



How does social media and American culture affect Asian mothers?

By: Prashantika Chand

Digital Portfolio:

Password: Research



Research Question:

How does American culture along with social media affect Asian mothers in a social and emotional way?

Problem Statement:

Most blogs, self-help books, websites, and other social media platforms for mothers in America are primarily geared towards white mothers. I plan to fill this gap by sharing the experiences of mothers of color through a book that will provide narrative research, allowing other mothers of color to share their experiences and feel more seen.

Hypothesis:

Desi/Asian mothers from minority communities encounter struggles in adapting their cultural parenting practices due to the influence of Western parenting ideals when moving to America. This struggle stems from the differences in values, approaches, and expectations between immigrant cultures and Western culture. This tension is further heightened by parenting-related social media, which often portrays Western parenting as the superior form. Consequently, immigrant mothers experience increased pressure to conform to Western ideals, leading to feelings of inadequacy.



Introduction:

I was born in Nepal and lived there until I was six years old. I moved to America in 2016. As I've grown up, I have witnessed the feelings of inadequacy that permeate the community of immigrant mothers. Through various observations, I realized that these feelings stem from the discrepancy between the expectations of different cultures. One example of this is the expectation for mothers to handle all the household responsibilities, care for the children, and manage the additional responsibilities that come with parenting. Watching my mother struggle to navigate the facade of social media while tackling the cultural differences in America inspired me to collect and share these stories with other mothers. My goal is to build a community that lifts women up while also celebrating the beauty of motherhood.

Methodology:

I chose narrative research because I wanted to focus on the mothers' stories and journeys. I conducted in-depth interviews with seven mothers, all of whom shared their experiences of being mothers of color and how they navigate being immigrant mothers in America.

Acknowledgements:

Thank you to the following mothers who shared their time and experiences with me:

- Bhavna Singh
- Kimiko Reed
- Ranjana Karki
- Mary Hrasky
- Pratibha Chand
- Savita Chauhan

Results:

During my research I saw that most of the mother self-help books where all targeted to white moms, all the research papers I read were all about white moms and women of color were an afterthought. my book and research will sign a light on immigrant and Asian mothers to help them feel less alone. Of the 7 mothers I have interviewed only 3 of them said that social media had not influenced them at all.

Interview Samples:

Name: Mary Hrasky

Age: 62

Ethnicity: Asian

"What differences do you see from your culture's parenting and American parenting?

My opinion is that Asian cultures allow children to have some fun and freedom when children are tiny, but they become overly strict during the school years, telling children they are not worthy unless they are the best of everything. I believe there are also many western families who are clueless on parenting, but the majority are into positive reinforcement and providing their children with opportunities to grow via conversations, cheering for their children (even grown) to get up after failure, to keep trying, and to focus on doing what brings them joy, as that's when we do our best, when we're happy."

Could you give me examples of how motherhood is viewed in your culture?

"In Asia, it's common that a "village" will help raise your child, but in the United States, it's usually just mother and father raising a child/children."

Name: Kimiko Reed

Age: 54

Ethnicity: Asian

How does social media affect your parenting?

"For me, social media makes me more nervous and causes me to overthink. When I had my first child, I learned everything from a book or others' experiences. I learned from talking in-person. But with my second child, everything I wanted to know was one click away! It caused me to feel overloaded with information that didn't apply to me or my child."

Next Steps:

I plan to write a book that analyzes how culture and the media affect Asian mothers. Eventually, I aim to expand my research to include other women of color.

Limitations:

A potential issue is that every mother has a different experience with social media and motherhood in general. It's challenging to make everyone feel included, and those who do not share the same experiences may feel that their feelings are invalid or that they are inferior mothers for feeling differently.

Sources:

Hwang, W. Y., Choi, S. Y., & An, H. J. (2022b). Concept analysis of transition to motherhood: a methodological study. *Korean Journal of Women Health Nursing/Yeoseong Geon'gang Ganho Hag'hoeji/Yeoseong Geon-gang Ganho Hakoeji*, 28(1), 8–17. <https://doi.org/10.4069/kjwhn.2022.01.04>

Mary, S. M., Duschinsky, R., Davis, L., Dunnett, S., & Coughlan, B. (2024). Representations of motherhood in the media: a systematic literature review. *Information Communication & Society*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118x.2024.2348020>

Bauer, D. (2023). How the Media Communicates Ideals of Motherhood to Real Life Mothers. *Bauer UWL Journal of Undergraduate Research*, XXVI. <https://www.uwlax.edu/globalassets/offices-services/urc/jur-online/pdf/2023/bauer.devany.cst.pdf>

Peterson, J. (2023, January 11). Social media & Mom Guilt. *Postpartum Support International (PSI)*. <https://www.postpartum.net/social-media-mom-guilt/>