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**SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE SPECTACLE OF THE  
MATERNAL IDENTITY:  
A RESEARCH ON INSTAGRAM**

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MATERNAL IDENTITY:  
A RESEARCH ON INSTAGRAM**

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## APPROVAL

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- that this Master of Arts Thesis does not contain any material from any research submitted or accepted to obtain a degree or diploma at another educational institution.
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In addition, I acknowledge that any claim of irregularity that may arise in relation to this work will result in a disciplinary action in accordance with the university legislation.

ALİ BAĞDAŞ AKTAŞ

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10.01.2023



*To My Dearest Love, Asli'm...*

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SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE SPECTACLE OF THE MATERNAL IDENTITY: A  
RESEARCH ON INSTAGRAM

**ABSTRACT**

Social roles and judgements influence the way people perceive and spectacle their identities. Social media is a digital space for people's identity spectacle. Instagram is a platform for sharing images more than text sharing. For this reason, Instagram is a convenient platform to examine identity spectacles in the context of the theory of the society of spectacle. Some of the high follower Instagramers represent themselves with maternal identity. In addition, mothers also interact with each other on Instagram. This interaction creates an area for social roles and judgments. Instagram user are women who have children; while spectacle their maternal identity, they can be influenced by accounts with high followers or each other. This research investigated these reflections in the following problematics: whether the identity of maternity is instrumentalized as a spectacle; or provides a field where women can express themselves digitally. This research aims to contribute to the literature and raise awareness about the use of social media. The problem of the research is "How does following maternity-related Instagram accounts influence how women with children perceive and spectacle their identities as mothers?". The study targets Instagram user women with at least one child – children must be under 18 years of age -. The data were obtained from the survey results conducted with random sampling and the in-depth interview with snowball sampling. The data obtained from the in-depth interviews were interpreted with content analysis in the results section. According to the research, it has been determined that social judgments reflected on Instagram create ideal and acceptable mother patterns. As a result, the way mothers perceive and spectacle their maternal identity is shaped in this context. It has been determined that this situation creates a difference between appearance and what is actually experienced, and the maternal identity is instrumentalized as a spectacle.

**Keywords:** Maternal identity, social media, the society of the spectacle, maternal spectacle, Instagram mothers



SOSYAL MEDYA VE ANNELİK KİMLİĞİ GÖSTERİSİ: INSTAGRAM ÜZERİNE  
BİR ARAŞTIRMA  
ÖZET

Toplumsal roller ve değer yargıları kişilerin kimlikleriyle ilgili algılarını ve kimliklerini gösterme biçimlerini etkilemektedir. Sosyal medya kişilerin kimlik gösterimi için dijital bir alandır. Sosyal medya platformlarından Instagram, metin paylaşımından çok görüntülerin paylaşıldığı bir platformdur. Bu nedenle Instagram, gösteri toplumu teorisi bağlamında kimlik gösterimlerini incelemek için elverişlidir. Instagram’da paylaşım yapan yüksek takipçili birçok kişi, kimliğini bir annelik gösterisi olarak oluşturmaktadır. Yüksek takipçili hesapların yanı sıra, anneler Instagram’da kendi aralarında da etkileşim halindedir. Bu etkileşim bir toplumsal rol ve değer yargısı alanı oluşturur. Çocuk sahibi olan Instagram kullanıcısı kadınlar; yüksek takipçili hesaplardan veya birbirlerinden etkilenebilir. Bu etkilenmenin; annelik kimliğinin bir gösteri ögesi olarak araçlaşması biçiminde mi, yoksa kadınların kendilerini dijital olarak ifade edebilecekleri bir alan yaratımı biçiminde mi gerçekleştiği sorunsalı araştırılmıştır. Bu araştırma literatüre katkı sağlamak ve sosyal medya kullanımı konusunda farkındalık yaratmak amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmanın problem cümlesi; “*Annelikle ilgili Instagram hesaplarını takip etmek, çocuklu kadınların anne olarak kimliklerini algılama ve gösterme biçimlerini nasıl etkiler?*” dir. Araştırmanın hedef kitlesi Instagram kullanıcısı ve 18 yaşın altında en az bir çocuğu olan kadınlardır. Araştırmanın verileri tesadüfi örnekleme gerçekleştirilen anket sonuçları ve kartopu örneklem ile gerçekleştirilen derinlemesine mülakatlar üzerinden alınmıştır. Derinlemesine mülakatlardan alınan veriler sonuçlar kısmında, içerik analizi ile yorumlanmıştır. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre Instagram üzerinden yansıyan toplumsal yargıların ideal ve makbul anne kalıpları yarattığı tespit edilmiştir. Bunun sonucunda annelerin annelik kimliğini algılama ve gösterme biçimi bu bağlamda şekillenmektedir. Bu durumun görünen ile aslında yaşanan arasında bir farklılık yarattığı ve annelik kimliğinin bir gösteri ögesi olarak araçsallaştığı tespit edilmiştir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Annelik kimliği, sosyal medya, gösteri toplumu, annelik gösterisi, Instagram anneleri

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Problem

The problem statement of this research is: "*How does following maternity-related Instagram accounts influence how women with children perceive and spectacle their identities as mothers?*" has been determined.

## 1.2 Sub Problems

- Do mothers' self-evaluations of their maternal identity differ based on the Instagram accounts they follow?
- Do mothers' evaluations of maternal identity differ according to Instagram?
- What are the Instagram usage purposes of mothers?
- What are the influences of maternal roles and judgements shaped by social identity on Instagram shares?
- Guy Debord argues: "*The entire life of societies in which modern conditions of production reign announces itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles. Everything that was directly lived has moved away into a representation.*" (Debord 1967). In this context, can maternal representation on Instagram be interpreted from the perspective of the society of the spectacle?
- How do following maternity-related Instagram accounts influence women's reflections? Does it lead to the instrumentalization of the maternal identity as a spectacle, or does it provide a field where women can express themselves digitally?
- Do mothers' evaluations of maternal identity differ according to their age?
- Do mothers' evaluations of maternal identity differ according to their educational level?
- Do mothers' evaluations of maternal identity differ according to the number of children?

### 1.3 The Importance of Study

- This research makes a practical contribution to the theoretical literature by following the digital environment of the society of spectacle through Instagram maternity.
- It is an original study in the sociology of communication, which examines the relationship between mothers' use of Instagram and their self-evaluations and spectacles of maternity. It reveals the influence of social roles on digital identities.
- The study uses multiple qualitative methods. It has scientific value in terms of being a source for future studies.

### 1.4 Limitations<sup>1</sup>

- Since this study is a master's thesis, it is necessary to act quickly, and its scope is limited. For this reason, while examining the influence of maternal identity spectacles on social media, Instagram was chosen among the social media platforms. Instagram is a visual platform. It was therefore considered the most suitable platform for this research. In other studies, platforms such as TikTok, Twitter and Facebook can also be examined in this context.
- This study was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic. The fact that people spend more time at home during the pandemic affects their behaviour on digital platforms. For this reason, the pandemic could be as influential in the answers given by the participants. The answers would likely differ if the same study were done before or after the pandemic.
- The results may differ when these scales are kept the same if research is done again after a few years.

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<sup>1</sup> The thesis also could discuss other concepts such as the "*public sphere*" and "*consumption culture and commodification*". The idea of public space; It is possible to deal with theorists such as Habermas, Arendt and Gramsci. However, this is a master's thesis, and its scope is limited. Nevertheless, this thesis discusses the theory "*The Society of the Spectacle*", which offers an excellent wide discussion area. The views of the public sphere and commodification have not been mentioned in order not to disperse the theoretical discussion in different directions and to carry out a crystallized discussion. This thesis has established a refined discussion of "*The Society of the Spectacle*" theory.

- In-depth interview participants live in giant metropolises in Turkey. Urban life and rural life are socio-culturally different from each other. It is possible to interview participants from rural areas in a further study. It could be that the situations brought about by urban life affect how people spectacle their identities and responses to the research. Therefore, the study is limited.
- It was accepted that the participants gave correct answers to the questions. Therefore, the findings and conclusions are limited to the accuracy of the answers given by the participants.
- The scales are limited to the demographic data of the participants. It is possible to work with different demographic groups based on this study in further studies.
- Information received from mothers is limited to scale questions.
- In-depth interview results are limited to data from the selected sample.
- The entire sample group of the research of this thesis consists of women. The research subject of this thesis is susceptible for women due to social patterns and judgments about gender. The fact that the researcher is male is a limitation in terms of the answers given by the participants.
- The research participants are from Turkey. For this reason, the questionnaire and in-depth interview questions conducted within the scope of the research were prepared in Turkish and answered in Turkish. The researcher has translated the given answers since the thesis language is English. Due to the nature of the translated texts, there may be some semantic shifts. While some expressions were translated into English, their Turkish equivalents were also stated.

### **1.5 Assumptions**

The hypotheses of this research were determined as follows;

- The determined sample is sufficient to represent the selected research group,
- Online survey respondents answered questions honestly and only for themselves.
- The fact that women who have children in the sample group gave correct answers to the in-depth interview questions.

## **1.6 Fundamental Definitions**

The Society of The Spectacle: It is the social theory that Guy Debord defined in his 1967 book. According to the theory, societies have passed through various stages throughout history. The last stage is that actualities lose their meaning and turn into a form of spectacle.

Identity: Identity, which includes the characteristics of the person that he/she is, his/her position in social relations, roles, and group memberships; is a view of a person's mental organization and functioning. Identity is shaped by information about a person's past, but it has a temporality that reflects its current state and includes expectations and predictions. (Oyserman and James 2012).

Instagram: Instagram is a social media platform founded in 2010. This platform is based on sharing visual content. It has approximately 1.4 billion users worldwide.



## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Identity

#### 2.1.1 Definition of identity

Identity is the way people create themselves socially. People express what they are like, their personal characteristics and their lifestyles with their identities. Psychology, sociology, and political science have different definitions of identity.

In a psychological view, identity, which includes the characteristics of the person that he/she is, his/her position in social relations, roles, and group memberships, is a view of a person's mental organisation and functioning. Identity is shaped by information about a person's past, but it has a temporality that reflects its current state and includes expectations and predictions. (Oyserman and James 2012).

Political Scientist Ernesto Laclau claims that social identities are formed through differences. According to him, society is a self-existing structure. Identities are formed within the social structure. The formation of these identities is based on differences. For this difference to occur, the "other" is needed. As long as the other exists, social identity exists. In societies, people are given an identity by pointing out each other. (Laclau, 1996)

*"Identity is our unity." "Who am I?" Our answer to the question and the subjects we think differently from everyone else" (Boz 2012, 31). So, we could say: "Who am I?" as individuals in the social totality. People take on distinct roles in every social environment. These roles include a parent at home, workers or bosses at work, a confidant at a leisure activity, etc. All these people ask, "Who am I?" cases where they give different answers to the question. These answers may not always coincide with self-actuality. There may be a distance between people's perceptions of the self and their true selves. Others' evaluations may influence the answer to this question. In addition, the perception of another person who presents himself/herself in the same role as the person can also change his perception of his own identity. How people perceive*

and spectacle their own identities may change by watching the personality shows of others. All identity spectacles are the product of social interaction.

According to social identity theory, individuals experience collective identity based on belonging to groups such as ethnicity, gender, citizenship, etc. (Tajfel & Turner 1986). These collective identities are a fluid process that reveals each other. *“Individual selfhood is a social phenomenon, but the social world is constituted through the actions of individuals. As such, identity is a fluid contingent matter - it is something we accomplish practically, through our ongoing interactions and negotiations with other people.”* (Buckingham 2008, 6-7). From this point of view, we can say that all these social actions interact with each other with the principle of reciprocity. These mutual interactions also shape the identity spectacle.

In this study, the perspectives on identity were synthesized. The evaluations of women with children regarding maternal identity were examined.

### **2.1.2 Social identity**

Social Identity Theory argues that people are motivated to achieve and maintain a positive “social identity”. (Tajfel & Turner 1986). Tajfel (1982) defined the social identity concept as the fact that the individual’s self-perception arises from the individual “s information about the membership to a group or groups and the value and emotional significance that this individual attributed to this membership.

*The influences of being a group member on the particular form the basic framework of Tajfel and Turner’s approaches. They aimed to determine how this membership reflects the individual’s identity, motives, and perceptions of themselves and others. According to theorists, people often act not as individuals but as members of certain social groups/classes and derive their definitions from the awareness of their membership in important social classes. (Madran 2012, 75).*

Belonging to a group changes individuals’ perception of their social identity. This change in perception also affects the way they show their identities. Jenkins argues that social identity should be seen not so much as a fixed possession, but as a social process, in which the individual and the social are inextricably related. (Jenkins 2004.) Social

processes create and transform each other on the principle of reciprocity. These interactions are reflected in the identity spectacle. If social interactions are analysed, forms of identity spectacle can also be analysed.

The identity of maternity, which we discussed in this study, is also social. When women with children express themselves as mothers, they are included in a social group named maternity. As in every social identity, social interaction is inevitable here. While mothers show their identities as mothers, they may be affected differently by how other mothers present themselves. This influence can also be in the digital field. Maternity-related pages with high follower counts are likely to have a wider reach. In this study, we investigated the perceptions of maternal identity and the spectacle maternal identity of women with children as social users through social identity theory.

## **2.2 The Society of The Spectacle**

### **2.2.1 Debord's theory**

The society of the spectacle theory claims that: Society passes through various stages, and the last stage is the spectacle's society. Changing production conditions have alienated people from the essence of humanity. Life is an unceasing mass of spectacles in economies that constantly accumulate commodities. All experiences have turned away from actuality and into only representations. These spectacles that produce each other are the fundamental cause of the social acceptance of the existence of individuals. The specialization of images of the world extends into the world of images that have gained autonomy.

*People became alienated from their labour. The first influence of differentiation in production was that social acceptance turned to possession rather than existence. After prolonged process, the ever-increasing commodity production got out of hand. In the second stage, the sense of possession lost its meaning. The spectacle came to the fore. Individuals' actions, possessions, and personalities began to occur in society only as a spectacle. The entire individual being has become a manifestation of social spectacles. (Debord 1967).*

*Nevertheless, according to Guy Debord, what is the essence of the spectacle? It is an externality. The spectacle is the dominance of appearance, and appearance is an externality, that is, to be deprived of oneself. The illness of the watching person can be summarised in the following short phrase: The more you contemplate, the less it exists. (Ranciere 2010, 14).*

From this point of view, we can say that, according to Debord, the spectacle is an externality and, therefore, it is a state of alienation from the self. People present their identities in society. These presentations are demonstrations. Therefore, identity presentations are not the same as the self. Many external factors cause the difference between the core actuality of identity and the presentation spectacle.

This theory of Guy Debord has a fundamental place in this study. The study will proceed to the “Media Spectacle” through the forms of the Spectacle Society. From this point of view, it will interpret the representations of maternity on Instagram through the society of the spectacle.

### **2.2.2 Kellner’s media spectacle**

Kellner approaches Debord's theory through the media in his book *Media Spectacle*. He examined different case examples from other media types. This study will investigate Instagram's maternal spectacles through Kellner’s approach.

*Building on this concept, I argue that media spectacles are those phenomena of media culture that embody contemporary society's basic values, initiate individuals into its way of life, and dramatize its controversies and struggles, as well as its modes of conflict resolution. They include media extravaganzas, sporting events, political happenings, and those attention-grabbing occurrences that we call news – a phenomenon that itself has been subjected to the logic of spectacle and tabloidization in the era of the media sensationalism, political scandal, and contestation, seemingly unending cultural war, and the new phenomenon of Terror War. Thus, while Debord presents a rather generalized and abstract notion of spectacle, the study engages specific examples of media spectacle and how they are produced, constructed, circulated, and function in the present era. (Kellner 2003).*

Kellner approaches Debord's theory through the media in his book *Media Spectacle*. He examined different case examples from different media types. This study will investigate Instagram's maternal spectacles through Kellner's *Media Spectacle* theory.

Based on Kellner, media spectacles cause all cultural products to become commodities that can be used and consumed, thus instrumentalising them as an element of spectacle. Representations of maternity on Instagram are also a media culture. The representations of maternity on social media create an encompassing media spectacle culture by making the identity of maternity consumable. Interaction from high-follower accounts related to maternity to other Instagram user accounts is an example of Debord's concentration spectacle. On the other hand, ordinary mothers interacting with each other while using Instagram is an example of a joint spectacle.

Kellner's work made Debord's theory of the abstract spectacle practical in the media. We will evolve this practical approach from traditional media to digital media by following the same approach. According to Kellner's claim, media culture phenomena encompass all areas of life. So, identity spectacles in the new media are affected by the siege of these media culture phenomena. The maternal identity is perceived, and the spectacle on Instagram is related to these phenomena. This conceptual perspective will be used while interpreting the findings and data of this study.

## **2.3 Social Media**

### **2.3.1 Social media theory**

According to the Cambridge dictionary, social media refers to the websites and computer programs that allow people to communicate and share information on the internet using a computer or mobile phone (Cambridge University Press 2018). *“The new media concept includes interactive Internet applications known as web 2.0, mobile phones, PDAs, digital games and gaming environments. The interactive nature of Web 2.0 enables users to produce and publish content. Among the tools, users use for broadcasting are “social media”, such as social networks and blogs.”* (Bayraktutan, Binark, Çomu, Doğu, İslamoğlu and Telli Aydemir 2012, 6). According to Evans (2008,

31), “*Social media involves a natural, genuine conversation between people about something of mutual interest, a conversation built on the thoughts and experiences of participants. It is about sharing and arriving at a collective point, often to make a better or more informed choice*”. Social media is a commonly used term for online tools and websites that create mutual interaction by allowing users to share information, thoughts, interests, and knowledge (Sayimer 2008, 123).

Although social media has media in its name, it has distinctive features from traditional media. The most crucial difference that creates its originality is that any person can create, comment and contribute to the content of social media (Scott 2010, 38). The concept of social media is entirely different media from all other types of media. Traditional or new media journalism provides information flow in various forms using different tools and communication technologies. However, this is primarily one-way communication. There is an editorial team that prepares and presents the news. The communication works prepared by this team are sent to the recipients. The counter-influence of the receiving audience in communication is limited only to interpretations and feedbacks. Social media, a different type of media, is separated here. In social media, actual people share their digital environment. They create different personas on different social media platforms. There is a dynamic multiple-way communication flow here. People also create their digital personas on social media and spectacle their identities on social media. Every use of social media is an identity presentation from this perspective.

### **2.3.2 Instagram**

This study covers the evaluation of social media channels through the society of the spectacle. The most important social media channel that forms the basis of the study is Instagram. For this reason, it would be helpful to look at the recent history of Instagram and its differences and similarities with other social media platforms. In this part of the study, there are evaluations of Instagram.

Instagram was first developed in 2010 in San Francisco by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger. Systrom and Krieger focused their practice on photo sharing. The name Instagram comes from a combination of the words “instant camera” (polaroid camera)

and “telegram” (telegraph). Even this name choice indicates that Instagram is a visual platform. The transfer of data between digital telegram technology and receiving networks is much faster and more extensive on Instagram. Instagram is a social network with billions of users where images flow.

In December 2013, Instagram developed the direct message feature that allows users to send messages and files to specific people privately. It launched the Instagram Stories feature in August 2016, live streaming in November, and disappearing photos and videos for the Instagram Direct feature. On December 6, 2016, it introduced comment likes and the ability to turn off comments. In June 2018, Instagram developed IGTV, a video platform aimed at competing with YouTube, and in July 2020, Reels, a short-form video feature designed to compete with TikTok. Users can heavily share photos using Instagram. The hashtag feature, which started on Twitter, is also used on Instagram.

The Instagram application reached 1 million users within three months of its launch and was sold to Facebook in 2012, 2 years after its establishment. After the application was sold to Facebook, the commercial business and digital advertising features were integrated into the Instagram application. As of January 2022, there are approximately 1.5 billion users worldwide. (Global Social Media Ranking 2022 Statistic)

As Instagram developers focused on sharing visual images while developing the platform, Instagram is the best place to explore society’s spectacle digitally. Instagram introduces the formation of “Yours to Made” in the article titled “The Next Chapter in Instagram’s Brand Story”, dated September 23, 2021, published on its corporate website. In the article, Instagram officially says this expression: “Instagram believes when we have a place to explore who we can be collective, we can move ourselves, our communities, and even the world forward. It is Yours to Make.” (The Next Chapter in Instagram’s Brand Story, 2021) The expressions in this article mean that Instagram is a tool for people to spectacle their identities.

Instagram can also be a platform for expression and help the community with inspiration and positivity. However, photos on Instagram are more likely to affect the viewers’ body image, especially women, and self-esteem. (Kelly & Daneshjoo 2019).

Instagram can offer a digital opportunity for women's participation in the public sphere. Instagram can turn women's display of their identities into commodification. These forms appear with different identities, such as perceiving beauty and being a good wife or a good mother. This research will focus on how women show their maternal identity.

*Instagram users are engaged in social comparison with the "peers' lives" where everyone posts personal photos for appraisal, and the feedback defines "self-worth". Instagram has a role in building understanding about self" (Bay 2015). "Because feedback defines self-worth, influencers who can provide feedback to many people on Instagram significantly impact identity exposure. Instagram is a platform to offer the space for uploading and posting photos of self for self-expression motive. This self-expression motive satisfies the sharing instinct of the individuals (Andalibi, Ozturk, & Forte 2017).*

From this point of view, we can say the following. People want to express themselves and spectacle their identity. Social conditions influence these modes of spectacle. This influence also happens in the digital field. Instagram's way of posting images affects the spectacle of identities more.

People exhibit who they are in different areas under different factors. Social media platforms are a digital area where people spectacle their identities. Social media has its dynamics. People are affected by these dynamics when they exhibit whom. Social media is a suitable area to examine people's identities. Examining the dynamics of social media is a guide to analyzing the identity spectacles of people on social media. Other social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok are also suitable for making these domains. This study is a master's thesis, and it is necessary to act quickly.

For this reason, it is limited. As we mentioned above, Instagram is a visual platform. For this reason, Instagram was preferred in the study. In other studies, other social media platforms can be researched, following this study's theoretical framework and method.



## 3. METHOD

### 3.1 Research Model

A demographic information form was prepared for the research participants. In the first part of this research, an online survey was conducted with the participants selected by random sampling from the research target group. The scale of social media usage purposes was taken to prepare the survey questions. The survey results were grouped and interpreted.

Participants were selected with snowball sampling in the second part of the research (In-Depth Interviews).

*Snowball sampling is a technique in which the researcher initially samples a small group of people relevant to the research questions, and these sampled participants purpose other participants who have had the experience or characteristics relevant to research. These participants suggest others and so on. (Bryman 2012, 424).*

In-depth interviews were conducted with the participants. Interview findings were interpreted by text analysis. All the research outputs were evaluated in the context of the drawn theoretical framework.

The study also examined whether maternal identity and the use of Instagram differ according to some demographic variables. In this direction, a causal comparison was also conducted. Causal argumentation studies determine the relationship between dependent and independent variables. (Karakaya 2009).

The research is qualitative. This research: is conducted to contribute to the literature and raise awareness about the use of social media by researching the influence of maternity accounts on Instagram, one of the social media platforms, on the maternity identity representations of mothers through the theory of spectacle society.

The research is on the use of Instagram by women with at least one child under eighteen, their perceptions and evaluations of maternity, and how they show their maternal identity through these perceptions and assessments. For this reason, it is

possible to include data on lifestyles in the answers given by the participants within the scope of the research. However, ethnic identity, political views, and religious or philosophical convictions are not processed.

The research has two phases in collecting data. Web surveys and in-depth interviews are two methods of research. “Demographic Information Form”, “Instagram Usage Information Form”, and “Instagram Usage Purposes Scale” will be used in the web survey. “Demographic Information Form”, “Instagram Usage Information Form”, and “Interview Questions” will be used in in-depth interviews.

The research is an original social media study. The work focuses on social media and, more specifically, Instagram through the manifestations of identities in the digital space; It will contribute to social sciences by researching the representations of maternal identity on Instagram through the theory of spectacle society. It will also provide a social benefit by raising awareness about the use of Instagram.

The research is voluntarily, and consent was obtained from all participants. In web surveys, with the checkbox on the confirmation survey, the approval in the in-depth interviews was obtained with the wet signed consent form specified in the appendix. The data contains information about the participants. Web surveys were conducted using online tools. In-depth interviews were done by phone call and an online interview with the Zoom application; audio recordings were taken during the interviews. Questionnaires are in the appendices. Since the native language of the participants was Turkish, all questions were asked in Turkish. The researcher translated the questionnaires into English and included them in the appendices of this study.

### **3.2 Study Group**

The total number of participants in the study’s sample group was determined from Instagram users, women with at least one child under eighteen. The methodological basis of the study consists of interviews with semi-structured questionnaires. Interview participants were selected by snowball sampling method. When data satisfaction was achieved, the interviews were terminated.

The online survey had 80 participants, and 8 participated in the in-depth interview study. The total number of participants in the study is 88.

In the in-depth interviews, which formed the basis of the study, 8 participants were terminated as sufficient data were provided according to the scope of this master's thesis. The research is qualitative and online surveys were conducted to supplement and provide in-depth interview data. For this reason, 80 participants in the online surveys created enough samples to support the in-depth interviews.

The average age of the eighty-eight participants in the research sample is 36,602. 85.22% of the participants are married. The average number of children of the participants was 1,579.

### **3.3 Research Phases**

#### **3.3.1 Web surveys**

Web survey study: It was designed to expand the study's demographic scope, support in-depth interview data, and provide this data. For this reason, web surveys are a secondary method of research. Participants will be determined by random method; The in-depth interviews, which are the primary research, will be terminated when the supporting data are satisfied.

This survey used the "Demographic information form", "Instagram Usage Information Form", and "Social Media Usage Purposes Scale". Data from the social media usage scale questions formed the basis for qualitative analysis and interpretation. The data of this survey also constituted a source for in-depth interviews.

Solmaz et al. developed the Social Media Usage Purposes Scale in their study, "An Application on the Internet and Social Media Usage". After the validity and reliability study, the definitive version of the scale is 11 items. Items in the ranking were measured with a 5-point Likert-type evaluation. This measure is 1: never; 2: rarely; 3: sometimes, 4: often, and 5: always. The scale questions were adapted to the research problem while preserving the basic structure. (Solmaz et al. 2013)

*“Web surveys operate by inviting prospective respondents to visit a website at which the questionnaire can be found and completed online.”* (Bryman 2012, 671). People suitable for the research target group were found by random sampling on the web and were provided to answer the questions. The demographic information form in the survey provided an adequate data opportunity about the participants’ demographic data. Also, the questions were prepared based on the social media usage purposes scale and adapted to maternal spectacles on Instagram. The survey provided data for in-depth interviews and qualitative interpretations.

### **3.3.2 In-depth interviews**

In-depth interviews are the primary methodological basis of the research. The qualitative research methods, semi-structured questionnaires, were used. The primary purpose of the interviews is to get mothers to express their opinions about the looks related to maternal identity on Instagram.

In his book “Social Research Methods”, Alan Bryman explained the difference between structuring the questions of qualitative interviews and quantitative ones with the following explanation:

*The approach tends to be less structured in qualitative research; the approach is structured to maximize the reliability and validity of measurement of key concepts. It is also more structured because the researcher has a specified set of research questions to be investigated. The structured interview is designed to answer the questions. Instead, in qualitative research, there is an emphasis on greater generality in the formulation of initial research ideas and interviews own perspectives.* (Bryman 2012, 470).

Within the scope of the research, in-depth interviews were conducted with semi-structured questions by qualitative research methods. Within the scope of the in-depth interviews, 8 people were interviewed, and 9 semi-structured questions were asked. Interviews were conducted online in Turkish, the native language of the participants. After deciphering, it was translated into English by the thesis author. The data obtained from the in-depth interviews were interpreted with content analysis in the results section.

### **3.4 Data Collection Tools**

In line with the research problem, data were collected from the participants using the "Demographic Information Form", "Social Media Usage Purposes Scale", "Internet Questionnaire", and "In-depth Interview Questions".

#### **3.4.1 Demographic information form**

Demographic information form: For both studies, it was prepared to learn the participants' demographic information. The form will provide the demographic segmentation of the sample.

The Demographic Information Form collects information about the socio-demographic characteristics of the research participants. The form collected age, education level, marital status, duration of marriage if married, number of children, age of their children, time of using Instagram, reasons for using Instagram, which category they follow on Instagram, which pages they share about maternity Data such as the ones they follow.

#### **3.4.2 Instagram usage information form**

The Instagram usage information form includes ordinary questions about the participants' social media and Instagram usage. There are six questions in total in the form. Five of these questions are multiple-choice, and one is an open-ended question. In the open-ended question about to name of the maternity-related Instagram pages that participants follow. Multiple-choice questions are about preferred social media platforms, Instagram usage times, and participants' influence on maternity-related pages.

#### **3.4.3. Instagram usage purposes scale**

Instagram usage purposes scale based on a 5-point Likert-type evaluation. This measure is 1: never; 2: rarely; 3: sometimes, 4: often, and 5: always. A total of 12 questions were asked to measure Instagram usage purposes. These questions are about communication,

entertainment, leisure time, self-expression, messaging, getting to know people, personal presentation, access to organizations, access to information, and the purpose of people to show their own lives to others.

#### **3.4.4. In-depth interview questionnaire**

In-depth interview questionnaires were created in a semi-structured form. It is aimed to examine the expressions used by the participants qualitatively. A total of nine question patterns were created. All of these questions are about the participants' use of Instagram, the way they spectacle and express themselves on Instagram, people's perceptions and evaluations of Instagram's maternity, and the influences of social judgments on maternity identity on Instagram.

## 4. RESULTS<sup>2</sup>

While preparing the questions of this research, it aimed to determine how and in what form the maternal identity spectacles on Instagram are manifested. The study was designed in two stages. The main results of the research were obtained from in-depth interviews. An online survey study was also conducted to support the research by providing in-depth interview data.

The main problem statement of the research is "*How does following maternity-related Instagram accounts influence how women with children perceive and spectacle their identities as mothers?*". While preparing in-depth interview questions, to be careful not to be directive, I aimed to choose questions that would reveal how mothers communicate with their children and their environment with their maternal identity and how they express themselves on Instagram. In the research, I aimed to investigate the influence of social roles on maternal identity spectacles on Instagram. Do these influences cause the instrumentalization of maternal identity? Or do the maternal identity spectacles on Instagram allow mothers to express themselves freely? I aimed to create research questions that would enable me to collect data for these fundamental questions.

Maternity is a subject that has many social sub-meanings and could make mothers feel under pressure. While conducting in-depth interviews as a researcher, I was aware of asking a question about this sensitive topic. At the beginning of all the interviews, the mothers felt like they were on a test about their maternity. All participant mothers tried to give the impression of being good mothers and were worried about being judged despite their demographic, cultural and class differences. As a researcher, I tried to communicate in an objective, courteous, and reassuring tone. When I created an environment of trust, they understood that they were not judged and were relieved. When this environment of trust was provided, they expressed their thoughts comfortably and openly.

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<sup>2</sup> In-depth interviews and online questionnaires were conducted in Turkish. The results have been translated into English by the author.

Another significant result that I determined within the scope of the research was the views on the roles of paternity in society through maternity. While researching maternity, I also came to important conclusions about paternity. The fact that women are visible on Instagram with their maternal identity also causes the reproduction of paternity roles in society. The women I interviewed shared many judgmental sentences about being a mother. Some of these sentences are their ideas, some are evaluations of others, and some are stereotypical expressions that are socially imposed on mothers. Every definition of maternity indirectly describes the perception of paternity in society. There is a significant disparity between society's responsibilities to parents. Socially, fathers are seen as only financially responsible for their children. A father who can provide for his home is considered to have completed his duty perfectly. The burden is entirely on the mother in all the remaining issues, such as the child's development, care and education. While social pressures and judgments about paternity are absent or extremely limited, mothers feel tremendous pressure to "*look like a good mother*" to be socially accepted. We could see the reflections of this on Instagram as well. Dozens of pages with high followers share maternity on Instagram. It is tough to find a page that shares similar posts about paternity. Likewise, it has been determined that Instagram users and women with children often create their identities on Instagram through maternity, but the same is not the case for fathers.

Another finding within the scope of the research is that mothers create their own identities by marginalizing others. The interview participants, who stated that they did not want to create their identity on Instagram based on maternity, mentioned that other mothers did this kind of maternal identity presentation and that others made their maternity a means of demonstration. They stated that they were distant from sharing too much on Instagram, as they did not want to be like "other" mothers in their own words. This is a kind of maternal identity aspect. It is an identity construction through maternity with the reflex of avoidance or marginalization.

All participating mothers experience a visibility and judgment conflict regarding their maternal identity on Instagram. All their posts on Instagram are amid this conflict of visibility and judgment. On the one hand, there are desires and feelings to be visible as a mother. They want to make visible their experiences, problems, and thoughts about



maternity, which is an integral part of their lives. On the other hand, they are under severe pressure to be judged by society. They are worried about being judged by society based on their post on Instagram.

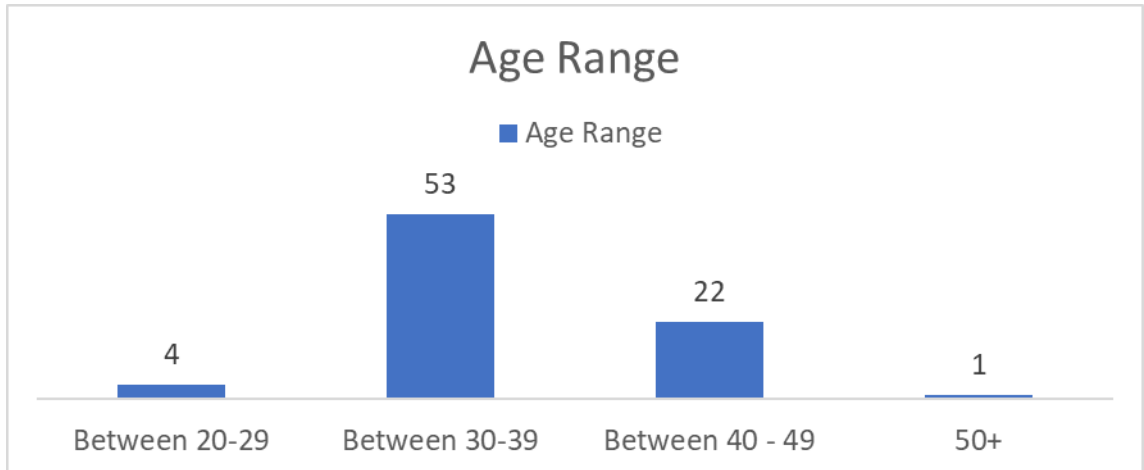
For this reason, there is a different state of balance between the desire to be visible and the worry of being judged. Moreover, the appearance of maternal identity on Instagram occurs as a manifestation of this balance. However, they can easily share on Instagram when there is an impression that they think society will accept them as an acceptable mother.

The main results of the study were gathered through in-depth interviews. An online survey was conducted as support. The demographic diversity of the study was increased with the web survey. According to the web survey results, mothers want to make themselves visible as a mother on Instagram for many purposes. According to the web survey, women with children use social media actively. The most used medium is Instagram. According to the web survey results, women are influenced by Instagram when making decisions about their children. The results of the survey, the participants' purposes for using Instagram, and the findings of the in-depth properties, which is the other research method of this thesis, are consistent.

#### **4.1 Web Surveys Results**

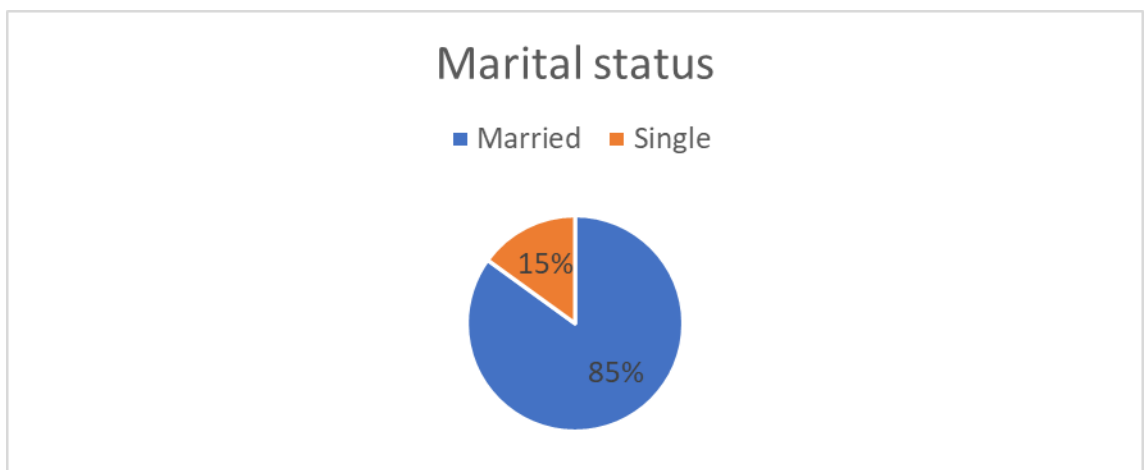
The online survey was conducted with 80 participants. The average age of the participants is 35. All of the participants are women with children who are Instagram users. The online survey was conducted through a 3-part questionnaire. The first part consists of a demographic information form. The second part is the Instagram usage information form, which includes the participants' Instagram usage preferences. The third part is the Instagram usage purposes scale. The results will be stated below.

**Table 4.1 Age Range**



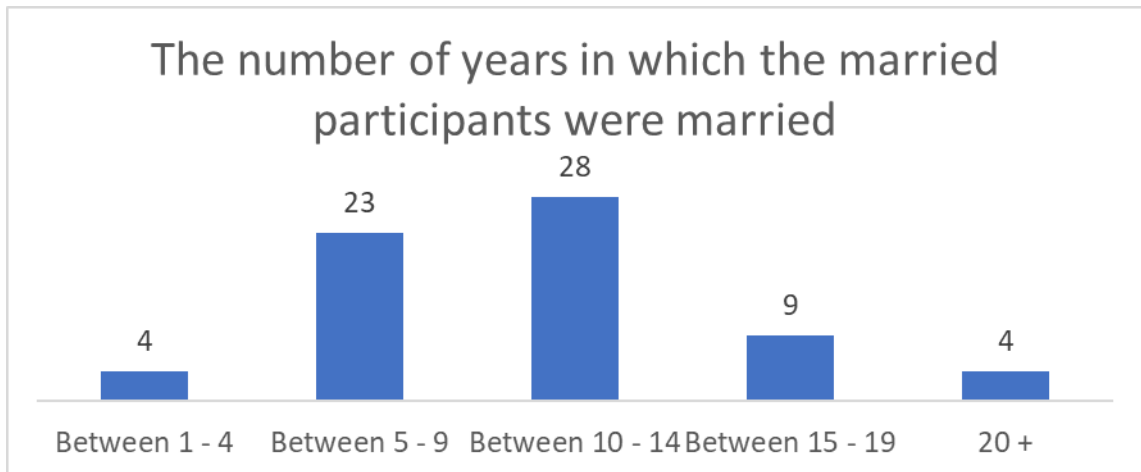
Of the 80 participants, four were in the age group of 20-29, 53 were in the age group of 30-39, 22 were in the age group of 40-49, and 1 was in the age group of 50 and over.

**Table 4.2 Marital Status**



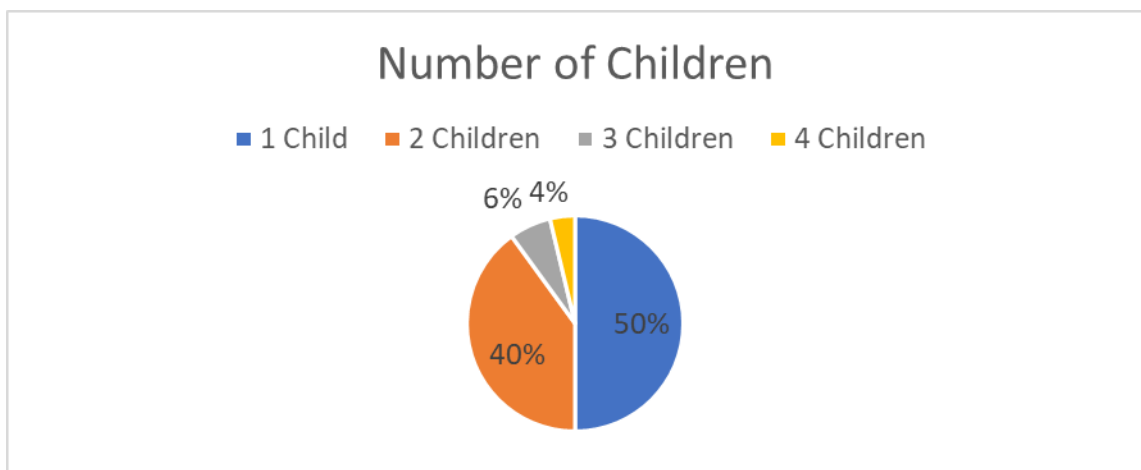
85% of the participants are married, and 15% are single.

**Table 4.3 Number of Married Years**



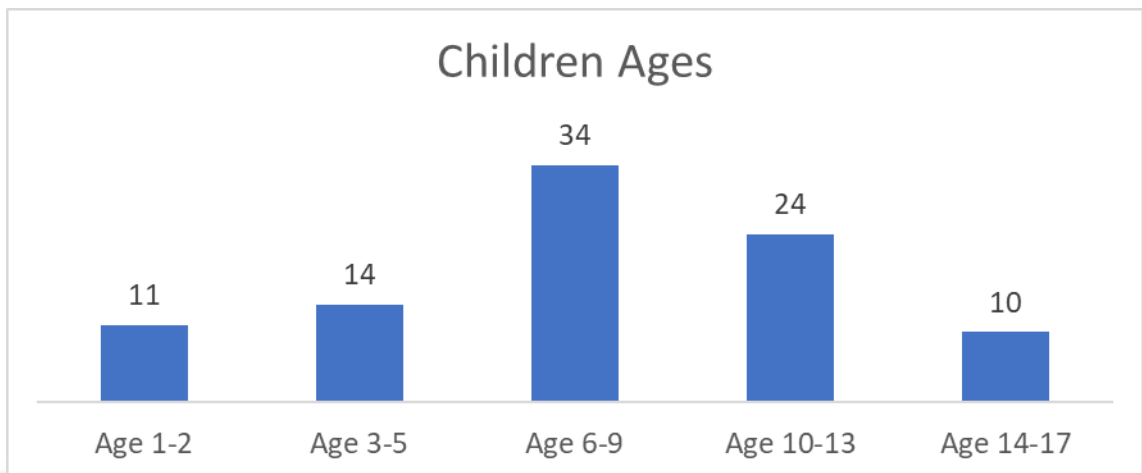
The majority of the participants have been married for 10-14 years.

**Table 4.4 Number of Children**



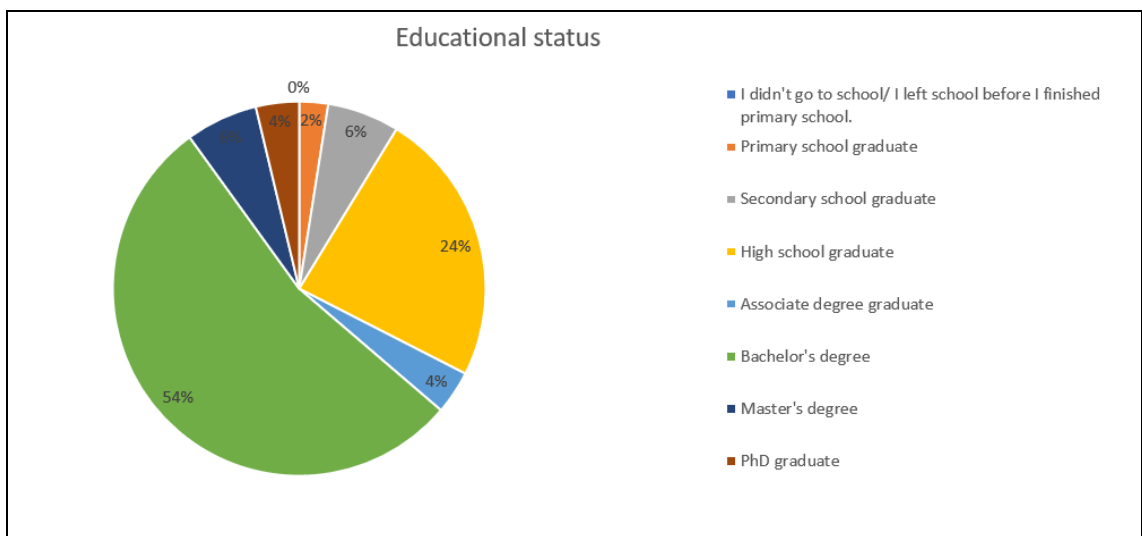
Half of the participants have only one child. Forty percent have two children. The rate of women with three or more children is ten percent.

**Table 4.5 Children Ages**



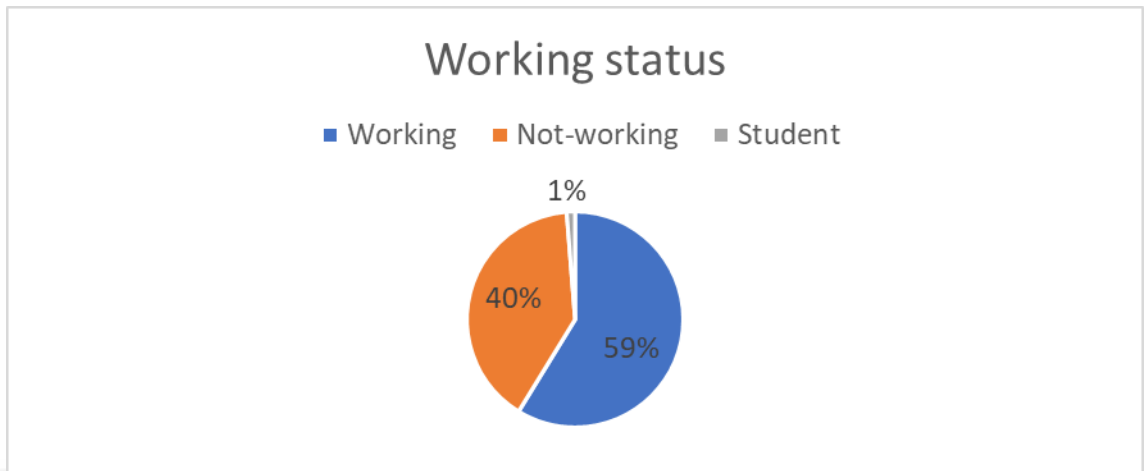
Eighty participants have a total of 93 children. Seventy-two of these children are between the ages of 3 and 13.

**Table 4.6 Educational Status**



Fifty-four percent of the participants have a bachelor's degree.

**Table 4.7 Working Status**



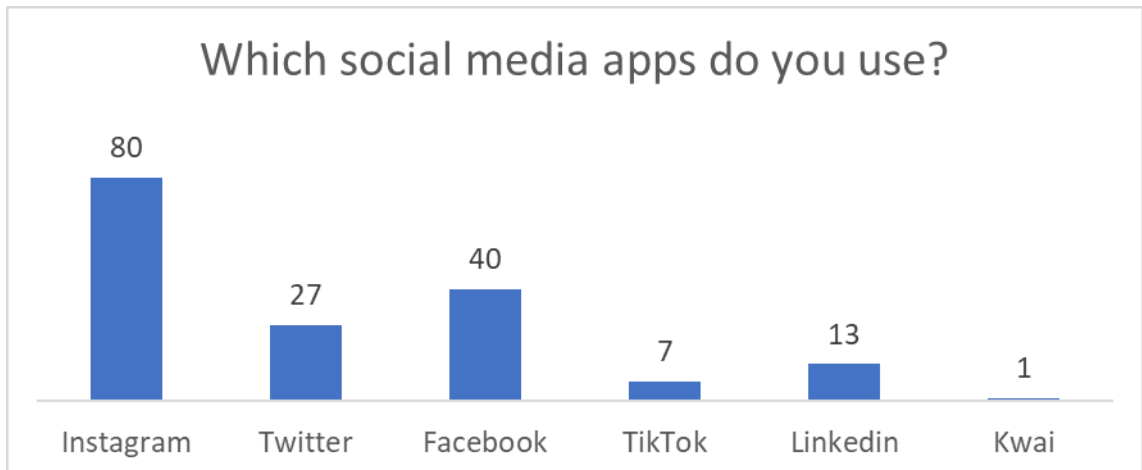
Fifty-nine percent of the participants are actively working in a job. Forty percent do not work. One percent stated that they were students.

**Table 4.8 Professions**

<b>If you are working or have worked before, your profession is:</b>	
<b>Profession</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>
Academician	1
Kindergarten teacher	1
Kindergarten staff	1
Anesthesia technician	1
Cook	1
Bank inspector	1
Banker	4
Dressmaker	1
Biologist	1
Doctor	2
Pharmacist	1
Former banker / New NGO worker	1
Trainer	1
Finance	2
Beautician	1
Nurse	3
Human Resources	3
Public servant	1
Accounting	1
Kitchen staff	1
Marketing communications manager (formerly), freelance blogger (now)	1
Purchasing specialist	2
Playground staff	1
Classroom teacher	2
Supply chain manager	1
Textile	1
Assistant teacher	1
Financial advisor	1
Tea serving and cleaning staff	1
Teacher	11
Communication consultant	1
Interior architect	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>53</b>

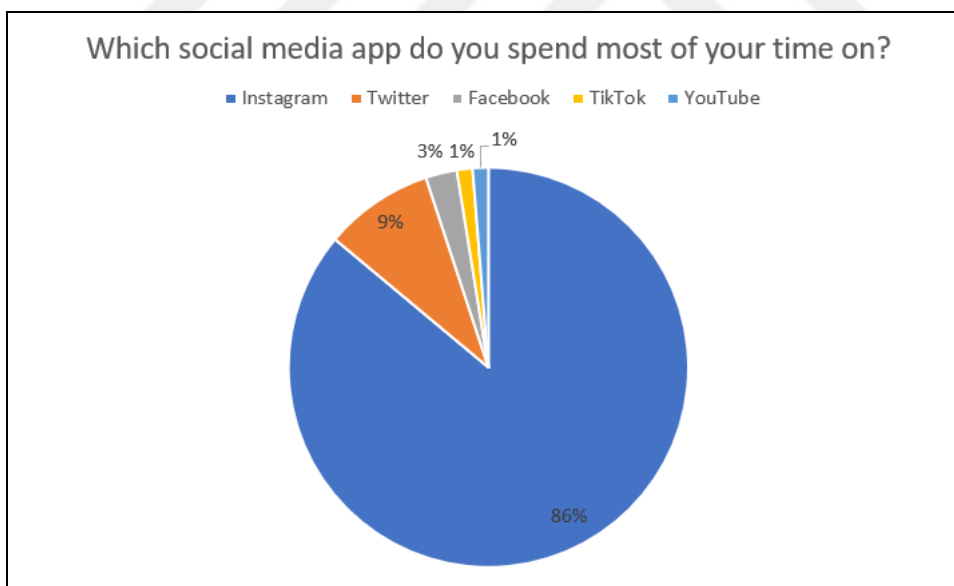
The occupations of working women are as in the table above.

**Table 4.9 Social Media Apps Usage**



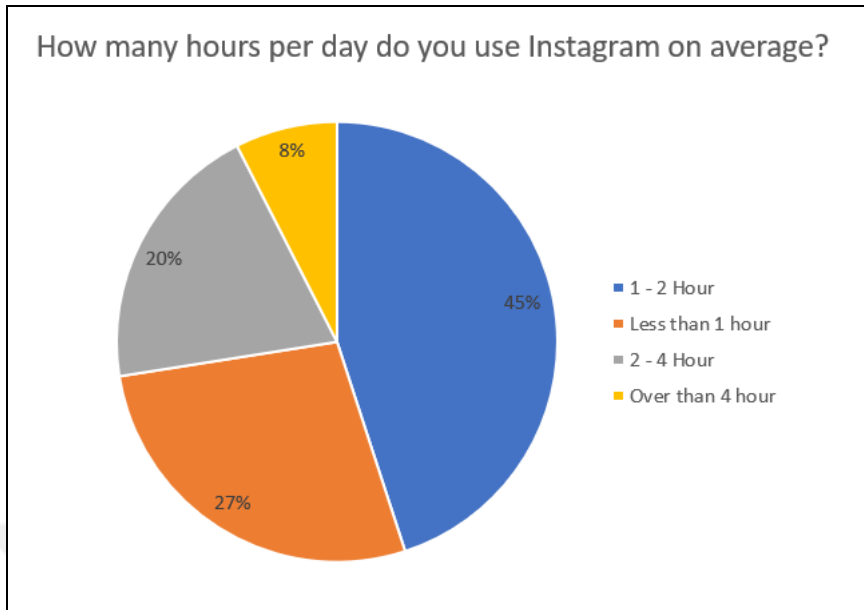
All of the participants are Instagram users, and half are Facebook users. The number of Twitter users is also at a significant rate. Although fewer than these platforms, some said that they were LinkedIn, TikTok and Kwai users.

**Table 4.10 Spending Time on Social Media Apps**



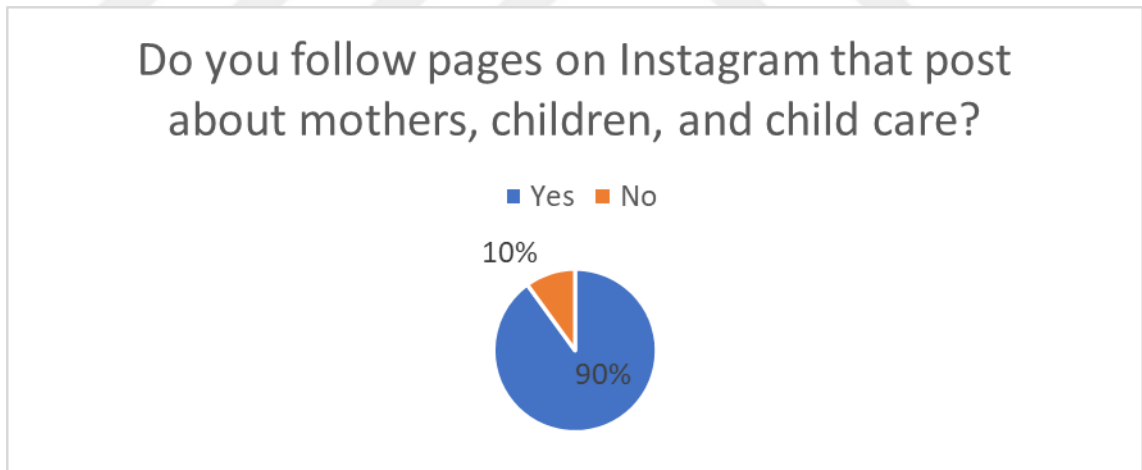
Eighty-six percent of the participants stated they spend the most time on Instagram.

**Table 4.11 Spending Time on Instagram**



Sixty-five percent of the participants spend between 1 and 4 hours daily on Instagram.

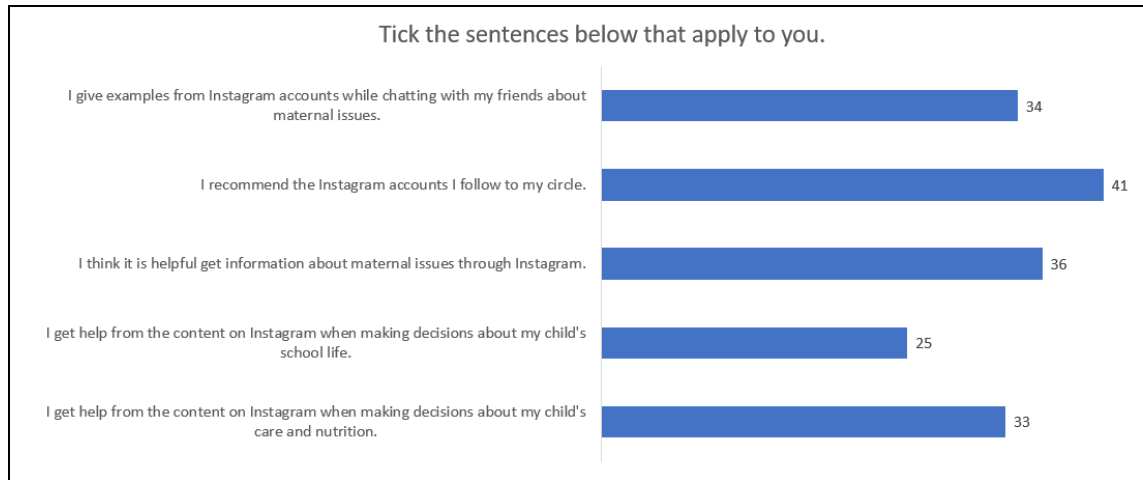
**Table 4.12 Following Pages on Instagram**



Ninety percent of the participants follow high-follower accounts that post about maternity and childcare on Instagram.



**Table 4.13 Relevant Sentences**



There are 34 participants who picked the following statement “I give examples from Instagram accounts while chatting with my friends about maternal issues.

There are 41 participants who picked the following statement “I recommend the Instagram accounts I follow my circle.”

There are 36 participants who picked the statement “I think it is helping get information about maternal issues through Instagram.”

There are 25 participants who picked the statement “I get help from the content on Instagram when making decisions about my child’s school life.”

There are 33 participants who picked the following statement “I get help from the content on Instagram when making decisions about my child’s care and nutrition.”

These results show that mothers are influenced by Instagram when making decisions about their children. This influence brings with it the desire to be visible.

**Table 4.14 Instagram Usage Purposes Scale Results<sup>3</sup>**

No		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	I use Instagram to keep in touch with my friends.	4	24	24	23	5
2	I use Instagram for fun and relaxation.	0	18	25	32	5
3	I use Instagram to spend my free time.	4	20	29	23	4
4	I use Instagram to express myself.	45	12	15	4	4
5	I use Instagram to send and receive messages.	9	36	26	6	3
6	I use Instagram to get to know people.	30	24	19	6	1
7	I use Instagram to follow events and agendas	9	17	26	23	5
8	I use Instagram for personal presentation and information sharing.	20	26	26	6	2
9	I use Instagram to reach people and organizations.	6	21	32	19	2
10	I use Instagram to exchange ideas.	7	20	36	15	2
11	I use Instagram to access information.	0	13	42	17	8
12	I use Instagram to show my life and what I do.	32	23	14	5	6

The table above shows how many participants answered the questions and how often.

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<sup>3</sup> Instagram Usage Purposes Scale: It was adapted from the Social Media Usage Purposes Scale published by Solmaz et al., in 2013, in the Academic Journal of Selçuk University Faculty of Communication, with the title "An Application on the Internet and Social Media Usage". The basic structure of the scale was preserved, and the questions were explicitly adapted to Instagram and the research topic. (Solmaz, Tekin, Herzem & Demir M. 2013).

Goffman developed a role theory to explain everyday interactions and relationships. “He argues that, like actors on stage, we are constantly busy presenting our image to the wide variety of audiences we come across.” The challenge for Goffman’s approach is not playing, but not playing, both on and off the stage. It is not very meaningful to question what naturalness and authenticity are since everyone is always playing games. People play on stage even when they believe they are acting naturally and spontaneously (Goffman 1956). According to Higgins' Self-discrepancy theory, People have an ideal and an actual self. People display their current selves in their daily lives. However, they tend to idealise themselves when they come together with society. For this reason, idealised selves come into play in areas where social evaluations are intense (Higgins 1989). I argue that representations of maternal identity on Instagram are instrumentalized as a spectacle. Mothers try to be accepted in society by instrumentalizing their maternal identity as a spectacle. The reasons for this are complex. Social judgments and the desire to be visible are the dominant factors in the maternal spectacle. Based on Goffman, the forms of maternal identity are a presentation of daily life. Based on Higgins, maternal identities on Instagram are in the form of idealized selves instead of actual selves due to social evaluations. In the following paragraph, the data on this scale, the actual self, which should be understood through this theoretical framework and argument, will reveal the idealized-self difference and examine the maternal self as becoming a spectacle.

One of the striking results is that 45 respondents (56%) answered "Never" to the question "I use Instagram to express myself". Despite those 62 respondents (77,5%) chose the sometimes, often, and always options of “I use Instagram for fun and relaxation.”. Also, 52 respondents (65%) chose that they keep in touch with their friends on Instagram. Likewise, most of the participants use Instagram for purposes such as getting information, following the news and messaging. People communicate with their environment using Instagram for entertainment and relaxation, sharing many topics from their daily life, which shows that they use this social media platform to express themselves. In summary, when we look at all the data in this scale holistically, the participating women use Instagram to express themselves. However, to the direct phrase "I use Instagram to express myself", most participants answered "Never". The society of the spectacle is the prominence of appearance and the loss of actuality. Although the

participants aim to be visible with their use of Instagram in many ways, they express the opposite opinion. This is a detection: that only revealed the prominence of representation and the denial of actuality.

#### **4.2 In-Depth Interviews Results**

According to in-depth interview results: maternity-related Instagram accounts that the participants follow affect their communication with their children. This interaction: could be to apply what is recommended in the shares directly, or it could be indirectly by comparing the shares with their own experiences.

The Instagram accounts that the participants follow affect their self-evaluations about maternity differently. Some participants can express their definitions of maternity through what they see on Instagram. On the other hand, it was determined that they made self-evaluations about maternity by marginalizing and alienating these Instagram posts. This is also a kind of influence from an opposite direction.

The study figured out that some participants mentioned the maternity-related Instagram accounts they follow and the posts made by these accounts in their conversations on Instagram and daily life. Some participants do not mention Instagram in their conversations with their circle.

One of the most noticeable results from the study was the intense impact of social pressures on their mothers. According to the research findings, mothers were anxious to prove themselves as good mothers in society. All participants stated that there are stereotypes about maternity and social pressure on mothers. It is fixed in the statements of all the participants that the anxiety of appearing suitable for these social pressures affects the Instagram posts made by the mothers.

Six of the women who have children who took part in the study said that Instagram is a convenient area for mothers to express themselves. 2 participants said that it is not convenient.

The participants' opinions about sharing children's images on Instagram differ in detail. However, for all participants, the determining criteria for sharing children's images on Instagram are the frequency and intention of sharing.

All participants said that maternity on Instagram and actual life are different. At this point, it is necessary to shape the concept of the actual through the expressions of mothers. According to the mothers' statements, the actual situation that is currently being experienced and how the mothers manifest themselves are different. The mother's expressions determine the distinction between reality and spectacle here. One participant said social media is like a theatre, imitating what people see. Another participant said that the influencers shared something about childcare, and then all of her mother's friends around her shared precisely the same. Participants stated that Instagram user mothers try to spectacle themselves as perfect, concerned with looking like good mothers. According to these results, the participants state that there is a distance between the actuality experienced by women who are Instagram users and the identity they spectacle on Instagram.

#### **4.2.1 The influences of Instagram shares on participants' communication with their children**

Mothers use what they see on Instagram in their communication with their children. Instagram influences their approach to their children and their assessment of maternity. It has been found that views on Instagram are influential in actual-life communication.

Researcher: *"Do you think the posts made by the maternity-related accounts you follow on Instagram are influential in your communication with your child?"*

*P2: Yes. It increases our activities. Let me try this too, and sometimes I wonder if my child will like it. (P2: C.K. 32, Academician)*

*P4: If the people I follow on Instagram have shared something about their kids, I will listen. If the post I came across is about something I have a problem with, I say yes, I'll try that too. Sometimes someone is doing something, and it feels like something to strengthen the communication with my children. (P4: L.Ç.A. 42, Nurse).*

According to research findings, posts on Instagram affect mothers' communication with their children. One of the participants, academician C.K. stated that the posts she encountered on Instagram helped diversify her activities with her child. Participant L.C.A. She is 42 years old and is a nurse. She said she accepted the posts she saw on Instagram as advice to strengthen her communication with her child and tried the suggestions here.

*P6: I think it is partially. I have a mentally retarded child. My son has autism. I am a person with solid empathy skills. After I had a child, this side of me became unbelievable. In this regard, I think that I can do this more myself. Instagram shares have some influence on my communication with my child. (P6: N.H. 42, Nurse).*

N.H. stated that she has a mentally disabled child. She said that she evaluates the posts she encounters on Instagram with empathy and that this partially affects her communication with her child.

*P7: I think Instagram is influential in my communication with my child. I am learning things I did not know in the same month group, mothers who have raised their children before sharing their experiences. I usually follow the doctor's mom and supplementary food pages. (P7: N.A. 42, Teacher)*

Participant 7 is having a baby just under one year old, N.A. On the other hand, she said that she received advice from Instagram about caring for her baby. She stated that she interacts with other mothers who have children the same month as her child and that the experiences shared by other mothers influence her communication with her child.

*P8: I can take some things on Instagram as an example in my communication with my child. It is about how I should behave. Since I have a child in adolescence, some things need special attention. I am generally interested in posts about adolescence. (P8: Y.C. 43, Banker)*

Having a child in adolescence, Y.C. On the other hand, she said that she obtained information on how to communicate with adolescent children from Instagram.

All in-depth interview participants who participated in the research agreed that Instagram directly or indirectly affects their communication with their children.

#### **4.2.2 Participants' opinions on the influence of the Instagram accounts they follow on their self-evaluations of maternity**

Mothers define their maternal identity through their views on Instagram. This means that Instagram influences how mothers display their maternal identity.

*P2: The pages we follow on Instagram necessarily affect our self-evaluations on maternity. We are making comparisons. You are comparing your approach to your child with someone else's approach to their child. I think that when we follow pages like this, we follow what other mothers do for another reason, which makes us more understanding. It reduces judgment against other mothers. Because everyone has a logical reason behind what they do, it makes people question their maternity while communicating with their children. (P2: C.K. 32, Academician)*

Participant 2 stated that the content she encountered on Instagram caused comparison. She shapes her self-evaluations of maternity by comparing her approach to theirs. She stated that this comparison led her to be understanding instead of judgmental while evaluating maternity. Participant 2 refers to comparison in her statements. In this comparison, being an "acceptable mother" or "ideal mother" is essential. After all, she states that this is less judgmental and more tolerant of other mothers because of the comparison between her and other mothers.

*P4: Instagram shares are influential in my understanding and evaluation of maternity. The things we encounter always collide. It touches our lives. I think it is somehow influential. (P4: L.Ç.A. 42, Nurse).*

*P5: Of course, Instagram is influential in my self-evaluations about. Because we are exposed, I inevitably do this too, or sometimes we say it would be better if I did not do it that way. All posts on Instagram affect us. (P5: M.Ç. 32, Not-working)*

*P6: Instagram is influential in my self-evaluation of maternity. Since my son is autistic, I follow food supplements and things like the child's brain development. There are many oils, like CBD oils that affect the brain. I am more inclined toward them on Instagram these days by brain-opening drugs or something. They give the same supplements to every child. I am firmly against it. For example, it says to use iodine, according to what iodine. I am firmly against giving such examples without looking at the analysis. Since this sector is for profit, it can be directed to deceive people. Mentally handicapped children are deceiving their mothers. You must use this, like these many dollars. I am a healthcare professional;*

*they sell essential ingredients at exorbitant prices. They affect mothers. I do not want to give these pages' names now. There are several physicians. It is not able to follow the child's development this way. These are so wrong. There is a spiritual void in mothers of exceptional children. There are also psychological problems. Worry, anxiety, and depression are present in these mothers. I include myself. We say what will happen; we cannot see ahead. They advertise that you must use them to be a good mother. Physicians also benefit from this desperation of mothers. (P6: N.H. 42, Nurse).*

The 6th participant, whose child has autism, expressed his experiences with the use of Instagram by mothers with a disabled child. She stated that many supplements for children with disabilities are sold on Instagram and that mothers are targeted as buyers here. Participant 6, who defines disabled children as exceptional children, states that there is a spiritual vacuum in mothers with exceptional children. She stated that these mothers had depression and anxiety and that these supplementary food advertisements abused these feelings and benefited from the mothers' desperation. Accordingly, it has been determined that a self-maternity assessment differs on Instagram according to the mothers who use or do not use these supplements.

*P8: These different perceptions push moms to pressure to appear themselves as good moms on Instagram. Because we inevitably think, what will be thought if you do this? Would it be said that she has a child, a woman with children, that she should not do this? All mothers try to look good. (P8: Y.C. 43, Banker).*

Participant 8 emphasized the social pressures on the behaviour of women with children. She stated that women with children could be judged very quickly. According to what participant 8 said after a woman has a child, society imposes behaviours that are suitable or not suitable for a mother. It is not welcome for a mother to act too liberally. These social stereotypes are also influential in mothers' self-evaluations about maternity. The expression "appearing like a good mother", stated by this participant, is based on acceptance by society. In order to enter the moulds defined as an acceptable mother or ideal mother by social values, there are differences between the maternal identity that mothers actually live and the identity of motherhood that occurs as a spectacle.



### 4.2.3 Instagram shares and the social communications of the participants

According to the research, it has been determined that mothers' desire to be visible on Instagram is more important than sharing their experiences with their environment. Some mothers share their experiences with Instagram and their daily life circles. On the other hand, some mothers do not share their experiences much with their environment. However, for all mothers, it is essential to how they appear as a mother to their environment.

Researcher: *"Would you share the maternity-related posts you encountered on Instagram with your social circle on Instagram?"*

P1: *I am a very strict but also understanding mother. While I send these kinds of things, especially to my friends who are mothers, I also send them to my wife. Look, this is the case; I show it because I am not the only one. I am like friends with my son and am strict where boundaries need to be set. My son knows my point and never goes over it the lines. However, I always explain the reason for the good. I share Instagram posts to my circle when I see posts are fruitful. (P1: B.Ö.Y. 36, NGO Officer).*

Participant 1 stated that she shared posts about motherhood on Instagram with her surroundings. While she expresses this, she describes herself as a mother with strict rules but understanding. Even when answering a question on another topic, she felt compelled to make herself look good about her maternal identity.

Researcher: *"Do you think there are common acceptances of maternity in society? Do you think these common acceptances affect the shares made on Instagram from social networks?"*

P1: *I think there are such assumptions. Everyone wants to take on that role of maternity well. There is more pressure from the elders in society. Older mothers put pressure on younger mothers. Under this pressure, women want to be seen as perfect mothers. It is also possible to see the pressure on Instagram shares. At present, a large part of society also has financial difficulties. That is why, when you go somewhere and share it on Instagram, it is not like a memory; look, we went here, and they shared it as a spectacle. Like advertising. They do it to the spectacle it to someone. There is a close friend's option on Instagram stories. To avoid looking like this, I try to make many of my posts so that only people registered in the close friend's tab will see them. Because I do not want some people*

*to see my posts, so they can interpret them differently. These social things influence us. Because your maternity can easily be questioned, or vice versa, you can get much appreciation. I have experienced that too. Even the close friends feature stems from my wanting to avoid social judgments about maternity as a mother. A mother needs to use social media more carefully. The people you receive these negative returns from may sometimes even be your family or remarkably close relatives. (P1: B.Ö.Y. 36, NGO Officer).*

Participant 1 stated that she used the "close friend" feature in her Instagram stories. One mother used a phrase that she should use Instagram more carefully. She stated that she is careful on Instagram with the close friend option, making her stories visible only to people she thinks not to judge her.

*P4: I do not share the maternal posts I come across on Instagram very often with my social circle. Because I think that when you share it, everyone can make different meanings. Everyone's truth is different; not every child-mother relationship is the same. I am not someone who likes to claim parenthood. I try to be a well-intentioned and diligent mother. I do not want to give people a spectacle of maternity either. I do not want to be misunderstood. That is why I avoid very assertive actions and sentences. (P4: L.Ç.A. 42, Nurse).*

Participant 4, on the other hand, stated that she does not share the content she encounters on Instagram much with her surroundings. She stated the reason for this as avoiding being misunderstood by people.

*P4: Also, I am not particularly eager to talk about the maternity of others in my conversations with my friends. I talk to very few people about maternity. This is a susceptible area for me, and I do not particularly appreciate being judged and battered in this area (maternity). Because I am already doing this myself, this is an identity I have acquired with my children, and I am unsure if it is right or wrong. I do not like when outsiders say something based on results without knowing my story. I only talk to certain people. (P4: L.Ç.A. 42, Nurse).*

*P7: While sharing my knowledge and experiences about maternity with my surroundings, I give examples from the Instagram pages I follow. Some recipes should be given to children related to the month group we are in. I share them with my circle. If I read anything about vaccines, I give information. My child is seven months old; I follow the influencers in the same month group. There is an influencer called the engineer's son. It researches all baby products on the market. It shares its contents. Before I buy a product, I look at that page. I*

*am reading the table of contents, is it recommended or not? I take it accordingly. I also share these products I bought with my friends. (P7: N.A. 42, Teacher)*

Participant 7 stated that she intensively shared posts about baby care with her circle.

#### **4.2.4 Participants' comments on social assumptions and pressures on mothers and their reflection on the Instagram spectacle**

It has been determined that social pressures, judgments and roles influence how mothers show their maternal identity. Social judgments create the spectacle, and at the same time, the spectacle creates the social structure. Social influences are the most dominant factor in mothers' belief, evaluation and appearance regarding their maternal identity.

*P2: There are common assumptions that mothers are the subject of rebellion as if the mother takes care of the child. You can see the most rebellious mothers on Instagram. The mothers who rebelled that the child's parents are not only mothers. When I see these mothers, I feel "I am not alone. (P2: C.K. 32, Academician).*

Participant 2 described Instagram as an area of rebellion for mothers. She stated that she got rid of feeling lonely when she saw women with the same problems.

*P3: "I think there are societal pressures on maternity. People's comments by tagging each other under the posts on Instagram create social pressure. There may be comments about maternity made by men. Evaluations can be a factor of pressure." (P3: G.E.Ç. 32, Purchasing specialist).*

Participant 3 drew attention to the comments made under the Instagram posts. She stated that these comments could be a factor of pressure.

*P4: I recently saw a psychologist's narrative about attachment on social media. One of the women also commented on it; she wrote we are thinking of escaping to Barcelona for three days with my wife. Other comments "Please do not do it; it would be too bad"; they wrote that they could not get over it. So, what do people do? Because of this pressure, people spectacle themselves were sharing on Instagram that "I was a perfect mother". Especially if the child-mother relationship is a little troublesome, mothers can get tired of questioning themselves. It can be depressing. I am not assertive about my other identities, but I say it because the identity of maternity is more visible. Certain adjectives are constantly loaded by filling in the identity of maternity. As if you had to be in that model. (P4: L.Ç.A. 42, Nurse).*

Participant 4 gave an example from a post they encountered on Instagram and the comments made on this post. She stated that according to this example, women oppress each other and put pressure on each other.

*P4: Recently, a woman with three children did not get along well with her husband and ran away with her lover. It was talked about at the hairdressers. Would you believe everyone blamed the woman? "How can a woman leave her children as a mother?" That's what they said. I said, she is a human before she is a mother. We do not know if he was happy or not. I said that if you are not loved, you cannot love. There is such an environment. A frame is constantly drawn for mothers. Social media is also a lovely mirror to see. People can blame each other's maternity in the comments in mutual dialogues on Instagram. I think that social media also imposes these social conditions on maternity. (P4: L.Ç.A. 42, Nurse).*

In these statements, the participant states that women have an identity of being human before their identity as a mother. While a man with children continues his life with a woman other than the mother of his children, it is not blamed by society; When there is a woman in the same situation, the woman in the situation is blamed.

*P5: Unfortunately, such judgments exist. It is also widely available on Instagram. It is like a mom should do this. It is a big event if the mother is working and taking care of her children. Even if the mother is tired, she needs to pretend that she is not tired. There is pressure on Instagram that the mother should always look good, like a picture, actively with her children. There is a situation where the mother always communicates with her children; the mother always plays with her children, and the mother is perfect. We know that this is not so. However, some do not know. I have it around me too. After seeing someone on Instagram, "She did it; why can't I? She is catching up; how can I not catch up?" Many around me say so. Unfortunately, Instagram creates such a perception. Because none of us out there share all our daily lives, things that want to be shown and liked are shared. You see, she also cooks, takes care of her husband, and plays with her child, how she does it. You look at yourself; you try to do something running, but you still cannot catch up. I often wonder if I am an inadequate mother when I see this. (P5: M.Ç. 32, Not-working).*

Participant 5 evaluated that there is too much psychological burden on women on Instagram. He mentioned that there is social pressure for women to work, take care of their children, and take care of their spouses simultaneously. Accordingly, women posting on Instagram present themselves as omnipotent mothers, even if they are not.

Participant 5 stated that other women, who see women who pretend to be self-sufficient, can feel inadequate.

*P5: A friend of mine is looking at Instagram; there are toy pages for children; for example, when she looks at them, she always thinks she should have them too. Moreover, when she couldn't, I witnessed with my eyes that she dragged herself into a depression. This can put pressure on a mother. There are also perfect things on Instagram, but I can be dragged into depression with the feeling that I cannot do it. As I said, I had a remarkably close friend who said that I could not buy enough things for my child, and I could not take care of them enough. People are drifting away from actuality on Instagram. Inevitably, there is a perception. Even though I try not to share too much, comments are coming from my environment that you are a wonderful mother. They say, how do you grow so many things? This creates pressure because, this time, you are trying to put yourself there. (P5: M.Ç. 32, Not-working).*

Participant 5 said that one of her friends felt inadequate and unsuccessful as a mother and became depressed because of the posts she saw on Instagram.

*P6: There is intense pressure on mothers in society. In my work environment, they say a lot about my son's condition - he has autism - that you should not work, you need to take care of your son. Some of my friends say that if I were you, I would take unpaid leave and be with my child. I also need to be able to support my child economically. After I cannot take my child to a good nursery and a good therapist, what will help my being at home for my child? If I had money, I would not work anyway. Such pressures are, especially on mothers. There is never such pressure on fathers. This situation is wholly left to the mothers. Dads say they do not understand anyway. Is there such a thing? For example, my wife could not accept my son's condition until he was 4-5. I want to share this with you.*

*We used to take my son to the park; I saw in my husband's eyes that he was ashamed of her son. Fathers are like that. No mother is ashamed of her child, but a father can be ashamed of his child. That is why he targets mothers on his Instagram pages. We have WhatsApp groups for families with children with autism. If there are 500 people, maybe 2 of them are fathers. Mothers with autistic children say you do not work, but I have never heard anything like that said about the father. As I have not heard of, I have seen many fathers who do not work and do not take care of their children. There is no pressure on even such fathers. The mother is both working and taking care of the child. The father is not working and has no intention of working. All the burden is on the mother. (P6: N.H. 42, Nurse).*

Participant 6, who has a child with autism, stated that society places all responsibility for childcare on the mother. She stated that despite all her efforts, she was seen as inadequate by society and that this was an element of pressure on her, but the same pressure was never placed on her kid's father. Participant 6, a nurse, stated that society judged her for not being able to spare enough time for her disabled child because she continued to work. She stated that if she does not work, she blames society for not being able to offer good opportunities to her child because she will have financial difficulties. She continues to work or stops working; participant 6 is faced with being accused in both cases.

On the other hand, there is no social pressure on the spouse of the participant. Participant 6, in an example she gave, said that his wife was initially ashamed of her child due to her disability and did not accept the situation. She said a mother is never ashamed of her child, but a father can. Mothers of children with autism have stated in their Instagram posts that they are constantly worried about these pressures. She gave the example of a WhatsApp group of about 500 people with families with autism, almost all of them women. From this point of view, we can say that there is significant gender inequality in social value judgments. Social pressures focus on female identity.

*P7: Old mothers put psychological pressure on new mothers. Ex-mothers have general knowledge within themselves. The new ones have the information according to the new age. New mothers are also affected by these social pressures in their Instagram posts. (P7: N.A. 42, Teacher).*

#### **4.2.5 Instagram as an expression area for mothers**

It has been determined that Instagram is an area where mothers can express themselves. Mothers want to be visible through Instagram.

*P4: I refrain from expressing myself as a mother on Instagram, as I have seen the maternal identity turned into a spectacle. I do not want to be part of this kind of spectacle. I limit myself too much. I want them to know me independently of my identities. (P4: L.Ç.A. 42, Nurse).*

The 4'th participant says that she does not want to be known for her identity related to maternity. She thinks her maternity identity has turned into a spectacle on Instagram.

She states that she limits herself not to appear to be showing off this way. This can be considered a self-censorship situation with an avoidance reflex. On the opposite way, it is a statement that defines the spectacle of maternal identity.

*P5: Friends on social media are also different from daily life. Regardless of the topic, I also feel good about my communication on Instagram. It creates the impression that you are more robust; you know, you can manage it. Mothers who are suppressed in everyday life may be more relaxed on Instagram. (P5: M.Ç. 32, Not-working).*

Participant 5 says posting on Instagram can make mothers feel good. It creates a kind of atmosphere of trust and togetherness between mothers.

*P6: I think Instagram is a suitable place for mothers to express themselves. On Instagram, I share things that will make moms feel stronger. Things that have messages like we can do these things, we can get over them. I can share things on Instagram that I cannot say in everyday life. It sounds good to me. It's nice that at least someone knows about us. We exist, we are flesh and blood, and we are here. It is like saying, we always seem strong, but we are not strong either. (P6: N.H. 42, Nurse).*

The 6th participant also says that Instagram is suitable for mothers to express themselves. It is nice that at least someone can see us, she commented. There is an emphasis on visibility here. According to this statement, mothers get the opportunity to participate and be visible in a kind of digital public space through Instagram.

*P7: As a mom, I love expressing myself on Instagram. Because people have become very fond of sharing what they do. Even if people in their own families do not understand her, they think his followers understand her as her followers increase, including mothers. For example, they do Q&A with their followers. They answer and share the questions they receive on Instagram. They share the products they bought. I think the side of showing me the best mother outweighs the motivation for making these posts. I choose the best products. I am raising the best kid. Let everyone see this. Yes, maybe it starts as a support, but with the increase in followers, the anxiety of showing maternity and showing off with it increases. (P7: N.A. 42, Teacher).*

Participant 7 states that when mothers are not understood by their families, they can be understood by their followers on Instagram. She says Instagram publishers do Q&A with their followers, which is good for them to express themselves.

#### 4.2.6 Opinions of the participants on the sharing of children's visuals on Instagram

While some mothers found sharing children's photos negative, some mothers considered it normal. However, according to the findings, it was revealed that the anxiety of appearing as a good mother for mothers is an essential factor in sharing their children's photos. The mothers who shared their children's photos said they created an album for their children as good mothers. Mothers who did not share photos of their children said they did not share them because they were conscious mothers. In both cases, the common concern is to appear as a good mother.

*P2: For me, it's not right for a mother to always share images of her child with a camera. The kid always seeing the mother with the phone in her hand is not reasonable for my lifestyle. However, I respect everyone. I think it is a spectacle of maternity. With the phone in your hand, you shoot videos while your child is experiencing something, spending time with him or her without reacting to the child. It seems that it makes the relationship with the child a bit artificial. (P2: C.K. 32, Academician).*

*P3: Mothers who share photos of their children on Instagram want to give themselves the appearance of "I am a perfect mother". You know, maternity is a sacred duty or, in our society, "she is like a mother after all"; It is like being both a mother and working... For this purpose, those who want to emphasize maternity share their children more. I always think like this. We have distinct roles. I am a wife, mother, and businessperson from 7 am to 5 pm. That is why I have distinctions. I do not want to highlight one of these identities. I usually post my child's photos on the weekends. Maybe it is because my maternity role started the weekend. (P3: G.E.Ç. 32, Purchasing specialist).*

Participant 3 says that women who frequently share photos of their children on Instagram do so to appear as the perfect mother. She states that she has different roles, such as wife, purchasing specialist and mother, and she does not want one of them to stand out in her identity. Saying that her motherhood started on the weekend and that she shared the images of her child on Instagram at the weekend indicates that she limited herself to a working woman.

*P4: The intention is also essential; maybe she wanted to share her happiness with her kids. However, I think there is a problem with frequency. I do not want to see every action there. I find it wrong that it is shared too often. I rarely share. I have negative feelings towards mothers who share very often and every content. It bothers me to see five videos in a row.*



*In this way, a maternity spectacle sounds like camouflage. I think it is a two-way feeling. A little "look, I am doing this job very well." It is self-confidence, but it is a bit like, "I cannot be a good mother, so let me share a few things, show it, and look like a good mother". There is a saying about - in Turkish: "Analar neler doğurur!" ("Analar neler doğurur" It is a kind of idiom in Turkish. The direct translation of this expression is: "Mothers give birth to amazing kids." It means some mothers give birth to extraordinary children who befit their maternal identity. It's a competitive phrase that makes mothers look like they have to give birth to the perfect child.) Mothers want to show their maternity that way via their children on Instagram. "Look, I did this, I give birth to this perfect kid!" Well, you did well. I do not want to look like that either. That is why I limit myself so much on Instagram. (P4: L.Ç.A. 42, Nurse).*

*P6: I do not judge mothers for sharing many videos and photos of their children on Instagram. Frankly, I do not find it wrong. A person shares who and what she loves very much. That is why I think she likes it, so she shares it. (P6: N.H. 42, Nurse).*

*P6: In general, the mind remembers painful memories, not beautiful ones. Instagram is not like that. It brings back good memories. It is always nice to have good memories like this. In that sense, I love social media. (P6: N.H. 42, Nurse).*

*P7: I need to share the memories I spend with my child on Instagram. I feel like I am keeping a diary for my daughter. I love to collect moments. We used to look at printed photos. Like its digital version. (P7: N.A. 42, Teacher).*

#### **4.2.7 The participants' comments on the differences between the actuality and the maternal spectacle on Instagram**

According to the findings, it was detected that the mothers stated that actuality and appearance were different. On Instagram, mothers try to create the same appearance as each other by being influenced by accounts with high followers or by each other. However, what happens is not the same as what appears.

*P1: I am not saying I am a super mom, but sometimes I can make negative criticisms about what I see. Since my son is somewhat of an emotional child, my role as a mother also works differently. When I look at moms on Instagram, I see that nothing is what it seems. The truth of a photo, video or story is not like that on the back. Because I know this, I am not the type who does see something others and will do the same. I go a little with our living conditions or my child's character or family structure. (P1: B.Ö.Y. 36, NGO Officer)*

Participant 1 says moms act differently on Instagram than in actual life.

Researcher: *“You just said that the actuality is different from what is seen in the posts on*

Researcher: *“Is it possible that you are trying not to look like the pages you criticize negatively on Instagram because of your negative review?”*

P1: *Yes, it is. I avoid such unactualistic spectacles of maternity.* (P1: B.Ö.Y. 36, NGO Officer).

P7: *There are posts about babies eating lumpy food, which I come across on Instagram right now. New moms share this a lot; expressions like “I mashed it with a fork as I steamed it”. When influencers on Instagram, for example, share these lumpy food contents, I see that the mothers around me share the same. I see the same things all the time. All mothers who have children around me, influencer or not, share these posts if they use Instagram regularly. They always look alike. In the meantime, only the images of the children change. Everyone shares their child, but the information is the same; the image is the same. The display format is the same. They take the spoon from the same plate and put it in the same place. They shoot at the same angle. They are influenced by each other. Everything is the same; only the children are different. She starts an account with a high following to this influential; then, all moms do the same.”* (P7: N.A. 42, Teacher).

Participant 7 says that when an influencer shares about baby care, all the mothers around her share the same. Only children change in videos, she says. She interprets those mothers, whom she knows do not treat their children this way, take such videos on Instagram as a break from actuality. She says moms act differently on Instagram than in actual life.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

My observations formed the starting point of this study. I observed that many high-follower accounts on Instagram present themselves through their maternal identity. Regarding paternity, it was tough to find similar accounts. Afterward, I observed mothers following these pages who shared about maternity. I have observed that the spectacle of their maternal identities is essential for mothers who are Instagram users. I wanted to explore how and in what way these forms of demonstration came to be. Social roles affect people's perceptions of their identities and how they spectacle them. On social media, people display their different identities.

On the other hand, Instagram is a platform built on sharing images rather than text within social media platforms. Therefore, Instagram is an ideal platform to study identity representations in the context of the theory of spectacle society. Every post made by the page mothers follow on Instagram bears traces of the stereotypical social roles imposed on maternity. These accounts may affect women who have children and follow these pages differently when they spectacle their maternal identity. This influence could be a pressure factor or a transfer of experience that makes their lives easier. Instagram is a digital space for mothers. Has this space instrumentalized the maternal identity as an element of spectacle, or does it offer mothers public space participation? Maternity identity on Instagram was investigated in line with these questions. Guy Debord's Society of Spectacle theory formed the basic literature framework of the research.

This interaction creates an area for social roles, and my claim is that maternal identity is instrumentalized on Instagram as a spectacle. All data supported this argument. According to the theory of the spectacle of society, the spectacle is a loss of actuality both created by the society and forming the society itself. The findings of this study showed that the views of maternal identity on Instagram are shaped by the influence of social roles and judgments. At the same time, these maternal identity appearances have spawned the maternity community on Instagram. Actuality has lost its importance; only appearance has gained importance. Mothers need to appear as good mothers. This break

from actuality shows that the Instagram community has turned into a society of the spectacle. The findings have proven the argument.

The 17th aphorism of Guy Debord's Society of Spectacle:

*The first stage of the economy's domination of social life brought about an evident degradation of being into having — human fulfilment was no longer equated with what one was, but with what one possessed. The present stage, in which social life has become completely dominated by the accumulated productions of the economy, is bringing about a general shift from having to appearing — all "having" must now derive its immediate prestige and its ultimate purpose from appearances. At the same time, all individual actuality has become social in the sense that it is shaped by social forces and is directly dependent on them. Individual actuality is allowed to appear only if it is not actual.* (Debord 1967).

Before the concept of "possession" appeared, people existed with their differences in social life. Result of the first economic domination in social life, this changed to "having" concept. People stopped dealing with what they were and started to buy what they had. This will be better understood when considering social status and roles. Which molds can be answered in the question "What am I?" This has caused the transition to "look like" from "possession". Today, all individual actualities are related to social power. The ruling of social power decides "what seems like actual." People do not need something; it is enough to seem "have". In today's society, people have an image of themselves. This image is a kind of mask, not related to actuality. Individual actuality is allowed only if it is not itself. This image contradicts "being," the humanities essence. In the second step of economic domination: People stopped dealing with what they had and started to be busy with what they would display. After the second step of economic domination, which moulds can be answered by the question "Who am I?". There are no molds to answer. This question is meaningless. Because actuality has lost its importance and the answer to everything is in the false images. We can observe this situation in every social area, such as politics, media, arts, etc. We can also see this situation in the identity of maternity. Research conclusions show that society does not accept women only as individuals. It is essential to have different identities and roles for social acceptance. Turning these identities into a spectacle after a stage has made them more valuable than how they were lived. The spectacle has replaced possession and is the

result of social domination. It is also possible to see this maternal identity spectacle on social media. Instagram is suitable for looking at the society of the spectacle as it is based on visuals. The maternity spectacle appears on Instagram from different sides. All the research data show that visibility is integral to maternal identity. Looking like a good mother is more important than actuality. This shows us that maternal identity on Instagram has been instrumentalized as part of the society of the spectacle.

My claim in the research is that women's maternity identity presentations on Instagram reflect the spectacle's society. The main reason maternal identity presentations on Instagram have turned into a spectacle is that the Instagram accounts followed by women with children make social stereotypes an element of pressure on mothers. To prove my argument, the problem statement of the research; is "How does following maternity Instagram accounts affect the way women with children perceive and spectacle their identity as mothers?" I set the question, and I structured the research qualitatively. I selected the research sample from women with at least one child under 18 who are Instagram users. I collected the data using qualitative methods in two stages. Web surveys and in-depth interviews were the two methods I provided data. I used the "Demographic Information Form", "Instagram Usage Information Form", and "Instagram Usage Purposes Scale" in the web survey. In the in-depth interviews, I used the "Demographic Information Form", "Instagram Usage Information Form", and "Interview Questions".

The primary data source of the research is in-depth interviews. The survey was conducted as secondary and supportive. In-depth interviews were conducted with 8 participants; online surveys were conducted with 80 participants. Online surveys have a limited number of 80 participants because online surveys are not the primary position in this research. Online surveys aimed to support and provide the interviews by expanding the demographic data.

While implementing my method, the fact that maternity is a susceptible concept in society was worrying for me. In addition, the participants were more likely to be biased. I had to be careful and avoid sexist statements during the research process. Interview participants were shy at the beginning of the interviews. They were worried about not being able to look like a good mother and being judged about their motherhood. As a

researcher, I approached impartially and reassuringly. Once they felt a sense of security, their anxiety lessened, and they began to answer questions sincerely.

For Guy Debord, the spectacle presents itself as a society. As a part of society and as a means of unification. The spectacle brings together society's views and consciousness. The spectacle is not a collection of images, but images mediate a social relationship between people (Debord 1967.) Research has shown that mothers want to be visible. As mentioned extensively in the Results section, social stereotypes greatly impact their desire to be visible. This desire to be visible occurs both as a specific existence in society, being a part of the society and directly as an extension of social judgments. Therefore, this societal desire for visibility is a definite indicator of the society of the spectacle. Mothers try to be accepted in society by instrumentalizing their maternal identity as a spectacle.

The specialization of power is the basis of the spectacle, which is the actual production of contemporary society, which is the indispensable ornament/image of the objects produced today and shapes the objects directly. In this context, the spectacle is a specialized activity that speaks for others. (Debord 1967.) In this context, maternity-related high-follower accounts that share on Instagram are a kind of specialized spectacle power. This power is a dynamic process that influences social judgments on its followers and creates social judgments. This form of power is purely demonstration and interaction oriented. These accounts significantly affect the instrumentalization of maternal identity as a spectacle. Mothers are on Instagram about their own and others' maternal identities, between being visible in society and being judged by society. This situation leads mothers to try to show themselves differently than they are. Maternal identity presentations on Instagram are widening the gap between actuality and spectacle. Mothers try to look like the pages they follow on Instagram. These appearances, in which only images gain importance by moving away from actuality, are entirely in line with Debord's definition of the society of the spectacle.

It is undeniable that media is one of the most potent ideological devices of power. The ruling reproduces the truth through the media spectacles. This reproduction becomes a tool of hegemony. Media spectacles recreate actuality and surround people. Life through media spectacles; is reduced to a form of entertainment, drama, surrender and

consumption. *“Media spectacles are those phenomena of media culture that embody contemporary society’s basic values, initiate individuals into its way of life, and dramatize its controversies and struggles, as well as its modes of conflict resolution.”* (Kellner 2003). Instagram is a new type of media spectacle in this context. Sharing about people's identities imposes stereotypical roles on people. In the research, I found that maternal identity is reproduced on Instagram as a media spectacle. Maternal roles make them look different from what they are. This is a new media spectacle pattern.

The online survey results also support these data on the show society provided by the in-depth interviews. According to the results of the survey, women with children use Instagram for communication for different purposes. According to the survey results, women are affected by Instagram in many ways on matters related to their children. The status of the spectacle of the maternity identity can also be seen statistically in the survey results.

I argue that representations of maternal identity on Instagram are instrumentalized as a spectacle. As a result of the study, it was seen that women with children use Instagram as a form of identity spectacle. Mothers try to be accepted in society by instrumentalizing their maternal identity as a spectacle. The reasons for this are complex. Social judgments and the desire to be visible are the dominant factors in the spectacle. The findings obtained from the research method proved the argument developed in the axis of the theoretical framework.

The results obtained in this study are limited in some respects. First of all, the study was conducted during the pandemic period. During the pandemic period, the domestic labour of women has increased intensively. This situation may have increased the desire to be visible and, therefore, more intense data about the show society. However, since this is a master's thesis, it is research with a limited scope. Research on the was not designed based on the pandemic to conduct crystallized research. This work is limited to Instagram. The results may differ when other social media platforms are examined in other studies. The results are limited to a sample of participants. The number of participants can be expanded in further studies.

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## APPENDIX A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM

İsim- Soyisim: ...

E-Posta: ...

Cinsiyet:

- Kadın  
 Erkek  
 Belirtmek İstemiyorum

Yaş: ....

Medeni Durum

- Evli  
 Bekar

Evli iseniz kaç yıldır evli olduğunuzu belirtiniz: ....

Çocuk Sayısı

- 1  
 2  
 3  
 4  
 5 ve fazlası

Çocuklarınızın Yaşlarını Yazınız: ...

Öğrenim Durumu

- Okula gitmedim / İlkokulu bitiremeden okulu bıraktım.  
 İlkokul Mezunu  
 Ortaokul Mezunu

- Lise Mezunu
- Üniversite Mezunu
- Yüksek lisans mezunu
- Doktora Mezunu

Meslek:

- Çalışmıyorum
- Öğrenci
- Çalışıyorum. Mesleğim:.....



## APPENDIX B: INSTAGRAM USAGE INFORMATION FORM

Aşağıdaki sosyal medya uygulamalarından hangilerini kullanıyorsunuz?

- Instagram
- Twitter
- Facebook
- TikTok
- Linkedin
- Diğer: ...
- Hiçbiri

En çok hangi sosyal medya uygulamasında vakit geçiriyorsunuz?

- Instagram
- Twitter
- Facebook
- TikTok
- Linkedin
- Diğer: ...
- Hiçbiri

Günde ortalama kaç saat Instagram kullanıyorsunuz?

- Hiç
- 1 saatten az
- 1 – 2 saat
- 2 – 4 saat
- 4 saat ve üstü

Instagram'da annelik ve çocuk bakımıyla ilgili paylaşım yapan sayfaları takip ediyor musunuz?

- Evet
- Hayır

Instagram’da annelik ve çocuk bakımıyla ilgili paylaşım yapan en çok hangi sayfaları takip ediyorsunuz?

.....

Aşağıdaki cümlelerden sizin için geçerli olanları işaretleyiniz:

- ( ) Çocuğumun bakımı ve beslenmesi ile ilgili karar verirken Instagram’daki içeriklerden yardım alırım.
- ( ) Çocuğumun okul hayatıyla ilgili karar verirken Instagram içeriklerinden yardım alırım.
- ( ) Annelikle ilgili bilgileri Instagram üzerinden edinmek benim için faydalı oluyor.
- ( ) Takip ettiğim annelikle ilgili Instagram hesaplarının gönderilerini Instagram’daki sosyal çevremle paylaşıyorum
- ( ) Çevremle annelikle ilgili konularda sohbet ederken annelikle ilgili Instagram sayfalarından örnekler veririm.

## APPENDIX C: INSTAGRAM USAGE PURPOSES SCALE

Table C.1 Instagram Usage Purposes Scale

No		Hiçbir Zaman	Nadiren	Bazen	Sıklıkla	Her Zaman
1	Instagram'ı arkadaşlarımla iletişimde bulunmak için kullanırım.					
2	Instagram'ı eğlenmek ve rahatlamak için kullanırım.					
3	Instagram'ı boş zamanları değerlendirmek için kullanırım.					
4	Instagram'ı kendimi ifade etmek için kullanırım.					
5	Instagram'ı mesaj göndermek ve almak için kullanırım.					
6	Instagram'ı insanları tanımak için kullanırım.					
7	Instagram'ı olayları/gündemi takip etmek için kullanırım.					
8	Instagram'ı kişisel sunum ve bilgi paylaşımı için kullanırım.					
9	Instagram'ı kişi ve organizasyonlara ulaşmak için kullanırım.					
10	Instagram'ı fikir alışverişinde bulunmak için kullanırım.					
11	Instagram'ı bilgiye erişim amacıyla kullanırım.					
12	Instagram'ı kendi yaşantımı ve yaptıklarımı gösterebilmek için kullanırım					

## APPENDIX D: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Instagram'da takip ettiğiniz annelikle ilgili hesapların yaptığı paylaşımların çocuğunuzla iletişiminizde etkili olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?
2. Annelikle ilgili anlayış ve değerlendirmelerinizde takip ettiğiniz Instagram hesaplarının etkili olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?
3. Instagram'da karşılaştığınız annelikle ilgili paylaşımları, Instagram'daki sosyal çevrenizle paylaşır mısınız?
4. Çevrenize annelikle ilgili bilgi ve tecrübelerinizi paylaşırken takip ettiğiniz Instagram hesaplarından örnekler veriyor musunuz?
5. Toplumda annelikle ilgili yaygın kabuller olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz? Sizce sosyal ağlardan Instagram'da yapılan paylaşımlarda bu yaygın kabullerin etkisi var mı?
6. Instagram'ın anne olarak kendinizi ifade edebileceğiniz bir alan olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?
7. Instagram'da çocukların video ve fotoğraflarının paylaşılmasını doğru buluyor musunuz? Siz çocuğunuzun video fotoğraflarını paylaşıyor musunuz? Paylaşıyorsanız, ne sıklıkla paylaşırsınız?
8. Çocuğunuzla geçirdiğiniz vakitleri (örneğin: tatil, etkinlik, vb.) Instagram'da paylaşmak sizin önemli midir? Önemliyse neden önemlidir?
9. Anne olmadan önce annelikle ilgili paylaşım yapan Instagram yayıncılarını takip ediyor muydunuz? Yayıncıları ne zaman takip etmeye başladınız?



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