How Maternal Gatekeeping and Media Conflict Affect Media Monitoring in a Co-parental

Context

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Context

The purpose of this project is to identify the role that maternal gatekeeping and media

conflict play in the type of monitoring style utilized by co-parents (those who have guardianship

over the same child but are not necessarily in a romantic relationship with each other). My

specific research question is, "How, after controlling for gender, race, and age does maternal

gatekeeping and media conflict affect a co-parenting system's ability to monitor media?" After

doing some research on the subject, I hypothesize that maternal gatekeeping and media conflict

in a co-parenting system will have a significant negative impact on the co-parenting system's

monitoring levels.

Project Overview

Importance

There are several reasons why the results of this study will be relevant for both co-parents

and researchers. Within the last decade, there has been an onslaught of digital and social media,

some sending positive messages, and others sending negative ones. This study is being

conducted so that co-parents can begin to understand the consequences of media conflict—and

more specifically, maternal gatekeeping—on their ability to monitor the media (and therefore the

messages) entering the home.

Researchers may also benefit from this study for several reasons. First, the pool of

research that has been done on the topic of media use is extensive, but the research currently

being conducted on the effect of media conflict on co-parental media monitoring is scarce. By

continuing to fill this gap in the research, the results of this study will shed some light on the

relationship between co-parents and how it influences the effectiveness of media monitoring in

the home. Also, by conducting this study, I hope to lay a foundation that will provide a starting

place for future research into the influence of co-parenting relationships on media use in the

home.

Variable Overview

The research building up to this proposal has been extensive, with many perspectives and

findings for each variable in my research question. In this section, each concept will be

explained, after which the methodology of the study and sampling procedure will be delineated.

Maternal gatekeeping. *Maternal gatekeeping* is defined as when mothers exclude

fathers from participating in child care because of fear of loss of power (Pleck, 1983) or threat to

personal identity. Maternal gatekeeping has been studied for decades, mostly in the context of

father involvement (De Luccie, 1995), but when put in the context of co-parenting and media

monitoring, the research is pretty much nonexistent.

As mentioned earlier, women may act as gatekeepers because of fear of power or identity

loss. Another reason, more related to media, is that mothers may feel like the other co-parent is

allowing the children to consume media that doesn't fit with their values. This difference in

permissiveness is what could possibly lead to co-parental conflict over media.

Media conflict. In general, couples tend to have more issues with co-parenting when

their levels of permissiveness differ (Tavassolie, Dudding, Madigan, Thorvardarson, & Winsler,

2016). Applying this principle to the current question, we may predict that couples who disagree

with each other concerning the level of permissiveness in media will tend to have more conflict,

along with other negative effects. A study, conducted by Mares et al. (2018), found that,

"Inconsistent restriction (sometimes forbidding, sometimes allowing media use) predicted more

concurrent exposure to media violence" (p. 178), concurrent meaning that the child viewed the media along with the parent.

Media monitoring. The goal is to have the co-parents utilize the same style of media monitoring. By definition, media monitoring is the effort put in by parents to supervise and discuss their child's media use (Padilla-Walker et al., 2018). Over 80% of households in the United States report that there are rules in place regarding media use (Mares et al., 2018), but various studies have found that just having rules in place doesn't necessarily mean that they will be effective (Mares et al., 2018; Festl & Gniewosz, 2018; Meeus, Beyens, Geusens, Sodermans, & Beullens, 2018). There are many different strategies such as interaction rules and technical filtering software that parents utilize to monitor their children's media use, but for the purpose of my thesis, I will focus on just two types of media monitoring: active and restrictive. These can further be broken down into controlling versus autonomy supporting monitoring styles (Coyne, Padilla-Walker, & Stockdale, 2016).

Design. The variables used will be as follows: maternal media gatekeeping, parental media conflict and parental media monitoring, along with demographic information as controls.

Dataset. The idea is to use the constructs and corresponding data from the Project MEDIA dataset, a cross-sectional study conducted by Dr. Sarah M. Coyne, Dr. Laura Padilla-Walker, and Dr. Laura Stockdale from the BYU School of Family Life.

Sample. While previous research has been done on media use in the United States, the demographics of the samples were not representative of the general population. Because of this, the goal of Project MEDIA was to "obtain a snapshot on media use and behavior in a quota nationally representative sample of 10 to 20-year-old participants in the United States" (Coyne,

Padilla-Walker, & Stockdale, 2016). With data from over 1,000 participants, the results from projects based on this dataset will be more widely generalizable.

Analyses. This study will be classified as an analysis of archival self-report survey data. To run the linear regressions required for the analyses, I will use the SPSS statistical software.

Thesis Committee

Laura Padilla-Walker (Advisor). Dr. Walker is my advisor for the School of Family Life Academy, an advanced program for Family Life majors to help prepare them for graduate school. Among other things, Dr. Walker is an expert on media use in the home. She specializes in the effect of media on parenting and adolescence and has been a great resource.

Erin Holmes (Faculty Reader). I first met Dr. Holmes at the Wheatley Round Table on the Family, put on by the Wheatley Foundation. Dr. Holmes was the head of the discussion group with the topic of children. I was able to spend four days together with her, discussing children and preparing a presentation for the rest of the seminar attendees. In her research, Dr. Holmes focuses on a mother and father's relationship to each other and to their children, along with the ecological factors that can also have an effect on a family system. Her knowledge of the family system, along with the effects that media can have on said system, will be invaluable to my thesis.

Dr. Mark Butler (Honors Coordinator). This is Dr. Butler's first year as the Honors Coordinator for the School of Family Life. His research interests include recovery from addictive desire and behavior, healing relationships (especially infidelity), and spirituality in clinical perspective and practice.

Project Timeline

IRB Approval

My project is pending IRB approval. I have already received approval from the directors of Project MEDIA to access their data, and included in this packet is the certificate I received after completing the mandatory CITI training (required for social scientists dealing with human subjects and their data).

General Timeline

My plan is to have the research and testing completed by the end of March, after which the paper will be written as part of SFL 403R, directed by Dr. Walker during Spring 2019. It will be completed, defended, and published by the time I graduate in August 2019

Funding

There will be no funding necessary for this project.

Culminating Experience

nice!

My research has already been accepted for presentation at the Western Regional Honors Council Conference, which will be held at the end of March. I will also apply to present at the 2019 Fulton Conference here at BYU.

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