

East Meets West: Celebrity Motherhood Portrayals on Instagram and Their Impact on Maternal Self-Esteem

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Abstract

Celebrities have long been considered influencers of human behaviour. These celebrities have been noticed to communicate certain discourse on motherhood on social networks, with young mothers being the most active users. A celebrity-mother's positive self-presentation online can affect others' parental self-esteem. This research intends to explore and compare how motherhood is presented by Pakistani and American showbiz celebrities on the Instagram, the readers' response and its potential impact on mothers. Following a mixed method approach, data is collected from eight female celebrities' posts related to pregnancy and child, readers' comments and interviews with new mothers. Feminist critical discourse analysis is used as the theoretical framework to explain the stereotypes about motherhood in East and West Countries. A discourse analysis is conducted to analyse Instagram data, while thematic analysis is conducted to analyse interview data. The analysis showed that new-mother celebrities from the East glorify a stereotypical motherhood as a blessing from God, a fulfilling experience replete with joy, and are found appreciative to their husbands for their support, conversely, mothers from the West display the courage to defy the taboo and call it a tough experience, while still finding a joy in it. Interview data shows new mothers expressed an anxiety and a pressure to conform to the positive self-image, and find it unrealistic due to potential changes that come along with motherhood. The study implies how language used on Instagram by celebrities may strengthen the stereotypes and influence the behaviour of women as mothers.

Keywords: Motherhood; parenting; Instagram; showbiz celebrities; feminist critical discourse analysis; stereotype

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1. Introduction

The use of social networks has grown exponentially over the last decade. With the growing user base, celebrities on social networking sites have made a revolutionary impact on a common person's lifestyle and habits. In order to relate to them, consumers were reported to replicate their style (Melody, 2018); motherhood was one of the aspects of life which were affected by social media. Portrayal of motherhood surged in popular culture and public discourse largely since the mid-2000s (Orgad, 2019; Tyler, 2011). Maternity experiences are being expressed, and negotiated publicly and unremittingly, in a variety of media platforms (Orgad & Baldwin, 2021). The recently intensified visibility of motherhood showed variations related to broader social and political changes, such as increased levels of education and greater participation of women in the workforce, the influence of feminism, and the destabilization of the biological view of motherhood. Several social networking sites, blogs, and websites offer important spaces for mothers to articulate not only happiness but also powerful emotions of frustration, discontent, dissatisfaction, and anxiety. Maternal labour, that remained historically invisible and undervalued work of mothering, is becoming increasingly visible now. The discourse on motherhood may influence the definition, expectation of motherhood and may affect the viewers' lens to see their experiences and guide the future decisions (Heffernan & Wilgus, 2018).

In the eastern setting, responsibility of mothering is culturally assigned to the women, not men. Pakistan is a patriarchal country where the role of a male is to run the family and the rest of responsibilities inside home fall within the female's domain. Besides having a traditional Eastern culture, the use of technology spread all over the country to match the needs in different fields of life. The statistical data of a developing country like Pakistan showed that the use of the Internet increased over last 2 years due to uncertain conditions and reliance on the Internet to be connected. A population of 227 million in 2022 has 82.90 million internet users, which exhibited an increase of 35.9% from 2021. Twenty percent of these users, 71 million are registered on social media with 43.55 million on Facebook and 13 million on Instagram alone. It is also recorded that 19% of FB and 16.6% of Instagram ad users were females (<https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-pakistan>). Despite huge popularity among the viewers, social networks received criticism for the over-idealistic representation of motherhood.

The purpose of this research is to explore the linguistic construction of motherhood on social media in eastern culture and western culture. A feminist theory of language looks at how language is used to keep women in their place, how language indexes gender role, how language use establishes women's identity as subjugated. Researchers are interested in uncovering whether women from both cultures portray motherhood in a certain fashion and how far the culture plays a role in this description.

2. Literature review

Earlier research reflected motherhood as a basic tool for the development of their children. Later, studies referred to motherhood as a set of social interaction that developed within a gendered set of associations and societal foundations of a particular place and time (Arendell, 2000). Mothering is reviewed as a natural activity which reveals cultural ideologies. However, the theory of maternal instinct calls for an innate knowledge and set of behaviours among women which is negated by Monk who called maternal instinct as a myth and can be materialised only after 'spending hours with and thinking about the child', as she said in an interview (Lindberg, 2020).

Research showed that motherhood has always been considered a source of happiness and fulfilment for females. According to some researchers, the visible element of "good mother" is to fulfil the duties of motherhood. Hansen (2012) investigated the attitude towards parenthood and childlessness and compared folk theories and empirical evidence about the effect of parenthood on happiness and life satisfaction. He found that parenthood was considered as life fulfilling and as a central meaning of life.

However, research on parenthood and its impact on their lives in advanced countries indicated little life satisfaction. Glass (2016) examined the cross-national variation in the association between parenthood and happiness. The researcher revealed an accumulating evidence of lower levels of happiness among parents than non-parents in most advanced industrialised societies. Another research in Australia examined the parenthood and its outcome on their life. The researchers concluded that having children feels like burden and they have little time for enjoyment and leisure. They have to look after kids, their education, their needs which leads them to in a state of anxiety and depression (Vanassche, Swicegood, & Matthijs, 2013).

A limited research directed the attention towards the pain and hardships mothers may suffer from. Few research works explored mother's shared experiences on media. Donath (2005) expounded on how women feel the loss of self in the transformation to motherhood. Donath investigated twenty-three women of different ages and family background who expressed regret at being a mother on Facebook. A mother called it 'the most thankless job in the world!' A recent study by Matley (2020) investigated the voices of new mothers who share their experiences on the web. An analysis of the online forum Mumsnet showed mothers feel regret in having kids as they miss their old life and have a desire to "turn back the clock". Orgad and Baldwin (2021) analysed the role of the mediated maternal figure of Markle demonstrated what and how this representation obscure, normalize, and reinforce in relation to maternal labour. Social media responses were found blaming Markle for her parenting practices. Markle highlighted maternal vulnerability and the mental and emotional price mothers had to pay, in contrast to what royal mothering calls for. It also revealed that the crucial role of child care arrangements in other-mothering remains hidden as a typical practice of celebrities (Onion, 2019).

A person's self-esteem has an impact on their health and is sustained by a nurturing environment. Many studies studied the connection between social media and self-esteem. Previous studies have revealed both beneficial and detrimental consequences of using social media. Recent research has delved into its negative impact. According to Fox and Vendemia (2016), women are more likely to edit their online pictures and are more likely to be affected by their body image on social media. Those with low self-esteem, high narcissism, and loneliness displayed a greater utilization of social media (Liu & Baumeister, 2016). Other research suggests that extensive involvement with social media leads to increased self-esteem. An individual's self-confidence is shaped by the amount of online followers and the caliber of their relationships in both digital and physical worlds (Gonzales, 2014). Engaging in positive social interactions with other users can lead to an increase in self-esteem (Gonzales, 2014). The most well-known 'mummy' profiles on Instagram are a source of motivation, fashion and a stress-free life. As Dawson (2016) states, Instagram deems motherhood a lovely experience and not a difficult journey. In 2016, Dawson discovered that a large majority of parents (67%) believed that other parents were not truthful about their parenting on social media, as most parents are fabricating their online persona.

Social media has become an everyday tool for infotainment and attracts and influence a larger community. It is important to explore the potential role of media in naturalising certain discourses and producing, maintaining and strengthening certain gendered roles. Above literature showed that research was mostly conducted with sociological perspectives and media representations; however, there is a dearth of investigation on the role of language played in constructing motherhood and gender identities and how do mothers feel about social media's portrayal of motherhood. Present study intends to bridge this gap by exploring the linguistic construction of motherhood on social media with a focus on Instagram application. It also investigates mother-readers' beliefs about such portrayal and its impact on their self-esteem. Present study explored the answer to the following research questions:

1. How do showbiz celebrities construct their identities as mothers on social media?
2. How does a new mother experience the phenomenon of motherhood?
3. What is the impact of media portrayal on the self-esteem of new mothers?

3. Methodology

Following an interpretive paradigm and qualitative approach, the researchers employed feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA) to uncover the linguistic construction of mothering by Pakistani and American showbiz celebrities on social media. The sample comprised eight female actors or models, four from each country, and their selection was made on the criterion of being most followed by the country. Among the four Pakistani subjects, SK and IZ are actor and model and married to a singer and an actor, respectively. While the GA and is an actor and married to a business person. SK is a mother of a baby girl, whereas IZ and GA are mothers of baby boys. All Pakistani celebrities were first-time mothers. The sample from US celebrities comprised MM, RR and FG. All shared their experiences from pregnancy to the birth of the child with the public through social media app Instagram. The data were collected from their posts on Instagram accounts and were analysed through FCDA lens. Second set of samples comprised eight respondents, new mothers, who shared their experiences and also their engagement with Instagram. The data were collected through face-to-face individual interviews which were

recorded and transcribed later for the purpose of analysis. The purpose was to examine potential disparities between publicly shared content on social media and privately shared content in interviews.

3.1 Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis

The Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) aims to thoroughly examine discourse as a component of power imbalances and societal issues (Lazar 2018, p.703-704). According to Fairclough, the purpose of CDA is to facilitate positive transformations in social life, while its core is the interplay between critique, explanation, and (political) action. While Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA), Lazar argues, is not CDA solely centered on investigating "gender," but rather is a discipline propelled by current advancements in critical feminist thought. The FCDA places its emphasis on the examination of the relationship between language, power, ideology, and gender within social, cultural, and historical contexts, with a specific focus on how language and communication contribute to the perpetuation of gender inequalities and power imbalances. She places great emphasis on integrating feminist theory into the study of discourse, with the intention of challenging and reshaping gender-based societal structures and ideologies. This approach deeply examines the construction of gender norms, power dynamics, representation, identity, and how women are influenced by societal pressures and internalized norms. FCDA incorporates a reflective and ethical research approach, addressing the researcher's biases and promoting linguistic and social change for gender equality.

The data is analysed under the key components of FCDA: analysing power dynamics at play in discourse, how women and their experiences are represented in discourse and how such representations contribute to the construction of gender identities, and how societal norms and values influence and are reflected in discourse.

4. Data Analysis and Findings

An overview of data analysis of media portrayal showed that there is a difference in portrayal of mothering in Asia and in western countries. However, phenomenological experiences of common Pakistani mothers portrayed the situation differently as compared to media portrayal of their celebrities.

Table 4.1: Portrayal of motherhood in Pakistan and USA

Sr. No.	Portrayal of Mothering in Pakistan	Portrayal of Mothering in USA
Motherhood – a joy	√	√
Motherhood – a blessing from God	√	
Motherhood – a fulfilment of woman	√	
Celebration of daughter's arrival	√	
Appreciation of supportive husbands	√	
Motherhood a difficult phase		√

4.1 Motherhood- a joy

Motherhood is taken as a source of happiness in both cultures. The analysis of American celebrities showed a positive construction of mothering experience. The posts of RR showed her excited to become a mother who can't wait the day to meet her baby, she delineates that "time that is difficult to spend in early pregnancy and bear mental and health issues" just because of her happiness and excitement has gone very easy and flown quickly. FG also celebrates the birth of baby as a happiness, 'The day you entered our world is the happiest day of our life.♥□'

4.1.1 Empowerment and Agency

Pakistani celebrities were also found expressing the experience of happiness. IZ showed gratitude to God for the new chapter in her life, as she wrote, 'Loving this beautiful new phase of my life♥□☺ [#alhamdulillah](#) can't explain the feeling. Alhamdulillah'. GA also expressed her joy as, 'We are so happy to announce that our little bundle of joy will arrive soon!' (GA). The act of expressing gratitude indicates a personal narrative of empowerment and agency. It proposes a commemoration of individual progress or accomplishment, which can be empowering from a feminist standpoint.

4.1.2 Traditional Gender Expectations

The conformity or challenge to traditional gender expectations depends on the context of the mentioned "new phase". As an example, if the new

phase pertains to professional accomplishments, it could potentially disrupt established societal expectations regarding the roles and abilities of women. In contrast, if it is connected to personal milestones that are traditionally linked to femininity, such as marriage or motherhood, it has the potential to strengthen certain gender norms, albeit in a positive and self-affirming manner. The utilization of emoticons and the expression "can't explain the feeling" convey a profoundly personal and emotional experience. From the perspective of feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the act of openly expressing emotions can be viewed as a means of challenging the societal stereotype that separates public and private spheres, wherein women's emotional expressions are frequently devalued or limited to the private realm.

On the other hand, mothers' actual experiences were mixed. A few of the mothers expressed their happiness over the news as R8 shared, 'I was so much happy that I was in the doctor's room and I started dancing'. R7 called it the best time of her life. Few of them expressed anxiety after they received the pregnancy confirmation.

4.2 Motherhood- a blessing from God

Pakistani showbiz discourse showed that new mothers announced the baby's birth as a blessing of God. The use of 'Subhanallah' and 'Alkhamdulillah' show the gratitude towards God and that the receiver is lucky enough to be blessed. Later, IZ's pray for other childless parents strengthens the religious connotation.

4.2.1 Cultural Identity Assertion

The invocation of 'Subhanallah' and 'Alkhamdulillah' places the experience of motherhood within a religious or spiritual framework. The recurrent employment of "Alhamdulillah" (praise be to God) underscores the religious facet of gratitude and acts as a declaration of cultural identity. The reference to religion can be interpreted as strengthening the traditional gender roles. The same focus on religion was also reflected in interview data. A respondent, R4, expressed her feelings as 'It was beautiful feeling and I thanked Allah for this blessing. Someone said well that a woman is completed when she becomes a mother'. The repetition of religious terms or gratitude towards God situates the experience within a religious context. The religious framing might be employed to legitimize the expectations as a divine rule.

4.3 Motherhood- a fulfilment of a woman

Another theme that emerged during the analysis of Pakistani celebrity posts was the declaration of motherhood as a fulfilment of life. SK takes childbirth as one of the sources of pride in her life. By calling it ‘What a beautiful feeling’ and making it a proud moment, as shown in extract below, strengthens not only the societal patterns that the ultimate role of a woman is becoming a mother.

“I’m proud of many things in life but nothing beats being a mother
 ♡ mama loves you little munchkin” (SK).

4.3.1 Traditional Gender Expectations

Then she quotes from Quran, *فَمَا يَكْفُرُ لَكُمْ يَا آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ* (So what are the blessings of your Lord that you would deny?) that not only enriches the higher rank of the blessing, but also makes it further hard for any woman who want to express the agony and pain as a baggage each mother carries with motherhood. While the initial statement "I'm proud of many things in life" implies a sense of personal accomplishment beyond motherhood, the subsequent phrase "nothing beats being a mother" diminishes other aspects of identity while emphasizing motherhood as the ultimate attainment. This reinforces traditional gender roles, where a woman's main accomplishment is seen as becoming a mother. The celebrities seem to perpetuating the idea that regardless of a woman's other achievements, the crowning glory is the motherhood. The phrase 'mama loves you little munchkin' exemplifies the nurturing role in a woman's life. A display of such emotions on media constructs and validates a public identity as a proud mother.


In the same vein, IZ also calls it ‘an experience everyone should be blessed with□’. Then she further says, ‘I pray for all the moms to be and all the women who are waiting for their share of experience□’. The wishes of IZ for other females show that motherhood is considered as a blessing everyone may be blessed with and an ultimate aim and purpose of life in East which fulfils a woman's life and without that the life would be empty and barren. Such linguistic construction is prevalent only in Pakistani social media discourse.

The same concept was strengthened by the interview data where new mothers were found calling it a time when ‘a woman cannot say that she is happy or she is worried, but with the passage of time, woman becomes

grateful to Allah Almighty that Allah has considered her worthy of this'. The cited statement illustrates the conventional gender norms that associate motherhood with a fundamental element of a woman's identity. The societal power dynamics indicate that a woman's value is elevated through the selection of motherhood, thereby suggesting that a woman's worth is linked to her reproductive function. The inclusion of 'Allah Almighty' in interviews and the incorporation of Quranic verses in posts may be perceived as reinforcing conventional gender roles, in which divine authority is invoked to validate specific expectations placed upon women. The data allows for the inference that societal norms play a role in determining the suitable emotional reaction for mothers, potentially imposing pressure on women to feel grateful even in the face of challenging experiences. Also, the lexical choice of 'completed' in R 4' statement 'It was beautiful feeling and I thanked Allah for this blessing. Someone said well that a woman is completed when she becomes a mother', reinforces traditional gender roles, implying motherhood as a necessary aspect of women's identity. Describing motherhood as a "beautiful feeling" and a "blessing" signifies positive sentiment and personal fulfillment.

4.4 Celebrating a Daughter's Arrival

Some Pakistani celebrities are found breaking the stereotypes. The posts by Pakistani actor and new mother, SK, celebrate the arrival of the first baby (daughter) by calling her a blessing.

“Aulaad! What a beautiful feeling, such a blessing SUBHANALLAH 
khuda har joray ko aulaad sey nawazay, Amen”
(May God bless every couple with children, Amen)

4.4.1 Implications for Gender Equality

Commemorating the arrival of a daughter in a public and affirming manner serves to confront sexist biases and foster a more equitable perception of gender. By using the word 'aulaad (children)', she equates the status of a daughter and a son. Then praying the same for all, she again minimizes the possible negativity attached to a daughter's birth. GA was found also celebrating the arrival of daughter as she posted, 'A daughter is one of the best gift this world has to give!!' It has been established through history that the birth of a daughter has never been as celebrated as that of a son, neither it was wished by the parents-to-be, nor had it caused happiness for the parents in several areas of the world in general, and particularly in Asia.

4.4.2 Traditional Gender Expectations

The analysis of interview, however, showed a stereotypical attitude where mothers celebrated the birth of a son more than that of a daughter as R 3 shared, 'I prayed to God for this son'. The phenomenological experiences were relatively different from the media portrayal of celebrities. Another respondent, R5, shared how badly she faced the pressures from her in-laws about their preference for a male offspring. She told, 'My husband is the only brother, so my mother-in-law used to make a lot of noise saying that I have only one son and it's first child should be son'. It shows gender biases within family; and the pressures a new mother faces and its expected impact on her mental health and family dynamics.

4.5 Support System during Pregnancy

Female celebrity were also found grateful to their husbands for the support they showed during and after the pregnancy.

4.5.1 Gender Roles and Expectations

As the duties are socially constructed to mothers, particularly in Asia, to look after their kids but IZ' husband helps her wife, and takes care of her wife and baby. It means the father's identity is not fixed; he is performing the duty of nurse for her wife.

'You have been an amazing partner throughout this beautiful journey, my love. I can't thank ALLAH enough for making you mine. Taking care of all my mood swings, meals, OCD's, rest and what not. I am so happy to be starting a family with a man like you♥☐'

Another celebrity, GA, announced the arrival of her daughter, initiated with the appreciation of her husband for his support in terms of tolerance towards her mood swings and stress-related issues. However, a close reading implies two things: it is unusual for Pakistani husbands to be supportive so GA and IZ

"A partner's support is especially important for moms and babies during this busy time. I feel my partner is so supportive during this pregnancy, I feel happier and less stressed. Pregnancy is a great balance in life it brings out the worst mood swings in a wife and the best levels of tolerance in a husband!"

By placing emphasis on the partner's support, the post brings attention to the role of traditional gender expectations in ensuring the welfare of the

mother and baby. The traditional roles of caregiving and providing are reflected in the perception of men as supporters and women as recipients.

4.5.2 Emotional Labor and Gender Dynamics

The concept of emotional labor within the partnership, a key focus in feminist analyses, is introduced through the mention of mood swings in the wife and tolerance in the husband. It implies that women go through notable emotional shifts, which their partners should tolerate. This perspective may perpetuate stereotypes regarding women's emotional vulnerability during pregnancy and the societal expectation for men to display emotional resilience while providing support.

However, when new mothers were asked about any support system as they were living in an extended family, some of them appreciated the cooperation of in-laws, others felt that their own mother and sisters were helpful during the tough phase. Some complained about the absence of cooperation from the extended in-law's family. As R3 shared her experience, 'although my husband for example used to do the tasks secretly that my mother-in-law asked me to do, other family members wanted that I should take care of them'. R4 also felt a pressure from in-laws to take care of the whole family as before, as she shared, 'everything was a big challenge for me as I was the youngest in my parents house so I didn't know much about the moods of others. So, taking care of moods of all was the biggest challenge for me'. It seems as a common female in Asian society has less support as compared to influencer on social media.

4.6 Motherhood- a difficult phase

Articulating the sufferings a mother-to-be has to go through is not articulated usually in any discourse by mothers, particularly among celebrities in Asia. It is interesting to note that only American actor RR voiced the physical and mental health issues any mother faces. In her sponsored post, she revealed,

'There are a lot of things that happen following the birth of a baby.

So many great things, but, physically & mentally, moms just go through a lot! #ritualpartner I know I need all the help I can get to support my body.'

4.6.1 Intersection of Gender and Health

Highlighting the physical and mental toll on mothers after giving birth explores the overlap between gender and health. Feminist Critical

Discourse Analysis (CDA) shows the way societal expectations minimize the health impacts on women in relation to motherhood, both physically and mentally. By highlighting these issues, the post challenges societal norms and adds to the ongoing conversation about motherhood. In the same post, she explained why she has to take extra care, ‘😊 But I know I have to take care of my body so I can take care of my baby’. Pakistani mothers also take several steps to make the life of their child healthier and safer, but they are not found articulating their practices.

4.6.2 Visibility and Validation of Maternal Experiences

The post helps validate and bring attention to maternal experiences by openly recognizing the physical and mental challenges that accompany childbirth. From a feminist CDA perspective, this can be viewed as a major development in questioning society's tendency to romanticize motherhood while disregarding the complex realities and struggles of new mothers. This visibility is vital in normalizing conversations about the hardships of motherhood and promoting support.

When mothers were asked about the changes in their routine life due to their pregnancy and after childbirth, most of the mothers talked about challenges they faced during pregnancy. The overall experience was overwhelming for several new mothers. The physical changes included eating disorder, lack of digestion and nausea. R6 shared, ‘the routine of eating and drinking was not set. If I ate something, I would vomit. There was no digestion’ (R6). The respondents informed how all physical activities were changed with physical changes, ‘One of the biggest changes in my life was that my body was undergoing Internal changes that caused me to feel sick and tired more quickly than before. The routine of doing housework was also changed, before pregnancy so much work was done easily’ (R9). R 9’s expression highlighted few things. It not only highlighted the physical and emotional challenges a mother goes through and which remain under-discussed in societal narratives about motherhood, it also highlighted that despite the fact that responsibilities are impacted due to biological changes, the traditional expectations regarding domestic labour from a married woman remain unchanged. It is evident that societal structures and expectations often fail to accommodate the evolving needs and capabilities of women during pregnancies. The usage of the phrase "sick and tired" might be perceived as a societal endorsement and normalization of hardship and unease in the course of motherhood, thus reflecting societal pressures for women to endure these

adversities. It urges for the need of better support system for pregnant women including acceptance of their struggle with physical changes and equitable distribution of domestic responsibilities.

4.7 Impact of Social Media on Self-esteem

The results showed that all respondents were not active user of Instagram and they use it to keep them entertained, relaxed and well informed about health, baby care, fashion and food. A few mothers perceived social media as a platform for acquiring knowledge. As R4 said, 'I learnt to take care of myself. I felt satisfied that I am not alone who is in this phase'.

4.7.1 Construction of Idealized Motherhood

Motherhood, along with other aspects of life, is often depicted in a polished and curated manner by celebrities on Instagram. This contributes to the construction of a perfect image of motherhood that is calm, blissful, and without difficulties. Feminist CDA analyzes the role of these representations in shaping societal views of motherhood, possibly overlooking the challenging and less idealized aspects of the maternal journey.

4.7.2 Social Comparison and Self-Perception

However, most of the other respondents felt that social media portrays the reality of motherhood in a sanitized way with perfection. As R2 found inspiration in posts when she shared, 'I saw a blogger who was also guiding to manage the feeding schedule. The thoughts like if I had all of this, it could be easier for me, cause comparison in mothers. While R2 felt that 'when they show that everything is easy, it causes inferiority complex'. When social media users visit these pages, they perceive the depictions as reinforcing societal norms regarding the qualities of an ideal mother, often depicted as effortlessly handling all parenting difficulties. According to respondent mothers, social media leads to create a sense of inferiority among them particularly when they find a stark contrast between their lives and the idealized portrayal of media. It shows how certain feelings are actually rooted in societal norms and create unrealistic standards. Mothers usually feel more pressure to conform to these ideal images, as motherhood has been central to their traditional identity. In a societal context, where media presents constant comparisons, the negative impact on the self-esteem of new mothers can be significant. Furthermore, persistently comparing oneself to flawless examples can further exacerbate feelings of inadequacy among young mothers.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Present study explored the way motherhood is constructed on social media. The analysis revealed that culture plays a vital role for celebrities, actors and models, portraying the experiences of pregnancy and motherhood. A child is welcomed in all cultures. Pakistani Instagram celebrity mothers were found different from American mothers of the same field as the earlier were found celebrating it as a joy, a blessing and a fulfilment of a woman's life. Present finding recalls the earlier results of Hansen (2012) who found a substantial effect of parenthood on happiness and life satisfaction; however, present study highlights the difference between East and West as celebrities from West appeared not to focus the motherhood as the sole purpose of a woman's life. The intensive focus of Pakistani mothers, whether they are from celebrities or a common working mother, on motherhood as the only meaning of women's life leads to the inference that the childless females have a void in their lives and their lives could be complete only if they are able to give birth to a child. It was interesting to note that Pakistani mothers were breaking stereotypes by celebrating the birth of their daughters in a society where daughters are hardly considered equally important as sons are. Again, in Eastern contexts, the role of a father is quite stereotypical. These celebrities are quite generous in appreciating their husbands for tolerating the mood swings and stress which female were going through alone. The support of a husband is extraordinarily highlighted in the posts that lead the reader to believe that husbands are not actually supposed to support. On the other hand, American celebrities were found expressing the mental and physical health-related issues which they had to face due to pregnancy and child delivery. The absence of such discourse in Pakistani social media data shows that people in the East still dislike the articulation of pain or suffering. The mothers, if do so, will not be accepted as good mothers (Vanassche et al., 2013). Social media celebrities are more conscious about their fame and followers, so the absence might be related to their intentional following of socially desirable behaviours. It should also be noted that the cultural changes, celebrating daughters' birth or showing husbands as cooperative partners, may not occur homogeneously across all social groups, as was warned by earlier researchers (Heffernan & Wilgus, 2018). The discussion exposes how social media frequently presents an idealized and sanitized depiction of motherhood, resulting in new mothers feeling inadequate and inferior as they compare themselves to these unrealistic expectations. As a result, it underscores the significance of encouraging genuine depictions of motherhood on social platforms in

order to alleviate the stress and detrimental influence on mothers' self-worth. The results cannot be generalised to other strata of Eastern society. However, the study implies that linguistic construction of motherhood in Pakistan may strengthen some stereotypes, break few of them; hence, may influence a common mother's lifestyle.

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