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DISTRACTED PARENTING:
HOW SOCIAL MEDIA AFFECTS PARENT-CHILD ATTACHMENT

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Denise Ante-Contreras

June 2016

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ABSTRACT

Social media usage for parents has become ubiquitous, as either a form of entertainment or communication with other individuals. However, excessive use of social media has also shown to have effects on parenting; causing parental distraction, decreasing the level of everyday parental engagement, and making a child more likely to be at risk for injury. Studies have shown that frequent eye contact, one on one time, and undivided attention are necessary in building a secure attachment between a parent and child. The research study in question hoped to understand whether there was a correlation between the amount of hours a parent uses social media and any number of parental qualities. Surveys were distributed to parents in various parenting groups and online chatting boards regarding social media usage, number of hours on their devices, and parenting styles. Other questions asked whether their child has ever been injured as a result of their social media usage, and whether a parent shows a strong general bond to their child.

Results from the survey concluded there to be only one statistically significant relationship between any of the social media usage variables and the parenting variables, that is, a positive relationship between hours of social media usage and a high score on authoritarian parenting techniques. Overall however, parents identified more often with a balanced parenting style. Implications of other demographic characteristics are further explored.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would especially like to thank Dr. Carolyn McAllister for all of her guidance throughout this process. Without her assistance this project could not have been completed. Dr. McAllister helped me take a vague idea and create a very specific study, pushing me along the way to ensure its completion. Though our results were not as telling as we had hoped, we know that the overall idea of my study has room for growth and improvement. Thank you for helping me with every step of my research and with learning about an aspect of society that I was greatly interested in.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis foremost to my husband Daniel Ante-Contreras. Daniel, you have been there with me through everything, through every struggle, late night, and frustrating moment. I thank you for being patient and supporting me in this process. Together we worked as a team to make sure our daughter Dakota had all the love and attention she needed. I want to thank my beautiful daughter for being herself; being patient, and always loving me even on days when she clearly missed her mommy.

To my parents, Isidro and Raquel Contreras, and my siblings, who have shown me a lifetime of unconditional love and support. To my mother in law Lynette and father in law Michael, thank you for your never-ending help, I could not have completed this program with you and I am forever grateful for the willing extra set of hands. Lastly, I want to thank my wonderful cohort. I have developed the most amazing friendships during the past three years; we have been each other's support and encouragement during all the stressful times. I love you guys, we finally did it!

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Excessive use of social media has become a problem in recent years, based on its ability to take away typical human interactions and replace them with conversations through the use of technology. The following chapter will describe the problem of social media usage as it relates to a parent's ability to bond and spend time with their children. The usage of online forms of media has many benefits for socialization and support; however the focus of the study is to identify how its usage affects parenting skills, parent-child attachment, and whether social media usage is replacing or diminishing valuable quality time between parents and their children.

Problem Statement

Social media usage has increased exponentially in modern years. Communication which once was in person or by telephone now can be done online without physical contact or connection. Individuals spend countless hours of their lives attached to devices with the intent of communicating with others, sharing their daily lives, and acquiring new information. Many of these individuals therefore can neglect other aspects of their lives by spending more time on social media and social networking sites. Research, both academically and in mainstream media, has shown that accidents occur on a daily basis

from drivers who are distracted by texting, checking their Facebook, taking pictures, and otherwise using their many devices (Radesky et. al, 2014; Bianchi & Phillips, 2015). Parents and children no longer have conversations face to face but rather will text each other, even when they are only a short distance away or within the same house. Individuals also use social media as an outlet to vent frustrations and connect with others in similar situations throughout the world. For these reasons, mobile devices such as cell phones and tablets have become ubiquitous and are an ever-expanding aspect of socialization for children (Blake and Wrothen, 2012).

Excessive use of social media may lead to a decrease in the many communication processes necessary to create strong bonds between a parent and a child. Beside the sheer amount of time spent on the device, the parent may be physically present but may be emotionally distant, ignoring all but the more important needs of their children. Golden (2015) also states that “while parents generally report that they are only on their mobile devices for a few seconds at a time, video evidence shows that they can be absorbed for upwards of 3 minutes at a stretch” (p. 102). This is not to say that parents are neglectful for using social media necessarily, but specifically parents are more distracted and less in tune with their children if they are constantly focusing attention on their devices. Some researchers such as Ralston (2012) even describe distracted parenting as being a direct threat to child welfare as

parents are often more engaged in their devices as opposed to supervising their children closely.

There are currently no social policies or agencies which directly affect the issue of excessive social media usage and its potential subsequent effect on parenting. Because the study focused on parent attachment as opposed to outright child neglect, the applicability of information from certain agencies such as Child Protective Services is negligible. While it is possible for a parent to use social media to an extreme level as to directly impact the care of their children, these cases are the exception; attention was placed instead on the varying levels of attachment between the parent and the child based on their usage of social media. Therefore, more extreme cases leading to child abuse and neglect were not studied.

Purpose of the Study

The study hopes to answer the question: How does excessive parental use of social media affect parent-child attachment and parenting style? The hypothesis is that excessive use of social media, defined as over two or three hours of daily usage, by parents will negatively affect the strength of attachment between the parent and child. When parents begin to spend more hours on social media during the time they are caring for their child, they may start to lose some of the important interactions necessary for a healthy attachment. At the same time, an increased use of social media can lead a

parent to have a different parenting style, one that may be permissive or authoritarian versus a responsive and respectful parenting style more in tune with an authoritative/balanced style.

The study focused on the use of social media by parents and its effects on their parenting, particularly their type of attachment to their children. Parents who spend an excessive amount of time on sites such as Facebook may be prone to neglecting their children, or leaving them unsupervised for short periods of time while they become immersed in the information shared through social media. Therefore, social media usage will affect how much attention parents are paying to their children and their subsequent level of attachment and bonding. Though the study then focused on parents and their young children, the impact of the research can reach larger populations. There may be an understanding overall as to how social media affects relationships.

According to Huisman (2014), healthy attachments are particularly critical for young children, who are the focus of this study. "Attachment is easily formed through eye contact, talking to each other, and skin-to-skin contact" (p. 160). While a parent who spends excessive amount of time checking their phone may be physically present and providing that needed skin to skin contact, there may be less of a focus on the necessary eye contact and communication needed to acquire a healthy attachment at a young age. Children of a young age may be less likely to conceptualize how their parents' social media usage may be impacting their relationship, but may still be

affected by the lack of attention. Older children may be able to understand that their parents are “ignoring them” or “always busy” and therefore this may affect the relationship more obviously. Therefore the study focused on parents of children under the age of four, who would have less insight into whether their parents are distracted by social media. Effects on their attachment will then solely be a result of the parents’ use versus the child’s feelings about how social media is affecting their relationship.

The research methods used included a variety of surveys and interviews with relatively new parents who use social media. By using online surveying, a more precise population of individuals impacted by the study was reached: that is, those who spend time on these same social media sites and have young children. Many parents who completed the survey are also members of multiple other online parenting communities, through which they were able to share the existence of the survey with their friends, and therefore increase survey participation. Through these methods of sampling the study was able to acquire a great variety of participants from all over the world, of all ethnicities, ages, and income levels. The internet is a commonplace utility in most homes now, with over 65% of adults using social media in some form (Perrin, Pew Research Center, 2015), and therefore the survey research can be more widespread.

Significance of the Project for Social Work

Social media usage significantly affects social work practice through changes in the way families communicate and spend time together. A negative parent and child attachment could potentially lead the child to further developmental or emotional problems later in life related to attachment at a young age. For example, Turner (2011) states that “the quality of interactions between infant and caregiver, beginning at birth, motivated specifically by the child’s need for safety and protection, are central to lifespan development” (p. 31). Further, Bowlby (2005) believed that in order for a child to be able to explore his world with confidence, he must be able to trust in the availability and security of their primary caretaker. In using social media excessively, the supervision or attention given by a parent can be haphazard or inconsistent, which can lead to a disintegration of the “secure base of the attachment relationship” (Turner 2011, p. 33).

Based on the prevalence of social media usage in new parents and the increasing amount of time most individuals spend using their devices (Ray & Jat, 2010), understanding the negative repercussions of its usage will benefit families in learning to focus their time and attention on their children. Excessive use of social media can also potentially be a social issue in terms of increased number of distractions and cuts in face to face interaction. On the opposite realm, if social media usage actually is shown to be positive for parent-child relationships, parents can use these resources of social support

and bonding to improve their parenting ability, improving their own moods and the behaviors of their children.

Based on the generalist intervention process, the study hopes to acquire new information related to the beginning and assessment phases. Although surveying the participants will not lead to actual interventions being made, it becomes important to view the parents' attachment style. Engagement with the participants and an assessment of their parenting style, social media usage, and their child's attachment will be of greatest significance. Social workers focused on problematic social media usage will evaluate and develop an understanding of the underlying issue in a client's parenting, and therefore may articulate a clear statement of the client's need.

The main focus of the research was to create the necessary survey which can measure not only the extent of the participant's social media usage but also their level of parenting skill, the number of hours of childcare they provide, the level of attachment they have with their child, and their parenting style. Themes included whether parents who use social media in excess of one or two hours per day are more likely to have moments when they do not respond to their child's needs or whether the child has ever had an incident or injury which could have been avoided had the parent been paying full attention (based on Morrongiello et al. 2006). Surveys also measured the level of attachment between the parent and child, and whether social media usage has an effect here.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Much of the research already performed in the realm of social media focuses more on the effect of its usage in children and teenagers rather than on the parents themselves. Other research may focus on adult usage, but will connect it instead to levels of depression, isolation, narcissism, etc. In some research, there is a distinction made between positive usage of social media and negative ones. So far, very little is known in the literature about social media usage and how it affects a new parent's ability to bond with their child, and for the child to have a strong secure attachment to their primary caregiver.

Children and Social Media

Ray and Jat (2010) have found that mass media has potentially harmful effects on the health and behaviors of children, as they "are not yet mature enough to distinguish fantasy from reality, particularly when it is presented as "real life" (p. 561). This can lead the child to have distorted views about the world and their relationships with other individuals. It can also lead the child in turn to spend less time with their parents, or doing outside activities, which can cause isolation and aggression over time. Children on social media may be more likely to be exposed to violence, bullying, and hate, which can have

detrimental effects on their psychology (Ray & Jat, 2010, p. 563). Parents play a vital role in the impact of social media usage by limiting hours on the computer and also monitoring sites visited.

Children and teenagers are affected in many ways by social media usage, particularly in terms of depression. A clinical report by the American Academy of Pediatrics found that “acceptance by and contact with peers is an important element of adolescent life. The intensity of the online world is thought to be a factor that may trigger depression in some adolescents” (Fernandez, 2011, p. 802). Chairatchatakul et. al (2012) have also found that parental involvement in school activities of their children by usage of social media has a positive effect on the child, in which Facebook is “a social media utility that helps parents and school share information and communicate more efficiently” (p. 378), and can then improve the overall relationship between parent and child.

The research study focused more of the attention currently found in social media on the effect of parental use. This continues to help with a new viewpoint on parenting, and also a different view on how social media affects children indirectly. Bowlby believed those “infants whose mothers have responded sensitively to their signals during the first year of life not only cry less during the second half of that year than do the babies of less responsive mothers but are more willing to fall in with their parents’ wishes” (p. 10). The use of social media may lead a new mother to be slightly less responsive to

their child, simply by the act of having a device in their hand, taking up their current view and concentration. These statements do not necessarily state those mothers who use social media are automatically neglectful, but instead that their attentions are divided and diverted. The current research hopes to strengthen the correlation between the two and show how Facebook and other forms of social media can bring about both positive and negative changes to the already widely varying and evolving parenting relationship.

Adults and Social Media

Other research often focuses on adult usage, but will connect it instead to levels of depression, isolation, narcissism, and other similar mental health issues. In some research, there is a distinction made between positive usage of social media and negative ones. For example, Stepanikova et al. (2010) describe how “the direction of the relationship between Internet use and psychological well-being may be either positive or negative, depending on how Internet use influences the social processes that contribute to mental health” (p. 329). Many other researchers such as McDaniel (2012) also state that there are both benefits and risks to the increased use of social media, in this case for new mothers who are using the online communication as a means of acquiring continued support and information needed to help them through the difficult first few months following childbirth.

Previous researchers have brought up a variety of important questions to be answered about internet usage. Leung and Lee (2005) believe that internet activities are diminishing family and individual leisure time and keeping them “plugged in” more often, creating less face-to-face interactions. These lead to in essence less happiness and less empowerment by the individual, which may in turn affect other relationships in their lives and the quality of life with their children. This study found that the use of the Internet and computers were negatively related to quality of life, even though other findings in the same study showed that extra leisure time and social support led to positive quality of life (Lueng & Lee, 2005).

These findings show that the internet may not be linked as strongly with other factors such as social support, and if so, this does not create positive changes in the individual’s relationships. Similarly, other researchers believe that the increased usage of social media has led to a world in which “individuals are ‘always elsewhere’—always distracted or distractible from the social and physical presence of here and now to a more appealing attentional target” (Wallis 2010, p. 11). Therefore, this continues to support the claim that social media usage when in the presence of children can lead to distracted parenting and changes to parenting style and techniques.

There is very little research done on how parents using social media affects the attention and care they are providing to their children. Most of the

information currently available is through mainstream media articles. For example, one story on the New York Times by Scelfo in 2010, states:

Kids raised the same three examples of feeling hurt and not wanting to show it when their mom or dad would be on their devices instead of paying attention to them: at meals, during pickup after either school or an extracurricular activity. (p. 1)

A similar story by Scott (2014) in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette explains that adults with children are actually more likely to use social media than adults without children. This subsequent inattention by the parents towards their children can lead to increased incidences of tantrums, separation anxiety, and resisting of discipline.

As described previously, much more research can be done on the specific impact of social media on parenting ability and attention. The main reason for the lack of attention to parenting in the digital age stems from the sudden increase of its use only in the last decade. Social media usage obviously did not exist in previous decades, according to the Pew Research Center (2015). Therefore, younger parents in this age are just emerging, and social media affecting parenting can be seen as a relatively new phenomenon. Instead, current researchers look to study how younger children use television and media, and how parents can help their children still learn important social skills. New research will be needed to work with new generations of parents who are surrounded by social media and the internet on a daily basis.

Theories Guiding Conceptualization

Other research uses theories such as ecological theory to describe the relationship with social networking, blogging and parental (or maternal) well-being. Ecological theory emphasizes the relationship between the new mother, and the outside world to which she communicates with through the use of social media. McDaniel et. al (2012) believe,

The two systems most relevant to the role of media on motherhood are the microsystem, which encompasses the relationships and interactions a mother, her partner, and her child have with their immediate surroundings...and the mesosystem, which represents the connection between the mother and the institutions with which she interacts (e.g. new media such as blogging or social networking sites). (p. 1510)

This study takes a different standpoint and believes social networking may have a positive association with the happiness of new mothers, as it allows for a medium for social support in a time of isolation from the outside world.

Of particular interest in answering the research question, Andangsari et al. (2013) believe there may be an interaction between attachment style and use of social networking, though their relationship is found to be the opposite. Those individuals who have acquired an anxious or avoidant attachment style through infancy by neglect or distrust, are more likely to turn to the use of Facebook to fulfill an attachment need. Therefore, this shows the relationship between attachment style as a child and later use of social media, whereas

the present research study focuses more on current use of social media and later attachment style in the children. This is an important distinction in the Andangsari study which shows a strong correlation between anxious attachment and a stronger use of social media.

The main theory guiding this particular research study on social media and parental attachment is known as attachment theory, mainly coined by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth, who both arrived at similar ideas in separate ways. Bowlby believes “giving time and attention to children means sacrificing other interests and other activities” (Bowlby, 2005, p. 2). Often, parents in the digital age are surprised at the level of daily attention needed to raise children. New parents are often already dependent on the use of social media to communicate and share with family members, and may find themselves having to sacrifice that time for social interaction. There may be a conflict then between the amount of time needed to care for their children and the amount of time the parents wants to devote to their own social, emotional, and entertainment needs.

At the same time, attachment is seen as being an important determinant in parent and child relationships and happiness. Bowlby describes that a child’s attachment is “activated especially by pain, fatigue, and anything frightening, or also by the mother being or appearing to be inaccessible” (2005, p. 3). Therefore, children are apt to notice when their parents have conflicting demands and are unable to focus their entire attention on the child’s

pressing needs. These children's actions and behaviors then must shift to take account of the timing of the parents' responses and interventions. Those children who have experienced distraction by their parents may be less likely to share their needs and desires with their parents, hence affecting the nature of their attachment.

Summary

Research on social media can be focused on a variety of different factors, including the children's ability to socialize, the parents' ability to focus their time and energy on their children, and how social media in general affects those two relationships at once. By surveying parents with young children who use social media, importance can be placed on the need for constant attention in children and how this attention affects their future behavior. Limiting screen time can lead to better time management and potentially then less stress in family relationships. Less distractions in everyday life can allow a parent to be present and in the moment.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

The study surveyed new mothers and fathers with children less than four years of age. Methods included online surveying of parents through various social media sites and online parenting communities. Respondents were asked a variety of questions regarding their usage of social media and their level of attachment to their children. Data was also collected from parents who do not use social media regularly as a comparison, though the number of parents who fit these criteria was significantly smaller, due to the prevalence of its use. The data was analyzed into themes related to time spent using social media and the nature of the parent-child attachment as defined by Mary Ainsworth as a reciprocal relationship of love, trust, and bonding. Another important theme was related to the parenting style of each participant and how they responded to specific questions regarding discipline of their children.

Study Design

The research study was explanatory; there was a focus on describing the correlation or relationship between the two variables: hours of social media use and they type of parent-child attachment and/or parenting style. Information gained from the surveys was used to describe a social

phenomenon, as opposed to proving a particular relationship. The research method was both descriptive and correlational, with a group of subjects used to study the distribution of a variable in the population of interest. These characteristics made the research method quantitative, to gain an understanding of a social issue and generate ideas for solving the problem, if such a problem in fact exists. The quantitative research then uncovers whether the trend of social media usage is negatively affecting new parents and their style of parenting.

Limitations to the research were primarily related to respondents inadvertently having confirmation bias. Particularly in the realm of parenting, respondents are likely to feel constrained to “give only those answers that they perceive would fit generally accepted social norms” (Grinnell & Unrau, 2014, p. 411). Many parents are likely to answer the questionnaire in the form in which they believe they parent, which can of course be vastly different from the actual execution of the discipline or parenting style. Parents are likely to not notice the exact effect of their social media usage or downplay the sheer amount of time spent using devices while caring for their children. Participants may also provide answers to the questions which sound good, whether they are applicable to their actual day to day life in the specific way they claim or as often as stated. Bias is arguably one of the most limiting aspects of having self-response as a research method.

The research question was: How does parental use of social media affect parent-child attachment and bonding? The research hypothesis looked to explain the relationship between use of social media by parents (in excess of two or three hours a day) while caring for their children, also known as “distracted parenting”, or checking of devices while a child is in their care. This type of parenting in the moment shows the parent as being present and the child’s needs are being met; however the parent’s attention is focused elsewhere on their mobile devices and social media sites. A hypothesis was created which links usage of social media with decreased levels of attachment and bonding between parents and their children. This increased use of social media may also affect the frequency of childhood neglect cases or cases in which a child has been injured or otherwise due to a parent being distracted.

Sampling

Online survey methods were used allowing the research to reach the exact population of individuals impacted by the study; that is, those who spend time on these same social media sites and have young children. Using a large number of online parenting communities, and the connections formed with parents in other communities increased the number of new parents who were exposed to the research and therefore interested in completing the survey. By using online methods of acquiring participants, there was a large group of parents to study, in total 167 completed surveys.

Sampling was purposive, as there was an expectation that the participant is a parent and uses social media. Therefore, the researcher searched websites frequented by this population. Sampling also included snowball sampling, as participants told other friends or acquaintances they know online about the survey. Many new parents were interested in learning about the effects of their own usage of social media on their relationship with their children, and therefore shared the survey information on their respective pages, blogs, or websites. The original sample size goal was to have thirty five respondents answering the survey questions and providing their own personal feedback in a qualitative manner.

Access is simple to be gained from participants as they are often already members of various groups and permission is not often required in order to post advertisements for surveying. In fact, many members in online communities welcomed the information and shared it with other social media sites. For these reasons, the research study was able to reach a much larger group of parents than expected. The original goal being 35, the survey had a total of 223 respondents, with 167 of these surveys being completed fully.

Data Collection and Instruments

The independent variable is “parental use of social media”. Conceptually, this is defined as usage of such websites as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and others. In an operational sense, the independent variable is

defined by the number of hours a parent spends on social media through a variety of devices (cell phones, tablets, computers, etc.) while their child is in their care. The dependent variables in this research study are described as parent-child attachment and parenting style.

The specifics of this variable include a definition of attachment in which there is a reciprocal relationship between the parent and child. According to Mary Ainsworth, attachment is “defined as an affectional tie that one person or animal forms between himself and another specific one – a tie that binds them together in space and endures over time” (Ainsworth et al. p. 31). These ties include secure attachments related to love, care, and protection by the parent to the child. However, in an operational sense it was difficult to quantify the child’s attachment behavior through the use of the survey method. Instead, general parenting style and attachment questions were asked.

The research study used established measures of parenting qualities in order to accurately describe various styles of parenting. Using the “Provincial Assessment of Parenting Styles” by Biletski et al. 2013, the study was able to quantify and identify three different parenting styles currently recognized by developmental psychologists. These parenting styles are known as authoritative (also described as balanced throughout this study), authoritarian, and permissive. The included Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire was then adapted into the research survey with the intent of categorizing each parent completing the survey into a particular style of parenting. Some

examples of the questions asked include “I help my child understand the impact of his/her behavior” for authoritative/balanced parenting; “I use physical consequences as a way of disciplining my child” for authoritarian parenting; and “I give into my child when he/she causes a commotion about something” to describe a permissive parenting style. (Biletski et al, 2013, p. 9).

General parenting questions used in the survey were adapted by Parent-Child Attachment survey created by the Centers for Disease Control (Dahlberg et al, 2005). These questions included such statements as “How often would you say that: You get along with your child?” or “You feel you can really trust your child?” found in Appendix A. Several of these questions were reverse coded and then added to create a general parenting score. Questions asked in the beginning of the survey in order to receive more demographic and information statistics for the parent respondents were adapted from similar surveys used by LaMont (2010) to describe patterns of parental characteristics, such as occupation, hours worked outside of the home, whether their child attends daycare, and other similar questions.

Themes included whether parents who use social media in excess of two or three hours per day were more likely to have moments when they do not respond to their child’s needs. There were questions asking whether the child has ever had an incident which could have been avoided had the parent been paying full attention to the child. Please see Appendix A for a copy of the survey instrument used for this study.

Procedures

The study surveyed new mothers and fathers with children less than four years of age. Participants were found by visiting various social media sites, including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, and by asking parents to complete a survey regarding their use of social media and their parenting skills, relationship to their children, and their child's behavior. Participants were also encouraged to share the survey with other friends or family members who could fit the criteria. Postings were also created on Baby Center and What to Expect, which are online parenting communities. Sharing the survey on many different sites allowed for a greater pool of participants.

Once there were a sufficient number of participants who had successfully completed the survey, the data from the surveys was organized into themes. Surveys measured the level of attachment of the parents toward their child, and whether social media usage has an effect here.

Protection of Human Subjects

The privacy and anonymity of respondents was protected by using pseudonyms for individuals. In many cases, certain online community members were already using a generic username and did not provide their personal information including their name or location. Informed consent (see Appendix B) was provided to all participants prior to collecting their data; respondents were required to check off both sections of the informed consent

before being allowed to start the survey. The consent included information as to the purpose of the study and the nature of the data collection, as well as potential hypothesis for the study. Data collected remains anonymous and secured in a password-protected program only accessible by the researcher.

Data Analysis

Once surveys were completed by respondents and all data was collected, the data was organized carefully. The answers parents gave regarding their parenting style were added up to create a general score for each parenting style. For example, if one person stated they often agreed with specific statements that apply to permissive parenting, they would have a higher score in this category than if they state they never or rarely use these parenting techniques. The number of hours that each respondent claimed to use each type of social media was also added up into one specific score, which was the total number of hours on social media in general. Once these scores were calculated, correlations between the variables of hours of social media usage and parenting scores could be found.

The concepts studied included the number of hours using social media, and level of parent-child attachment. The relationship between these variables was examined in a correlational association. Methods of data analysis included a chi-square and a bi-variate correlational test. A new data file was created showing the data from parents about their use of social media. The

parents' own personal perceptions of their social media usage was categorized into themes related to either its negative or positive repercussions. The data analysis section of the research project is still a work in progress as the exact variables and measurements are still unknown.

Summary

With an increase in the level of social media usage by parents today, the importance of this analysis comes to light in relationship to how distracted parenting affects parental bonding and therefore the future behavior of children. By surveying the exact population being researched, data was collected on those parents' online habits and their own parenting skills. Respondents were recruited through the use of social networking sites whose focus is already on learning new parenting skills and communicating with other parents in similar situations. The information from the research is likely to be well received and welcomed in these communities as the parents themselves are often interested in the effects of their own actions on their parenting.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

The following section will discuss the results of the Distracted Parenting survey distributed to parents in November and December of 2015. There were a total of 214 respondents, with 167 completed surveys giving full disclosure on all questions regarding parenting style and attachment to child. Respondents were reached through various forms of social media and were instructed to complete a survey using Qualtrics online survey software. Information was then organized into concrete groups. Based on their responses, parents were assigned to be described as exhibiting a particular parenting style. The demographics of the participants as well as key variables will be discussed throughout this section.

Presentation of the Findings

Demographics

There are several relevant demographics found within the body of data. Firstly, over 90% of respondents have some degree of exposure to higher education, whether currently in college or having completed a higher education degree. In fact, the biggest representation throughout the study was for college graduates, who made up 37% of the respondents. A high

representation also identified their marital status as married (83%), with the second highest being those parents who are single but cohabiting with the other parent (9%).

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants (Parents)

| Variable | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Age (N = 167) | | |
| 18 to 24 | 15 | 9 |
| 25 to 34 | 113 | 68 |
| 35 to 44 | 38 | 22.8 |
| 45 to 54 | 1 | .6 |
| Race | | |
| White/Caucasian | 140 | 83.8 |
| African American | 2 | 1.2 |
| Hispanic | 18 | 10.8 |
| Asian | 3 | 1.8 |
| Native American | 1 | .6 |
| No Answer | 2 | 1.2 |
| Other | 1 | .6 |
| Marital Status | | |
| Married | 139 | 83.2 |
| Divorced | 2 | 1.2 |
| Separated | 1 | .6 |
| In a domestic partnership | 6 | 3.6 |
| Single, cohabiting with partner | 16 | 9.6 |
| Single, never married | 3 | 1.8 |
| Education | | |
| High school diploma/GED | 17 | 10.2 |
| 1 st year of college | 9 | 5.4 |
| 2 nd year of college | 14 | 8.4 |
| 3 rd year of college | 5 | 3.0 |
| College graduate | 69 | 41.3 |
| Some graduate school | 7 | 4.2 |
| Completed graduate school | 45 | 26.9 |
| Income (per year) | | |
| \$0 to \$25,000 | 6 | 3.6 |

| | | |
|------------------------|----|------|
| \$25,001 to \$50,000 | 41 | 24.6 |
| \$50,001 to \$75,000 | 32 | 19.2 |
| \$75,001 to \$100,000 | 38 | 22.8 |
| \$100,001 to \$125,000 | 19 | 11.4 |
| \$125,001 to \$150,000 | 15 | 9.0 |
| \$150,001 to \$175,000 | 7 | 4.2 |
| \$175,001 to \$200,000 | 4 | 2.4 |
| \$200,000+ | 5 | 3.0 |

Occupation

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|----|------|
| Stay at home parent | 61 | 36.5 |
| Work at home parent | 12 | 7.2 |
| Work outside of the home, part time | 26 | 15.6 |
| Work outside of the home, full time | 64 | 38.3 |
| Student | 3 | 1.8 |
| Other | 1 | .6 |

Hours of Work Per Week

| | | |
|----------------|----|------|
| None | 51 | 30.5 |
| 0 to 10 hours | 18 | 10.8 |
| 11 to 20 hours | 18 | 10.8 |
| 21 to 30 hours | 11 | 6.6 |
| 31 to 40 hours | 26 | 15.6 |
| 41 to 50 hours | 37 | 22.2 |
| 50+ hours | 2 | 1.2 |
| No answer | 4 | 2.4 |

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Children

| Variable | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Child Age (N = 167) | | |
| 0 to 1 years | 24 | 14.4 |
| 1 to 2 years | 128 | 76.6 |
| 2 to 3 years | 10 | 6.0 |
| 3 to 4 years | 3 | 1.8 |
| No Answer | 2 | 1.2 |
| Child's Gender | | |
| Male | 82 | 49.1 |
| Female | 83 | 49.7 |
| No Answer | 2 | 1.2 |

In terms of race and ethnicity, a surprisingly high percentage (83%) of respondents identified as White/Caucasian, with 11% representation by Hispanic parents, 4% Asian respondents, 1% African American, and the remaining having no specification. However, income findings vary across the board with fairly even distribution of income levels throughout the respondent data. The highest representation of income came from individuals with a total family household income of between \$25,000 and \$50,000 per year. Other important characteristics of the data set were focused on whether a parent identified as a stay at home parent, a working parent, student, or other. Once again here the data showed a fairly even distribution between working and stay at home parents.

In terms of the variables used to describe the parents' occupation and time away from the home, these characteristics of the sample were fairly uniform throughout. For occupation, the highest representation was for full-

time working parents (38%), following closely by stay at home parents (36%). Part time working parents (16%), work-at-home parents (7%), and students (2%), represented the remaining parents surveyed. Similarly, in listing the hours worked outside of the home, the highest representation of parents were those who spend zero hours away from the home (33%), followed by those who work 40 to 50 hours a week (22%). These statistics are significant because they show that responses to the survey do not appear to be affected by whether the parent is home with the child on a daily basis, or whether the parent works outside of the home.

Demographics taken for the children of the parents surveyed were focused mainly on the age and the gender of the child, and whether the child has any developmental disabilities (which may also affect attachment and parenting style), and whether the child has older siblings in the home. Gender for the children was uniform, with 49.1% of children being male, 49.7% female, and the remaining no answer. The children varied in age from 0 months to 4 years old, with the highest representation between 1 to 2 years of age (77%), followed by 0 to 1 years of age (14%), 2 to 3 years (6%), and 3 to 4 years (2%). Single children comprised 68% of those surveyed, with 93% of the children being described as having no developmental disabilities.

Key Variables

For social media usage, the most widely-used form of social media was Facebook (92%), with the most common device being a cell phone (97%).

Further, 75% of parents describe themselves as using these devices for social media upwards of three times a day while caring for their child, in their direct supervision. In contrast, throughout the study only 2% parents in the study claimed to never use social media in the presence of their children. Despite these high numbers of usage within the sample, only 10% of the respondents believe their social media usage has directly affected the supervision they have provided to their child, or increased their potential for danger.

Table 3. Social Media Usage Variables

| Variable | Frequency (N) | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Devices Used (N = 167) | | |
| Cell phone | 161 | 96 |
| Tablet | 33 | 20 |
| Laptop | 36 | 22 |
| Desktop | 22 | 8 |
| Websites Frequented | | |
| Facebook | 155 | 93 |
| Instagram | 78 | 47 |
| Pinterest | 111 | 66 |
| Snapchat | 17 | 10 |
| Tumblr | 8 | 5 |
| Twitter | 19 | 11 |
| Other | 10 | 6 |
| Frequency of Usage Per Day | | |
| 1 to 2 times a day | 37 | 22 |
| 3 or more times a day | 100 | 60 |
| Constantly | 25 | 15 |
| Never | 4 | 2 |

In describing parenting variables and parenting styles, there was far less variation throughout the study than expected. For example, each parent was asked a variety of questions in one block, which ascribed to a particular parenting style, whether balanced, authoritarian, or permissive parenting. All respondents in the survey received higher scores in the balanced parenting style and subsequently lower in the remaining two styles of parenting. Therefore, though it would seem unlikely otherwise, it could be said that 100% of the parents surveyed could identify as having a balanced parenting style, with 49 parents responding positively to all nine balanced parenting questions (giving them a score of 4 overall). The range in balanced parenting scores went from 2.7 to 4, with 4 signifying that they identified with these characteristics all of the time.

In contrast, for authoritarian parenting style, the highest score created through responses was only a 3 overall, with a range of 1 to 3. The highest representation of parents (89%) showed that they identified with an authoritarian style either rarely or never. Similarly, for permissive parenting style, the range of scores varied from 1 to 3.5 overall, with 62% of parents again stating they identify with these parenting techniques either rarely or never. Therefore, it can be easily stated here that all parents surveyed were more likely to follow a balanced parenting style.

Inferential Statistics

Using SPSS statistical software, a Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated in order to assess a correlation between any of the variables previously listed. The social media variables calculated include: number of hours of social media usage per day, frequency of usage in a single day, and frequency of usage while caring for the child. The various parenting variables assessed include balanced parenting score, authoritarian parenting score, and permissive parenting score. Other minor variables assessed include frequency of a child's injury while the parent is using social media, as well as education level and parent's occupation. All of the previously discussed variables were assessed with each other using a Pearson's correlation coefficient.

The results showed only one statistically significant relationship between any of the social media usage and parenting variables. This relationship was a positive correlation between hours of social media usage per day, and the prescribed authoritarian parenting score ($r(167) = .157, p < .049$). Other minor correlations found within the body of data include a negative relationship between the number of hours of social media usage and the level of the parent's education or degree. There were no significant correlations found between the other variables.

Summary

This chapter provided the data collected from the research responses. The information included not only the demographics of survey respondents (age, race, income, education level, etc.) as well as child age, but also the various scores received for parenting style variables and social media usage variables. Finally, inferential statistics for all variables concurrently were reported, showing only one statistically significant correlation related to the hypothesis of the research study.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The following discussion will focus on the findings of the study, which relate to a positive identification of a correlation between hours of social media usage and authoritarian parenting practices. Limitations of the research study, as well as recommendations for future social work research will also be discussed. Finally, statements from survey respondents will be included in order to get a more broad perspective of respondents' attitudes towards the research study in question.

Discussion

This study's research methods aimed to understand whether excessive parental use of social media had an effect on parent-child attachment or parenting style. The hypothesis stated that parents who use social media excessively may be more likely to be distracted in their everyday parenting and therefore less likely to have developed a strong attachment to their children. Increased distraction while caring for their child may also make the parent more likely to develop negative parenting traits. The data received from survey results showed to reasonably support the hypothesis, though with several limitations.

Whether by chance or by accident, most parents who completed the survey identified with similar parenting techniques; ascribing their parenting style to a more balanced or authoritative style. This uniform set of responses to the parenting questionnaire led to a less likelihood of identifying any strong correlations between parenting answers and social media usage. Several different variables were evaluated together, and the strongest correlation was found to be between a parent's authoritarian score and the number of hours they use social media. This relationship therefore claims that the number of hours a parent uses their device may increase the likelihood that they would use physical punishment, threats, or other negative consequences as a disciplinary technique, as opposed to discussing behavior with their children or respecting their autonomy.

Through the results of the survey conducted, two reasonable statements can be made. First, the lower the education level of the parent, the higher hours of social media they claimed to use per day. Secondly, parents who then reported higher levels of social media usage per day subsequently received higher scores in authoritarian parenting styles. Using these results, a statement can be made that increased hours per day of social media usage is likely to be correlated to a parent's use of physical discipline, yelling, criticizing or scolding, as well as threats, consequences, or "time outs" with little explanation to the child.

While there are currently no research studies which have found a similar correlation between authoritarian parenting techniques and social media usage, other research has found similar correlations between a person's social media use and problematic behaviors. These behaviors can include neuroticism, low self-esteem, lack of self-control, as well as participating in dangerous behaviors such as texting and driving (Bianchi & Phillips, 2005; Radesky et al. 2014). Therefore, the research study concludes it is reasonable to believe an excessive use of social media can lead to a variety of behaviors which are negative and problematic, particularly the use of authoritarian parenting techniques.

An important statement to understand about this correlation focuses on its inability to really prove whether social media on its own has the strength to affect a parent's style. As a negative relationship was also found between social media hours and a parent's education level, it is difficult to attribute whether these higher scores in authoritarian style are the result of excess social media usage or if they are better explained by a lower education level in the parent. The research then shows it is also fairly likely that a parent's discipline style can be attributed to their level of education level.

Conversely, there was no correlation between the parenting variables and other demographics, such as age, income, or whether a parent was a stay at home parent or a working parent. Therefore, a statement can also be made as to the importance of education in creating and maintaining a parent's

attachment style, be it authoritative, authoritarian, or permissive parenting style. In short, though there was a clear, statistically significant relationship found between hours of social media usage and authoritarian parenting style, this same relationship can be caused by any number of different factors in a parent's systems, namely education level.

Limitations

Despite the highly varied methods of survey distribution, the respondents can be described as being over-represented by Caucasian, highly educated parents, which can certainly skew the questionnaire answers significantly. The main limitation of the study was the unintentional lack of diversity within survey respondents. Even after having received well over 200 responses, survey demographics were fairly uniform. They showed a particularly high incidence of college-educated, Caucasian individuals.

A second limitation to the study was the lack of participation from parents who do not use social media. Based on the inherent nature of the survey and how it was distributed online, all survey respondents use social media in some regard. More time and resources could be used to insure that parents with little access to social media can participate in the survey as well. Further, due to the nature of society in general, finding individuals who have young children that do not use social media is actually a very difficult

undertaking, in part due to the high usage of social media in general and also due to the general age of the parents surveyed.

Another minor limitation to the study was focused on the inapplicability of some of the questions in the survey. Some parents with younger children were not able to answer various questions regarding discipline or their child's behavior. Therefore, these parents were mostly able to questions based on what they believe they would use as discipline for their children, and not merely based on actual fact. This of course, can skew a parent's response into a more socially desirable statement as opposed to an actual statement of their parenting practices. Therefore, an important factor affecting the study was created by respondents potentially answering questions in a socially desirable or positive manner versus noting their true feelings.

By the nature of social media usage, it becomes easy to state that most individuals are likely to underestimate the amount of time spent using their devices on a daily basis while caring for their children, as described previously in a study by Golden (2015). Similarly, these parents may state socially desirable characteristics of their parenting, such as downplaying how often they use negative consequences towards their children.

Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research

In assessing the limitations of this particular study, one can identify potential changes to future related social work research. Namely, some

changes that can be evaluated include asking respondents to download applications on their devices that will track the exact amount of time used on various social media sites at certain points in the day. Further, a parent's style or attachment to their child can be evaluated instead by a researcher through observation in the family's natural environment. This may help change the perspective of the parent's style and give a wider range of qualities to be researched. These techniques may also help to eliminate or reduce incidences of confirmation bias that so often occurs from self-report research methods. It is clear that a great deal of changes to the research study may allow for a more clear assessment of social media effects.

The primary strength of the study was the high enthusiasm and interest level in the survey topic by parent respondents. Many respondents stated that they personally felt their internet use had a large effect on their parenting, and hoped that the study in question could help them make more responsible choices for their parenting. Many parents requested to receive information about the final results of the study and were in fact quite concerned with the finding that high usage of social media may have a correlation with a parent's likelihood of using an authoritarian parenting style. Therefore it is clear that a problem has begun to be identified by the general public, which can continue to guide research in social work practice.

A particularly clear prospective of the study in question was given by a respondent in the comment section. This individual stated: "I try to be aware of

how often I am using social media during my child's waking hours. I strive for balance. I don't feel it's off limits, though I do sense guilt at the same time, so I just try to be mindful and aware of my actions and the amount of time I am spending in the moment. I ensure my child's needs are met and that he is in a safe environment" (personal communication, November 6, 2015). Other parents state the benefits of using social media but can admit to its overarching effects in their children, who often yearn for more attention or even can become attached to using a device as well.

Similarly then, through the use of the information found in this research study, social workers can assist parents in understanding how their continuous usage of devices can negatively impact their child's attachment and bonding to them. While parenting style on its own is a widely complex variable which is influenced by many different world factors, parents can become more aware of the distraction of social media and take steps to reduce its usage while caring for their children.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the complex relationship between social media usage and parenting styles or attachment was examined throughout this research study. Through the use of parental surveys, the data concluded there to be a small but significant relationship between the number of hours a parent uses social media and the likelihood said parent is to adhere to certain parenting techniques, namely characterized by an authoritarian style. However, within

the study there is room for further research focused on these parenting variables. Specifically other research can be conducted using different methods of data collection in order to insure a smaller margin of bias and less likelihood of receiving socially desirable answers. Overall, social media, like all technology, can be used in both positive and negative ways. It's important that social workers, parents, teachers, and individuals in general are being introspective as to how we and those around us, children in particular, may be affected by the use of social media.

APPENDIX A
SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Distracted Parenting Survey

PLEASE MAKE SURE TO CLICK BOTH BOXES OR IT WILL
AUTOMATICALLY END THE SURVEY

- I am at least 18 years old (1)
- I give my consent to participate in the Distracted Parenting: How Social Media Affects Parent-Child Attachment survey (2)

Developed by Denise Ante-Contreras

What is your age?

- 18-24 (1)
- 25-34 (2)
- 35-44 (3)
- 45-54 (4)
- 55-64 (5)
- 65-74 (6)
- 75 or older (7)

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Did not attend school (1)
- Elementary school (2)
- Middle school (3)
- High school graduate (4)
- 1st year of college (5)
- 2nd year of college (6)
- 3rd year of college (7)
- College graduate (8)
- Some graduate school (9)
- Completed graduate school (10)

What is your approximate average household income?

- \$0 - \$25,000 (1)
- \$25,001 - \$50,000 (2)
- \$50,001 - \$75,000 (3)
- \$75,001 - \$100,000 (4)
- \$100,001 - \$125,000 (5)
- \$125,001 - \$150,000 (6)
- \$150,001 - \$175,000 (7)
- \$175,001 - \$200,000 (8)
- \$200,001+ (9)

What is your race/ethnicity? (Please select all that apply)

- White/Caucasian (1)
- African American (2)
- Hispanic (3)
- Asian (4)
- Native American (5)
- Pacific Islander (6)
- Prefer not to answer (7)
- Other (please specify) (8) _____

Which of the following best describes your current relationship status?

- Married (1)
- Widowed (2)
- Divorced (3)
- Separated (4)
- In a domestic partnership or civil union (5)
- Single but cohabiting with a significant other (6)
- Single, never married (7)

Of the following, which describes your current occupation?

- Stay at home parent (1)
- Work at home parent (2)
- Work outside of the home, part time (3)
- Work outside of the home, full time (4)
- Student (5)
- Other (please specify) (6) _____

If employed or in school, how many hours do you typically spend away from your child per week?

- Less than 10 hours (1)
- 10 to 20 hours (2)
- 20 to 30 hours (3)
- 30 to 40 hours (4)
- 40 to 50 hours (5)
- 50 hours or more (6)
- Not employed or in school (7)

Questions Regarding Your Child Ages 4 and Under

If more than one child, use information for youngest single child

What is your child's gender?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

What is your child's age?

- Less than 1 year (1)
- 1 to 2 years (2)
- 2 to 3 years (3)
- 3 to 4 years (4)

If less than 2 years, how many months old is your child? _____

Are there older children in the home?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- If yes, please list their ages (3) _____

Does your child have any developmental, medical needs, or disabilities?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- If yes, please specify (3) _____

Does your child attend daycare or have a regular caregiver other than parents?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Only occasional babysitting (3)

Questions Regarding Your Social Media Usage

What type of devices do you use on a daily basis to visit social media sites?

- Cell phone (1)
- Tablet (2)
- Laptop (3)
- Desktop computer (4)
- Other (please specify) (5) _____

In the last month, which of the following social networks have you used?
(Please select all that apply)

- Facebook (1)
- Instagram (2)
- Myspace (3)
- Pinterest (4)
- Snapchat (5)
- Tumblr (6)
- Twitter (7)
- None of the above (8)
- Other (please specify) (9) _____

While caring for your child in a typical day, how often do you use social media?

- 1 to 2 times a day (1)
- 3 or more times a day (2)
- Constantly (3)
- Never (4)

How often do you login or check each type of social media site?

| | Never (1) | Less than Once a Month (2) | Once a Month (3) | 2-3 Times a Month (4) | Once a Week (5) | 2-3 Times a Week (6) | Daily (7) | 2-3 Times a Day (8) | 4 or more Times a Day (9) |
|-----------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Facebook | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Instagram | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Myspace | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Pinterest | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Snapchat | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Tumblr | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Twitter | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

In a typical day, how many hours do you spend looking at content on each social media site?

| | 0 to 1 hours (1) | 1 to 2 hours (2) | 2 to 3 hours (3) | 3 to 4 hours (4) | 4 to 5 hours (5) | 5 or more hours (6) |
|-----------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Facebook | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Instagram | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Myspace | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Pinterest | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Snapchat | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Tumblr | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Twitter | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Have you ever desired or attempted to cut back on your usage of social media?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Has your child ever fallen, gotten hurt, or otherwise been unsupervised while you were browsing social media?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- If yes, please explain (3) _____

What positive impact(s) do you receive from using social media? _____

What negative impact(s) do you receive from using social media? _____

Questions Related to Parent-Child Attachment and Parenting Style
 How often would you say that:

| | Often (1) | Sometimes (2) | Rarely (3) | Never (4) |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| You get along with your child? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| You feel that you can really trust your child? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| You just do not understand your child? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Your child is too demanding? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| You really enjoy your child? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Your child interferes with your activities? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| You think your child is terrific? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| You feel very angry towards your child? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| You feel violent towards your child? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| You feel proud of your child? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| You wish your child was more like others that you know? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

How often would you say each statement applies to you?

| | Often (1) | Sometimes (2) | Rarely (3) | Never (4) | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I am responsive to my child's feelings and needs | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I give comfort and understanding when my child is upset | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I give praise when my child is good | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I give my child reasons why rules should be followed | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I help my child understand the impact of his/her behavior | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I explain the consequences of bad behavior to my child before he/she misbehaves | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I take into account my child's desires before asking him/her to do something | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I encourage my child to express | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

| | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| him/herself when disagreeing with his/her parents I show respect for my child's opinions by encouraging him/her to express them | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|

How often would you say you agree to each statement?

| | Often (1) | Sometimes (2) | Rarely (3) | Never (4) |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I use physical consequences as a way of disciplining my child | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I yell or shout when my child misbehaves | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I scold or criticize to make my child improve | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I give consequences by taking away privileges with little or no explanation | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I used threats as consequences with little or no justification | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I give consequences by putting my | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| child off somewhere with little or no explanation | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|

How often is each statement applied to you as a parent?

| | Often (1) | Sometimes (2) | Rarely (3) | Never (4) |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I give into my child when he/she causes a commotion | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I threaten my child with consequences more often than actually giving them | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I state consequences to my child and do not actually do them | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I am confident about my parenting abilities | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I find it difficult to parent my child | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I am unsure about how to solve my child's misbehavior | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Do you have any other questions, concerns, or comments about using social media as a parent? _____

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT



College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
School of Social Work

Dear Participants:

I am a graduate student in the MSW program at California State University, San Bernardino. My research “Distracted Parenting: How Social Media Affects Parent-Child Attachment” has been approved by the School of Social Work Sub-Committee of the Institutional Review Board at CSUSB. You are invited to join a research study looking to identify the complicated relationship between social media usage and the care of young children by their parents. The research looks to identify whether usage of devices affects the bonding and care given to children and their subsequent level of attachment to their parent. By choosing to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a brief survey as to your social media and online habits, basic non-identifying information about the age of your children and your parenting style.

Although there are no distinct physical or financial benefits from participating in this study, it is hoped that results will provide valuable information to parents and future parents who use social media or are interested in how its use affects social and familial relationships. The information collected should also potentially provide a wealth of information to social workers, childcare workers,

educators, and other professionals who work with young children and their parents. There is no foreseeable risk to participating in the study.

Confidentiality will be maintained at all costs. No identifying information will be placed anywhere within the survey; in fact you are asked to leave your responses anonymous. Your participation will remain completely voluntary and you may decide to revoke your consent at any time without negative consequences. Completing the survey should take no more than 25 minutes. Participants are also welcome to share your viewpoints on the issue of distracted parenting with open-ended questions. If you have any questions or are interested in learning more about the research topic, please contact me at antecond@coyote.csusb.edu. I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study by clicking both of the boxes labeled. Please do not provide any identifying information.

- I am at least 18 years old
- I give my consent to participate in the Distracted Parenting: How Social Media Affects Parent-Child Attachment survey

909.537.5501

[5500 UNIVERSITY PARKWAY, SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92407-2393](#)

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APPENDIX C
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
Institutional Review Board Sub-Committee

Researcher(s) Denise Ante-Contreras
Proposal Title Distracted Parenting: How social media affects
parent-child attachment
SW1548

Your proposal has been reviewed by the School of Social Work Sub-Committee of the Institutional Review Board. The decisions and advice of those faculty are given below.

Proposal is:

- approved
- to be resubmitted with revisions listed below
- to be forwarded to the campus IRB for review

Revisions that must be made before proposal can be approved:

- faculty signature missing
- missing informed consent debriefing statement
- revisions needed in informed consent debriefing
- data collection instruments missing
- agency approval letter missing
- CITI missing
- revisions in design needed (specified below)

- See a very minor correction needed at your Informed
Consent form (See Attached)


Committee Chair Signature Date 11/4/15

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