

# PRINT MEDIA DESIGN THROUGH FEMINISM APPROACHES

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## ABSTRACT

This research aims to study the suitable content and layout design of print media which focuses on female's interest through feminist theory. This research has been conducted as a qualitative research with semi-structured questionnaires. The interview has been made with 14 editors of different printed materials for women in order to obtain information on popular content, proper styles and design elements for the layout.

It is found that popular contents are lifestyle and fashion, art and culture, health and quality of life, nightlife and dining, celebrities and jet set gossip, horoscope, tourism and environment, history, sport and recreation, woman issues, automobile, information and technology, novels, job classified, and shopping.

Moreover, there are three proper styles: modern, chic, and natural styles. Each style has its distinctive elements of layout design as follows. Firstly, regarding the modern style, the gradation pattern of composition is a key element to grab attention from the readers by applying different structures leading to the focal point. This also creates a dynamic movement. Few numbers of dark color tones can be paired with a wide variety of bright tones. The curve and round structures can be applied to the Thai font characters with harmonious size and consistent strokes. This can be perceived as humble and noble looks. Secondly, regarding chic style, the composition with a clear distinctive scale together with rhythmic repetitive pattern can draw reader's attention. Various vivid and bright tones can be used with similar color tones. The round structures can be applied to the Thai font characters with light strokes and consistent lines. Finally, regarding natural style, the composition with rhythmic patterns and movement can create a point of interest noticeably with a harmonious arrangement. Restrictive range of warm color tones as appeared in the natural atmosphere can be used with descending color tones to present the harmonious perception. Free formed Thai fonts with inconsistent stroke are suitable for the natural style.

**Keywords:** *Print Media Design, Feminism Approaches, Social Media, Printed Materials for Women*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the past, printed materials can be regarded as mass media that gave influential effects on the lifestyle of people. The information was interchangeable among the people in the community. Some media tycoons profited themselves from advertisements. Some might work as a medium for political reasons. However, most of their roles are to provide information, argumentation on some issues that include education as well as entertainment.

According to the mass communication principle, printed materials can be divided into two categories: popular and quality printed materials (Chantarangsi, 1982). The popular printed materials primarily offer emotional news and news from daily situations which are widely popular among mass readers. On the other hand, quality printed material serve needs in some specific groups of readers who want to broaden their worlds through some particular area of knowledge such as economy news or political news.

In the old time where printed materials played as the main medium of communication among people, it is undeniable to refrain from fierce competition in the market (Suwannapuem, 1978). Therefore, to respond to the numerous requirements from the readers, several brands of printed media had been introduced into the market. This created several inventive ideas with noticeable images. At that time, Pipitkul (2003) has found that most of the contents were male-dominated and none of the newspaper in the

market focused on women's interests. However, the number of female readers outweighed her counterpart. If there had been any newspaper targeting female readers, those readers might have responded enormously in terms of psychological and marketing reaction. Simone de Bois and Dejadiwong (1983) have agreed that both females and males were born equally yet different in some aspects. Both of them have similar needs of in terms of biological, psychological, sexual related, and love. Nonetheless, females have fewer desires than their opposites. Meanwhile, Kaewthep (1992, 1997) pointed out that being female is not biologically born but society and culture have cultivated the quality of feminine attributions. She also found that the misappropriate news contents towards women are female violence, the exaggerated language used on women's issues with discriminated opinions, and obvious pictures of women victimized from unfair events on the first page of a newspaper.

It can be assumed that marketing segmentation towards genders can lead to gender equality causing purchasing satisfaction. In terms of mass media through feminism theory, women should be equally respected and accepted, the media will be able to deliver more feminine friendly content than it did in the past.

## **5. OBJECTIVES**

1. To specify the proper contents of printed materials for women through feminism theory.
2. To identify the layout patterns of printed materials for women.

## **6. METHODOLOGY**

This research has been conducted as qualitative research with semi-structured questionnaires (Kumar, 2014) about styles, contents, layout patterns, color tones, and typography together with the interviews with 14 editors of popular printed materials in Thailand.

## **7. RESEARCH RESULTS**

After the interviews with the 14 editors, it can be summarised that the widely accepted contents for female readers are lifestyle and fashion, art and culture, health and quality of living, nightlife and dining out, celebrity and jet set gossips, horoscope, travel and natural environment, history, sport and recreation, female issues, automobile and information technology, novels, job classified and shopping.

In terms of proper styles, there are three suitable styles for printed materials, which are modern, chic, and natural.

1. Modern style emphasizes functional attribute through a clear layout arrangement with unique characteristics: progressive, metallic, rational, sharp and urbane. The composition in the layout can be an anomaly with an outstanding proportion to intricate the sense of dynamic movement and a focal point. The proper color tones used are dark tones intertwined with the bright tones. The typography should be proportionally formed in a simple round shape and lined with a consistent stroke under the harmonious arrangement. This can create the look of humble and noble perception, as can be seen from Figure 1.



Figure 1: Print media design through Modern style

2. Chic style portrays the confident, clever, and mature characters with the urban taste and little cunning look. This style can be sensed as modest, quiet, simple, sober and subtle attributions. The composition can be laid out with a distinctive scale with specific concentration leading to rhythmic movement and attentiveness. Vivid and bright color tones can be applied together with similar color tones. Round shape typography with light and a consistent stroke is acceptable, as can be seen from Figure 2.



Figure 2: Print media design through Chic style

3. Natural style depicts the simple warmth embraced with serene nature. This style is comprised of generous, intimate, natural, appealing and tranquil qualities. The composition stresses on balanced proportion with peaceful element contributing to the unity of the layout. Brownish earth tone colors can be applied with grayish tones creating the soft appearance of the whole picture. Free formed typography with an inconsistent stroke can be used incorporated with the curve and edge lines, as can be seen from Figure 3.



Figure 3: Print media design through Natural style

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

According to the content, it can be concluded that the suitable contents for woman readers are lifestyle, fashion, culture, quality of life, nightlife, celebrities, horoscopes, travel, health, sport and entertainment. However, it is necessary to include some informative global and domestic news, and some useful information such as education and documentary. In terms of writing style, the contents need to be directly expressed without any violent ideas through a literary statement. Too overemphasizing over dramatic issues should be avoided in order not to provoke readers being aggressive. It also appeared that an inappropriate context towards women is definitely unacceptable.

Furthermore, layout design for women reading materials is different than the others. The concepts for the layout plan should include the women-friendly, feminine look, sweet, chic, natural, wise and adorable. The layout composition should be dynamic with a rhythm of grid systematic arrangement correlated to Wong's (1993) "The Two-Dimensional Graphic Design Principles and Design Principles". Besides, eye catchy image with a colorful graphic can capture the readers' attention. Additionally, a harmonious layout plan with a clear focal point can work well on the medium for woman readers, as can be seen from Figure 4.



Figure 4: The layout composition with a rhythm of grid systematic arrangement

In addition, it is recommended that the color tones for woman readers can be warm tones while some vivid and bright tones can enhance more positive feeling from the readers than the dark tones supported by Kobayashi's research (1991) about the relationship between color schemes and personalities, as can be seen from Figure 5.



Figure 5: The color scheme with warm tones, vivid and bright tones

Modern Thai typography is acceptable to represent a local look. Applying straight line with unity can give a warm and friendly feeling to the readers, as can be seen from Figure 6.



Figure 6: The modern Thai typography

Nowadays, printed materials are not the main medium to contribute to the atmosphere of mass communication. Nonetheless, those elements mentioned in this research still play an important role in readers' perceptions. During the course of time, when the forms of mass communication have been altered, digital media has gradually replaced the traditional forms and changed the lifestyle of mass consumption (Waijitrugum, 2013). Apparently, people have changed the way they receive the information into surfing some well-known social media such as Facebook®, Line®, or others. Some have perceived outdoor commercial information from the LED screen. This creates great swing from the traditional to the latest forms with different emotion from the readers and audiences. Despite the digital disruption, it is found that content is the most influential element to draw readers' attention followed by the attractive layout design with suitable color tones and typography. These design elements can be adjusted in order to fit in the various platforms of the media in order to create an impression from the readers and audiences at the first sight while the value content is vital for the media generators to increase the followers.

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