

Men and Masculinity in Men's Stylish Lifestyle Magazine

Collin Jerome

Centre for Language Studies, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, 94300 Kota
Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia
e-mail: jcollin@cls.unimas.my; C.Jerome@sussex.ac.uk

Abstract: This paper discusses qualitative findings from a series of focus group discussions with six adult Malaysian men, aged 24-34, on the representation of men and masculinity in *Men's Folio*, a stylish lifestyle men's magazine. It highlights the extent to which the language used in the magazine's editorial content and advertisements that feature musculature images, fashion and style, and feminized grooming products and practices that have diversified impacts on the respondents' notions of a modern male identity.

Key words: men's lifestyle magazine, masculinity, masculine identity

Men's magazines today have become sites of significant inquiry that offer alternative views on the representation and construction of the modern male identity. This is especially evident in the growth of men's lifestyle magazines that are believed to be sites for men to learn how to become a man in this post-traditional modern world (Gauntlett, 2002; Jackson, Stevenson, & Brooks, 2001; McKay, Mikosza, & Hutchins, 2005). The emergence of new men's lifestyle magazines such as 'New Man' and 'New Lad' cover varied aspects of men's lives that were "once considered strictly female" (Beam, 1996). This is clearly evident in the increasing number of men's magazines that range from the upscale and literary (*Esquire and GQ*) to practical, and outdoorsy (*Men's Health, Men's Fitness, Verge, Men's Journal*) to hip and girl-crazy (*Details, Maxim, Men's Perspective*) (Beam, 1996). The fact that "men don't read magazines, except for sports or hobby titles" (Braithwaite, 2003, p. 115) and that men's magazines are only restricted or limited to sports or hobbies may no longer be relevant. Jackson, Stevenson, & Brooks (2001) posits that new men's magazines "have encouraged men to "open up" previously repressed aspects of their masculinity and how "the magazines signify the