Glorified Dads and Struggling Moms:

Comparing mother and father online parenting magazines

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December 14th, 2015

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Abstract

In recent years, there has been a shift away from hard copy magazines to digital magazines. Therefore, more parents today are turning to digital magazines for their parenting advice. This study examines how mass media, magazines aimed at mothers and fathers in particular, construct gender specific images of mothers and fathers. Data for this study was obtained from a content analysis of 444 article titles from the online mother magazine *ModernMom* and the online father magazine *Daddyhood*. Findings reveal that traditional gender roles are being reinforced through mother and father magazines, but mothers and fathers are also presented as individual beings encouraged to have their own interests, aside from their role as parents. The findings also suggest that when fathers take on more than what has traditionally been expected of men within the family structure, they are glorified; whereas mothers are depicted as constantly struggling to manage it all.

In recent decades, there has been a shift within family gender roles in the United States. Traditionally, fathers were considered to be the breadwinner, and mothers the caretaker; today, there is a blurring of the lines between these two distinct gender roles. In addition to changing gender roles, there has been an increase in media consumption worldwide. Popular culture is an important part of every day life, especially through online sites. People often look to media sources, like online magazines, for advice and guidance. Research shows that, 84% of American adults use the Internet (Perrin & Duggan, 2015), 75% of parents use social media (Duggan, Lenhart, Lampe, & Ellison, 2015), and the average adult spends 20 hours per week online (Ofcom, 2015).

The purpose of this study is to compare online mother and father magazines in order to analyze the gender messages constructed by online parenting magazines. The central research questions addressed here are: What are online mother and father magazines telling mothers and fathers their parental focuses should be? How do mother and father magazines differ in underlying content? Do mother and father magazines focus on the individual parent or the individual's role as a parent? This paper finds that, traditional gender roles of mothers and fathers are being reinforced through the online parenting magazines *ModernMom* and *Daddyhood*. Additionally, mothers and fathers are presented as individuals that are being encouraged to have their own interests aside from parenting their children. When men attempt to take a more active role in parenting, they are glorified; in contrast, when women attempt to balance family and other areas of life, they are portrayed as struggling.

Social Construction Theories

Magazines are one outlet through which the media socially constructs the world around us. In *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (1966),

Berger and Luckmann contend, "reality is socially constructed and that the sociology of knowledge must analyze the process in which this occurs" (p. 13). One of their key concepts is "the reality of everyday life" in which "everyday life presents itself as a reality interpreted by men and subjectively meaningful to them as a coherent world" (p. 33). Everyday life includes what Berger and Luckmann call an "intersubjective world," which is the shared system of interacting with others. They state, "I cannot exist in everyday life without continually interacting and communicating with others" (p. 37). Thus, one's "human nature" is shaped by social interactions. Berger and Luckmann write, "While it is possible to say that man has a nature, it is more significant to say that man constructs his own nature, or more simply, that man produces himself" (p. 67). Berger and Luckmann argue that social reality differs depending on the person who is interpreting that reality and also based upon the social context. Berger and Luckmann explain that there is always one "reality" that trumps the others; this reality usually reflects the views of those within a privileged position (p. 35).

When constructing social reality, Berger and Luckmann argue that nurture is more important than nature in the creation of both society and humans; "Society is a human product. Society is an objective reality. Man is a social product" (p. 77). Berger and Luckmann believe that people participate in the social world when they perform roles (e.g. such as "worker", "student, or "mother"), but also that those roles represent a larger social order. They view social institutions (such as family, education, and religion) as important to the social construction of specific roles; institutions are formed when two people from different groups (A and B) begin to play roles in regard to one another (p. 74-75). Berger and Luckmann conclude that, "all socially constructed universes change" because they are products of human history (p. 134).

The Social Construction of Gender Theory

Drawing upon the work of Berger and Luckmann (1966), in *The Social Construction of Gender* (1994*)*, Lorber examines gender as a social construction. Because notions of "appropriate" gender behavior are engrained in society, people rarely question it. According to Lorber, "gender is so pervasive in our society that we assume that it is bred into our genes" (p. 99). Like Berger and Luckmann, Lorber views gender as a social construction; "Gender is constantly created and re-created out of human interaction, out of social life, and is the texture and order of that social life" (p. 99-100). Lorber notes that gender socialization begins at birth based upon the genitalia and continues throughout one's life as people "treat those in one gender differently from those in the other" (p. 100).

Lorber explains that people are taught to refer to themselves as members of a specific and socially determined gender. Females are taught to express a typically feminine gender, and males a typically masculine gender. According to Lorber, gender is used as an organizational method; "Human society depends on a predictable division of labor, a designed allocation of scarce goods, assigned responsibility for children and others who cannot care for themselves, common values and their systematic transmission to new members" (p. 101). People are typically assigned to tasks based upon their gender. An important point that Lorber makes is that gendered roles can differ depending upon place and historical period. Therefore, what constitutes masculine versus feminine varies by cultural context. Lorber notes that in some social groups, the distinct dichotomy between genders is beginning to blur (p. 101).

Lorber views gender as a process, a system of stratification, and a social structure. Gender is a process that "creates the social differences that define 'woman' and 'man'" (p. 101). These social differences are, however, not equal in social status. Gender is used to rank one

group higher so that femininity becomes secondary to masculinity. Lorber points out that gender

norms are reinforced in many social institutions where there is a "superior group" (p. 103).

Lorber explains that gender is also a social structure arguing that, "gender divides work in the

home and in economic production, legitimates those in authority, and organizes sexuality and

emotional life" (p. 103). She uses the example of mothers as the "primary parents" since women

are responsible for the development of children, even the process of reproducing gender (p. 104).

According to Lorber, gender is taught to children through socialization and is commonly

viewed as serving a social function; "Gendered people emerge not from physiology or sexual

orientations but from the exigencies of the social order, mostly from the need for a reliable

division of the work of food production and the social reproduction of new members" (p. 104).

While gender constructions may work well for maintaining social order, some individuals resist

the gender norms. Lorber notes, "In almost every encounter, human beings produce gender,

behaving in certain ways they learned were appropriate for their gender status, or resisting or

rebelling against these norms" (p. 102).

As gender roles are becoming less rigid in the United States, this study asks if a

hegemonic depiction of the ideal mother and father is still portrayed in the media, or if new

mother and father ideals are emerging? When examining how mothers and fathers are portrayed

in magazines both Berger and Luckmann and Lorber provide a theoretical lens, which considers

how gender behaviors are socially constructed through media.

Literature Review

Hegemonic Ideal of Man and Woman

Scholars discussed cultural ideals of man and woman as early as the 1940's when De

Beauvoir attempted to answer the question, "What is Woman?" De Beauvoir (1949) claims,

"humanity is male, and man defines woman, not in herself, but in relation to himself; she is not considered an autonomous being" (p. 260). The cultural ideal is that woman is subject to man. De Beauvoir (1949) explains the way in which the sexes are socially constructed when she says, "it is understood that man is not a particularity; a man is in his right by virtue of being a man; it is a woman who is in the wrong" (p. 260). De Beauvoir argues that simply because a woman has female reproductive parts, they are thought by man to be of lesser value; "he considers woman's body an obstacle, a prison, burdened by everything that particularizes it" (p. 261). To De Beauvoir, women are viewed as "the other," the lesser, the submissive sex. The ideal man is superior to woman.

Historically, traditional gender roles have influenced what it means to be the "ideal man" or "ideal woman." According to Williams, Sawyer, and Wahlstrom (2012), "for traditional males, the most important function is to be good providers and protectors for their families," while "for traditional females, the most important function is home and hearth- taking care of the house, cooking, raising children, being supportive of a husband" (p. 101- 102). In other words, the ideal man is a provider and the ideal woman's place is in the home. According to Eagley & Steffen (1984), gender stereotypes suggest that women are more selfless and concerned with others, whereas men are more self-assertive and motivated (p. 735). Because gender stereotypes imply that one of the key roles that men and women play in society are that of "father" and "mother," hegemonic ideals of "fatherhood" and "motherhood" have been previously studied.

Hegemonic Ideals of Fatherhood and Motherhood

Fatherhood ideals have developed and changed throughout American history. According to Eggebeen and Knoester (2001), "this attention is driven in large part by social and cultural changes in the image of fatherhood," but also, "by changes in men's behaviors as fathers – they

are 'fathering' differently than was the case in the past" (p. 381). Historically, caring for a child has been seen as a feminine task, and Vavrus (2002) argues, for that reason fathers tend to reject parenting tasks that are generally associated with femininity.   Eggebeen and Knoester (2001) find that, "compared with men who are not fathers, fathers evidence greater attachment to the labor force or greater commitment to their careers out of a sense of responsibility to provide for their children" (p. 384).

For much of history, men were expected to be the breadwinners, while women were expected to be the primary caregivers. Tardy (2000) found that many mother's sense of self-worth is tied directly to "taking good care of their children and family" (p. 467).   Additionally, the hegemonic mother is also expected to embody traditional values associated with the "ideal woman." However, the "ideal" mother in American society is now changing as the expectations of the ideal mother no longer entirely stem from the work of raising children. Guendouzi (2006) found that while many women experience stress and guilt because of a pressure to balance professional and maternal roles, stay-at-home mothers are no longer the "ideal."

Hegemonic Images of Father and Mother in the Media

Research on ideals of fatherhood in the media is limited. However, previous research finds that when fatherhood is shown in the media, the hegemonic ideal is portrayed. Sharrer (2001) conducted a content analysis of "the sitcom father" from the 1950s to the 1990s, and found that the sitcom father has increased in foolishness over time (p. 31). The father was the butt of 45% of the jokes in the sitcoms and he told an average of three times as many jokes as sitcom mothers did (p. 31). This finding supports Kimmel's (2008) argument that men have created a new stage of development between childhood and adulthood in which they are delaying

maturity and responsibility. Furthermore, Sharrer found that a majority (61%) of the sitcom

fathers were middle class and 86% of the families were white (p. 31).

One area that has been studied more extensively is fatherhood in advertising. Using a

content analysis of commercials, Kaufman (1999) reports that men are still portrayed in

stereotypically male behaviors in family life; "Men are less likely to be portrayed cooking,

cleaning, washing dishes, and shopping than women" (p. 439). This study also found that men

were less likely than women and children to advertise body and home products, were less likely

to be portrayed as care-taking than women, and were shown teaching, reading, and playing with

children more than mothers. Kaufman's study was replicated in Taiwan eleven years later by

Tsai (2010), who found many similarities in the depictions of Taiwanese men as less active in

housework and childcare than women. Tsai states, "advertising representations of gender roles

have made only slight and slow progress" (p. 423). In 2011, Kaufman's study was replicated

again in the United States by Tsai & Shumow (2011), who reported the same findings as

Kaufman's 1999 study.

According to a study by Wall and Arnold (2007), fatherhood is still considered to be

something a man does part-time. Wall and Arnold (2007) state that father's "parental

responsibilities fit around employment responsibilities" (p. 522). In other words, the hegemonic

father is still expected to be the provider for the family. Wall and Arnold (2007) recognize that

some "popular cultural representations portray the 'new father' of the past two decades as more

involved, more nurturing, and capable of co-parenting" (p. 508). However, they report that

motherhood and the relationship between mother and child is still thought to be more important

than fatherhood and the relationships between father and child (p. 508).

The previous literature on mothers in the media is more abundant than literature on fathers in media. A majority of the previous studies have looked at motherhood depictions in magazines. Lynch (2005) documented changes in advertising images of motherhood and examined the relationship between motherhood and consumption through a content analysis of advertisements found in two national magazines. In the ads, mothers were found to be holding either children (38%) or products (48%); "In a majority of cases, the maternal figure, alone or accompanied by a child or children, is the only adult figure displayed" (p. 39). Also, 66% of the mothers in the ads are described as caring for children (cooking, helping with homework, dressing, etc.) (p. 39). Lynch argues that, "one thing that she does not do is work outside of the home" (p. 40). Lynch explains that no ad depicted the "supermom" – "holding both briefcase and child" (p. 40).

According to previous scholars, magazines have played and continue to play an important role in shaping the lives of women. Odland (2010) contends that the 1946 *Ladies Home Journal* issues convinced women to return home from the work force once the war was over by portraying motherhood as "an ideological position, the feminine ideal" (p. 78). Odland argues that this magazine played a role in constructing the post-war maternal identity (p. 63).

Not only do magazines portray ideals for mothers, but they are also used to influence the work-related choices of mothers. Johnston and Swanson's (2003) content analysis of five women's magazines reports that "traditional motherhood, which excludes Women of Color and employed mothers, is "promoted" through these magazines (p. 21). Mothers were rarely depicted in the public sphere and were most often portrayed in the domestic sphere (p. 26). The study found that the negative myths stating that stay at home mothers are generally "confused, overwhelmed, and interested only in superficial topics are upheld in the magazines analyzed" (p.

21).   Kuperberg & Stone (2008) also examined articles about women who chose to leave the workforce in order to be full-time mothers. They found that those opting out are portrayed as putting family first, are college educated with well-respected jobs, and are shown as facing a tough choice regarding family versus work.   Despite media depictions that most women who opt out are middle class, Kuperberg & Stone found that, "the large majority of women portrayed in these articles, that is, college-educated mothers of preschoolers, are working and opting out at levels consistently *lower* than those of their less-educated counterparts" (p. 518).

Francis-Connolly's (2003) study compares images of mothers and fathers in parenting magazines and found mothers were portrayed more than twice as often as fathers. When mothers were portrayed, they were shown nurturing, being passive, and caretaking. Fathers, on the other hand, were shown in traditional roles of active play and sports (p. 181). Additionally, Francis-Connolly found that white parents were the most commonly portrayed and that parenting was not mentioned in any of the men's magazines but was in every woman's magazine. While previous studies have examined the depictions of mothers or fathers in the media, few have compared mothers and fathers in parenting magazines specifically. This study's content analysis of mother and father online parenting magazines adds to the literature that compares gender role expectations for mothers and fathers.

Methodology

This study compares one online father magazine, *Daddyhood*, to one online mother magazine, *ModernMom*. There are no hard copy magazines available exclusively for fathers, thus, data from online magazines allowed for the comparison. *Daddyhood* is an online magazine launched on Father's Day in 2014 and features sections on fatherhood, news, parenting, family, fun, finance, sports, and technology. *Daddyhood* describes itself as: "for all dads—new,

divorced, single, traditional, gay or step" (Daddyhood.com). The online motherhood magazine, *Modern Mom* describes itself as: "a one-stop destination for smart, savvy and soulful women who want to be informed, entertained and inspired" (Modernmom.com).   This online publication offers "practical tips, advice videos, and information on parenting, pregnancy, family, career, health, beauty, cooking, crafts and more" (Modernmom.com). While both of these magazines are aimed toward a specific audience, neither provides available information on the demographics of the readers of their magazine. Additionally, since this is an online publication, the number of articles available is constantly being updated.

These two magazines were selected because they are comparable to one another in layout and content. The magazines were chosen in the spring of 2015 after conducting a Google search of the phrases "online father magazine" and "online mother magazine." Both *Modern Mom* and *Daddyhood* are published by privately owned, small companies. In addition, they both aim to create a community amongst their target readers. Of the available online fatherhood magazines, *Daddyhood* was the most extensive, organized, and currently in publication. *Modern Mom* is also well organized, currently in publication, and appears to be aimed at the same social class as *Daddyhood*.

The sample for this study was drawn from articles available during the week of October 19th, 2015. The number of articles for each publication included in the sample is 222, for a total sample size of 444. An equal number of articles from each tab on the websites were selected until all article titles for the website were gathered or there were no articles left under a given tab. Because some articles are featured under more than one heading, a running alphabetized list of the article titles was kept in an Excel Spreadsheet so that no article title was double-coded.

Each article title was analyzed using a content analysis methodology. Article titles allow for a larger sample size, and also have advantages because of the technology. Unlike paper magazines, online magazines allow the reader to choose which articles are accessible by title. Analyzing article titles provides insight into how the editors are framing the interests of their readers and attempting to gain their attention.

Article titles were open coded to create themes based upon the articles' content. Examples of themes include: Current Events, Technology, Popular Culture, Parenting Advice, Health, Balancing Act, Sports, Finance, Career, Festive, Food, and Beauty. Each article title was coded into one category to which it best fit. The article titles were then coded for either mentioning or alluding to parenting, or not mentioning or alluding to parenting. The articles that were considered to "mention parenting" were then double coded for either "active parenting" or "not active parenting."

Findings

The data from this study shows that, overall, mother and father specific magazines focus on the development of "mother" and "father" as individuals rather than on their role as active parents. While mothers and fathers are portrayed as having different areas of interests, the interests reflect stereotypical gender roles.

As Table 1 shows, there are slightly more article titles that mentioned or alluded to parenting (54.5%) compared to those that did not mention or allude to parenting (45.5%). However, it is important to note that of the articles that mention parenting, only about half of them (51%), are about "active parenting." Active parenting is defined as a conscious and proactive effort on the mother or father's behalf to teach, guide, or bond with the child in order to shape the child's overall well-being. Anything that was not active parenting was labeled as "not

active." *Daddyhood* was more likely than *ModernMom* to mention parenting overall (151 articles

compared to 91 articles). However, when the article titles that mention or allude to parenting are

analyzed as "active" versus "not active" parenting, *ModernMom* has a greater majority of

"parenting mentioned" articles about active parenting; 64% of the *ModernMom* "parenting

mentioned" articles are about active parenting versus 43% of the *Daddyhood* "parenting

mentioned" articles.

Table 1			
Frequency of Parenting Styles Within Online Magazines' Article Titles			
	ModernMom	*Daddyhood*	Total
Parenting is mentioned	91	151	242 (54.5%)
Active Parenting	58	65	123 (27.7%)
Not Active Parenting	33	86	119 (26.8%)
No parenting mentioned	131	71	202 (45.5%)
TOTAL	222 (50%)	222 (50%)	444 (100%)

Active parenting includes article titles such as "Anxious child? Here's what you should

not do," "The Hardest Part of Parenting is Letting Go," "How to find a good daycare for your

baby," and "Sunscreen safety: should parents avoid-spray on sunscreens." One example of a not

active parenting article title from *Daddyhood* is "Father Learns his Missing Son is Okay while

Talking Live with Nancy Grace." Some not active parenting article titles from ModernMom are:

"The Yoga Philosophy of Motherhood" and "Hayden Panettiere Pregnant With First Child."

Article titles in which no parenting was mentioned include *ModernMom*'s "5 Ways to support a

friend with breast cancer" and "7 Ways to Get Organized Before the Holidays," while examples

from *Daddyhood* include "10+ July 4th Grilling Tips" and "Survey: In-laws Cause Most

Extramarital Affairs."

Table 2 compares the themes found in *ModernMom* and *Daddyhood* article titles that

mention parenting. The most prominent themes amongst those article titles that mention

parenting are: 1) Current Events (14.9%), 2) Technology (12.8%), 3) Popular Culture (11.6%), and 4) Parenting Advice (9.9%). Most notably, the majority (35 out of 36) of the current events articles appear in *Daddyhood*. Many of the current event articles in the father's magazine mention "dads" in the news; for example, "Father wanted for punching man who eyed his teen daughter at Wawa."

Table 2
Frequency of Themes in Article Titles That Mention Parenting

Theme	*ModernMom*	*Daddyhood*	Total
Current Events	1	35	36 (14.9%)
Technology	14	17	31 (12.8%)
Popular Culture	11	17	28 (11.6%)
Parenting Advice	18	6	24 (9.9%)
Health	7	11	18 (7.4%)
Parenting	5	12	17 (7%)
Other	6	10	16 (6.6%)
Safety	3	8	11 (4.5%)
Balancing Act	6	4	10 (4.1%)
Sports	0	7	7 (2.9%)
Finance	1	5	6 (2.5%)
Relationships	2	4	6 (2.5%)
Celebrity Advice	0	5	5 (2.1%)
Social Media	3	2	5 (2.1%)
Helping Others	0	5	5 (2.1%)
Festive	4	0	4 (1.7%)
Divorce	1	2	3 (1.2%)
Career	2	1	3 (1.2%)
Sex	2	0	2 (0.8%)
Self-help	2	0	2 (0.8%)
Food	2	0	2 (0.8%)
Beauty	1	0	1 (0.4%)
TOTAL	91	151	242 (100%)

Technology, the second most frequent theme, occurs twice as frequently in *Daddyhood* compared to *ModernMom* (30 articles compared to 15). Overall, Daddyhood features 67% of the articles about Technology. However, 93% of *ModernMom*'s articles about technology mention parenting (14), while only 56% of the *Daddyhood* technology articles mention parenting (17).

Examples include, *Daddyhood*'s "Dad who videotapes daughter during 'epic' selfie sessions gets 15 minutes of fame" and "New app: helping dad's organize diapers and wipes," and *ModernMom*'s "Are app rewards sending kids the wrong message about life?" and "Teaching our kids tech etiquette." Technology includes: Hard Technology (i.e. gadgets and machines), Internet Technology (i.e. the Internet and apps), and Kids and Technologies. Internet technology comprises 51% of the total technology theme with 23 articles; of those 23 articles, 20 of them are found in the father magazine. Hard Technology, comprised of 12 articles, constitutes 27% of the Technology category; *Daddyhood* accounts for 75% of the "Hard Technology" articles. Finally Kids and Technologies, which discusses how to manage children's' hard and soft technology usage, is predominately (90%) *ModernMom* article titles. This data suggests that the magazines portray fathers as caring more about technology unless it involves monitoring a child's use; this is constructed as a mom's job.

The third most frequent theme is popular culture; 61% of the article titles mention or allude to parenting (28 of 46). Examples include, *ModernMom* article "Rapper Lil' Kim Gives Birth to Daughter" and *Daddyhood* articles "Reality check: 'Girl meets world' episode tackles a dad coming to terms with daughter growing up" and "Best TV commercials starring dads." Of all article titles that mention parenting, 9.9% were found in Parenting Advice, making it the fourth most common theme in articles that mention or allude to parenting. Parenting advice was given to mothers at three times the rate at which it was given to fathers (18 times to women versus 6 times to men).

Significantly, 7% of the article titles that mention parenting were coded as having a "Parenting" theme. The parenting theme is a compilation of themes all related to parenting, including articles titles about Advising Children (28%), Daddy Rights (11%), Discipline (11%),

Extracurricular (11%), Family First (11%), Grieving Dad (11%), Single Parenting (11%), and

About Kids (5%). Examples of parenting themed articles include, *Daddyhood's* "Dad's battle for

changing tables in men's rooms" and "Dance dad? Competitive dance through father's eyes" and

ModernMom's "Teach your kids how to be good sports." Of these 17 Parenting articles that

mentioned parenting, *Daddyhood* accounted for 70%.

Table 3 compares the themes found in *ModernMom* and *Daddyhood* article titles that do

not mention parenting. As the table shows, when the parenting magazines are not talking about

parenting, they are most likely discussing Health (9.9%), Popular Culture (8.9%), Food (8.9%),

and Current Events (8.4%). Of the Health themed articles that do not mention or allude to

parenting, 19 of the 20 are found in *ModernMom* article titles. Examples include, "Aspirin may

help prevent pancreatic cancer," "Living with Metastatic Breast Cancer," and "7 tips for

detoxing and restoring energy." *ModernMom* is also twice as likely as *Daddyhood* to not

mention or allude to parenting when discussing Popular Culture (12 article titles versus 6).

Although Food is the third most prominent theme of the overall articles that do not discuss

parenting, all appear in *ModernMom*. Although these articles do not explicitly mention

parenting, the stereotype is that mothers cook for their families. Current Events, the fourth most

common theme for "did not mention" article titles, is primarily found in *Daddyhood*. Current

Event article titles that do not mention parenting include *ModernMom*'s, "Airbag maker, Takata,

Announcing largest auto recall in history" and *Daddyhood* "articles "FBI raids home of Subway

pitchman Jared Fogle," "Brian Williams: Iraq war story: NBC anchor recants, faces blows to

credibility," and "Exclusive: Will former notorious mobster Michael Franzese be robbed of

speaking engagement in Australia."

Table 3
Frequency of Themes in Article Titles That Do Not Mention Parenting

Themes	*ModernMom*	*Daddyhood*	Total
Health	19	1	20 (9.9%)
Popular Culture	12	6	18 (8.9%)
Food	18	0	18 (8.9%)
Current Events	4	13	17 (8.4%)
Other	11	4	15 (7.4%)
Technology	1	13	14 (6.9%)
Festive	13	0	13 (6.4%)
Beauty	13	0	13 (6.4%)
Career	6	6	12 (5.9%)
Relationships	11	1	12 (5.9%)
Finance	1	10	11 (5.4%)
Safety	7	1	8 (4.0%)
Social Media	2	4	6 (3.0%)
Travel	0	5	5 (2.5%)
Helping Others	3	2	5 (2.5%)
Fashion	5	0	5 (2.5%)
Sports	0	3	3 (1.5%)
Self-help	3	0	3 (1.5%)
Sex	0	2	2 (1.0%)
Parenting	1	0	1 (0.5%)
Balancing Act	1	0	1 (0.5%)
TOTAL	131	71	202 (100%)

When analyzed by magazine, the top themes amongst the *Daddyhood* articles that do not

mention parenting are: Technology (13/71), Current Events (13/71), Finance (10/71), Career

(6/71), and Popular Culture (6/71). Of the *ModernMom* articles that do not mention parenting,

Health (19/131), Food (18/131), Beauty (13/131), Festive, (13/131) and Popular Culture (12/131)

are most frequently occurring.

As Table 2 and Table 3 show, the themes discussed in the magazines vary depending

upon the assumed sex of the reader. There are some themes that occur in both the mother and

father magazine, but lean primarily toward one specific sex. For example, *ModernMom* put more

emphasis on Relationships than did *Daddyhood*; Relationships are mentioned 13 times in

ModernMom versus 4 times in *Daddyhood*. Finance, on the other hand, is nearly exclusively

found in the father magazine; of the 17 articles about Finance, 88% are found in *Daddyhood*.

Other themes exclusive to one of the magazines, also indicating gender differences,

include Sports, Celebrity advice, Travel, Military, Daddy Rights, Discipline, Extra Curricular,

Family First, and Grieving Dad, which are found in *Daddyhood*. Food, Festive, Beauty, Fashion,

Self-help, Crafts, Body Image, and Faith are themes exclusive to *ModernMom*. Notably, of all

the article titles in *ModernMom*, food accounts for 9%, festive accounts for 8%, and Beauty

accounts for 6%.

Notably, a number of the article titles mention the "Balancing Act," or creating a balance

between work and family. *ModernMom* mentions this theme at a higher rate than the father

magazine (64% compared to 36%). This issue is something that both mothers and fathers are

concerned with; however, the titles reveal a gender difference. The mother magazine depicts the

work/family balance as nearly impossible; article titles include, "4 Tips to Balance Family and

Career (Or at Least Try)," "The Struggles of Working at Home," and "A working mom's guide

to asking for flexible work arrangements." The father magazine, by contrast, glorifies fathers

who choose to balance work and family; "Work-life balance: Dad ditches multi-million dollar

job to spend time with daughter" and "Work life balance: How a Calif. Clinic founder juggles

career and fatherhood."

Discussion

As the data suggests, although the magazines in the study are labeled as "mother" or

"father" magazines, the central focus of the magazines is not parenting alone. Despite the shifts

in family and gender roles throughout recent decades, parents are still expected to adhere to

hegemonic gender roles. However, the magazines also suggest that parents are individuals with gender specific interests.

According to Williams (1970) individualism is one of the core American values. Williams defines individualism as the way in which "Americans have traditionally prized success through individual efforts and initiative" (p. 43). In this study, American parents, who are expected to sacrifice their own wants and needs for the well-being of their children, are also affected by the value of individualism. Kimmel (2008) explained the link between individualism and fatherhood by first looking at the link between individualism and masculinity. According to Kimmel (2011), the link between individualism and masculinity began in the 1800s with the "self-made man" (p. 64). The self-made man was built through individual achievement and improvement of the individual. Kimmel suggests that by emphasizing individual wants, needs, and goals over the needs of their children, men are proving their own self-reliance and independence, which are still important values of masculinity today. However, as the data suggests, mothers today appear to value individualism as frequently as fathers. This may be due to the many roles that women are expected to fill in order to be respected as both women and mothers.

As the data shows, the specific form of individualism emphasized is gender specific. *Daddyhood* tells men that in order to be good fathers, they must focus primarily on technology, current events, finance, and popular culture. By contrast, the data shows that a mother's role includes a broader range of issues including: health, beauty, food, festivities, relationships, and parenting advice. Mothers in other words, will likely struggle to be successful in everything that is expected of them.

Although it may be surprising that *ModernMom* mentions both active and non-active parenting less than *Daddyhood*, one possible explanation is that a mother magazine does not need to reinforce parenting because mothers are already expected to know more about parenting than fathers. In other words, the act of mothering is something that should come naturally to women upon having children. The magazines construct a gendered view of parenting. Fathers are expected to know what is going on in the world, and outside of their homes, at all times. *Daddyhood* is also gendered in its parenting information. For instance, discipline and extracurricular activities are exclusively father topics; implying that fathers are in charge of disciplining and sharing their knowledge of sports. Mothers on the other hand, are expected to focus primarily on issues within the home such as health, food, parenting advice, and festivities. As this data shows, it is still a mother's job to provide her family with wholesome food, sound advice, and a pleasant atmosphere. The mother magazine also mentions themes such as beauty, fashion, and relationships, which are all stereotypical female concerns. These magazines socially construct mothers and fathers as having gendered roles in the family.

Overall, the study finds that in parenting magazines, fathers are expected to do less, while mothers are expected to do it all. When men take on fathering roles within the family structure, they are often glorified. Women however are portrayed as constantly struggling to manage all the elements of being a "good" parent.

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