as fighting back against the dominant motherhood ideology, in which all mothers are expected to be perfect (Lopez, 2009).

Orton-Johnson (2017) explains that motherhood blogs that show motherhood in relation to mistakes and shortcomings is much more relatable for mothers. This kind of motherhood blogging can help reconstruct the social image of motherhood. In addition, it can give mothers a space to come together and share their frustrations (Orton-Johnson, 2017). This relates to the current research because viewing this type of content could make mothers feel better about their own shortcomings and thus perceive themselves as more adequate parents.

Press (2006) argues that a cultural shift must occur in order for mothers to be more comfortable with motherhood as a valid form of work. This is because motherhood is often constructed as un-feminist or unworthy of praise. In fact, mothers are often penalized in work environments simply because of their status as a mother (Benard & Correll, 2010; Kahn et al., 2014). However, sharing stories of real motherhood can help in freeing women from previously held idealistic images of motherhood (Hallstein, 2006).

For the purpose of this study, “realistic” motherhood blogs feature unedited pictures and captions. Often, the captions discuss struggles with issues like postpartum depression, body image, and the blogger’s perceived inadequacies as a parent.

The following study will examine the impact of “realistic” motherhood blogs and “alpha-mom” motherhood blogs on the perceived parenting skill of the typical mother. The previously outlined literature shows that people are inclined to compare themselves to the images they see online. For this reason, it is important to examine the way this can impact parents. The following two hypotheses will be tested through a survey circulated through online motherhood groups and forums.

Hypothesis 1. Viewing “alpha-mom” motherhood blogs on Instagram results in a lower level of perceived parenting skill than when viewing “realistic” mom motherhood blogs on Instagram.

Hypothesis 2. Viewing “realistic” motherhood blogs on Instagram results in a higher level of perceived parenting skill than when viewing alpha-mom motherhood blogs on Instagram.

Methods

A quantitative approach was used for this study. In this experiment, participants were randomly presented with Instagram motherhood blogger posts and then, immediately after, asked a set of questions to gauge their perceived parenting skill. This approach was used to assess the participants’ feelings about their own parenting efficacy soon after engaging with motherhood blogger Instagram content.
Sample
A snowball sampling method was used in this study. Participants were recruited from a variety of different American-based mother’s groups and clubs. First, an email was sent out to the leadership of each organization, explaining the study, and including a link to the survey. From there, the leaders of the organization decided how to disseminate the survey to their members. Finally, the researcher posted the link to the survey on their personal social media pages and the Facebook pages of popular motherhood groups. The email templates and social media template can be found in Appendix B.

Experimental Design
The first section of the survey prompted the participant with a consent form (Appendix A). Next, participants were randomly shown either five pieces of “alpha-mom” content or five pieces of “realistic” mom content, which were collected from public Instagram accounts. The order in which the pieces of content were presented was randomized. After viewing the five pieces of content, participants responded to a set of Likert-type scale survey questions aimed at measuring if they believe themselves to be an effective mother. The presentation order of the Likert-type scale questions was also randomized. The survey can be found in Appendix C and is modeled after the Parenting Sense of Competence scale (Gibaud-Wallston & Wandersman, 1978). In addition, participants were asked a range of demographic questions, these can be found in Appendix D. Responses and identities were kept anonymous.

The content used in this experiment was collected by exploring Instagram for dozens of popular, public motherhood bloggers and influencers. Hashtags were often used to find the posts from these bloggers and influencers. Popular hashtags among motherhood bloggers included #mommyblog, #mommyblogger, #momlife, #momwins, and #workingmom, among many others. The content that was ultimately selected and participants were exposed to can be found in Appendix E. To keep the privacy of the bloggers intact, a new, private Instagram account was created where their pictures were reposted and identifying details, including their usernames, hashtags, and photo tags were removed. Thus, participants had no way of knowing who posted the photo they were being exposed to unless they had already seen it outside of the study.

Results
In total, 240 mothers participated in this experiment. However, only 168 completed the survey, resulting in sample size of 168 (N=168). All the demographic data were self-reported. The ages of the 168 participants ranged from 24 to 64 years old. The median age of participants was 36 years and the mean age was 38.95 years (SD=8.705). Participants had between one and six children. Fifty percent of participants reported having two children. Regarding relationship status, 85% of participants reported being married, 4.8% reported being divorced, an additional 4.8% reported they were living with a partner, 2.4% reported being single, 0.6% reported being separated, and an additional 0.6% reported other. Regarding race/ethnicity, 85% of participants reported being Caucasian, 3% reported being Latinx or Hispanic, 3% reported being two or more ethnicities, 2.4% reported being African American, and 1.8% reported being Asian. All of the participants identified as women.

Hypothesis 1
Hypothesis 1 stated that viewing “alpha-mom” content would result in a lower level of perceived parenting efficacy than participants who were exposed to “realistic” motherhood blogger content. Participants could score between 14 and 70 on the parenting self-efficacy survey, with a lower score meaning a lower belief in their own parenting efficacy and a higher score meaning a higher belief in their parenting efficacy. The data showed that there was no significant relationship (p=.362, ns) between the content participants were exposed to and their scores on the parenting efficacy survey. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was not supported.

Hypothesis 2
Hypothesis 2 stated that “realistic” motherhood blogger content would result in a higher level of perceived parenting efficacy than participants who were exposed to “alpha-mom” blogger content. The data showed that there was no significant relationship (p=.362, ns) between the content participants were exposed to and their scores on the parenting efficacy survey. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was not supported.

Other Important Findings
The data do show a significant relationship between where participants received their parenting information and their
scores on the parenting efficacy survey. Participants were asked to mark all of the different places from which they received their parenting information. These options included Internet sources, primary care doctor or OB/GYN, social media and blogs, family and friends, printed material (books, magazines, pamphlets), and other sources. Participants could mark as many sources as they felt applied to them. Participants who reported that they received some of their parenting information from Internet sources \( (n = 123) \) scored an average of 48.9 on the parenting efficacy survey. Participants who did not receive any of their parenting information from Internet sources \( (n = 39) \) scored slightly higher with an average of 51.9 on the parenting efficacy survey. As mentioned above, a higher score on the parenting efficacy survey means that the respondent has a higher belief in their parenting efficacy. With a significance value of \( p = .023 \), participants who received some of their parenting information from Internet sources had a lower belief in their own parenting efficacy \( (score = 48.9) \) compared to participants who did not receive any of their parenting information from Internet sources \( (score = 51.9) \).

Finally, while not significant, there does appear to be a relationship between a participant’s number of children, their use of Internet parenting information, and their scores on the parenting efficacy survey. Participants were grouped based on if they had one child, two children, or three or more children. For the participants who had two children, there was no significant difference between parents who received some of their parenting information from Internet sources and those who did not. However, for the participants who had one or three or more children, the participants who did not report using Internet sources for parenting information performed better of the self-efficacy survey, and thus had a higher belief in their own parenting skill. The difference in score for participants with one child who did report using Internet sources for parenting information was a mean score of 48.5 versus 54.7 for their counterparts who did not report using Internet sources for parenting information. For participants with three or more children, those who did report using Internet sources for parenting information had a mean score of 49.5 versus 54.2 for those who did not report using Internet sources for parenting information. While the results of this test were not significant \( (p = .087, ns) \), these results do suggest that there is some relationship between the amount of children a participant has, a participant’s use of Internet sources for parenting information, and their scores on the self-efficacy survey.

This finding, while not the intent of the original hypotheses, suggest that a parent’s belief in their own efficacy can be influenced by the types of online content they engage with. In 2008, it was found that the use of Internet learning platforms increased parents’ confidence in the parenting skill \( (Na & Chia, 2008) \). Using the lens of self-efficacy theory \( (Bandura, 1989) \), this likely also increased their actual parenting skill. However, with the evolution of the Internet, online misinformation has become more common and can impact major parenting decisions \( (D’Errico et al., 2021) \). Further research should delve deeper into the impacts of the amount of children on a parent's perceived parenting efficacy, as well as their parenting choices.

**Discussion**

**Hypothesis 1 Not Supported**

There are a few potential explanations as to why Hypothesis 1, which stated that participants who were exposed to “alpha-mom” blogger content would have a more negative view of their parenting efficacy, was not supported. First, the experiment recruited mothers, not just mothers who regularly looked at Instagram motherhood blogger or influencer content of any kind and were potentially frequently exposed to the opposition between “realistic” and “alpha-mom” motherhood blogs. Instagram (and other social media sites), as a platform, was quickly adopted by the motherhood community. This quick adoption is largely due to the casual as well as visual nature of the platforms and the ability to share family pictures and musings quickly with an audience \( (Friedman, 2018) \). Thus, this makes for an extensive amount of content for the typical mother to sift through. Perhaps, if the study was limited to just individuals who regularly interacted with Instagram motherhood blogger content, the results would be more representative of the effect of the “alpha-mom” content versus “realistic” motherhood blogger content on mothers using Instagram.

Previous research has found that women tend to benefit from feminism. These benefits include a higher overall self-esteem and self-efficacy \( (Eisele & Stake, 2008) \). In this study, participants were not asked about their levels of identifying with principles of feminism. Many participants may have held high levels of feminist beliefs and thus also had high levels of self-efficacy, resulting in a lessened impact from the different types impact from the motherhood blogger content they were exposed to in this experiment.

**Hypothesis 2 Not Supported**

Hypothesis 2 stated that mothers who were exposed to “realistic” motherhood blogger content would have a higher level of perceived parenting efficacy than participants who were exposed to “alpha-mom” blogger content. The lack of support for this hypothesis may have been impacted by the responses from mothers who did not regularly engage with Instagram motherhood blogger or influencer content. Two participants mentioned, in the final question of the survey, that they felt that the survey questions had a negative bias. This perceived bias was that survey questions all seemed to highlight the struggles of motherhood. The perceived negative wording was done to make data coding more efficient. However, if the survey questions were written from both a positive and negative perspective, participants may have
been more inclined to feel positively about their parenting skill after viewing content from the “realistic” motherhood blogger. The lack of support for these hypotheses could also indicate that participants held a feminist viewpoint. Researchers have found that women with a lower level of feminist beliefs are more likely to experience negative impacts from comparison on Instagram than women with a higher level of feminist beliefs (Feltman & Szymanski, 2017). These assertions may explain why the participants in this study appeared to not be experiencing negative impacts from comparing themselves to any type of motherhood blogger content. Future surveys should include a way to identify participating women’s self-understanding of motherhood before exposure to motherhood content as well as their level of identifying with tenets of feminisms regarding motherhood and parenting.

**Other Important Findings**

While the hypotheses of this experiment were not supported, the data do present some important findings. Most notably, the discovery that mothers who receive some of their parenting information from online sources score markedly lower on the self-efficacy survey. This could be for a variety of reasons. There is a seemingly endless amount of information to be discovered on the Internet. Often, this immense amount of information can be overwhelming to an Internet user, and some of the information on the Internet is promoted by brands or companies, making it even harder to determine what information is unbiased (Li, 2016). The human desire to search for information is a natural one, but before the advent of the Internet, there were fewer options for a person to choose from when looking to gather information (Tokunaga & Gustafson, 2014). This plethora of information, including false information, can negatively impact the decisions that a person makes (Brown, 2004). In addition, it has been shown that when compared to experts, inexperienced people have a harder time processing and deciphering multiple sources of information (Ettensohn et al., 1987). Finally, the landscape of online parenting information is a vast one, and to navigate this landscape, it is important for users to have an adequate level of media literacy. The term media literacy was first used by Marshall McLuhan (1965). To be media literate is to be able to critically assess and understand information found online and in other media outlets. Not every person in this study may have been media literate, and a participant’s level of media literacy could impact their understanding and potential impact of online information. All of these facts have the potential to negatively impact a mother’s belief in her own parenting skill.

These new findings and lack of support for the hypotheses make room for important future research. Most notably, these findings highlight the potential importance of a contemporary motherhood culture on today’s mothers. In addition, this study highlights the potential impact of Internet parenting information on mothers. Future research should delve deeper into the ways mothers use online parenting information.

**Implications for Theory**

The findings of this study do not work in accordance with social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954), which states that people are inclined to compare themselves to one another. Since the exposure of participants to “alpha-mom” or “realistic” motherhood blogger or influencer content did not have a significant impact on their perceived parenting efficacy, we cannot tell if participants were comparing themselves to these bloggers. We are also unable to tell if the findings support self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1989), which states that if a person believes they can perform a task, they will actually be better at performing it. Since the difference in the parenting efficacy scores between participants who saw “alpha-mom” blogger content and “realistic” motherhood blogger content were not significantly different, we do not know if their prior belief in their own parenting skill was impacted. In addition, we do not have a way to measure the actual skill of their parenting and how that is impacted by their belief in their own parenting.

However, the lack of support for Hypotheses 1 and 2 do speak to the implications of contemporary feminisms and feminist theory. In a personal exploration of modern motherhood, Timmins (2019) explains that she used to struggle with understanding her role as a mother. As a stay-at-home mother, she always feared questions about what she did for work. In her early explorations of feminisms, Timmins (2019) felt as though motherhood was often excluded from the narrative. However, Timmins (2019) and Ruddick (1989) found that strength and empowerment during the experience of motherhood was often found within mothering communities. This can also include online communities. Since holding feminist beliefs has been shown to result in less negative impacts of comparison (Feltman & Szymanski, 2017), and many participants were recruited from motherhood groups, they may have reaped the benefits of holding feminist beliefs and being members of communities of mothers to boost the confidence in their own parenting skills. Both factors likely resulted in a more empowered view of their roles as mothers and made them less likely to compare themselves to other mothers they see online.

Furthermore, while the original hypotheses were not supported, this study highlights the importance of critically examining the impact of online health-related information. There are a multitude of challenges in regard to online health information, including confirmation bias in already held false beliefs (Meppelink et al., 2019), difficulty of users in assessing the quality of information (Li, 2016), and more. Now, the findings of this study suggest that engagement with online health information results in lower belief in one’s parenting efficacy. Since believed efficacy is an important part
of actual efficacy, the impact of online parenting information on mothers needs to be further studied.

These findings speak to how mothers experience their parenthood in the digital age, and they may also speak to the experience of the child. As mentioned earlier, online parenting misinformation can have an impact on the decisions made in regard to child care, with a notable decision being the vaccination plan of children (D’Errico et al., 2021). Thus, further research into the impacts of online parenting information will inform our understanding of the motherhood experience, as well as the impacts on their children.

Conclusion

The hypotheses, which stated that participants who were presented with “realistic” motherhood blogger or influencer content would have a higher belief in their own parenting skill versus participants who were presented with “alpha-mom” blogger content, were not supported. However, this study still brings to light important information about the sense-making of contemporary motherhood in the United States by mothers. Discovering that mothers who use Internet sources for parenting information have a lower belief in their parenting skill makes way for future research to further examine the impacts of Internet use on parenting, and to tease out which types of Internet content and spaces may have which level of impact. For example, the photo-based nature of Instagram and its usage of likes have been shown to have an impact on an individual’s dissatisfaction with their face (Tiggemann et al., 2018). The impact of social media would benefit from more exploration.

In addition, this study highlights the potential impact of contemporary feminisms on participants’ perceptions of motherhood. Since previously mentioned literature has found that women who identify as feminists have a higher level of self-esteem, self-efficacy, and are less likely to subject themselves to harsh comparisons (Eisele & Stake, 2008; Feltman & Szymanski, 2017), participants were likely benefiting from the women’s empowerment movement and propelling new notions of motherhood into the mainstream. The lack of support for the hypotheses also highlights the importance of motherhood groups as a form of comradery and support (Ruddick, 1989; Timmins, 2019). Timmins (2019) found that when she was involved in supportive motherhood organizations, she felt better about her role as a mother. Ruddick (1989) explains that mothers find feelings of “warmth and support” (p. 29) from other mothers that they do not feel in their other work-based relationships. Likely, participants benefited from a combination of tenets of contemporary feminisms and social support, which is promising for contemporary mothers in the United States as they are able, from a wider and more nuanced repertoire, to make sense of their identity as mothers in different types of situations and to add an affirmative perspective to their skills as a parent.

The findings of this study open the door for exciting future research into the identity of contemporary motherhood in the United States and the way it is impacted by feminisms and new media spaces online. Understanding the evolution of motherhood during the Internet era will allow mothers to become more equipped to deal with the challenges that parenting in today’s society presents as well as the identity this entails. This will, in turn, benefit society as a whole because mothers will be able to better understand how their roles are reflected and constructed and how this impacts how they parent the children they raise.

Limitations

There were a few potential limitations in this study. First, mothers were not recruited based on their use of social media. The findings may have been more significant regarding the two hypotheses if the participant pool was limited exclusively to mothers who actively use social media, and in particular Instagram as the platform for investigation. Second, the number of usable responses (N = 168) was relatively small. The data might have been more significant regarding the hypotheses if there was a larger participant pool. As mentioned earlier, feminism can play a very important role in a woman’s self-construction of her identity as a woman and a mother. Participants were not asked about their beliefs as it pertains to feminism. Future research would benefit from exploring what level of feminist beliefs participants held and how that impacts their self-esteem and self-efficacy in relation to their roles as mothers. In addition, future research may benefit from phrasing questions in the third person, such as “how do you think this post makes a mother like you feel?” This may allow participants to feel more comfortable with the questions. Finally, the experience of motherhood is much nuanced, and all of the feelings that motherhood blogger content may elicit in mothers cannot be covered in one single survey. If interview or focus groups were performed in addition to the survey, the impact of motherhood blogger’s content on mothers may have been better understood.

Directions for Future Research

The finding that the use of Internet sources for parenting information has a negative impact on the perceived parenting efficacy of mothers opens the door for more research to be done on the subject. This study begins to uncover the impacts of Internet parenting information on a mother’s parenting skill and will allow researchers to further examine the specific impacts of social media on mothers. Future research should take a qualitative approach to understanding the impact of motherhood bloggers and influencers on mothers and why the use of Internet sources negatively impacts a mother’s belief in her own parenting efficacy. In this context, it would also be promising to analyze which particular online spaces contribute to low or high beliefs in parenting efficacy as motherhood communities or groups online may boost confidence in parenting skills compared to other online
spaces. Moreover, the universe of motherhood blogging could be placed in a larger context of parenting blogs in general such as questioning its extent and quality in comparison to the presence or lack of fatherhood blogs and their functions to reflect and construct contemporary fatherhood and parenting identities in the US society.

Finally, the findings of this study support the benefits of a more supportive, contemporary feminist approach to motherhood culture, particularly in the United States. Previous research has consistently found that mothers have better images of themselves when they are in a supportive environment. In addition, women in general have more positive feelings regarding themselves when they hold the beliefs of contemporary feminisms (Eisele & Stake, 2008; Feltman & Szymanski, 2017; Ruddick, 1989; Timmins, 2019).

Future research should examine the ways that mothers feel that feminism and motherhood organizations have impacted their beliefs about their own role as mothers. Future surveys and studies should include a pretest that determines what, if any, feminist beliefs participants hold. Not only should these questions ask if participants identify themselves as feminists, it should also ask if they believe in specific feminist principles, such as an equal parenting load for both parents. After the impacts of modern society on mothers is better understood, the impacts of social media on mothers can be further examined, ultimately resulting in a better understanding of motherhood as a whole.

Acknowledgements
I would like to thank my two advisers, Dr Stine Eckert and Dr Fred Vultee. Both have been instrumental in the creation of this thesis. I would also like to thank Wayne State University for allowing me to do this research. Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their support throughout the process.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests
The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding
The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

ORCID iD
Eloise R. Germic https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6768-7332

References
Abetz, J., & Moore, J. (2018). “Welcome to the mommy wars, ladies”: Making sense of the ideology of combative parenting in mommy blogs. Communication, Culture & Critique, 11(2), 265–281.
Abidin, C. (2017). #familygoals: Family influencers, calibrated amateurism, and justifying young digital labor. Social Media + Society, 3(2), 1–15.
Bandura, A. (1989). Regulation of cognitive processes through perceived self-efficacy. Developmental Psychology, 25(5), 729–735.
Benard, S., & Correll, S. J. (2010). Normative discrimination and the motherhood penalty. Gender & Society, 24(5), 616–646.
Brown, C. (2004). Web of deception: Misinformation on the internet. Technical Communication, 51(2), 298–299.
Campbell, K. K. (1973). The rhetoric of women’s liberation: An oxymoron. Quarterly Journal of Speech, 59(1), 74–86.
Chae, J. (2014). Am I a better mother than you? Communication Research, 42(4), 503–525.
Chambers, D. (2017). Networked intimacy: Algorithmic friendship and scalable sociality. European Journal of Communication, 32(1), 26–36.
Chen, M. (2013). Don’t call me that: A techno-feminist critique of the term mommy blogger. Mass Communication and Society, 16(4), 510–532.
Coyne, S. M., McDaniel, B. T., & Stockdale, L. A. (2017). “Do you dare to compare?” Associations between maternal social comparisons on social networking sites and parenting, mental health, and romantic relationship outcomes. Computers in Human Behavior, 70, 335–340.
D’Errico, S., Turillazzi, E., Zanon, M., Viola, R. V., Frati, P., & Fineschi, V. (2021). The model of “informed refusal” for vaccination: How to fight against anti-vaccinationist misinformation without disregarding the principle of self-determination. Vaccines, 9(2), 110.
de Vries, D. A., Möller, A. M., Eigenraam, A. W., & Hamelink, K. (2018). Social comparison as the thief of joy: Emotional consequences of viewing strangers’ Instagram posts. Media Psychology, 21(2), 222–245.
Douglas, S. J., & Michaels, M. W. (2005). The mommy myth: The idealization of motherhood and how it has undermined women. Free Press.
Dow, B. J., & Tonn, M. B. (1993). “Feminine style” and political judgment in the rhetoric of Ann Richards. Quarterly Journal of Speech, 79(3), 286–302.
Eisele, H., & Stake, J. (2008). The differential relationship of feminist attitudes and feminist identity to self-efficacy. Psychology of Women Quarterly, 32(3), 233–244. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.2008.00432.x
Etenson, R., Shanteau, J., & Krogstad, J. (1987). Expert judgment: The roles of internalization, comparison, appearance commentary, and feminism. Sex Roles, 7(5–6), 311–324.
Festinger, L. (1954). A theory of social comparison processes. Human Relations, 7, 117–140.
Freberg, K., Graham, K., Mcgaughey, K., & Freberg, L. A. (2011). Who are the social media influencers? A study of public perceptions of personality. Public Relations Review, 37(1), 90–92.
Friedman, M. (2018). Insta-judgement: Irony, authenticity and life writing in mothers’ use of Instagram. Interactions: Studies in Communication & Culture, 9(2), 169–181.
Gibaud-Wallston, J., & Wandersman, L. P. (1978). Parenting sense of competence scale [PscyTESTS dataset]. https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/sps/documents/e-change/parenting-sense-of-competence-scale.pdf
Goldberg, A. E., & Smith, J. Z. (2009). Perceived parenting skill across the transition to adoptive parenthood among lesbian, gay, and heterosexual couples. *Journal of Family Psychology, 23*(6), 861–870.

Hallstein, D. L., O. B. (2006). Conceiving intensive mothering. *Journal of the Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement, 8*(1), 96–108.

Hays, S. (1996). *The cultural contradictions of motherhood*. Yale University Press.

Kahn, J. R., García-Manglano, J., & Bianchi, S. M. (2014). The motherhood penalty at midlife: Long-term effects of children on women’s careers. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 76*(1), 56–72.

Katz, J. E., Rice, R. E., Acord, S., Dasgupta, K., & David, K. (2004). Personal mediated communication and the concept of community in theory and practice. *Annals of the International Communication Association, 28*(1), 315–371.

Korda, H., & Itani, Z. (2011). Harnessing social media for health promotion and behavior change. *Health Promotion Practice, 14*(1), 15–23.

Lewallen, J. (2016). When image isn’t everything: The effects of Instagram frames on social comparison. *The Journal of Social Media in Society, 5*(2), 108–133.

Li, C. (2016). The more, the better? Why abundant information leads to unanticipated outcomes. *Telematics and Informatics, 33*(3), 834–847.

Livingston, G., & Cohn, D. (2019, December 31). The new demography of American motherhood. https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2010/05/06/the-new-demography-of-american-motherhood/

Lopez, L. K. (2009). The radical act of “mommy blogging”: Redefining motherhood through the blogosphere. *New Media & Society, 11*(5), 729–747.

Marshall McLuhan, M. H. (1965). *The medium and the messenger*. Ticknor & Fields.

Meppelink, C. S., Smit, E. G., Fransen, M. L., & Diviani, N. (2019). “I was right about vaccination”: Confirmation bias and health literacy in online health information seeking. *Journal of Health Communication, 24*(2), 129–140.

Na, J.-C., & Chia, S. W. (2008). Impact of online resources on informal learners: Parents’ perception of their parenting skills. *Computers & Education, 51*(1), 173–186.

Orton-Johnson, K. (2017). Mummy blogs and representations of motherhood: “Bad mummies” and their readers. *Social Media Society, 3*(2), 1–10.

Press, A. (2006). *The mommy myth: The idealization of motherhood and how it has undermined women*. Indiana University Press.

Reece, S. M., & Harkless, G. (1998). Self-efficacy, stress, and parental adaptation: Applications to the care of childhood families. *Journal of Family Nursing, 4*(2), 198–215.

Ruddick, S. (1989). *Maternal thinking*. Beacon Press.

Salonen, A. H., Kauninnen, M., Ästedt-Kurki, P., Järvenpää, A. L., Isoaho, H., & Tarkka, M. T. (2009). Parenting self-efficacy after childbirth. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 65*(11), 2324–2336.

Spitzak, C., & Carter, K. (1989). Research on women’s communication: The politics of theory and method. In K. Carter & C. Spitzak (Eds.), *Doing research on women’s communication: Perspectives on theory and method* (pp. 11–39). Ablex.

Swart, J., Peters, C., & Broersma, M. (2018). Shedding light on the dark social: The connective role of news and journalism in social media communities. *New Media & Society, 20*(11), 4329–4345.

Thompson, S. (2007). Mommy blogs: A marketer’s dream. *Advertising Age, 78*(9), 6.

Tiggemann, M., Hayden, S., Brown, Z., & Veldhuis, J. (2018). The effect of Instagram “likes” on women’s social comparison and body dissatisfaction. *Body Image, 26*, 90–97.

Timmins, J. E. (2019). “Care” from private concern to public value: A personal and theoretical exploration of motherhood, feminism, and neoliberalism. *Women’s Studies Journal, 33*(1), 48–61.

Tokunaga, R. S., & Gustafson, A. (2014). Seeking interpersonal information over the Internet: An application of the theory of motivated information management to Internet use. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 31*(8), 1019–1039.

Tosun, L. P., Öztürk, A., & Özdemir, G. (2020). Mother to mother: Mothers’ social comparison-based emotions on social networking sites. *Europe’s Journal of Psychology, 16*(4), 602–618.

Trammell, K. D., & Keshelashvili, A. (2005). Examining the new influencers: A self-presentation study of A-list blogs. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 82*(4), 968–982.

Vance, A. J., & Brandon, D. H. (2017). Delineating among parenting confidence, parenting self-efficacy, and competence. *Advances in Nursing Science, 40*(4), E18–E37.

Xie, J., He, Z., Burnett, G., & Cheng, Y. (2021). How do mothers exchange parenting-related information in online communities? A meta-synthesis. *Computers in Human Behavior, 115*, 106631.

**Author Biographies**

**Eloise R. Germic** is a first year PhD student in communication at the University of Illinois Chicago. She received her Master’s in Communication from Wayne State University in 2020. She enjoys researching new media, media effects, and their impact on the individual.

**Stine Eckert** joined the Wayne State journalism faculty in 2014. She received her PhD from the University of Maryland and her Master’s of Science from Ohio University after studying journalism studies, communication and media studies, and American studies at the University of Leipzig, Germany. She earned a Certificate in Graduate studies from the Women’s Studies Department of the University of Maryland. Her research interests include international, comparative work and the intersection of social media, minorities, and gender as well as the democratic potential of social media.

**Fred Vultee** (PhD, University of Missouri) is an associate professor in the journalism area of the Department of Communication. He teaches news editing, political communication, and content analysis, among other courses. His research looks at media content, media practice, and media effects.
**Appendix A**

**Consent Form**

*Title of Study:* Parents and Instagram Motherhood Blogs  
*Principal Investigator (PI):* XXXX  
Communications  
XXXXX  

**Key Information About This Study:**  
The following survey is a research project conducted by XXX at XXX. The purpose of this research is to understand how parents use and interact with social media. Participants will be asked to examine a series of Instagram posts and complete a survey afterward. This procedure will take about 10 to 15 min to complete. There will be no compensation for taking part in the survey. However, results will help researchers understand more about how people use social media. Participation in this survey is entirely voluntary. By advancing to the next page, you agree to participate in the study.

**Purpose:** You are being asked to be in a research study of how mothers respond to styles of social media because you are a mother. This study is being conducted online.

**Study Procedures:** If you take part in the study, you will be asked to examine a series of Instagram posts and complete a survey afterward.

**Benefits:** As a participant in this research study, there will be no direct benefit for you; however, information from this study may benefit other people now or in the future.

**Risks:** There are no known risks at this time to participation in this study.

**Costs:** There will be no costs to you for participation in this research study.

**Compensation:** You will not be paid for taking part in this study.

**Confidentiality:** All information collected about you during the course of this study will be kept without any identifiers.

**Voluntary Participation /Withdrawal:** Taking part in this study is voluntary. You are free to not answer any questions or withdraw at any time. Your decision will not change any present or future relationships with Wayne State University or its affiliates.

**Questions:** If you have any questions about this study now or in the future, you may contact XXX at XXX. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, the Chair of the Institutional Review Board can be contacted at XXX. If you are unable to contact the research staff, or if you want to talk to someone other than the research staff, you may also call the XXX to discuss problems, obtain information, or offer input.

**Participation:** By completing the questionnaire, you are agreeing to participate in this study. The data that you provide may be collected and used by Qualtrics and VassarStats as per its privacy agreement. In addition, participation in this research is for residents of the United States over the age of 18; if you are not a resident of the United States and/or under the age of 18, please do not complete this survey.

**Appendix B**

**Email Templates and Social Media Templates**

Dear [Organization Name],  
My name is [name], and I am a graduate student at Wayne State. I am writing to invite you to participate in a research study that focuses on mothers who are active on social media, specifically Instagram. If your organization decides to participate in this study, I’d like you to extend an invitation to members inviting them to examine a series of Instagram posts and complete a survey afterward. The survey should take about 10 to 15 min to complete and will help me produce a well-researched project. Remember, this is entirely voluntary, and participants’ identity, as well as answers, will remain anonymous. If you’d like to share with your members, please follow the link below and send the link with members of your organization. This will direct
Dear [Individual Name],

My name is [name], and I am a graduate student at Wayne State. I am writing to invite you to participate in a research study that focuses on mothers who are active on social media, specifically Instagram. If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to examine a series of Instagram posts and complete a survey afterward. The survey should take approximately 10 to 15 min to complete and will help me produce a well-researched project. Remember, this is entirely voluntary, and participants’ identity, as well as answers, will remain anonymous. If you’d like to participate please follow the link below. This will direct you first to a consent form and then to the survey. If you have any questions about the survey, please email or contact me at [insert email].

Thank you for your time.
Sincerely,
[Name]

Social Media Post:
“Calling mothers who are active on social media! Please consider taking the following 10–15 min survey to help me with my thesis. Identities and responses will be kept anonymous. [link to survey]”

Appendix C

Parenting Efficacy Survey

1. I feel I am not fully equipped or capable of dealing with the problems my child has at their present age.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

2. I go to bed the same way I wake up in the morning, feeling I have not accomplished a whole lot.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

3. I do not know why, but sometimes when I’m supposed to be in control, I feel more like the one being manipulated.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

4. My mother was better prepared to be a good mother than I am.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

5. I do not believe I am a good role model for other mothers.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

6. I feel that I am struggling to manage being a mother and have difficulty handling the challenges I am presented with.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

7. Sometimes I feel like I’m not getting anything done.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

8. My talents and interests are in other areas, not being a parent.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

9. If being a mother of a child were only more interesting, I would be motivated to do a better job as a parent.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

10. I do not feel that I have all the skills necessary to be a good parent.
    - Strongly Agree
    - Agree
    - Neutral
    - Disagree
    - Strongly Disagree
11. Being a parent makes me tense and anxious.

   Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

12. I believe I am being the best mother I can be.

   Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

13. I believe that most other mothers are doing a better job than I am.

   Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

14. Overall, I am not satisfied with my skills as a mother.

   Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

15. Is there anything else you would like to add about your parenting situation or style?
____________________________________________________________

Appendix D

Demographic Questions

1. How old did you turn on your last birthday? Please type as a numeric value.

   ____________

2. What is your gender?
   a. Man
   b. Woman
   c. Nonbinary
   d. Other/Prefer not to say

   ____________

3. Please specify your ethnicity.
   a. Caucasian
   b. African American
   c. Latino or Hispanic
   d. Asian
   e. Native American
   f. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
   g. Two or More
   h. Other/Unknown
   i. Prefer not to say
   j. Other

   ____________

4. How many children do you have?

   ____________

5. How old is your child/children?

   ____________

6. What is your marital status?
   a. Married
   b. Single
   c. Divorced
   d. Separated

   ____________
7. On average, how many hours do you spend online per day?

__________

8. Where do you get most of your health and parenting information? (Check all that apply)
   a. Internet sources
   b. Blogs and social media
   c. Primary care doctor or OB/GYN
   d. Family and friends
   e. Printed material (i.e., books, magazines, pamphlets)
   f. Other

Appendix E

Content

“Realistic” Posts

1. [Image of a post from Instagram]
2. I am the worst mom.
This is so hard.
I have no idea what to do.
I hate my body.
How are we going to pay for this?
I just want a minute alone.
I feel so alone.
I'm failing.
No one understands.
I'm fine.
I am so tired.

3. TMID: Probably. Real life? DEFINITELY. My forever bathroom partner. This is my life. This is a great life.
Find the Beauty because I promise you it's there! There is empowerment for yourself in loving yourself. There is beauty in self worth and valuing who you are and what your body has done. Our postpartum marks are stories of hope, stories of love, and sadly, sometimes stories of loss. There is so much beauty in our Mom bodies because above all they represent life, our children, and the undeniable love we have for them. Yet, they are often incredibly hard for us to love at times. Shifting your perspective is very important. Finding worth and self love in what your are is a gift. Celebrating your body for exactly what it is is one of the most liberating feelings. •

Find the Beauty!

---

Some #postpartum real talk.

What you see: a happy, well-rested mama enjoying some newborn snuggles. What you don't see is someone who cried maybe six times the day before, triggered by hormones and lack of sleep. Oh and the mom guilt I would feel when my mom or @crlo would take Leo for a few hours so I can rest or sleep in.

I know what the triggers are, but most importantly my family and I openly talk about it. I also have the most amazing mom community (you know who you are!) who check in on me daily or simply let me know they are here to talk. I know things will get better and easier. I just need to survive these first few weeks accept that help is OK 🙌
“Alpha-Mom” Posts

1.

2.
3. Social Media + Society

A daughter is God's way of saying, I thought you could use a lifelong friend.” So thankful for this sweet girl of mine, my forever friend. Hopefully she always thinks I'm cool enough to match with! 😊

47m

4. Social Media + Society

romant's face when I tell him his sister will be here NEXT MONTH and he won't be allowed to sit on her anymore.

ps who else wants to nibble their child's cheeks?! numnumnum

43m
Baby quiet snuggle time doesn’t last long because Bella's favorite thing is to grab my hand and say “mommy, MOMMY, play, PLAY!” But when I can get these snuggles in they are the BEST! (Off to play in the ball pit with Bella now 🌟)