

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores negative thoughts in mothers in the context of the early years of their first-born child's life. The theoretical part of the thesis is divided into three parts: the first presents the negative thoughts and accompanying emotions of mothers from the perspective of psychopathology, the second from the perspective of social psychology, and the third places them in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. The research part of the thesis presents the research questions, the method of interpretative phenomenological analysis, the characteristics of the research sample, data collection through semi-structured interviews and additional written questions, and it presents the findings. First, mothers experience content-similar negative thoughts that are accompanied by similar negative emotions; and furthermore, we can find similar developments over time. Second, the evolution of negative thoughts was associated with a change in their interpretations and a change in coping strategies. If mothers evaluated their negative thoughts and emotions as normal and natural, they coped better with them, managed to confide them to others and thus reduced their negative impact on the child. The perception of oneself as a good enough mother plays a key role here. Thirdly, expectations play an important role in interpreting and coping with negative thoughts and emotions, which are significantly influenced by inadequate preparation for parenthood, unawareness of mental health care methods and, last but not least, the social myth of the ideal mother.

KEYWORDS

negative thoughts, negative emotions, early motherhood, good enough mother, expectations, IPA