

Glorified Dads and Struggling Moms: Comparing mother and father online parenting magazines

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Presentation

Background

Research Question:

- ✧ What are 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?

Thesis

This paper finds that traditional gender roles of mothers and fathers are being reinforced through the online parenting magazines *Modern Mom* 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,

Theories

✧ Berger and Luckmann (1966):

✧ The Social Construction of Reality

✧ Lorber and Farrell (1991):

✧ The Social Construction of Gender

Literature Review

Hegemonic Ideals of Man and Woman

- ✧ De Beauvoir (1949), Williams, Sawyer, & Wahlstrom (2012), and Eagley & Steffen (1984)

Hegemonic Ideals of Fatherhood and Motherhood

- ✧ Fathers
 - ✧ Eggebeen and Knoester (2001), Varuvrus (2002)
- ✧ Mothers
 - ✧ Tardy (2000), Guendouzi (2006)

Hegemonic Images of Father and Mother in the Media

- ✧ Fathers in the Media
 - ✧ Sharrer (2001), Kaufman (1999), Tsai (2010), Tsai and Shumow (2011), Wall and Arnold (2007)
- ✧ Mothers in the Media
 - ✧ Lynch (2005), Odland (2010), Johnson and Swanson (2003), Kuperberg and Stone (2008)
- ✧ Comparison
 - ✧ Francis-Connolly (2003)

Methodology

- ✧ This study compares one online father magazine, *Daddyhood*, to one online mother magazine, *ModernMom*
- ✧ Content analysis of 444 article titles
 - ✧ 222 from each publication
- ✧ Each article title was coded for
 - ✧ Theme
 - ✧ Mentioned or alluded to parenting, or did not mention or allude to parenting
 - ✧ When did mention parenting, were then double coded for “active parenting” or “not active parenting”

Findings Overview

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.

Table 1
Frequency of Parenting Styles Within Online Magazines' Article Titles

	<i>ModernMom</i>	<i>Daddyhood</i>	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%)

“How to find a good daycare for your baby”

- *ModernMom, Active parenting*

“Anxious child? Here’s what you should not do”

- *Daddyhood, Active parenting*

“The Yoga Philosophy of Motherhood”

- *ModernMom, Not active parenting*

“Father Learns His Missing Son is Okay While Talking
Live with Nancy Grace”

- *Daddyhood, Not active parenting*

Table 2
 Frequency of Themes in Article Titles That Mention Parenting

Theme	<i>ModernMom</i>	<i>Daddyhood</i>	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%)

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

Themes	<i>ModernMom</i>	<i>Daddyhood</i>	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%)

“Just born: New app for new dads”

- *Daddyhood*, Technology, Parenting mentioned

“What to do when your kids use bathroom words”

- *ModernMom*, Parenting Advice, Parenting mentioned

“Dating is terrible (especially when you're cougar aged)”

- *ModernMom*, Relationships, Parenting not mentioned

“New Indie film 'Tokal' attracts major Hollywood support, sets off global debate on marriage and social customs “

- *Daddyhood*, Popular Culture, Parenting not mentioned

The “Balancing Act”

✧ 64% of the balancing act article titles came from *ModernMom*

“4 Tips to Balance Family and Career (Or At Least Try)” and “A Working Mom’s Guide to asking for Flexible Work Arrangements” - *ModernMom*

“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” - *Daddyhood*

Discussion

Central focus of the magazines is not parenting alone

- ① Parents are still expected to adhere to hegemonic gender roles
- ② Parents are individuals with gender specific interests
 - ✧ Individualism as a core American value

Overall, Fathers are expected to do less, while mothers are expected to do it all

✧ **Glorified Dads and Struggling Moms**