

**Addis Ababa University  
School of Graduate Studies**

**Reception Study of Female Magazine  
Readers: *Kalkidan* Magazine Readers in  
Focus**

**By  
Tereza Nega**

**July 2007  
Addis Ababa**

**Reception Study of Female Magazine Readers: *Kalkidan*  
Magazine Readers in Focus**

**By**

**Tereza Nega**

**Thesis submitted to Faculty of Journalism and  
Communication**

**Addis Ababa University**

**July 2007**

**In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Masters  
of Arts in Journalism**

**Reception Study of Female Magazine Readers: *Kalkidan*  
Magazine Readers in Focus**

**By Tereza Nega**

**Approved by the Examining Board**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Chairman, Department Graduate Committee**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Internal Advisor**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**External examiner**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Internal examiner**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

## **Acknowledgements**

Who can tell the great things he has done? Who can praise him enough? Let above all, praise be to the almighty God for he has carried me all along.

Let my deepest gratitude be bestowed to my advisors Dr. Gebremedhin Simon and Elna Rossouw for their constructive comments on this work.

Next, my heartily felt thanks be granted to my dearest father for he made me the who I am today.

Zewge, Frity, Bezu, Nadi and Maereg I grant you my greatest thanks, which is no more than your due. Thanks for being there whenever I needed you.

My gratitude also goes to Elias Gudisa, editor-in-chief and owner of *Kalkidan* Magazine for his support in helping me get all the necessary information materials.

I am very thankful to all the people who participated in the discussions and interviews.

I am also deeply indebted to Isaac for his invaluable support and encouragement throughout this work.

## **Abstract**

This study was conducted to explore the reception of female readers of the *Kalkidan* magazine in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

A qualitative research method was used, as qualitative approaches are most often associated with reception analysis, which is the focus of the study. The study used a three stage qualitative approach, which include qualitative content analysis to make a comparative analysis of the content data with the audience data, focus group discussions followed by individual-in-depth interviews. The former to gather data through the groups' interaction and the latter to enrich the data and give it a 'human face'. The sampling procedure was mainly purposive. The gathered data finally were thematically analysed. In addition, though the study is not bound to specific theories attention was given to theoretical and epistemological issues entailed in reception research during analysis.

In general, the study elicited important insights in the understanding of the consumption of *Kalkidan* by female readers. It indicates that social factors such as age, education level and marital status affect the interpretation and consumption of the magazine by the women. The findings also reflect both the active and passive audience theories, basically related to the education factor. Some concepts of Hall's encoding/decoding model are also observed in the findings. The overall views of the women on the magazine in line with their level of satisfaction on the magazine are also included. Accordingly the study reflects what the magazine lacks to meet the lived contexts of the women.

The study shows that factors such as age, education and marital status affect the interpretation and use of the magazine by the women. Moreover, the findings reflect that both the active and the passive audience theories are basically related to the education factor. The study also highlighted that educated audiences are generally unsatisfied with the provisions of the magazine as they felt that it has lacked pertinence to their real lives.

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>I</b>
<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>II</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>8</b>
1.1 Background.....	8
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	10
1.3 Research Questions.....	11
1.4 General Objective .....	11
1.5 Significance of the Study .....	11
1.6 The Scope of the Research.....	12
1.7 Organization of the paper.....	12
1.8 Limitation of the Research.....	13
1.9 Definition of key terms .....	13
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	<b>7</b>
2. Introduction.....	<b>14</b>
2.1 Media power versus people power .....	14
2.2 New audience and reception theory .....	16
2.4 Three approaches towards audience .....	19
2.4.1 The Uses and Gratification Approach.....	19
2.4.2 The Structural Approach.....	19
2.4.3 The Behaviorist Approach .....	20
2.5 Alternative models of the Audience-sender Relationship .....	21
2.6 Audiences as passive or active.....	21
2.6.1 Passive audience .....	21
2.6.2 Active audience.....	22
2.7 Reception Analysis .....	23
2.8 Magazine.....	25
2.9 Gendered Audiences .....	26
2.9.1 Women’s alternative print journalism .....	27
2.9.2 Ideologies of Femininity .....	28
2.9.3 Femininity and Women’s Magazine.....	29
2.9.4 Pleasures versus oppression and text versus audience.....	30
2.10 Studies on readers of women’s magazines .....	31
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES</b> .....	<b>34</b>
3. Introduction.....	34
3.1 Research design .....	34

3.2 Sampling method .....	35
3.2.1. Qualitative content analysis .....	36
3.2.2 Focus group interviews .....	37
3.2.3 Individual in-depth interviews .....	40
3.3 Data Analysis and Presentation .....	41
3.4 Conclusion .....	42
<b>CHAPTER FOUR.....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>43</b>
4. Introduction.....	<b>Feil! Bokmerke er ikke definert.</b>
4.1 Qualitative Content Analysis Findings: a brief overview .....	45
4.2 Consumption of the Magazine by Female Readers .....	50
4.3 Appropriateness of the magazine to the needs and interests of women readers .....	58
4.4 Meanings obtained from the textual contents of kalkidan and .....	61
4.4.1 Meaning making of the readers.....	61
4.4.2 Appeal of the readers towards the columns .....	66
4.4.3 Relevance of the columns to the readers' real lives.....	67
4.5. Satisfaction of the readers by the magazine.....	70
4.6 Conclusion .....	71
<b>CHAPTER FIVE .....</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Summary and Conclusion .....</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Appendix 1</b>	
<b>Appendix 2</b>	
<b>Appendix 3</b>	
<b>Appendix 4</b>	

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Due to the global regime, deregulation of the free flow of ideas and information, Ethiopia has opened up the media for the private sector, mainly for the print media after the year 1999 (Aadland and Fackland, 1999 )<sup>1</sup>. According to the February 2007 report of the Ministry of Information, licenses were issued to 454 newspapers and 151 magazines since then. Currently, there are 65 newspapers and 39 magazines in circulation, some of them banned and others closed due to decrees. The flourishing print media, according to the report, gave way for the magazine to try out issues other than politics too. Most of these issues have to do with art, culture, fashion, sports, construction and women.

With the flourishing media, especially before the 2005 election, when private print media reached its peak (ibid.), readership had also increased particularly in Addis Ababa where most of the circulation is limited to. It had become common to see people reading newspapers and magazines on the streets, in taxis and buses, at cafes and so on. But still, it was rare to see women engaged in this process. Though the researcher have not come across with any research based information on readership of females, in the researcher's own experience, it can be said that women are not used to reading newspapers and magazines, especially newspapers. However, it is common to see them read women and fashion magazines, mostly at the beauty salons.

The preference of magazines by women is illustrated by McQuail as follows:

The idea that media use is notably and persistently 'gendered' has also been developed in reception research, under the influence of feminist theory. The differentiation of media use according to sex has long been recognized, and certain types of media are

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.pressreference.com](http://www.pressreference.com)

specifically produced for female audiences, often by women, especially perhaps certain magazines and types of fiction (2000:398).

The reason for the beginning of women's magazine is related to the alternative or counter-cultural journalism in the 1960s in the UK and the US, which ignored women that led to a new wave of feminism highlighting the issue of women's interest. In this period, feminists organized journalists to focus on women's viewpoints on 'health, fertility, child care, work, housing, marriage and divorce'. Feminist publishers, local and national women's liberation news letters, magazines and journals emerged as part of the women's alternative press which was intended to give voice to women (Chambers, Steiner and Fleming, 2003:160).

Nevertheless, 'most newspapers and magazines nowadays focus on consumption and entertainment' (ibid.:161). Chambers further states that,

Most of the developments within feminist journalism in the new millennium seem to emphasize sassiness, edginess, or at least humour, even at the same time that they aim to create and sustain a global network of women and claim to be proactive, fierce, challenging and visionary (ibid.:175).

But still, women are reading these magazines no matter what issues are raised and how they are presented.

*Kalkidan* magazine is one of the products of the flourishing print media in Ethiopia after 1999. This magazine has the highest circulation with 30,000-40,000. It also has clearly labeled itself as women's magazine. The focus of *Kalkidan* is celebrities, love and fashion like most of the magazines of today. According to the 2007 report from the Ministry of Information it is the first women's magazine that was published in Ethiopia. *Kalkidan* was first published in 2001 by Elias publishing services. According to the owner and editor-in-chief of *Kalkidan*, they started the magazine with the aim of bringing out social issues and problems related to women in the society.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Since traditional history has revolved around the lives of great men or ‘exploit on the battle field’, women who were not on those areas have been abandoned by history including the history of mass media and journalism. The scope of media today needs to widen to include the private sphere where women are important actors, and one wider frame of media that brings women into focus now is women’s magazine (Blix, 1992: 56)<sup>2</sup>.

The aim of women’s magazines being to bring women and issues of their interest and concern into focus, most of the magazines published in Ethiopia seem to focus on celebrities, fashion and matters of love. The same applies to *Kalkidan* magazine, which is the focus of the study. However, the question is if these issues are the interests and concerns of women readers?

Moreover, as indicated in the background, the aim of *Kalkidan* is to present the social issues concerning women in the society. But, are issues like celebrities, fashion and love presented by the magazine concerns of women in the society, is another question to raise.

Though the issues raised in the magazine seem to match neither with the objective of the magazine nor with the reality in the society, *Kalkidan* still has readers. Thus, the researcher has taken interest in studying the consumption of *Kalkidan*, the first women’s magazine published, by female readers in Addis Ababa and there by try to find out why females read the magazine and how they identify with it.

In line with this, the researcher seeks to find out the reception of the female readers in relation to the active audience theory that emphasizes audiences’ ability in

---

<sup>2</sup><http://jci.sagepub.com>

bringing their own needs and desires to the process of making sense of media messages. As Watson puts this view,

[T]here is a plurality of responses to media messages; that people are capable of making their own minds up, accepting some messages, rejecting others using the media to a variety of reasons and using them differently at different time (2003:62).

### **1.3 Research Questions**

This study seeks to answer the following major research questions.

1. Why do the females read the magazine?
2. How do they identify themselves with the magazine?

### **1.4 General Objective**

This study offers an exploration of the reception of female readers of *Kalkidan* magazine between the age of 18 and 50, which the magazine claims to have.

#### **Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of the study are:

- To find out when and where the women read the magazine.
- To identify which contents or issues interest them most.
- To explore the extent to which the magazine serves the needs of female readers.
- To describe the meaning they make out of the readings of selected pages.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

It is my hope that this research would throw light on the content preferences of female readers of the magazine in question. The gaps that may be identified with regard to addressing the needs of these readers are also expected to be considered by magazine producers in order to treat issues in the interest of female magazine readers.

The research could also be of use for people who would want to start a magazine in that it highlights what female readers would want to find in the magazines they read.

It could also provide a basis for further studies in the area of gender and media, and adds some value to the body of audience research. It could further encourage other similar research initiatives and highlight the importance of getting feedback from the readers.

### **1.6 The Scope of the Research**

The research focuses solely on one magazine. Only the issues raised are under investigation. This means that it does not look into the design and layout, except for the front-page photos and colour combinations. The qualitative content analysis emphasizes only nine columns leaving aside advertisements and letters and questions to the editor pages. It covers articles that appeared in a period of 18 months analysing only two issues per column.

Six focus group discussions and six in-depth interviews are held. The focus groups are classified on social structure basis, emphasising only on age, education and marital status among the various factors. The editor-in-chief and owner of the magazine is also interviewed to get the overview of the magazine. Therefore, while wider relevance is assumed, the findings generalize neither to all female magazine readers nor to other magazines.

### **1.7 Organization of the paper**

The study contains five chapters. Chapter one presents a general background to the study, the research problem, the objectives, the significance, and the scope and limitations of the study.

Chapter two looks at the theoretical considerations underlying the study. It presents a review of literature on theoretical arguments surrounding audiences and the media. It also gives a brief background on the origin of magazines and of the magazine used in the study.

The third chapter focuses on the methods, procedures and techniques employed in the study. The chapter explains and justifies the preference of qualitative techniques as ways of data collection for the study. It also explains why the study employed focus group discussion and in-depth interviews as data collection tools.

Presentation and analysis of the findings are dealt with in the fourth chapter. Summary and conclusion are included in the last chapter.

### **1.8 Limitation of the Research**

Given the shortage of time, the researcher had to limit her to the analysis of only one magazine. Although the magazine may be better representative in the sense that it has wider readership, taking one among many other magazines of similar type may not be enough to give the full picture of the situation under study.

The qualitative content analysis also covers only two issues for each of the nine columns for the same constraint, time.

The researcher also involves only six focus groups discussions with a total of 30 respondents. Had there been adequate time and financial resources, more data could have been collected to make the result more generalisable.

### **1.9 Definition of key terms**

The following terms are defined as they are used in this study.

**Consumption:** refers to the way the women read the magazine in terms of time, place and content preference

**Readers:** refers to the female readers of the magazine.

**Make sense:** refers to the process of receiving and interpreting the texts in the magazine.

**Satisfaction:** refers to the rate the participants gave the magazine.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2. Introduction**

This chapter presents a review of literature on theoretical arguments surrounding audiences and the media. It also gives a brief background to the situation of the magazine in focus.

#### **2.1 Media power versus people power**

Does the mass media have a significant amount of power over its audience, or does the audience ultimately have more power than the media? is one of the biggest questions on the social impact of the media (Byerly & Ross, 2006:19).

According to Adorno and Horkheimer ‘Something is provided for all so that none may escape’ (cited in Byerly & Ross 2006:24). They remind us that the person seeking entertainment ‘has to accept what the culture manufactures offered him’ (ibid.: 24). Thus, choice is an illusion too. One can choose what he or she likes; however, the choice is from the limited range presented by the ‘culture industry’. Since there is nothing really different offered, one wants more and more of the same (ibid.: 21).

On the other hand, Fiske (1989) in (ibid.: 24) says that “we can’t even talk about ‘the people’ or ‘the audience’ because a singular mass of consumers does not exist...” People have their different individual changing tastes and a ‘shifting set of social allegiances’ which may or may not relate to their social background, and which are complex and contradictory.

According to Fiske, ‘Culture is a living, active process: it can be developed only from within, it can not be imposed from without or above’ (ibid.: 23). Hence, as to him, the pop charts for example are not a set of recordings that people are misled into liking and buying, in fact, they show ‘what is genuinely popular’. Fiske supports this

by pointing out that, record companies and movie studios put out many products which fail as well. This shows that the public chooses which items they actually want and like. People relate to media texts, in a ‘complex, shifting way based on their own identity, which is unique to themselves’ (ibid.: 23).

Fiske (ibid.: 70) further argues that there is an “overspill of meanings, so that most texts contain the ‘preferred’ meaning – the one intended by its producers – but also offer possibilities for consumers to create their own alternative or resistant readings”. He says that people are not passive consumers of texts. They also have the capacity to reject the produced meaning, ‘and become a producer, a producer of meanings and pleasures’ (ibid.:24). Thus, according to Byerly & Ross (2006: 25), ‘The meaning of any text is not complete until interpreted by an individual within the context of their lives’.

Hence, according to Fiske in (ibid.: 73), the media is an ‘enabler’ of ideas and meanings, promoting diversity and difference, which might lead to social change. The obvious criticism of Fiske’s work, however, is that ‘it is far too optimistic about the challenging impact of mainstream texts’ (ibid.:28).

In line with the active audience view, American psychologist, Leonard Eron in (ibid.:29) declares that ‘The search for media effects is over,’ He declares asserting that ‘conclusive proof’ had finally persuaded everyone that media content could have a clear and identifiable influence on people’s behavior. According to Byerly & Ross (2006:29),

The idea that a bit of media content ‘made’ somebody do something will always seem silly, for the perfectly good reason that, we all know, the influence upon any decision to do something are a complex combination of many elements, including previous experiences, opinions, values and suggestions from various sources.

## **2.2 New audience and reception theory**

Today media researchers are more interested to know about the influence of media from what the audiences have to say. How audiences bring out meaning has lately become the focus of media theory. As Williams (2003:109) argues, 'Audiences interpret media messages and their ability to do this is determined by a range of individual, social and cultural factors'. They are not perceived as homogeneous mass of passive recipients of messages any more.

'What audiences think and what they do is more central to understanding the influence of the media' (ibid.: 190). Contemporary scholars define audiences in several different ways such as by a 'particular product' like newspapers, film, or TV programme, by specific types of products like women's magazines, different film genres, television formats and so on, and by specific types of music like rap or hip-hop. Audiences are also defined by 'social or geographical type' such as age, gender, sexuality, nation, ethnicity and the like (ibid.).

Further more, many scholars have attempted to find out the factors that shape audiences interpretations and understandings of the media output. They have also tried to examine how different groups of people interpret and make sense of messages in different ways. This line of study has changed the notion of the media having direct power determining the interpretation the audience gives to media messages. 'The discovery of the ability of audiences to make meaning has produced 'active audience theory' (ibid.:190-91).

David Morley and Charlotte Brundson (1980) are pioneers of the audience research tradition. Their research undertaking was done on the Nationwide, BBC TV news magazine. Morley examined the context of media to determine the meaning people took from the programme and he concluded that 'meaning is not solely inscribed in the messages produced by the media but is the outcome of the interaction between the audience and the text'. He also found out that audiences from the same socio-

economic background could generate different interpretations of the same message (ibid.: 191).

Though such research stresses the capacity of the audience to resist the dominant meaning conveyed by the media texts, critics such as Curran, on the other hand argued that the research ignores the ‘constraints’ which limit people’s ability to interpret media messages (ibid.:191).

### **2.3 The Encoding/Decoding model**

The starting point for the active audience research is the encoding/decoding model developed by Stuart Hall (1973). Hall was critical of the traditional effects theories because of their focus on the influence of A on B’s behavior without the consideration of other barriers (Williams, 2003:195). The model had three premises, ‘first that the same event can be encoded in more than one way, second the message always contains more than one potential meaning besides the intended one; and third, messages therefore have the potential to be read in different ways’ (Gill, 2007:17).

Hall rejects ‘pluralism’; he argues that the media is a tool for certain groups to exercise their power in imposing their powers on the remaining part of the society. He suggests that any understanding of modern media culture must focus on ‘the fit between the discursive construction of the message and the interpretative understanding of the audience’ (Williams, 2003:195).

Hall argues there is one dominant message, which carries the preferred meaning by the most powerful that tends to come out of the media ‘consciously or unconsciously’. However, there is also room for the interpretation of the encoded message on the audience side. ‘The content of the media, described as media texts, is open to a range of interpretations as it is ‘polysemic’ and audiences are engaged in ‘semiotic work’ in decoding the media text (ibid.: 195).

According to Hall, social factors - class in particular - are determinants of the decoding process rather than the preferences of the individual. He also distinguishes three possible ways of decoding media messages: 'dominant, negotiated and oppositional'. Dominant decoding is when the audience accepts the preferred meaning encoded in the text. The oppositional decoding occurs when people understand the preferred reading rather reject it and make meaning according to their own 'values and attitudes', and a negotiated reading is 'where people adapt rather than completely reject the preferred reading' (ibid.:196).

According to Hall, a media producer may encode a certain meaning based on a certain social context and understanding to be decoded by the audience; however the audiences read the text based on their own social context and assumptions which is likely to be somewhat different than the intended meaning to be decoded. This might seem obvious, but one important point highlighted by this model is 'the importance of understanding the meanings and interpretations of significant actors in both media production (journalists, writers, producers, editors) and media reception (the numerous audiences) as well as those intermediaries in media distribution (executives, marketers, broadcasters, distributors, regulators)' (Byerly & Ross, 2006:26).

In addition, Hall's model stresses the 'interpretive framework where all effects depend on an interpretation of media message'. Encoding/decoding model emphasizes the interaction between the audience and the text including the social context in which the interaction takes place. Hall's model differs from the uses and gratification model in that it focuses not only on the individual's uses of the media but also on the social context's and background's influence on the individual's interpretations. 'Perception was not conceived in personal or psychological terms but social' (Williams, 2003:196).

## **2.4 Three approaches towards audience**

### **2.4.1 The Uses and Gratification Approach**

“Audiences are often formed on the basis of similarities of individual need, interest and taste. Many of these appear to have a social or psychological origin. Typical of such ‘needs’ are those for information, relaxation, companionship, diversion or ‘escape’” (McQuail, 2000:387).

‘Why do people use media and what do they use them for?’ is the question that audience research strives to answer. The media serves the needs of the society such as cohesion, cultural continuity, social control and large circulation of public information as to the Functionalist Sociology. ‘This in turn presupposes that individuals also use media for related purposes such as personal guidance, relaxation, adjustment, information and identity formation’ (ibid.: 387).

Some basic assumptions of the theory when it was rediscovered, twenty years later included that ‘media and content choice is generally rational and directed towards certain specific goals and satisfactions’ which indicates that the ‘audience is active and audience formation can be logically explained’. It also assumes that ‘audience members are conscious of the media-related needs which arise in personal (individual) and social (shared) circumstance and can voice these in terms of motivations.’ The approach further points out that ‘personal utility is a more significant determinant of audience formation than aesthetic or cultural factors.’ Moreover, it states that ‘all or most of the relevant factors for audience formation (motives, perceived or obtained satisfactions, media choices, background variables) can, in principle, be measured’ (ibid.: 387-88).

### **2.4.2 The Structural Approach**

‘Media use is largely shaped by certain relatively constant elements of social structure and media structure.’ Social structure refers to factors such as education, income, gender, place of residence, position in the life cycle and so on ‘which have a

strong determining influence on general outlook and social behavior.’ Media structure refers to the relatively constant choices the media offers. ‘The media system responds to pressures and to feedback from audience, so as to maintain a stable self–regulating balance between supply and demand’ (ibid.:388).

Weibull’s 1985 research on newspaper reading has tested this model and he concluded that ‘when an individual is highly motivated to obtain specific gratifications (for instance a particular item of sports news) he or she is less affected by media structure. Individuals with less interest in the media seem to be more influenced by specific contents or by content composition.’ This indicates that in principle there is a high amount of freedom to break the general patterns that come from the social and the media structure. It also supports the explanation that evidence about general tastes and preferences cannot fully help in prediction of individual value (ibid.:386).

### **2.4.3 The Behaviorist Approach**

The primary object of this theory is individual human behavior, in choosing, processing and responding to communication messages. The typical effects model was a ‘one-way process in which the audience was conceived as a passive recipient of media stimuli.’ The other type of ‘behavioral’ audience research was a reaction to the direct effects research in many ways. The audience was viewed as “a more or less active and motivated set of media users/consumers, who were ‘in charge’ of their media experience, rather than passive ‘victims’ ” (ibid.:366-67).

In general, ‘the social- cultural approach emphasizes the particular context in which an audience member is located and the way in which media alternatives are valued and given meaning’. “The ‘structural’ tradition emphasizes the media system and the social system as primacy determinants and the ‘behavioral’ (functionalist) approach takes individual needs, motives and circumstances as the starting point” (ibid.:384).

## **2.5 Alternative models of the Audience-sender Relationship**

The three models are transmission model, expressive or ritual model and attention model. In the transmission model, 'communication process is considered primarily as the sending of signals or messages over time for the purpose of control or influence.' The receiver/audience is perceived as a target of transferring meaning. The basic process is of 'cognitive processing' (McQuail, 2000:377).

According to Carley's ritual model, communication is defined in terms of sharing meaning rather than changing the receivers meaning with the preferred one by the sender (ibid.:377). 'Audience members are essentially participant.' On the other hand, the attention model does not aim to transfer any kind of meaning, 'but simply to capture the attention of an audience, regardless of communicative effect'. Audiences are simply spectators (ibid.:377).

## **2.6 Audiences as passive or active**

### **2.6.1 Passive audience**

In the 1920s, looking at audiences as passive and the media as powerful was a dominant view in explaining the relationship between audiences and the media. This view was reflected in the traditional effect theories. The theories were also known as the hypodermic needle theories or the 'magic bullet and transmission belt theory' (DeFleur and Ball Rokeach cited in Williams 2003).

The theories, no matter what they are called, refer to the same notion that 'media messages are received in a uniform way by every member of the audience and that immediate and direct responses are originated by such stimuli' (Williams 2003:206). The Hypodermic model theorists emphasize the power of media in determining how audiences think and behave. They assume that consumers accept the intended meaning encoded in media messages passively and the relation between media producers and consumers is predictable (O'Shoughnessy and Stodler , 2005).

However, new audience research challenges the institutional view of media audiences. The approach argues that audiences are much more complicated and diverse than the media industries and the effects scholars consider them. Ien Ang (1991) in Williams (2003:192) suggests that understanding audiences takes more than knowing who they are and how big their size is. 'We need to know more about how they interact with and respond to what they see, hear and read if we are to make any judgments about the power and influence of the media' she argues (ibid).

### **2.6.2 Active audience**

According to Williams (2003:192), new audience research focuses on how audiences generate meaning from the media. The approach is interested in 'what audiences do with the media'. It also aims at 'understanding how audiences actively engage in the process of generating meaning and the factors outside the media that shape the sense they make of media messages.' This approach sees the audience as active at 'individual, social and political levels' (ibid:193).

In line with the new audience research, reception studies have emphasized the power of the audience to resist the media with their 'critical' and 'creative' abilities. Fiske, (1986) in Williams (2003:201) argued that there exists 'excess' of potential meanings in any media text. The media text, be it in any form has a variety of meanings stored in the different images and words it is composed of. The dominant or preferred meaning cannot completely hold all the 'bits and pieces' that make up the text. People can put these 'bits and pieces' together in different ways and produce different meanings (ibid.:201).

Thus, audiences are no longer considered passive and easily manipulated by the media. The attention paid in media studies to the differences in interpreting media messages is not only on the basis of class but also gender, race, ethnic identity, age, sexual identity, nationality and disability. 'Active audience theory challenges the notion that what the media say is crucial in determining what people think' (Williams, 2003:205).

However, critics argue that the active audience approach is discarding the existence of media power totally. The flourishing articles emphasizing 'pleasure, resistance and the politics of consumption' are undermining the media power completely. Traditional effects theory stresses that media has power in shaping the knowledge, understandings and beliefs of their audiences. As stated in (ibid.:206),

Active audience theory by stressing the ability of audiences to make their own meanings from what the media pump out, to use media technologies for their own purposes and to take their own pleasures from what they see, hear and read undermines or even invalidates the concept of media power.

Nevertheless, though the active audience scholars might disagree in some aspects, they all agree on the diversity of interpretation of media messages and the ability of the audience to critically see what the media offers them (ibid:206).

## **2.7 Reception Analysis**

Reception analysis emphasized the ability of audiences to take out the meanings they wanted from popular media and cultural forms. The new audience research, unlike the traditional effects research, focuses on the mass entertainment forms rather than the serious news information forms. Soap operas, romance novels and women's magazines are most focused on forms since the 1980s. Moreover, much attention is given to 'one segment of the audience-women' (Williams, 2003:198).

Several feminist authors were interested in understanding 'why such large numbers of women consume media products that are predominantly sexist, patriarchal and capitalist in their content' (ibid.). For example, Modleski (1982) in her discussion of popular media forms for women, such as romance novels and soap operas, argued 'mass produced fantasies for women' could 'speak to the very real problems and tensions in women's lives' (ibid.).

Radway, 1984 examined how women readers interpret and make sense of their reading of romance novels. Despite the patriarchal ideology underlying most

romantic fiction, Radway's research found 'reading such novels allowed such women to escape from the constraints of their soul existence.' As stated by Radway, women get an element of empowerment in their reading of romantic fiction. 'Women's reading of romance novels is an example of how subordinate or oppressed groups create meanings for themselves out of 'the very stuff offered to them by the dominant culture as raw materials and appropriating it in ways that suit their own interests' (Eldridge et al., 1997:143 cited in Williams, 2003:198).

Hobson (1982) 'showed how women actively engaged in bringing meaning to "Crossroads" , Britain's most popular soap opera in the 1970s, by drawing on their own experiences.' "Crossroads" was enjoyed not for the good acting rather for its focus on women's day to day lives. According to Hobson, the appeal of the audience arises from the 'range of strong female characters'. The soap opera offers 'women of different ages, class and personality types...with whom many members of the female audience can empathize' and is 'primarily about the problems of everyday personal life and personal relationships'. Hobson found that Crossroads' viewers 'make their own readings of what the production sets out to communicate' as they 'work with the text and add their own experience and options to the stories in the programme' (Hobson, cited in Williams, 2003:199).

In her study on American soap, "Dallas", Ien Ang (1985) also argues the audience's appeal to "Dallas" is the result of 'emotional realism' they take out that brings them enjoyment they want; most of these audiences were women. The satisfaction the women gained from watching the programme came from the way in which "Dallas" 'facilitated fantasy'. 'What they enjoyed was the ways in which the programme appealed to their emotions' (Eldridge et al., cited in Williams, 2003:199).

The work to feminist scholars such as Ang and Hobson challenged the assumption of the media effects theories that early feminist research works depended on. Moreover, they introduced the notion of pleasure, which they believe is the result of the actively

constructing of meanings by the women audience to discard patriarchal media messages (Williams, 2003:200).

## **2.8 History of Magazine**

The early magazines started probably in the seventeenth century France. Magazines were first in the forms of booksellers' catalogues and notices that book publishers inserted into newspapers (Campbell, Martin and Fabos, 2003:302). The word "magazine" was derived from the French term 'Magasin' which means store house. Today, "magazine" refers to the collection of articles, stories, and advertisements published in tabloid style on weekly or monthly basis (Ibid.:302).

Moreover, 'Magazines are a major part of the media landscape' (Gill, 2007:180). They accompany readers of all age, even those aimed at two and three years old children offer polarized gender writings like 'action, transport, adventure for boys, and beauty kindness and princesses for girls.'

The appeal of magazines has not been taken over even by all technologies from radio to the Internet. 'There can be few people who do not read a magazine on fairly regular basis, whether it is one devoted to a hobby or interest, a stage of life, or a gender based identification.' The flourishing publication of magazines including the 'magazining' of newspapers can be a testimony of the popularity of magazines (Gill, 2007:180).

In the same manner, there are around 39 magazines in Ethiopia according to the 2007 report of the Ministry of Information. Most of these magazines are women, fashion, sport and religious magazines. *Kalkidan* is among these magazines, which focuses on women. According to the 2007 report of the Ministry of Information the magazine has a circulation of 30,000 to 40,000 out of which 50% is in Addis Ababa. Moreover, according to the statistics of 2006 (Elias Publishing Service, 2006), more than 70% of these readers in Addis Ababa are females. According to this statistics, 45% of these readers are between the ages of 18 and 28, 32% are between 29 and 39, 18% are between 45 and 50 and 5% are above the age of 50.

## 2.9 Gendered Audiences

The idea that media use is notably and persistently 'gendered' has been developed in reception research, under the influence of feminist theory' as to Seiter, some types of media are produced for female audiences; the most common of these media are certain types of magazines and romance fiction books (cited in McQuail, 2000:398). 'Gendered audience experience is a complex outcome of a certain kind of media content, typical everyday routines and the wider structure of what may still be described as 'patriarchal society'- or a 'man's world' as far as power is concerned' (ibid.: 398).

Radway's research indicates 'romances offer an escape specifically designed for women' in that they get a private 'space' and time without interruption of their husbands or family duties (cited in ibid.:398). They also enjoy a fantasy world of an ideal romance, 'which can be emotionally nurturing'. Radway's evidence further suggested that 'alternatives and images found by women readers in their fiction were at least mildly empowering and supportive, not withstanding the tendency of critical feminism to view romance fiction as delusory and reactionary in tendency' (ibid.:398).

In respect of the audience for women's magazines, Hermes in (ibid.: 399) has identified a set of interpretative structures of meaning that explains women's reading behavior and their relative attraction to the different varieties of the genre. 'The essence to a gendered audience is not the sex ratio of its composition, but the degree to which conscious membership of an audience is given some distinct meaning in terms of specific female or male experience' (ibid.:399).

There are numerous indications in research in to media use that gendered differences are associated with different preferences and satisfactions. For instance, Anderson et al., found that 'stressed women watched more game and variety shows, while stressed men watched more action and violent programming,' which emphasized differences in the audience (cited in ibid.:399). However, this does not mean that

mass media experience can be accounted for in gender terms, because there is much evidence indicating a shared purpose and understanding across gender lines (ibid.:399).

### **2.9.1 Women's alternative print journalism**

The 1960's, counter-cultural period emphasized 'personal liberation' from the repressive structures of society, and so an 'ambiguous and unfocused' politics around femininity came into being. Hence, much of the 'alternative or counter-cultural' journalism in this period in the UK and the US ignored women (Chambers, Steiner and Fleming, 2004:160).

This situation created a new wave of feminism emphasizing the issue of women. Women's issues were presented in a way that questioned their lives within the domestic sphere. It also assumed women's lack of interest in participating in the public sphere and that 'underscored how a variety of social issues affected men and women differently' (ibid.:160).

'Feminists called for mainstream journalists to take seriously women's viewpoints on health, fertility, child care, work, housing, marriage and divorce' (ibid.:160). But, as it was in the 'first wave' of the women's movement a century before, an 'alternative' platform for defining and producing news was needed. The shift to a more feminist politics during the late 1960s to 1980s gave several women a 'collective voice' they used to express their anger and also to implement the politics of the 'second wave' of women's movement. 'The women's liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s stimulated a thriving feminist news media during which a number of feminist publishers, local and national women's liberation newsletters, magazines and journals emerged as part of the women's alternative press'(ibid.:160).

What is today considered as 'alternative' is questioned. The ambiguity has to do with the changes in the women's movement, and with the economics of publishing. Today the different publications that claim to be 'alternative or feminist do not seem to go

in accordance with their claim. Most newspapers and magazines nowadays focus on consumption and entertainment (ibid.:161).

‘Most of the developments within feminist journalism in the new millennium seem to emphasize sassiness, edginess, or at least humour, even at the same time that they aim to create and sustain a global network of women and claim to be proactive, fierce, challenging and visionary. They tend, however, to be more ‘cutting edge’ with respect to funkiness than political vision’ (ibid.:175-76).

### **2.9.2 Ideologies of Femininity**

The Marxist notion, which looks at not only the content of magazines but also the powerful commercial organizations behind them has been used in the analysis of women’s magazines. Magazine publishers have to attract as many advertisers as possible and they create them by presenting content that is appealing to the ‘right kind’ of readers who can then buy the products advertised as argued by Gill, (2007:181). The most targeted reader is ‘young, aspirational or upwardly mobile and with lots of income.’ *Glamour*, UK’s best-selling women’s glossy, has attracted more than half a million readers in this manner. ‘The readership...is with an average age of 27; these readers are up market, high spending and aspirational - all the attributes advertisers are looking for’ (Gill, 2007:181).

Women’s magazines have many similar features: ‘they tend to address readers as equals and friends and to adopt an intimate tone; they are organized around the shared pleasures and labors of femininity; they are invariably constructed in opposition to masculinity focused on what women share by dint of being women’ (ibid.:183).

There is a significant difference in the contents of women’s magazines and *Cosmos*. The femininity constructed in the *cosmos* is focused on ‘sexual relationships, beauty and career success’ while in women’s magazines the attention is around ‘nation and

tradition, the pleasures and difficulties of home, and success as a wife and mother' (ibid:183).

Time, however, changes the content of magazines. Janice Winship, in (ibid.:183) argued, 'women's magazines offer survival skills to cope with the dilemmas of femininity at particular moments in time'. During the 1940s, the war time, feminist tone stressed independence and work outside the home where as in the 1950s it 'celebrated the return to family life and the virtue of the housewife through inviting the purchase of consumer good for domestic purposes' (ibid.:183).

'Social, political and economic transformations, including the rise of feminism, the advent of the birth control pill and the entry of large numbers of women into the labor market have brought major changes' (ibid.:183). There has been a big change in the content of women's magazines since the early 1990s. The contents have shifted to an increasing focus on celebrities, preoccupied with the lifestyles, diets, body care regimes, marriages and sex lives of Hollywood stars. They also give emphasis to the look and feel of the female body. Moreover, according to Angela McRobbie's analysis of *Jackie*, romance is the dominant theme in teenage magazines (ibid.:183).

### **2.9.3 Femininity and Women's Magazine**

According to Baehr and Gray et. al (1996:88), 'the magazine assumes a shared experience among women'. The construction of women as a homogeneous group primarily is the result of the "invocation of its supposedly 'natural' opposite – men". A dominant and consistent version of femininity offered by magazines, associates women to domestic and private aspects. It bounds them to " 'family', ideals of affection, and loyalty and obligation to domestic production or house keeping" (ibid.:88). The representation of women as confident participation in the competitive world of business, as it does in some magazines, however, is significant too (ibid.:89).

A crucial point in discussing magazine readership is the gap between the readers' social and economic reality and that presented by the media texts. Simone de Beauvoir's observation that 'one is not born, but rather becomes a woman' illustrates this idea (ibid.:89). Baehr and Gray also indicate that the femininity that the magazines present 'is not single, nor simple.' Readers acquire a femininity set that is fragmented. Moreover, 'the woman who is addressed by the magazine text is addressed first and for most as a consumer, of the message of the text and of the commodities which it presents' (ibid.: 90).

#### **2.9.4 Pleasures versus oppression and text versus audience**

The question, are magazines vehicles for pleasure or are they suppliers of oppressive ideology is an ongoing debate in analyzing magazines. There are arguments that point out the pleasure women's magazines offer in their feminine content. However, there is also the evidence of problematic representations of sexuality, race and class and the magazines' support of oppressive gender ideologies. A reasonable way of looking at these two ideas however is looking at them as interrelated (Gill, 2007:195-96).

One important study of magazine reading is that of Joke Hermes in the Netherlands in (ibid:197). In her interviews with a group of women and men, she learned that there are different patterns of use and engagement with women's magazines. For women, 'the fact that magazines were 'easy to put down' was central to the pleasures the magazines offered and their 'fit' with everyday life.'

Women emphasized the use of magazines as a professional journal for the home, featuring recipes, patterns, tips, as well as film and book reviews. Features and new beauty products is also the focus of the women. Their patterns of magazine reading also offered in terms of learning about other people's emotions and problems and about their own feelings, anxieties and wishes. The magazine helped women to build a 'fantasy world' who would be ready and prepared to help out a family member or friend in the event of illness, divorce or other kinds of crisis. Hermes argues 'fantasy

is key to understanding the pleasures of magazine reading for women, as it is situated at a relatively far remove from daily life - and even the practical tips are rarely used' (ibid.:197).

Dawn Currie's (1999) study of 13 to 17 year olds Canadians represents another important analysis that moves beyond the text of magazines. Unlike McRobbie, Currie found little evidence that girls used magazines to fight school ideologies or employed dress as a form of resistance to authority. Instead, she found that 'appearance was used as a vehicle for creativity and self expression as an indication of group membership and as a sign of social status'. In this case, the role of magazines was granting the information about 'what is hot' (ibid.:198).

Currie identified three broad reading positions among her sample: the vast majority, who take the dominant meaning as a whole; 'skeptical readers' who questioned specific aspects of the magazine (but who did not totally reject the ideology of femininity presented by the magazines); and 'critical readers' who refused '...the magazine's judgments of feminine acceptability, and chose role models by criteria not based on values promoted by magazine discourse (i.e. good looks and acceptance by men)' (Currie cited in Gill, 2007:198).

## **2.10 Studies on readers of women's magazines**

Due to the focus of traditional history around the lives of great men on the battlefield or in the boardroom, women who were not in those arenas were excluded from the history and the media. 'Mass media historians today need to widen history's frame to embrace the private sphere in which women have lived out their lives' and one form of media that has a wider frame that brings women in focus is women's magazine (Blix, 1992:56)<sup>2</sup>.

Kazue Sakamoto, citing McQuail in? 1987, states that though many studies have

---

<sup>2</sup><http://jci.sagepub.com>

been done, there is no definite answer whether media has to do with changes in society.

In the field of women's media studies, Angela McRobbie has examined British teenage girls' magazines (1991, 1996) and Janice Radway has surveyed romance readers in the USA (1984). However, in the research on media and female audiences, there are still few case studies whether the media has anything to do with the actual changes in the lives of women (Sakamoto, 1999:174)<sup>3</sup>.

In her study, *Reading Japanese Women's Magazines: The Construction of New Identities*, Sakamoto discovered that Japanese women had new magazines that encouraged new lives for them during the 1970s and 1980s. She further argues that though women magazines have been considered as 'tools for transmitting patriarchal ideas to women', they could be interpreted differently. The magazines might meet the real needs of their readers who somehow benefited from these media choices (ibid.:190).

'When there is no neat fit between 'everyday mundane reality' and the world according the magazine, women's sense of the world and expectations will become distorted, and confusion will ensue' (Machin et al., 2003:457)<sup>4</sup>. David Machin and Joanna Thornborrow argue that in many respects, Cosmo-land with Cosmoland- is constructed as a type of imaginary world in which 'women appear to have enhanced agency and power, indexed through visual and textual discourses which are now globally circulated'. They say that historically and cross-culturally, several of the texts that teach us about life have been set in imaginary world like fairytales, or worlds that are distant in time and space like bible stories and also classical Hollywood movie narrative. Such kinds of texts provide models, which are not meant to be followed literally (ibid.:457).

---

<sup>3</sup> <http://mcs.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/21/2/173>

<sup>4</sup> <http://das.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/14/4/453>

In their study, *Branding and Discourse: The case of Cosmopolitan*, Machin and Thornborrow argue that ‘women are oriented towards social interaction rather than towards technical, creative or intellectual skills’. (ibid.:468). They are fundamentally alone and must hold their own or advance through pleasing and/or manipulating others, and above all through the power which their body and sexuality affords them. It is this that defines women’s agency, and hence women’s power and independence in the world of *Cosmopolitan*’ (ibid.:468).

In her research, *The Influence of Presumed Media Influence on Women’s Desire to be Thin*, Sung-Yeon Park (2005:606)<sup>5</sup>, found that the use of beauty and fashion magazines increases the desire to be thin among female college students not only directly but also indirectly via the presumed influence on others.

In this chapter different theoretical frame-works and other literatures that are significant to the focus of the study are incorporated.

---

<sup>5</sup> <http://crx.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/32/5/594>

# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES**

### **3. Introduction**

In attempting to generate empirical data on the reception of female readers of *Kalkidan* magazine in Addis Ababa, this study follows a qualitative research design. The study mainly focuses on the meaning the female readers make out of the magazine as part of their lived experiences. It also gives emphasis on the comparative empirical analysis of ‘media discourses’ with ‘audience discourses’ in order to examine the reception process which has to do with the content of the magazine.

In this light, this chapter deals with the methodology used to carry out the research. It discusses the research design, sampling process, methods of data collection, and data analysis procedures the research employs. The methodological approaches are discussed in line with the theoretical framework and their relevance to the goals and aims of the study.

### **3.1 Research design**

The research method for this study is a qualitative research design, which is based in reception theory. The study applies a qualitative content analysis for a comparative analysis of the media content and the audience reception. Observation is also used to gather preliminary information. Qualitative method is preferred because this method of data gathering is most often associated with reception analysis (Jensen, cited in Mabweazara, 2006:1). According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:270) qualitative research is a ‘research approach in social research according to which research takes as its departure point the insider perspective on the social action’. Moreover, as Hansen et al. explains:

Survey research is good at providing a snapshot of audience beliefs, attitudes and behaviour - the what of audience - media relationships – but is much less suited for telling us about the

why or how of such relationships. For examining the dynamics of what experiential knowledge and frames of interpretation audiences bring to bear in their use of media content, what role media has in the everyday life of audience, or how audiences use the media as a resource in their everyday lives, it is necessary to turn to more qualitative methods (1998:257).

The method is thus considered to be appropriate for this study which focuses on the reception of female readers of *Kalkidan* magazine.

The philosophical underpinnings of qualitative method are mainly attributed to the view of phenomenology, which takes the *actor's* perspective as the empirical point of departure. Hence, qualitative studies assume that 'in studying humans we are examining a creative process whereby people produce and maintain forms of life and society systems of meaning and value' (Strelitz, cited in Mabweazara, 2006:11). Qualitative studies are thus dedicated to finding out the intentions, purposes and values people live by that shape their interpretations. As Bogdan & Taylor (cited in Bryman, 1998: 53) state,

The phenomenologist views human behavior ...as a product of how people interpret their world. The task of the phenomenologist, and, for us, the qualitative methodologists, is to capture this process of interpretation...In order to grasp the meanings of a person's behaviour, the phenomenologist attempts to see things from that person's point of view.

### **3.2 Sampling method**

'Qualitative sampling is concerned with information richness, for which two key considerations should guide the sampling methods: appropriateness and adequacy' (Fossey et al., 2002:726). Thus, the attempt on the process of sampling was on identifying appropriate participants who can best inform the study. The sampling strategy used is purposive in nature. As argued by scholars, the primary concern of qualitative research is understanding particulars rather than generalizing to the broader, thus a representative sample is not crucial (Deacon et al. 1999: 50). Fossey et al. states

Qualitative sampling may involve small numbers of participants, while the amount of data gathered can be large, with many hours of participant interviews... No fixed minimum number of participants is necessary to conduct. Sound qualitative research, however, sufficient depth of information needs to be gathered to fully describe the phenomena being studied (2002:726).

Maxwell (cited in: Mabweazara, 2006:3) further posits that in qualitative research, generalization works with the limits and bounds of persons and conditions studied and their needs to be a presumption on the part of the researcher that the same research process in different situations elicits different results.

As the purpose of this study is to explore how female readers of *Kalkidan* use and make sense of the magazine, the researcher implements three different stages to be collaborated with one another. The three stages include: qualitative content analysis, focus group interviews, and individual in-depth interviews.

### **3.2.1. Qualitative content analysis**

In order for the researcher to conduct a meaningful and focused discussion with the participants in the focus group and individual interviews, she should have a certain amount of knowledge about the media product. In attempting to find out the meaning female readers make of the magazine, the researcher as to Jensen and Rosengren (cited in Mabweazara, 2006:6) needs a comparative analysis of the audience data and the content data.

Qualitative content analysis is important because media text and its audience are independent of each other (McQuail, 2000:391). Thus, for this study the researcher familiarises with the text enough to be able to take care of the roles of a moderator and interview facilitator and above all to be able to give the over view of how meaning is organized in the magazine.

A total of 20 magazines were collected between September 2005 to April 2007, a period of which the researcher could find copies of. The analysis will focus on the main columns in the magazine leaving aside advertisements and letters to the editor. Moreover, lay out and design and pictures are not included in the analysis except for the cover-page.

Stratified random sampling is employed to systematically sample the copies of *Kalkidan* because it is not manageable for the researcher to analyse all within the time limit. The 20 copies were divided into 9 strata set according to the nine columns of the magazine, and two issues from each; a total of 18 issues were randomly selected. According to Deacon et al. (1999:47), this method of sampling allows the researcher to ensure the representativeness of the sample composition.

### **3.2.2 Focus group interviews**

Focus group interviews are used to examine how media audiences relate to, make sense of, use, negotiate, and interpret media content through a natural setting (Hansen et al., 1998:261). They bring together a small group of people to participate and interact with each other in a planned discussion on a defined topic to produce data and insights. This method is central to reception research because it answers how readers interpret, make sense of, interact with, and create meaning out of media content within their social context (Macun and Posil, cited in Mabweazara, 2006:9). Hansen et al. (1998:261) further posits:

[T]he generalization of meanings and interpretations of media content is ‘naturally’ a social activity, that is, audiences from their interpretations of media content and their opinions about such content through conversations and social interaction.

For the focus group discussion in this study, the researcher above all recruits people who are able and willing to provide the desired information and be representative of the population of interest (ibid.:264).

The participants are also selected according to Hansen's argument that 'sampling of groups in a focus group takes careful note of any particular demographic, occupational or other dimensions which the researcher is expecting or hypothesizing that differences will occur' (1998: 264). Hence, as the aim of this study is to examine how audiences' interpretation of the columns in *Kalkidan* may vary according to their age, education, and marital status, participants were selected in a way to represent the mentioned populations.

The focus group discussions include female readers of the magazine. The researcher purposively selects females who are familiar with the magazine using convenience and snowball sampling techniques.

According to Hansen (1998: 268), fewer than six focus groups are hard to justify. In this light, six focus groups out of which three consisted of readers between the age of 18 and 30, and the other three of readers from 30 to 50 is used. The first group consists of working females with high level of education (with college diplomas, degrees or higher), the second group was composed of university students and the third one was of working females with lower education levels (with high school diplomas or lower). The next group consists of housewives with lower education levels, working mothers with high education levels and single females of both high and lower education levels. There were six individuals each in three of the groups and five individuals each in the remaining three, and these numbers maintained a dynamic and lively discussion.

The group consisting of the young females with high education levels and the young females with lower education level groups were selected using snowball sampling. The university students were selected from a naturally existing community, Addis Ababa University, using purposive sampling in order to explore the ways in which social interaction mediates audience understanding. In the same manner the housewives, the working mothers with high education levels and the single women groups were selected among the regular customers of the beauty salon where an

observation for preliminary information was made, using snow ball sampling as it is the appropriate method 'where no list or institution exists that could be used as a basis for sampling' (Deacon et al., 1999: 53).

In line with this, Hansen et al. (1998:268) and Deacon et al. (1999:56) state that naturally existing groups make the task of finding, contacting and engaging the desired types of participants easier than contacting people entirely at random, and that they are more natural and participants may be comfortable in each other's company.

The researcher has as much as possible, tried to make the settings where the discussions were held at comfortable for the participants. Discussions with of the young females with high level of education and that of the females with lower level of education were held in a park. The college students were interviewed in the university compound. The discussions with the remaining groups were held at the beauty salon from where they were recruited. For the first three groups the researcher along with a classmate was the moderator. However, for the later groups, the researcher with one of the hairdressers from the salon who is familiar to all the participants was the moderator so as to make them comfortable.

During the discussion sessions, the participants were asked to go through the copies of the magazine as they would in their normal reading situation. A copy, which was of a recent month at the moment (April 2007), was selected. In addition, since it was difficult to make the participants read the whole magazine, four columns, which the editor in chief considers to be very much related to women, were selected for the participants to read.

An interview guide covering all the issues relevant to the research was prepared prior to the discussion. 'Semi structured interviews are used to facilitate more focused exploration of a specific topic, using an interview guide' (Fossey et al., 2002:727). An interview guide also enables comparisons between groups as to Hansen

(1998:274). The discussions were held with the help of this interview guide, which of course has flexibility for participants' response. The same interview guide was used for all focus groups so that it is possible to conclude that 'what so ever differences occur are the product of factors and characteristics other than the promoting used or manner of moderator intervention' (Hansen 1998:274).

Both tape recording and note taking were used for information gathering during the interviews and discussions. 'Note-taking and tape recording is a useful combination that enables analysis of the material as a whole, while more specific components of interviews can be transcribed in full for detailed analysis' (Fossey et al., 2002:728). Since the aim of the analysis is to understand the meanings given as expressed by the interview participants', transcription of the participants' own words in the interviews was made. This, according to Fossey (2002:728) 'would be important to privilege their voices in the analysis and interpretation'.

One assistant moderator worked with the researcher during the discussions to minimize the risk of steering responses in the direction which fits the researcher's preconceived expectations. The role of the moderator was to facilitate and stimulate the discussion. The moderator also ensured that the issues outlined in the interview guide are all covered and also made sure that all the participants got the chance to speak.

### **3.2.3 Individual in-depth interviews**

Focus group data should be combined with a range of data gathered from different sources using various research techniques so as to make the research complete and reliable (Macun & Posel, cited in Strelitz, 2005:12). It is to serve this need that individual in-depth interviews are considered important as a follow up to focus group discussions.

Individual in-depth interviews with selected focus group participants were also conducted so as to corroborate and deepen the data obtained from the focus group discussion. The most articulate and enthusiastic participants, one from each group, a

total of six participants were purposively selected. Semi-structured interview guides appropriate for each interviewee were prepared for the in-depth interviews. The individual interviews were held at places, which would be convenient and comfortable for the interviewees as was done with the focus group discussions.

Moreover, an interview with the editor-in-chief of the magazine was also held to further illustrate the analysis by giving insight of the encoder's perspective.

Thus, the above mentioned three-stage approach: qualitative content analysis, focus group discussions and individual in-depth interviews will be used to examine the meanings audiences make out of media messages.

### **3.3 Data Analysis and Presentation**

'Qualitative analysis is a process of reviewing, synthesizing and interpreting data to describe and explain the phenomena or social worlds being studied' (Fossey, 2002:728). Thus, to deal with the analysis, the interviews recorded from both the focus group discussions and individual in-depth interviews will be transcribed and then translated into English together with the notes taken since the discussions were held in Amharic.

The researcher will implement one of the best-known qualitative data analysis techniques, the constant comparative technique. This technique consists of four steps: 'comparative assignment of incidents to categories, elaboration and refinement of categories, searching for relationships and themes and simplifying and integrating data into a coherent theoretical structure' (Strelitz, 2005:112).

The researcher's task is to report parts of the interview that carry important points relating to the research question. The report thus moves from description of the settings and interactions that occurred, to quotations to discuss the meaning. 'The use of quotations (i.e. participants' own words) juxtaposed with the writer's description and interpretation helps the reader to evaluate the authenticity of the researcher's

claims about the data' (Fossey, 2002:730). Moreover, the link between the findings and the data from which the results are derived from is shown to make the study visible and comprehensible to the readers.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has sought to give the map of the research design and procedure implemented in the study. The methodology used in this study was a qualitative approach as qualitative approaches are most often associated with reception analysis, which is the focus of the study. The study used a three stage qualitative approach which allows a comparative empirical analysis of the content of *Kalkidan* with its audiences' reception. The use of the focus group discussion followed by individual-in-depth interviews allowed inferences from one data source to be followed up by another. The sampling procedure is also highlighted in this chapter. The gathered data finally were thematically analysed. In addition, though the study is not bound to theories attention was given to theoretical and epistemological issues entailed in reception research during analysis.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

#### 4. Introduction

The thing that very much upsets me when I think of the magazine and also other magazines is that the articles written are so silly and of low standard...even the newspaper vendors ask a female to buy only this magazine while they offer the magazine or newspapers with serious issues to the guy next to her, which clearly shows what kind of image of women is reflected through these magazines....Women have the right and the need to know, to know about everything, social, economic, political and so on issues. There is even a saying 'there is a smart lady behind every great man' (In-depth interview 17/6/2007).

*Kalkidan* is a very interesting magazine ..., it educates and entertains me. I learn a lot of things from the experiences of the models and other celebrities presented in the magazine. Even when they don't teach me, looking at their beautiful pictures makes me happy (In-depth interview 17/6/2007).

*Kalkidan* is a magazine intended to reflect social problems particularly of women, their professional lives, marriage lives, love lives, health problems and the like...it's a magazine that educates through entertainment...I believe our magazine is the best in town in that it reaches out the audience, fulfilling their needs and interests...(Individual interview with *Kalkidan's* editor-in-chief 18/6/2007).

The major objective of the study has been to investigate why females read *Kalkidan* magazine and how they identify themselves with it. In the process, it was attempted to unearth the readers' perspectives on *Kalkidan*, which account for the reasons behind their interest in the magazine, and the meaning they make in line of their way of life and how the texts are appropriated in their lived realities. Thus, in this chapter a comparative analysis of 'audience data' and 'content data' is presented in a manner of examining reception process, which has a bearing on the use of the editorial content of the magazine, by its readers.

To the main, this chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study. The analysis, discussion and interpretation have to do with the objectives of the study, and are enhanced by the theoretical considerations in the literature review. However, the study is not bound to some distinct theoretical approach as such but uses theory as an orientation in stepping into the research and as a guide for making sense of the data. The analysis combines findings from all the qualitative content analysis, focus group discussions and in-depth individual interviews. Relevant material sought through the individual interview conducted with the editor-in-chief of *Kalkidan* is also incorporated.

The analysis will start by giving the overview of the magazine in the qualitative content analysis followed by the findings from the focus group and in-depth interviews. These findings will be discussed and illustrated and then corroborated with selected quotations from the interviewees obtained from six focus group discussions and six individual in-depth interviews which constituted of a total of 34 interviewees between the ages of 18-50. Once written out in full, the focus groups and the in-depth interviews will be indicated in the analysis as follows:

FGD	Focus group discussion
II	Individual in-depth interview
High level education	With college diplomas, degrees or higher
Lower level education	With high school diplomas or lower
FGD 1	Females between the ages of 18-30 who are at higher education level, singles and working
FGD 2	Females between the ages of 18-30 who are undergraduate university students
FGD 3	Females between the ages of 18-30 who are at lower education level, single and working
FGD 4	Females between the ages of 30-50 who are housewives with lower level education

FGD 5	Females between the ages of 30-50 who are mothers at higher education level
FGD 6	Females between the ages of 30-50 who are singles and at both higher and lower education levels
Letters A,B,C...	Replacement of names of interviewees

The findings are presented and discussed under various sections in a narrative form categorized in three major thematic concerns related with the objective of the study as follows:

- Consumption of the magazine by female readers;
- Appropriateness of the magazine to the needs and interests of women;
- Meanings obtained from the texts of *Kalkidan* and their appropriateness in the readers' lived realities; and
- Satisfaction of the readers by the magazine.

The themes are put separately for analytical reasons though they are interrelated in practice. The next section presents data from the qualitative content analysis of sampled copies of *Kalkidan*.

#### **4.1 Qualitative Content Analysis Findings: a brief overview**

This section presents data from the qualitative content analysis of sampled copies of *Kalkidan*. The analysis is not involved in detailed textual analysis. The aim is to familiarise the researcher with the text sufficiently enough to provide a backdrop for the audience data.

Table 1 below, presents a summary of the content of *Kalkidan* in terms of its main columns and the issues raised in them. The magazine focuses mainly on issues like love, marriage, beauty and celebrities like most women magazines do.

**Table 1** Summary of content of *Kalkidan* in terms of its main columns

Name of Column	Issues Covered in the Column
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Let's introduce you to:</li> <li>-True love stories</li> <li>-Our guest</li> <li>-Marriage</li> <li>-Talent show</li> <li>-Incredible and sayings</li> <li>-24 Hours</li> <li>-Women's page</li> <li>-<i>Kalkidan's</i> kit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interview: mostly with fashion models and actresses</li> <li>- Love stories: of people's experience usually written by themselves of Hollywood celebrities</li> <li>- Interview with celebrities</li> <li>- Interview with sport personalities and with celebrities</li> <li>- Stories of the lives of Hollywood actresses (sometimes actors)</li> <li>-World's incredible stories, and quotable sayings</li> <li>- Narration of the series American movie, 24 Hours</li> <li>- Different issues meant to educate women plus beauty tips</li> <li>- Life history of great women in the world's history</li> </ul>

The researcher establishes an analysis of each of the above columns based on the sample copies in terms of a narrative structure, source of information, and issues raised. The cover page is also described since it is the first thing that grabs readers' attention.

The cover page, which is not made of a hard cover begins with the magazine's name written in green, yellow and red colours all together at the top right side of the page.

The page contains five to six pictures with quotations underneath. There is one dominant picture in a bigger size while the remaining are of the same size. It is a picture of a model or an actress to be featured in the 'Let's introduce you to:' column which is the biggest. All sorts of bright colours are used on the background as well as on the texts written on the page. The scattered pictures and the names and quotations make the page messy and unattractive.

The magazine starts with letters from readers and goes to its first column, 'Let's introduce you to:'. This column presents profiles of local female fashion models and actresses. For instance, in the two samples (October 2006 & February 2007) an actress and a model are featured respectively. The column is usually written in an exclusive interview format where the questions and the answers are verbatim. The titles are quotes from the interviewees followed by their full names, as follows:

What pleases me is knowing the right one for me: actress...  
I won because I am beautiful: winner of 2007 Miss Addis...

The editor-in-chief and owner of the magazine conducts these interviews focusing on the profiles of the models and actresses.

The 'True love stories' covers most of the pages of the magazine. Around ten pages of the magazine are given to love related issues. In this column the love lives or affairs of different ordinary people and of Hollywood celebrities is featured. The stories of the ordinary people reflect the adverse side of love, mainly betrayal. Both the stories in the sample magazines (November 2005 and July 2006) talk about young men who ended up with broken hearts. The stories have titles like:

She left me with a severe grief in my heart.  
I will regret it forever if I lose you.

'Our guest' is a column where a profile of celebrities is presented in an interview format. Their careers and their future plans regarding their career is also the focus of the column. In the editions of January and February 2007, interviews with two male

singers were featured respectively. It was mainly on the new album the singers were on the way to release. An abstract of one of the interviews reads as:

*Kalkidan:* Are you stressing only on your new album or are you doing other things?

Shewandagn: At this moment I have dedicated all my time to my album, because I want to produce something good. But, after some time, around Easter I'll start working at night club...

*Kalkidan:* ...Who does the lyrics and the music?

Shewandagn: I have my own works, but I also have included the works of many other professionals like...

'Marriage' is another column in the magazine, which relates with the name *Kalkidan*, which means promise. Marriage life of people in the sporting world and that of celebrities is featured in this column. It is put in a question and answer format where both the sportsman/ sportswoman and of the wife/husband interview is quoted. For example, in the May 2007 edition the questions for a male athlete revolved around his profession, his victories and defeats, his wedding and his marriage life.

*Kalkidan:* In how many races have you participated in Japan?

Moges: I have participated in 8 great marathons... and I set good time in the races.

*Kalkidan:* What is your role in his athletics profession?"

Zufan(Wife): I'm like his partner... He has accomplished a great honor till now... but, I want him to work even more.

*Kalkidan:* You have been together since you were very young. What do you say about love?

Zufan: We started living together since I was seventeen... love requires faithfulness, endurance and patience...

Marriage life of celebrities is also presented in the same manner. The interview reflects the profile of the couple, the profession of the celebrity, and of course their love and marriage lives.

'Talent show' is a column that narrates the profile of Hollywood actresses and singers emphasizing their talents and pointing out their ups and downs in the way to their success. Their love life is also included. Titles of movies the actresses took part

in and the lyric of one of the songs of the singer featured, is also put at the end of the column. For instance, the November 2005 edition, 'Talent show' profiled Jennifer Aniston. The focus of the story was her marriage and her divorce. Anna Nicole Smith, a model, was on the March 2007's 'Talent show' in the same manner.

'Incredible' is a column with different unbelievable stories from the world. In this column, different stories from the Internet, the news and various books are presented. Sayings, jokes, poems and general knowledge texts are also other constituents of this section. On the same page, there is a heading 'Our teeth', where a doctor answers questions on the health of the teeth. In the April 2006 edition one question on teeth problem was presented and an answer from a dentist was given right below it. The same was true for the September 2006 edition in which the same dentist answered a different question. However, other health issues are not included.

As indicated in Table 1 there is also a column in the magazine that translates '24 hours', an American action series movie into Amharic and narrates it. The movie is narrated word by word, even with a description of actions involved. The pictures of some of the leading actors and actresses are also featured. Each month, one part from each episode is produced.

'Women's page' is a column created to give educative information to women. In the June 2006 edition, women's page title read, 'For the world to be for men as well as women'. It is about oppression and violence women suffer with particular emphasis on the argument that all the demonstrations, meetings and researches on women rights are not meeting their goals. 'Problems that cause divorce' was the issue on August 2006 of the same page. Though the issues raised in this column are good they are not contextualised and most of the time they are translations of articles from abroad.

'*Kalkidan's kit*' is the column that traces great women in history, especially in politics and popularizes them. 'Women and terror, Al-Qaeda new recruits' was the

issue on September 2006. It discusses how the situation of women in the Far East countries remains the same even though it is different in the case of terrorism, where women are given the task of participating in suicide missions. The issue of December 2005 accuses organization managers, owners and other authorities that are responsible for human resources, those who can hire and fire for being hard on women who are attractive, asking them to fulfill their sexual needs. The title reads 'Improperly used beauty destroying a nation', which is not clear and not connected with the text. One thing this researcher has observed in this column is that the text is not as attractive as the title. Not much information is available, as it seems in the title.

In general, the columns mainly include direct interview texts and those that are not interviews are taken from the Internet, from books, and from foreign magazines and newspapers. Literally, there is no article produced by the reporters themselves. There is no research based or even interview-based article produced. Interviews and direct copies of articles from abroad which are translated into Amharic are the products of the magazine. Moreover, the issues are more or less celebrity-focused.

As it is stated in Chambers, Steiner and Fleming (2004:175-76):

Most of the developments within feminist journalism in the new millennium seem to emphasize sassiness, edginess, or at least humour, even at the same time that they aim to create and sustain a global network of women and claim to be proactive, fierce, challenging and visionary. They tend, however, to be more 'cutting edge' with respect to funkiness than political vision.

## **4.2 Consumption of the *Kalkidan* Magazine by Female Readers**

This section will start with the description of the mood of the focus group discussions and of the in-depth individual interviews. The focus group discussion began with the young females with high level of education who were so against the magazine. The debate was very hot in that the participants were so emotional in describing their dissatisfaction of the magazine. The next discussion, which was with

the university students, was rather cool but full of humour compared to the first group probably because they rated the magazine on average, and may be because they do not take the issues raised in the magazine seriously. They rather make fun of the texts.

The group discussions with the lower level of education young and housewives were more or less similar in that both the discussions were lively and for the magazine. With their negative views, the mothers with higher level education, on the other hand, discussed with a much deeper look into the magazine. The discussion of the last group, the single women, was the liveliest of all. It is probably because of the mix up of females with high level of education and females with lower level of education. The researcher's focus was on their age and their marital status that accidentally women from high and lower levels of education came together in the group. There was a lot of argument and much disagreement. The in-depth interviews had similar indicators. They possessed deep information and were lively. In general, the focus group discussions have met the intended goal, creating group interaction as the means to explore the research issues.

This section continues by discussing reasons for the consumption of *Kalkidan* by female readers and reasons for their subscription to read the magazine. It also points out the habits and content preferences of readers with the aim of establishing their attraction to the magazine. In the light of the media use scenario, the functionalist sociology viewed media as,

[S]erving various needs of the society - e.g. for cohesion, cultural continuity, social control and for a large circulation of public information of all kinds. This in turn presupposes that individuals also use media for related purposes such as personal guidance, relaxation, adjustment, information and identity formation (McQuail, 2000:387).

Regarding their media use, interviewees from the young females with higher education level who are working (FGD1), the university students (FGD2), the young

females with lower education level (FGD 3), the house wives with lower education level (FGD 4), the mothers with higher education level (FGD 5), and the singles with both higher and lower education levels (FGD 6) noted on the question of the moderator: “Why do you read the magazine?” as follows:

FGD 1(C): I don’t really know why I read it, but I read it when I come across it, which is usually at the beauty salon.

FGD 2(C): To know about celebrities, especially when I see pictures of singers or actors that are famous on the cover...I read it at the beauty salon.

FGD 3(A): I get education from the experiences of celebrities and to get information on the gossips about celebrities in town.

(D): I read beauty tips and other information on modeling, beauty contests and so on.

FGD 4(E): It has general knowledge that’s why I read it.

FGD 5(A): It’s not that entertaining or informative. I don’t read it because I want to. Actually I’m not even sure why, but I use it as a pass time in the beauty saloon.

FGD 6(B): I read *Kalkidan* to get general knowledge.

(E): I just read it at the hairdressers’ till I’m done with my hair not to get bored.

Although it may be difficult to generalise, it seems clear from the above extracts that most of the readers use the magazine as a pass time and they read it at the beauty salon. All the young females with high level of education, the mothers with high level of education, the singles with high level of education and the university students never bought the magazine purposely. Moreover, except for the university students who sometimes get entertained by the magazine, the other participants in the groups mentioned above agree that the magazine is not educative, informative or even entertaining. However, the young females with a lower level of education and the housewives read the magazine looking for education, information and entertainment. The following extracts further illustrate this point:

FGD 3(E): I buy the magazine on Saturdays every month and I read it at home in my spare time. I get lots of information from it.

(B): I borrow it from my friends.

FGD 4(E): My husband buys it because he likes the magazine and I read it because I get general knowledge out of it

Though it is not part of the objective of this study, it emerged from the focus group discussions that there are male readers of the magazine too and this is supported by the statistics from Elias Publishing Service on readership of the magazine in Addis Ababa, which indicates that there are 30% male readers.

On the issue of the magazine consumption, the significant variable lies on the difference in the education level of the interviewees. The discussion points out that all the readers with high level of education, the young, the mothers and the singles do not read the magazine because it interests them. They do not think that it is educative, informative or entertaining. On the other hand, the young with lower education level, the housewives and half of the singles with lower education levels think other wise. Age, in this regard, did not matter. All the females with high education levels, the young (FGD 1), the mothers (FGD 5) and the singles (FGD 6) agree on the same thing regardless of the age difference. Similarly, the females with lower education levels the young (FGD 3), the housewives (FGD 4) and the other half of the singles (FGD 6) agree on their appeal towards the magazine.

As to the preferences of content, the young females with high level of education, the university students, and the singles with high education levels prefer reading stories of Hollywood celebrities in the 'Talent show' column. Similarly, the young with lower level of education prefer the same column together with the 'Love stories' column. The working mothers and the house wives seem to have similar preference which is the stories of famous women of politics in history in the '*Kalkidan*'s kit' column. The 'marriage' column is also of interest to them.

Moderator: What particular feature or column interests you most? Why?

FGD 1(A): I mostly read stories of Hollywood celebrities...

FGD 2(B): I read the story of celebrities I find the picture of on the cover only if he/she is famous and I know them. I also read about Hollywood celebrities.

FGD 3(F): True love stories, those are what I read they entertain me, educate me, give me information. I like reading about celebrities too.

(C): I read the True Love stories (as in table 1) specially those that talk about heart broken people; I like these kinds of stories because I see my life in them...and stories of celebrities entertain me...

FGD 4(A): Stories of legendary women is my interest, the other selections I think are not for my age.

FGD 5(E): The marriage lives of celebrities attract my attention because I learn from their experience

Age happens to be a significant factor determining content preference. All the young with high as well as lower education levels and the university students have similar preferences, stories on Hollywood celebrities. However, the singles (between the ages of 30 and 50) also share the preference of the young regardless of the age difference. On the other hand, both the mothers with high level of education and the housewives are interested in stories of famous women in history, which, they said, makes them proud of their being a woman.

The view of the Integrated Model of Audience Choice (McQuail, 2000:391) that refers to social background, such as social class, education, religion, culture and the like illustrates the above finding. The intergrated model also points out that personal attributes of age, gender, level of income, general habits of leisure time in media use and availability to be in the audience at a particular time to be factors on the audience side. According to the model, 'awareness of the choices available and the amount and kind of information possessed also play a part. Specific context of use and chance play their parts too' (ibid.).

Since the researcher's intention is to investigate the media consumption of the readers (which is believed to include sharing what they read with others) the question if the women discuss what they read with other people, was also raised. This view is

supported by Thomson's view that 'media messages are commonly discussed by individuals in the course of reception and consequently elaborated discursively and shared with a wider circle of individuals who may or may not have been involved in the initial process of reception'(cited in Mabweazara, 2006: 21). The extract below further validates this view:

Moderator: Do you discuss what you read in the magazine with others (Friends, husbands, children, colleagues, etc.)?

FGD 1(C): On rare occasions when I find some interesting issues I discuss it with my friends.

(D): I remember discussing the story about the girl whom a man attacked by splashing acid on her , with my friends and my family, but other than that no.

FGD 2(B): I tell my friends if I see someone I know, usually a model on the cover page.

FGD 3(D): I usually inform my friends about the beauty tips from the magazine.

FGD 4(A): I tell my children about the beauty tips I read, specially the tip on how to protect your hair from the damage because I know they are interested in this kind of stuff.

FGD 5 (E): I discuss the woman on the '*Kalkidan's kit*' column with my husband because I want him to know about the legendary women in history.

FGD 6 (C): I discuss issues that surprise me with my friends and colleagues. I remember telling my colleagues what I read about the divorce of Haymanot (singer)...

It is revealed in the above extracts that almost all the focus group participants discuss what they read with other people even if the frequency varies. Croteau and Hoynes (2003: 267) believe that audiences engage with media in social settings in that they discuss about media messages with family and friends, which have an input in how each individual audience interprets a message.

To find out the general view of the readers on the magazine, the discussants were asked what comes to their minds when they first hear the name *Kalkidan* magazine. They explained it as follows:

FGD 1(E): What I remember is a picture of a beautiful girl, beautiful under quotation, and a very disappointing quote from her interview below it.

(D): I think of the same thing... and what makes me mad is the fact that the so called models on the covers are not even famous... on whose terms are they models in the first place....

(C): The very unattractive layout of the cover page is what comes to my mind.

For the university students, the dominant picture that comes to their minds is the 'True love stories'. However, it is not because they like the stories that they relate *Kalkidan* with love, it is rather because they think that the stories do not have valuable life experience messages, they laugh at the stories and criticise them as unrealistic stories.

FGD 2(F): What come to my mind are (laughter)... the true love stories where 'guys' always complain about being betrayed in very assertive words...well the stories always end up leaving a guy with a broken heart (laughter)...

(B): (laughter) The expressions in the stories make me laugh even though they are meant to make the story sad (laughter)...

On the contrary, even though the young females with lower level of education relate *Kalkidan* to the 'True love stories' they take it in a rather serious manner. They like the love stories and they take them seriously. They believe that the experiences of the people in the stories are educative. On the other hand, the housewives, the mothers with high level of education and all the singles associate the magazine with the young models on the front page and also with the marriage stories of celebrities and sport personalities. However, while the housewives and the singles with lower levels of education think of the stories in a positive way, the mothers with high education levels take it differently; the stories for them are very silly and too personal.

From the focus group discussions and individual in-depth interviews conducted regarding the consumption of *Kalkidan*, it emerged that the readers of *Kalkidan* make conscious and selective use of the content, which goes in line with the active audience approaches. Their preferences and reading habits are opposed to the passive audience theories that ignore subjective aspects of human experiences. Hall in Williams (2003:195) argues there is one dominant message, which carries the preferred meaning by the most powerful that tends to come out of the media 'consciously or unconsciously'. However, there is also room for the interpretation of the encoded message on the audience side.

As the findings on the females' consumption of *Kalkidan* show, though there is similarity in the way the females consume the magazine in terms of age and education, a slight difference is also revealed among the homogenous group members. In this regard thus, the view of Fiske (in Byerly & Rossi, 2006:24) that people have their different individual changing taste, which may or may not relate to their social background, is highlighted. Fiske argues, "We can't even talk about 'the people' or 'the audience' because a singular mass of consumers does not exist..." (ibid.).

On the other hand, the part that the groups that are not interested in the magazine mainly (FGD 1, FGD 5 and half of FGD 6) still read the magazine when they find it, which is usually at the beauty salon supports the view of Adorno and Horkheimer, in that a person seeking entertainment 'has to accept what the culture manufactures offered him' and that choice is an illusion (cited in Byerly & Ross, 2006:24). Adorno and Horkheimer state that "One can choose what he or she likes; however, the choice is from the limited range presented by the 'culture industry'" (ibid.:21).

Almost all the women are not subscribed to read the magazine. Even those who claimed to like *Kalkidan* do not purposively buy it. The women generally read the magazine when they find it as a passtime. Moreover, the most dominant place the magazine is read at is the beauty salon for all the groups.

### **4.3 Appropriateness of the magazine to the needs and interests of women readers**

This section discusses the relevance of the magazine to women readers in general.

The interviewees explain the relation between *Kalkidan* and women as follows:

Moderator: What are the distinct features of the magazine (if any), which makes it particularly relevant to women?

FGD 1(C): I can't really say it's relevant to women, because I have never come across stories that create awareness or give information...besides the issues are not that much related to what women really face in their every day life.

(B): It does sell and it sells more to women. The fact that the content revolves around celebrities and fashion might be the reason. However, what is written has no substance and is not timely.

FGD 5(C): It talks about models most of the time and probably that might be of interest to young girls who want to be models, but still I don't see that much of significance to women in it.

FGD 6(C): They make it seem like the interest of women is only love, marriage, fashion, celebrity and the like, and I don't think presenting these issues makes it relevant to women. Because I believe there are so many important and serious issues that women could learn a lot from especially in our country where there are other primary needs.

For the young females with high education levels (FGD 1), the mothers with high education levels (FGD 5) and half of the singles with high education levels (FGD 6) there is no significance to women in the issues raised in *Kalkidan*. As to them, the issues are very silly and not meant to educate or inform women. To conclude that the stories on fashion, celebrities and hair as being relevant to women is stereotyping, and underestimating women as to the women with high level of education. They also believe that issues on violence and women rights are other clichés that stereotype the interests of women.

This view is further illustrated in Allan (2005:288), which states that women's representation in the media sends important messages to the 'viewing, listening and reading public about women's place, women's role and women's lives'. If what the

media presents is always on violent crimes against women, and not the other way around like, the views of women judges, women parliamentarians or successful women in general as well it is obvious that the public would fail to keep in mind that women have significant roles in the society.

On the contrary, for the young females with lower education levels, the housewives, and the singles with lower education levels, the magazine is relevant to women. There are lessons of life the women believe *Kalkidan* grants women. The tips and advertisements are also important.

FGD 3(E): The 'True love' stories, the marriage lives of celebrities and the success stories of celebrities are relevant to women. For instance from the success stories women can learn that women can overcome the ups and downs of life and be the somebody they dream to be. The stories also show the bad side of love relationships which can teach how to escape such situations...

(D): ... there are also advertisements of training centers on beauty parlour and cooking classes that would initiate women to get the information, use the trainings and start working rather than sitting at home... the beauty tips are useful too...

In addition to the relevance to women in general, the researcher did ask the interviewees if their own needs are met in the issues raised by the magazine. Almost all the women in all the focus groups said no, except for two, one from the participants in the young lower education level group and one from the university students group, who said the tips on hair have contributed to their needs.

The findings of the above two related questions some how contradict in that for the prior question on the relevance of the magazine for the needs of women in general, most of the groups of the lower education level believed there is relevance, while in the next question that narrows the same question to the relevance of the issues for their own lives, their answer became the opposite. The reason for this contradiction was the fact that the females believed that the issues might be relevant to some women in general. This can be clarified in the following extract:

FGD 3(C): ...girls who want to be models or actresses can learn from the profiles of the models featured.

Hence, from this finding it can be concluded that the issues raised in *Kalkidan* are not related to the lived contexts of the women.

Thus, given that the real life needs of the women readers are not met in the issues raised provoked the researcher's next question which was, what the pages lack to meet the demands of their real life situation. The answers were articulated as follows:

FGD 1(B): The purpose is not clear... though some of the titles seem interesting, the text is empty. Even the profiles of successful celebrities presented is not much educative... the interviews of the so called models are not worth reading, let me tell you the most terrible quote I read once on the cover, 'I like a tall, guy or a chocolate color guy' why should I care whether a 'model', I have never heard of, likes a tall guy or not? ...

FGD 1(II): I like serious issues. I want to learn from what I read. I believe there's a lot you can learn from successful people, let them even be celebrities, but what I want to know is their journey from bottom to top, their misery, their hard work, their patience, their endurance, all the ups and downs. Not whether they think they're beautiful or handsome or what they like or dislike.

FGD 2(B): I would start with changing the whole cover page layout if I were them...

FGD 3(A): The love stories usually focus on the betrayal while there are also people who are faithful. I would love to read the happily married ever after types of stories too. It feels good to hear and read something good.

(D): When they write about love, what about love in the family, love among friends, love in a nation and so on ...

FGD 4(A): Issues on how to work on your marriage problems, about the rights of women, about domestic works... also some tips on health and how to handle your children when they reach their fire age would be appealing to me...

(F): If the beauty tips would present home made beauty supplies and other cosmetics that we can get with cheaper prices, they will be helpful for housewives like me who spend their days taking care of their kids.

FGD 5(E): The issues raised are very silly. What you read is not as much educative or even entertaining. The topics are shallow. Serious issues and real social issues is it lacks...

The magazine generally fails to meet the real lives of all the women. Although the main objective of the magazine, according to the editor-in-chief is to bring out social issues of women and promoting the needs of women, the readers do not recognize this.

#### **4.4 Meanings obtained from the textual contents of *Kalkidan* and their appropriateness in the readers' real life**

This section discusses what the content of *Kalkidan* means to its readers. The content of the magazine is also evaluated in terms of its relevance to the readers' life experience in a way that suggests how they identify themselves with what they read. The findings focus on the meaning the readers make after they read the purposively selected texts they were given during the discussions.

Although it is difficult to generalise from the limited interviews conducted, an important point that emerged from this study, is that the females with high education levels and with the lower education levels read *Kalkidan* in different ways. The way they make sense of the texts in relation to their real life varies. The age factor is also revealed in making sense of the texts.

According to Hall's encoding/decoding model, there are three premises to the encoding of messages. The first premise is that the same event can be encoded in more than one way, second the message always contains more than one potential meaning besides the intended one; and third, messages therefore have the potential to be read in different ways' (Gill, 2007:17).

##### **4.4.1 Meaning making of the readers**

The following extracts are some of the responses to the moderator's question: "What meaning have you made out of your readings?"

FGD 1(B): The story about queen Zewditu (in the '*Kalkidan's* kit') is somewhat okay compared to the other issues because at least it offers some new information, although the title and the text do not quite add up. The issue in the 'Women's page', which says that marriage should not bound the

development of women's mind does not present anything new as such. I already know that women's success should not be interfered by marriage. I did not read the interview with the model because it didn't interest me even at the beginning. And the 'Talent show' page talks about Foxy Brown (American singer) and that is something that you can get on the Internet. However, the issue about hair was interesting and I found out that it is normal for some hair to fall out everyday, and I didn't know that.

(C): At first, the title which says 'marriage should not stop the development of women's mind' drew my attention, but when I read it I didn't find it that much interesting, it's not a research based or experience based kind of story, it's just the opinion of the writer, male writer. Besides I already know that women should be as successful as men...

FGD 2(A): ...about queen Zewditu, I got some new information, that she was married three times, that she died poisoned and so on. That's our history and it's good to know that...

FGD 3(E): I have learnt from the women's page that women should be confident even after they are married. I've also seen the strength of the model in that she is a college student as well as a model and an actress...

(A): ... that marriage is not the end of the world. I also learnt from the profile of the Hollywood celebrity that we should listen to ourselves to score our goal ...

FGD 4(D): Since I'm married the article on marriage was educative to me. It has made me think that I can still be equal to my husband by trying to figure out something to bring income with. The fact that the story relates the issue of the equality with the Holy Bible has made the story appealing ... the message the article sends is really important for women like me, housewives who spend their days taking care of their kids.

The different interpretations in the extracts above can be explained in Fiske's view as cited in Williams (2003:201) that states there exists 'excess' of potential meanings in any media text. The media text, be it in any form has a variety of meanings stored in the different images and words it is composed of. The dominant or preferred meaning cannot completely hold all the 'bits and pieces' that make up the text. People can put these 'bits and pieces' together in different ways and produce different meanings.

Most of the respondents with high education levels (FGD 1, FGD 5 and half of FGD 6) did not make sense of the profile of the model in the text they read. They said the interview feature is nonsense and shallow. They also criticized the interview questions as silly. On the other hand the column was entertaining and educative for all the participants with lower education levels (FGD 3, FGD 4 and half of FGD 6). Besides, while the females in the high education level groups think that the model is worth given the title, the lower education level groups' participants labeled her as a beautiful and confident model who can be a role model to young women. The column was entertaining for the university students.

In line with this, the researcher came across with an interesting result on how two participants who are both mothers made sense of the column. One of them is from the mothers with high education level group and the other from the housewives group. Both the mothers related the text to their kids. However, it was in different ways as follows:

FGD 5(II): When I read the profile of the model, the part that her parents were not willing to let her be a model, and denied her their permission to be an actress make me project what I would do if my children ask for permission for the same thing when they grow up, and it scared me. Because this is not the direction I would want my children to follow. I want them to progress in their academics.

FGD 4(II): I see my children in the profiles of the young models and actresses... I wish for my kids to be like them when they grow up...

The 'Talent show' column was more appealing to almost all the young (age of 18-30) discussants. The difference, however, lied in the way they made sense of the text. For the females with high level of education and the university students the text was just entertaining. However, for the females with lower level of education it was educative. They said that the ups and downs the singer featured passed through are good lessons of life. The mothers with high education levels and the housewives, however, were not interested in the column at all.

The young females with high education levels, the mothers with high education levels, half of the singles with high education levels and the university students think that the text is not as punchy as the title. They said the message that wives should be equal to their husbands is not new to them. They also criticised the fact that the writer is a man, although the editor-in chief believes that it does not affect the readers.

On the other hand, this column was the most educative for the young females with lower education level and the housewives. The housewives revealed that they have learned about being independent. Moreover, the young females with lower education levels said the text points out how life after marriage could be difficult to women.

'*Kalkidan's kit*' was appealing especially to the mothers with high education levels, the singles with high education levels and the housewives. They said that reading about the strength of a queen in the Ethiopian history made them proud of being a woman. Though the column is of interest to the above-mentioned groups in particular, the participants in all the groups agree that it is informative. All of them have found out something they do not know about the legendary queen.

Another question was on the cover page, which was frequently mentioned in the discussions. The opinion of all the young females with high education levels, the mothers with high education levels, the singles with high education levels and the university students groups on the cover page are the same, negative. They all criticised it for its messy look and low quality pictures:

FGD 1(E): I don't like the cover page at all. It is so messy and the photographs are of low quality. Even the make-up and clothing of the models is unattractive...

(D): Lots of pictures ... it shows me the lack of confidence of the editor-in-chief. Because they think it might not sell, it his... seems like they're saying her story is in, and also his, and theirs, again so messy.

FGD 5(A): The terrible quotes add to the messiness...

FGD 2(F): It lacks the standard of a magazine.

However, the young females with lower education levels, the housewives and the singles with lower education levels say otherwise as indicated below:

FGD 3(D): The models on the cover are really beautiful. I like the way the pictures are taken and their makeup and hairstyle is really nice.

Though it was not the intention of the researcher to consider class as a barrier in the consumption of the magazine, there is an indication in the data that class can probably be a factor too. The class variable was revealed with regard to how the females view the models on the cover in that for the young females with high education levels the models lacked style and their make up and clothing was of low class, however, as to the young females with lower level of education, the models are fashion icons. Thus, given that the young females with higher level of education get relatively higher salaries than those with low level of education there is an indication that there is a class difference. As Hall puts this point 'social factors - class in particular - are determinants of the decoding process...' (Cited in Williams 2003:196)

In general, the way the women make meaning relates to Hall's three possible kinds of decodings of media messages: 'dominant, negotiated and oppositional'. Dominant decoding is when the audience accepts the preferred meaning encoded in the text. The oppositional decoding occurs when people understand the preferred reading rather reject it and make meaning according to their own 'values and attitudes', and a negotiated reading is 'where people adapt rather than completely reject the preferred reading' (Williams, 2003:196).

The meaning decoding of the females with high level of education (FGD 1, FGD 5, half of FGD 6) is generally oppositional in that in most cases they tend to abandon the encoded meaning and make meanings of their own. On the other hand, the university students (FGD 2) adapt rather than completely reject the encoded

meaning. In contrast, the females with lower education levels (FGD 3, FGD 4, half of FGD6) accept the preferred meaning as in the dominant decoding.

#### **4.4.2 Appeal of the readers towards the columns**

In general, for the young females with lower education levels, the housewives and the singles with lower education levels *Kalkidan* is exiting or interesting because it holds stories the women enjoy – stories that help them to ‘symbolically escape’, (Thomson cited in Strelitz, 2005:79) from the routine, responsibilities of their everyday lives. The stories help them view their lives from a different perspective, perspectives that are reflected by the stories.

These readers explained that the stories and articles were uplifting and made them feel good and they also said the columns provide stories and information about women, for women, which is a change from the male dominated newspapers and other magazines. Thomson’s idea of ‘symbolic distancing’ (cited in *ibid.*), which is imaginatively taking some distance from the ‘special -temporal’ conditions of everyday life seem to be provided by *Kalkidan* for these women. This was clearly articulated in the individual in-depth interviews as follows:

Moderator: Looking at the copies of *Kalkidan* we have here, which of the columns were interesting to you? Why?

FGD 3(II): I like the profile of the model in the ‘Let’s introduce you to:’ column because it shows that women as young as she is can be successful... it made me think of what I can be if I’m brave the enough to try out things. The thought of feeling I can change my life gave me pleasure ...other articles like the profile of celebrities, the love stories and the incredible are very entertaining too.

FGD 6(II): May be when you look at me now sitting with you discussing the same issue you might think that I lead a normal life like you. Well, you’re wrong. Each night are darker and longer for me ...I need to entertain myself as much as possible to forget my bad moments and one of my entertainments is reading focus magazines. The love stories remind me of the existence of love in life and the articles that on the successful women make me proud... *Kalkidan* keeps my mind off things ... I know you’re wondering, I’m a sex worker (tears in the eyes).

FGD 4(II): The magazine is entertaining and that's something I need especially when I'm alone after putting my daughter in bed in the afternoons.

For the young females with high education levels, mothers with high education levels, singles with high education and university students most of the columns were not interesting. For most of them only the tips on the hair were appealing. Queen Zewditu's story (*Kalkidan's kit*) was also liked by some. The disinterest is revealed in the following extracts:

FGD 1(A): You just made me waste twenty minutes making me read this article (laughter in the group) ... wasn't interesting at all.

FGD 5(C): Nothing interesting except for the story of queen Zewditu, which gave me information I never knew.

#### **4.4.3 Relevance of the columns to the readers' real lives**

Regarding the columns' appeal to the real life experiences of the women, as a human in general and as a woman in particular, the young females with high level of education, the mothers with high level of education, the singles with high level of education and the university students said the columns do not meet their real life experiences.

FGD 1(C): I didn't find anything that I can say relates to my life however, experience ..., I did expect to find something related to the no reality in women's page, what I read is just an opinion of a male writer. There are facts presented or even human life examples set ... so, no, it had nothing to do with my everyday life.

Even though the columns were interesting to the young females with lower education levels, the housewives, and the singles with lower education level groups, only the respondents in the housewives group relate the columns to their lived experiences.

FGD 4(A): I would say the issue raised on the women's page on how got marriage should not affect the development of women's mind relates to my life. I married when I was in the fourth grade, that since we used to start school late in the countryside. When I get married I was sure I was going to continue my education, however, my husband was not willing. But, with the struggle I made and the dedication I had, I could finish high school though my dream

was even more. This has always made me happy and I believed every woman should struggle to be successful even after marriage....

FGD 4(E): I had once wished to be a model when I was young and I imagined myself when I was her age ... her story made me remember my young age ambitions and it was fun...

Since the findings reveal that the texts do not relate to the lives of most of the women, the researcher's next question was, 'Whom do you think the magazine suits?' The answer from the FGD 1, FGD 5, FGD 2 and half of FGD 6 was that the magazine is suitable to people who have a lot of spare time and who are not that critical. None of them related the magazine to themselves.

On the other hand, the participants from FGD 3 and FGD 6 believe that *Kalkidan* is for all, for all age groups and for all education levels. Some of the housewives agree with the above view in that the magazine can suit every woman including herself. However, the remaining, even though they agree that the magazine can be read by them, they think that it especially serves the young. One of the respondents from the housewives group said:

(A): Since we have passed it all, I mean our young age when we could be models, and even the love life and the marriage life, believe there's nothing much we can get from the magazine except for entertainment... it best suits our children, the young I would say.

Hence, as the magazine lacks to meet the lived contexts of most of the women in the discussion, the last question on the in-depth interview was set to find out what the women would be interested to read. The responses are as follows:

FGD 1(II): As long as it focuses on women, the first thing that should be done is to really think of women's interest, and also to try and see the real social situation of women. This will obviously help to generate issues that are of interest and that are of real life. Deep and well researched articles are the other things that I would love to read... And if it is on fashion I would like it to be timely and presented by well-known models... Attractive cover is also what would be appealing to me... I'd rather read one of the issues raised by Oprah Winfrey's talk show related to women rather than the narration of 24 hours (Action series). There are a lot of women who can be role models. I'm sure presenting their profile will be of great help.

FGD 2(II): I would love to find issues in town in the magazine. I would also love to read about famous people, especially successful women... updates on fashion like cloths, jewels, make up and hair products is my interest too... Awareness raising things would be really important. For instance beauty products that have expired are on the market and these products are affecting women so awareness columns are important even on other issues...

FGD 3(II): I believe that the inclusion of the neglected women in society is very important. I would like the lives of sex workers to be included because on the one hand it will show readers the real life of these women and on the other hand it will be educative for other women to stay away from this life... The addition of the miserable life of women who go to the Far East countries will be of great education too...

FGD 4(II): ... If research findings, for instance about the menopause stage when women face great problems is featured in the columns it will be very informative because many of us have no idea of the symptoms. Breast cancer and other medical issues I think are important too... Domestic issues like, may be, cooking tips will be of interest to me.

FGD 5(II): I would like to read informative issues... Especially given the magazine focuses on women the lives of successful women, not only artists but also women from different fields can be really educative... For example, I remember watching the life history of Condoleezza Rice once and it really impressed me. It even has a big impact in my life. These kinds of women make you revise your beliefs on things that you think are impossible to accomplish as a woman. They make you realize your potential... Looking only at the case of Ethiopia there are different nations and nationalities. Even in these different nations there could be cultures that favour women and at the same time that harm them. Knowing the situation of those women is education, it is also information... If these things were considered I'm sure I would be first one to buy the magazine.

FGD 6(II): ... The fact that women can live independently should also be reflected... Diet and sport tips to stay healthy and young are I think important too... Consultations for depression are advantageous as well...

Thus, one may conclude this section by arguing that the appropriateness of *Kalkidan's* content into the readers' real life is variable. Most readers, particularly the high education level groups did not find the texts to be entertaining let alone have a significance related to their real lives. Even for some of the lower education level groups *Kalkidan* has no real life experience except for the entertainment. The other

significant point made is that readers wish to read matters that are real and of importance in their lives.

#### **4.5. Satisfaction of the readers by the magazine**

The young females with high education levels (FGD1), the working mothers with high education levels (FGD 5) and the singles with high education levels (FGD 6) rate *Kalkidan* poorly. The university students (FGD 2) on the other hand rate it between fair and good. On the contrary, the housewives (FGD 4), the females with lower education level (FGD 3) and the singles with lower education levels (FGD 6) rate it very good and excellent respectively.

The reason for the higher education level groups for rating *Kalkidan* poorly starts from their criticism of the cover page, which they termed as 'messy'. They also feel that the texts are silly and shallow. Moreover, the fact that the issues have nothing to do with the real life experience makes it useless for them. Besides, they have the feeling that the part that the focus of the magazine is celebrities, especially models is stereotyping women only simple and silly issues. They also have problem with fact that almost all of the writers are male. One of the educated singles stressed this point saying, 'no one can tell the pain of a wound like the one who has it.' The university students on the other hand rated it between fair and good because they are entertained by the gossip-news about celebrities, but they agree with the educated groups in the criticisms mentioned.

On the other hand, the rate excellent given by the lower education level groups shows their satisfaction on the magazine. They believe that the magazine is educative and informative for them. Moreover, it is a source of entertainment for them. They also think that it gives them the pleasure of forgetting the routines in their everyday life. The same holds true for the housewives who use the magazine as a source of entertainment.

As it is observed in the rating thus, the satisfaction has to do mainly with the level of education rather than the age difference. There is a mix in age groups both in those who rated it excellent and very good as well as in those that rated it poor.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the main findings of the research under four different themes together with the discussion of the content analysis of *Kalkidan*. The themes are, *consumption* of *Kalkidan* by female readers, appropriation of the magazine to the needs and interests of women, meanings obtained from the textual contents of *Kalkidan* and their appropriateness in the readers' everyday lives and satisfaction of the readers by the magazine. The discussion was underpinned by different theoretical and methodological frameworks- the audience reception being the main methodological approach. This chapter has highlighted the limitations and also the good parts of the magazine in the words of the readers. The variations mainly due to age and education are also pointed out. In general the chapter gives an overview of the consumption of *Kalkidan* by its female readers. A broad conclusion of the whole study will be given in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Summary and Conclusion

As already stated in chapter one, the major objective of this study is to explore why women read *Kalkidan* magazine and how they identify themselves with it. Although this study is limited to a small group of women in Addis Ababa and the results can not be generalized to the wider population, the findings are believed to offer some insights into the reception of female readers of *Kalkidan*.

This chapter summarizes the main findings of the study, which explores the reception of female readers of *Kalkidan* magazine by way of investigating the meaning the readers make out of the magazine and how they relate it with their real life.

Qualitative research method was used for the study. Within this research paradigm, such techniques as qualitative content analysis, focus group discussions and individual in-depth interviews were employed. The method has been found useful in understanding how women, different in terms of age, education, and marital status vary in their consumption of the magazine. Facilitating a practical reading process for the focus group participants, it was also attempted to find out how they make sense of the materials from *Kalkidan* magazine which they were exposed to.

This research concluded that the consumption of the magazine by the women in question varies mainly due to their level of education. In other words, the women with high level of education as one group showed similarity in the ways they consume *Kalkidan* as did the females with lower level of education. The women in high level education groups generally do not like the magazine and they have no intention of getting education, information or even entertainment while reading it. On the contrary, the magazine is appealing to the women with lower level education.

However, the content preference of the discussants and interviewees was affected by their age than their level of education. The young women with lower education level and with high education level plus the university students (18-30) have more or less similar content preferences while the housewives with lower level of education and the mothers with high level of education have the same types of preferences despite their great difference in the level of interest they have towards the magazine. On the other hand, the preferences of the singles fit with the young, regardless of their age difference.

There is, however, one similarity among all the women with regard to when they read the magazine. They all read it in their leisure time. Moreover, most of them do not buy it themselves; they mostly find it at the beauty salons. In general, as to the consumption of *Kalkidan*, the findings revealed that the magazine is not something the women purposively look for to read and that it does not equally serve the interests of all the women across different age groups and education levels.

With regard to the relevance of *Kalkidan* to women readers as a whole, the young, mothers, singles and the college students with high level education believe that it has no relevance to women.

On the other hand, the young, singles and the housewives with lower level education think that it is appropriate to women. However, none of the women related the issues raised in the magazine to their real life. They indicated that although they feel the magazine might be generally relevant to some of the women readers, no relevance of that sort applies to their own lived experiences.

Moreover, as to the meaning they made out of the texts the women were made to read, all the presupposed factors; age, education level and marital status seem to have an effect. With regard to the interest the women have on the issues they read, education level seems to be a factor in that all the young, mothers, and singles with higher level education and the college students reflected their detest to the magazine,

while the young, singles and the housewives with low level education were interested.

The meaning they made out of their readings was rather affected by all the three factors mentioned above. The young, singles and mothers with high level education attached little meaning out of their readings, while the young and singles and housewives with low level education thought otherwise.

In general, the study shows that factors such as age, education and marital status affect the interpretation and use of the magazine by the women. Moreover, the findings reflect that both the active and the passive audience theories basically related to the education factor. The study also highlighted that educated audiences are generally unsatisfied with the provisions of the magazine as they felt that it has lacked relation to their real lives.

## Bibliography

- Aadland, O. and Fackland, M. (1999) Ethiopian Press, Media, TV, Radio and News paper. [www.pressreference.com](http://www.pressreference.com). Accessed on June 17, 2007.
- Allan, S. (2005) Journalism: Critical issues. Glasgow. UK: Bell & Bain Ltd,
- Babbie, E. and Mouton, J. (2001) The Practice of Social Research. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Baehr, H. and Gray, A. (1996) Turning it on: A Reader in Women & Media. Bristol: JW Arrow Smith, Ltd.
- Blix, J. (1992) A place to resist: Reevaluating Women's Magazines, Journal of Communication Inquiry. <http://jci.sagepub.com>. Accessed on February 8, 2007.
- Bryman, A. (1998) Quantity and Quality in Social Research. London: Routledge.
- Byerly, C.M. and Ross, K. (2006) Women and Media: A Critical Introduction. Uk: Blackwell Publishing.
- Campbell, R., Martin, C. and Fabos, B. (2005) Media & Culture: an introduction to mass communication. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- Casty, A. et al. (1973) Mass media and Mass man. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York.
- Chambers, D., Steiner, L. and Fleming, C. (2004) Women and Journalism. London: Routledge.
- Croteau, D. and Hoynes, W. (2003) Media society. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. USA. Sage publications.
- Deacon, et al. (1999) Researching Communication. London: Arnold.
- Fossey, E., Harvey, C., McDermott, F. and Davidson L. (2002) Understanding and Evaluating Qualitative Research. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry. 36:717-732.
- Gill, R. (2007) Gender and the Media. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hansen, A. (1998) Mass Communication Research Methods: London Macmillan press.
- Hartley, J. (2002) Communication, Cultural and Media Studies: The key concepts. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London: Routledge.

Mabweazara, H. (2006) “An investigation into the popularity of the Zimbabwean tabloid newspaper, uMthunywa: A reception study of Bulawayo readers.” MA thesis. Unpublished. Grahamstown: Rhodes University.

Machin, D. and Thornborrow, J. (2003) Branding and Discourse: The case of Cosmopolitan. <http://das.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/14/4/453>. Accessed on February 8, 2007.

Manga, J. (2003) Talking Trash : The cultural politics of daytime TV Talk Shows. New York: New York University Press.

McQuail, D. (2000) Mass Communication Theory. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Ministry of Information (2007) Monthly Statistical Data on Press Products. Report. Addis Ababa.

O’Shaughnessy, M, and Stodler, J. (2005) Media and Society: An introduction. New York: Oxford University Press.

Park, S. Y. (2005) The Influence of Presumed Media Influence on Women’s Desire to be Thin. <http://crx.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/32/5/594>. Accessed on February 8, 2007.

Sakamoto, K. (1999) Reading Japanese Women’s Magazines: The construction of new identities in the 1970s and 1980s. <http://mcs.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/21/2/173>. Accessed on February 8, 2007.

Strelitz, L. (2005) Mixed Reception: South Africa Youth and their experience of Global Media. South Africa: Unisa Press.

Watson, J. (2003) Media Communication: an introduction to theory and process. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Palgrave.

Williams, K. (2003) Understanding Media Theory. London: Oxford University Press.

*Kalkidan* Magazine, editions of September 2005 to April 2007. Add publishers name see how to reference magazines specifically)

## **Appendix 1**

### **The Women Who Participated in the Study**

#### **Between the ages of 18 and 30**

##### **Females with high level of education**

'A' is a 24 years old single with a BA degree in Economics, working in a private company.

'B' is a 24 year old single with a BA degree in English, working as a Journalist working in a newspaper.

'C' is a 25 years old single with a College Diploma in Management, working as a secretary.

'D' is a 27 years old single with a College Diploma in Accounting, working as a sales Lady.

'E' is a 27 years old single with a College Diploma in Marketing working as a sales.

##### **Females with lower level of education**

'A' is a 26 years old single who quit school after grade 10. She works as a hairdresser.

'B' is a 25 years old single who is in grade 10. She is a waitress.

'C' is a 26 years old single who quit school grade 9. She works in a bar.

'D' is a 27 years old single who has completed high school. She works in a supermarket.

'E' is a 24 years old single who is in grade 10. She works in a boutique.

'F' is a 26 years old single who quit school from grade 9. She works as a hairdresser.

##### **Addis Ababa University under graduate students**

'A' is a 19 years old second year student majoring in Sociology.

'B' is a 19 years old second year student majoring in Information Science.

'C' is a 20 years old third year student majoring in Sociology.

'D' is a 21 years old third year student majoring in Law.

'E' is a 19 years old second year student majoring in Law.

'F' is a 21 years old third year student majoring in Management.

## **Between the ages of 30 and 50**

### **Housewives with lower level of education**

'A' is a 50 years old woman who has completed high school, with 5 children.

'B' is a 34 years old woman who quit school from grade 11, with one child.

'C' is a 32 years old woman who has completed high school, and with two children.

'D' is a 43 year old woman who quit school from grade 8 and with two children.

'E' is a 45 year old woman who quit school from grade 9, and with one child.

'F' is a 39 years old woman who has completed high school, and with three children.

### **Working mothers with high level of education**

'A' is a 42 years old pediatrician, who has four children.

'B' is a 41 years old university lecturer, who has three children.

'C' is a 38 years old accountant, who has two children.

'D' is a 41 years old secretary, who has one child.

'E' is a 35 years old teacher, who has two children.

## **Single females with high and lower levels of education**

### **Higher education levels**

'A' is a 37 years old public relations officer.

'C' is a 41 years old secretary.

'E' is a 38 year old secretary.

### **Lower education levels**

'B' is a 36 years old waitress who has completed high school.

'D' is a 34 years old receptionist who has completed high school.

'F' is a 36 years old waitress who quit school after grade 11.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Interview guide for focus group discussions, in-depth individual interviews and individual interview**

#### **Focus group discussions**

##### **1. Demography**

- Age
- Level of Education
- Occupation
- Marital status

##### **2. Why do women use the magazine?**

- What do you use the magazine as?
  - As a source of entertainment
  - As a source of information and news
  - As any other newspaper or magazine
  - Other
- When and where do you read the magazine? Why?
- Why do you buy the magazine?
- What particular feature or column does interest you most? Why? (There could be more than one preference.)
- Do you discuss about what you read in the magazines? If yes, with whom? If no, why?
- What comes first to your mind when you think of *Kalkidan*?

##### **3. Does the magazine serve the needs and interests of women readers?**

- What are the distinct features of the magazine (if any), which make it particularly relevant to women?
- Speaking of front cover portraits (pictures) of women, how do you view the portrayal (of women) in the magazine?
- How are your needs met in the pages particularly made for female readers?
- What do these pages lack to meet your demands as female readers if they do?

#### **4. Interpretation of messages (after they have read two columns**

- What are the columns about?
- What meaning have you made out of your reading?
- Were the columns interesting to you? Why?
- How does it appeal to your own life experience as a human in general and as a woman in particular?

Does the experiences and life styles of the women presented in the 'let's introduce you to:' column affect you in any way?

- To whom do you think the columns are suited to?
- What kind of messages would you want to get from the columns in the magazine? (facts, people's experience, scary messages, educative, entertainment...)
- If you are to rate the magazine where would you put it? Why?

Excellent, very good, good, fair, poor

#### **Individual in-depth interview**

- How would your needs be met in the pages particularly made for female readers?
- How does the fact that the reporters and the editors of the magazine are male affect you as a reader? What would be the difference if they were women?
- What is the significance of reading columns about celebrities to you?
- What do you think of the exclusion of serious social issues from the magazine's content?
- Are you satisfied with way the magazine is presented?

#### **Interview with the editor-in-chief of *Kalkidan***

- When did you start the magazine and what was the objective?
- What are the specific objectives of each of the columns?
- Who is your target audience?
- Do you think you are addressing your audience?
- On what grounds do you choose the issues you produce?
- Do you believe that the issues you raise relate to the reality in the society?
- What do you think of the cover page?
- Do you think the fact that your staff is entirely male affect women readers?

-What do you think is the standard for a magazine?

-How do you rate your magazine?

**Amharic version of the interview guide**

••••• ••• ••••• /••••••• •••/

1. •••••

- •••



1. ●●● ●●● ●●
2. ●●● ●●
3. ●●
4. ●●●●
5. ●●●

●● ●●●●

- ●●●● ●●●● ●●●●● ●●●● ●●● ●● ●● ●●●● ●●●●● ●●●●?
- ●●●●● ●●● ●●●●● ●●●●● ●●●●● ●●●● ●●●●● ●●● ●●●●●●●●
- ●●●● ●●●●● ?
- ●●● ●●●●● ● ●●●●●● ●●●●● ●● ●●● ●●●● ●●●● ●●●●● ●●●●
- ●●●● ●●● ●●●●● ●●● ●●●●● ●●?
- ●●●●● ●●● ●●●●●●●● ●●● ●●●●●●● ●●●●● ●● ●●●● ●●●●
- ●●●●●●●●● ●●●● ●●●●●●●●?
- ●●●●● ●●●●●● ●●●●●●● ●●? ●●●?

●● ●●●●

- ●● ●●●●● ●●
- ●●●●● ●●●● ●● ●●●●● ●●● ●●●●● ●● ●●●?
- ●●●●●● ●●● ●●●●●●●● ●●●●●●● ●●●●● ●● ●●●●● ●●?
- [du= ●●●●●●●● ●● ●●?
- [du= ●●●●●●●● ●●● ●●● ●●●●●●●● ●● ●●●●●? ●●●?
- ●●●●●●●●● ●●●●●● ●●●●●●●●● ●●●●● ●●●● ●●
- ●●●●● ●●●●● ●●● ●●●● ●● ●●● ●●●●● ●●●●●●? ●●●?
- ●●●●●●● ●●●●● ●● ●●●●●●●● ●●●●●●●● ●●●●● ●●?
- ●●●● ●Ä ●●●● ●●●●● ●●●●● ●● ●●●●●●●● ●●●●●●●● ●●
- ●●●●●●● ●●●●●
- ●●●●● ●●●●● "●●●●●" ●●●●●●●● ●●●●● ●●?
- ●●●●●●● ●●●●● ●● ●●●● ●●●●●●●?

## **Declaration**

**I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and all the sourced of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.**

**Name Tereza Nega**

**Signature \_\_\_\_\_**

**Date of Submission July 13, 2007**

**Place of Submission Addis Ababa**