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The Breadwinner PheMOMenon: Ketchum Study Shows How Earning More Money Affects Women’s Health, Attitudes and Relationships

Nearly half of all U.S. moms are now the primary breadwinner or contribute as much as their significant other.

Moms with spouses report being more starved for time than single moms.

Despite their growing financial influence, women overwhelmingly say that they do not feel in control of their destiny nor has their career given them a greater sense of purpose.

Working mothers in the United States and China report the highest levels of stress and envy of others, even while their partners are contributing more to parenting and household duties.

Half of U.S. women no longer have expectations that they should keep a perfect home.

CHICAGO, Oct. 22, 2014 – Nearly half of all U.S. women (49%) are now the primary breadwinner or are on par financially with their significant other, a trend that is progressing more quickly than even recent major studies predicted¹, according to the [2014 Marketing to Moms study](#) conducted by global communications leader [Ketchum](#) and [BlogHer](#), the leading cross-platform media network created by, for and with women in social media. The survey, which was conducted among 2,589 women in the U.S., the U.K., Germany, and China indicates significant changes in women’s perceptions and behaviors, as well as family and societal dynamics. “The Breadwinner PheMOMenon” findings will be unveiled today at the 10th Annual Marketing to Moms Conference.

The United States and China are on the leading edge of the women-as-breadwinner trend, with 85% and 87% of respondents, respectively, saying they’ve held that role for *at least* the past five years. The number of women becoming the primary breadwinner *within* the past five years is higher in the U.K. (20%) and in Germany (19%), indicating that the trend is gaining steam in those countries as well.

Seeking Purpose But Finding Stress

While women today may be seizing opportunities and providing for their families at unprecedented numbers, the vast majority of female breadwinners report they do not feel in control of their destiny, nor has their career given them a greater sense of purpose. This is one of the few findings from the study that remained remarkably consistent across all markets surveyed. Further, seeking opportunity comes at a cost – that is, more stress. Among primary breadwinners in the U.S., 44% are more stressed than they were five years ago, and 42% have even less free time.

“We are in the midst of one of the most significant socioeconomic shifts of this generation. As more moms bring home the dough, they are feeling increasingly empowered to make significant financial and purchasing decisions on their own, yet continue to say that they do not feel in control of their destiny. These changes are having ripple effects on their lives and behaviors,” said [Kelley Skoloda](#), partner and director of Ketchum’s Global Brand Marketing Practice and author of *Too Busy to Shop: Marketing to Multi-Minding Women*.

Skoloda continued, “Although feeling in control of their destiny may be elusive, working moms have a very clear vision about how they define their personal success – being in good health, having a strong marriage and having healthy, well-adjusted children.”

One area that does not seem to be stressing moms is trying to keep a “perfect” home. “With more breadwinning and less breadmaking, nearly half of moms surveyed no longer have expectations that they should be a ‘domestic goddess,’” noted Skoloda.

A Married Mother’s Midlife Crisis is the Crunch for Time

It comes as no surprise to learn that mothers are constantly juggling a number of tasks and feel pressed for time. In fact, “The Breadwinner PheMOMenon” found that the transition to becoming a mom more than doubles the likelihood of time starvation (21% to 46%). Defying conventional wisdom, single moms in the U.S. report being less time-starved than do working moms with spouses. According to the research, when these moms add a full-time job they report an increase in time starvation, from 39% to 60%. But for unmarried moms in the U.S., it makes no difference.

Despite the fact that more than 90% of women in all markets surveyed said being in good health is important to how they personally define success, the study finds that a working mother's greatest sacrifice is herself, especially when it comes to dimensions of her health like exercise, sleep and stress-reducing hobbies. Two in five moms (40%) globally say they have cut back on sleep and 35% have cut back on exercise due to increased demands. That may be because this group of working mothers feels strongly about remaining active in their communities. They place higher value on holding "out-of-home" positions of "high-importance" in community and church organizations than the general population of women (45% vs. 32%).

"Time starvation is not a new concept, but the differences in perception of time starvation between a mom with a spouse and those who are single is radically, and surprisingly, different," said Skoloda. She continued: "Does having a spouse feed rather than solve time starvation? The data suggests that spouses add to the feeling of time starvation, so products, services, tips and communities that help working moms optimize their time will be extremely relevant and welcome."

She's the CEO, COO and CFO

Women are moving beyond being decision-makers or influencers to the official head of the household in a notable number of U.S. families. An overwhelming 68% of breadwinning moms in the U.S. and over a third of all U.S. women surveyed (36%) say they make major financial decisions alone versus a mere 2% who say their spouse does. Women in China also are embracing a new financial role, with nearly half saying that they control all financial decisions (48%). The number of women making all financial decisions for the family drops off somewhat in the U.K. and Germany to 29% and 27%, respectively. And women are shrewd consumers, with 78% saying they conduct research before making purchases and 81% indicating they consider debt avoidance a benchmark of success.

Said Skoloda: "Although working moms are overwhelmingly starved for time, they also are very trend-aware and, quite often, one of the first to try new products or services. Our research shows us that 52% of this group are early adopters compared to only 37% of the general population. So marketers rolling out new offerings may be well-served to target working moms – the busiest people around."

American and Chinese Women Are Closely Aligned on their Experiences

While women in all countries surveyed report notable changes related to their work/life experience, the data shows that women in the United States and China are undergoing change, along with feelings of guilt and envy, at far greater rates than those in the U.K. and Germany.

		U.S.	U.K.	China	Germany
I feel more stressed out	Total	40%	13%	25%	15%
	Moms	42%	16%	28%	22%
	Moms as Primary Breadwinner	44%	19%	29%	17%
I feel more guilt now than I used to about prioritizing work over personal life	Total	37%	20%	44%	20%
	Moms	44%	30%	50%	31%
	Moms as Primary Breadwinner	44%	23%	54%	22%
I feel more guilt now than I used to about prioritizing personal life over work	Total	31%	21%	38%	14%
	Moms	42%	29%	43%	17%
	Moms as Primary Breadwinner	39%	23%	49%	17%
I envy couples who spend more time together than my significant other and I do	Total	45%	26%	73%	27%
	Moms	55%	16%	74%	37%
	Moms as Primary Breadwinner	58%	21%	76%	21%
I envy other parents who have more time to spend with their children	Total	42%	20%	73%	20%
	Moms	50%	36%	77%	34%
	Moms as Primary Breadwinner	53%	22%	74%	20%

Technology Eases the Burden, But Not All Services Hit the Mark

Breadwinners who have a spouse rely heavily on technology to manage their work-life balance, as 61% in the U.S. say that technology helps them have a more flexible work life, and 59% say that it helps them better balance everything that is going on in their lives. But the data from the accompanying [BlogHer study](#) released earlier this month shows women have little patience for apps and services if they feel they aren't delivering value. In fact, 31% of all women abandoned at least one social app or service in the past year, with the majority of those women saying it was because the tool didn't serve a necessary function in their lives.

"Technology has and will continue to play a critical role in women's lives, helping them manage

their increasingly challenging schedules, stay connected to their loved ones and, increasingly, have a stress-relieving outlet,” said Elisa Camahort Page, co-founder and COO, BlogHer. “But in an environment of time-starvation, women are also ruthless winnowers. The key takeaway for marketers and influencers when it comes to social platforms is that utility plus unique voice equals influence.”

Visit www.ketchummarketingtomoms.com for additional survey information and materials.

About the Study

A study of 2,589 women ages 18 to 75 was fielded across four markets from June to August 2014. Data was collected via a Qualtrics panel of female respondents. The total sample has a margin of error of +/- 2%, U.S. data +/- 3%, and U.K., China and Germany +/- 4%.

About Ketchum

Ketchum is a leading global communications firm with operations in more than 70 countries across six continents. The winner of 14 Cannes Lions and an unprecedented four *PRWeek* Campaign of the Year Awards, Ketchum partners with clients to deliver strategic programming, game-changing creative and measurable results that build brands and reputations. For more information on Ketchum, a part of the DAS Group of Companies, a division of Omnicom Group Inc., visit www.ketchum.com.

About the DAS Group of Companies

The DAS Group of Companies, a division of Omnicom Group Inc. (NYSE: OMC) (www.omnicomgroup.com), is a global group of marketing services companies. DAS includes over 200 companies in the following marketing disciplines: specialty, PR, healthcare, CRM, events, promotional marketing, branding and research. Operating through a combination of networks and regional organizations, DAS serves international, regional, national and local clients through more than 700 offices in 71 countries.

About BlogHer

BlogHer (www.blogher.com) is the leading cross-platform media network created by, for and with women in social media. BlogHer delivers quality advocacy at scale for brands seeking to engage in authentic and persuasive dialogue with moderated communities led by more than 3,000 quality bloggers and 17,000+ engaging, original voices in social media, reaching an audience of 100 million across premium blogs, Pinterest™, Facebook®, and Twitter™. Founded in February 2005 by Elisa Camahort Page, Jory Des Jardins, and Lisa Stone, BlogHer publishes and syndicates news, information, advice, recommendations and research on women in social media across interest areas as well as on BlogHer.com. The company also hosts the world's largest conferences for women in social media.

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