

The Role of Wanita and Jelita in Shaping the Development of Women's Magazine in Malaysia in the 1980's

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Abstract: The 1980's is the decade of development for Malay women magazine. Since, the first modern Malay women magazine, Wanita, published in 1969 not less than ten other magazines published to cater women readership in Malaysia. The orientation in content of these magazines has change rapidly from as the light reading materials for house-hold women to as the guide to the career of its readers. As such the increasing number of these types of magazines has itself a manifestation of the development of Malay women in their daily life. While, 1970's is the decade of early modern development for women in gaining education, 1980's is a period of transition whereby women started to fill all strategic posts in job market traditionally related to men. It is only in 1990's where their presence is felt in almost all areas of the careers. This development is represented in the women magazines published throughout the decades. This study will focus on the development of women Malay magazines in the decade of 1980's, especially the trend and the history of several dominant magazines.

Key words: Women magazines, Malay magazines, editorial, printed media, women and media

INTRODUCTION

As with the modernization that swept the general public in Southeast Asian countries, women in Malaysia also experienced an increase level of social and education in the 1980s. The number of women who obtain higher education is increasing. The attitude of parents towards education for their girls became increasingly positive. The most important effect of the modernization and improvements in education are the increasing number of women who work and have a career. At the same time, the numbers of women who become full-time house-wife are decreasing. In 1990, 37.9% women were involved in service sector compared to 29.4% in 1980 and 28.9% in 1970 (Malaysia 1991). The more extensive exposure of women to the values and outlook of the modern world itself crave a specific medium for them to participate and develop the changing of socialization.

Magazine is the medium most suited to meet this needs. Thus, an increasing number of Malay magazines and the response given from women's audience to each of them are felt enough in this decade. As such the role of women's magazines in the Malay publishing segment is becoming increasingly important.

In addition to improving response of readers due to the factors mentioned, the biggest factor contributing to the increase was the fact that women magazines attract

more advertisers than from other type of Malay magazines. Improvement living standards of women, accompanied with an improvement in monetary to spent by its nature, put women as the most valuable segment of readers to advertisers. Beauty and health products which symbolize the modern life compete to buy ad space in women's magazines as well as a variety of other consumer products. With the income earned from the advertisement, it means the production cost of magazines can be reduced. As a result, the price of magazine continue to remain in the affordable range and therefore, not necessary for publishers to raise the price.

This study will discuss the changes in the orientation of the women's magazine that occurred in the 1980s, compared with previous decades. Nineteen eighties witnessed a significant change in the scenario of women's magazine publishing with its contents was tailored to read by women who already have a career as opposed to the previously focused materials for housewives. These changes not only affect the editorial content of the magazine but also change the orientation of the advertisement that appeared in its pages.

THE DOMINATIONS OF WANITA AND JELITA

The Malay magazine has been largely studied in historical perspective before. In his pioneer study, Roff (1972, 1975) listed all periodicals since 1876 where the

first Malay newspaper was published until the break of Second World War where most periodicals were closed. In all, Roff presented 157 periodicals with 82 of them are magazines. Roff's study actually improved the number of periodicals presented earlier by Muhammad which listed 129 newspapers and magazines at the same period. Later, Iskandar corrected the number with 164 periodicals published in the same period. This number is further improved by Hamedy who discovered another nine periodicals never listed before in his doctoral studies. Before that, Ahmat discuss the Malay newspapers published in the 19th century where it was largely operated by Indian Muslim businessman. Although, Malay magazine is still not comprehensively studied as Mott (1938) and Tebbel did on American magazines those literatures are contributing to the understanding of periodical publishing in Malaysia. Among the first serious study on this matter was did by Ahmad (1941) which thoroughly discussed the development of Malay journalism from the first newspaper in 1876 until the break of Second World War.

Women magazines has been around in 1930s and it develops extensively after the Independence in 1957, basically due to the improvement of education among Malay women. In 1970s, 28 new women magazines has been published. Two most important women's magazine, Wanita (Women) and Jelita (Beauty) are well established in this decade and lead the market for women magazine. Wanita had to change the concept to adjust to the changing readers: from housewives in the early and mid 1970's to women's career in the late 1970s. Depletion of Wanita's circulation due to the introduction of Jelita in August 1976 is back to normal; instead the emergence of Jelita brings positive impact to Wanita.

The presence of Jelita forced Wanita to face market distortions and it pushes the editorial to move forward in momentum that cannot be pursued by the other rival magazines. For Jelita, their audiences in early stages are career young career women and living in the city: the same segment who are increasingly pursue by Wanita.

After Nik Rahimah Hassan leave Wanita in 1980, the magazine was led by Faridah Idris and assisted by among Einai Nor Mohd Amin, Tajaiyah Ihsan, Ramnah Yassin, Normala Hamzah, Delaila Hussein and Meran Abu Bakar. For Jelita, Zaharah Nawawi continues to be the editor until 1985 when Siti Bidayah Ahmad replace her in a short period before Rohani Pawan Chik takes over until the early 2000s when she retired. Before 1982, Jelita has experienced a very difficult situation to compete with Wanita. Fortunately, A. Samad Ismail, the chief editor of Berita Publishing who was released from Internal Security Act (ISA) detention is available to strengthen the magazine. According to Samad:

When I back run the NST group again in 1982, I noticed Jelita is not so developed. The content is less satisfactory because it does not reflect a woman's magazine. Furthermore, the contents were more concerned with elite tastes. Perhaps one reason is that the writers of the magazine's lack of experience, the language is less smooth, stiff and tense style, its editorial contents did not meet the appetite of readers, even boring... The magazine appears to be weak in value through the eyes of the reader. So, we try to fix it and change the concept

We started a relationship with readers and engaged outside writers. Jelita start publishing articles which is close to or of interest to the reader so that we can reach out to them. Thank God, it works and the sale progressed...

Both magazines were competed each other to attract readers in style and presentation of text and image in getting the best writers, designers and also in engaging the most attractive cover girl. Jelita ascertained the "beautiful, sweet and photogenic "as a key requirement for the cover girl. Those who meet these requirements can apply by "sending two full-face photographs only; a front face (front view) and the other side faces (side view)" to be evaluated prior fixing the date of the test-shot (Jelita, Aug 1986). Because not all the girls who attended the test-shot for the cover girl were suitable, editorial staff will sometimes find the right girl. As the editor says, "A wild and sharp view is needed; so beautiful girls cannot escape from our eyes." Once we saw a beautiful girl, we approached them, asking if they are interested to be our cover girl." Once the right girl is found, they will contact the boutique or shopping center to look for clothes and accessories to wear by the girl. Companies or hair styling will be contacted. All parties who help in cover girl filming will be given credit in the introductory note on the contents page.

If Jelita is more inclined for "beautiful, sweet and photogenic" girls, Wanita still tend to use well-known celebrities, especially princesses as their cover girls. This is because "every time the personality from the palace displayed, people are fond to read it. This is an opportunity for them to identify more closely with the princesses and if the publishing is in conjunction with the royal wedding, then a colourful picture of the wedding ceremony is sure to amaze the public". Throughout, the 1980s, among the figure who appeared as the cover image

are Tunku Dara Naquiah, daughter of the Sultan of Perak, Raja Zarith Sofia, the wife of Pahang Tengku Abdullah, Tunku Azizah, wife of Regent of Selangor, Nurlisa Abdullah and Raja Permaisuri Agong, Tuanku Bainon.

Besides that, other figures such as Datin Maria Musa, Sharifah Aini, Marina Chin, Dato' Seri Rafidah Aziz and Dr. Siti Zaharah Sulaiman was also appeared in the cover of *Wanita*. In addition, *Wanita* also diversify its text content. If the first decade of the 1970s, the contents are more likely to meet the demands of readers among housewives, the content in 1980s is more complicated. The question of health care, the role of women in professional fields, family care, beauty care, psychology, food and nutrition and Islamic question-answer issues are among the key recipes. Regular writers like Prof. Dr. Abdul Hamid Arshat, Dr. Mat Saat Baki, beauty expert Clara L. Chee and Dr. Muhammad Ello contribute regularly in their respective columns.

This healthy competition brings benefits to both magazines. Circulation for *Wanita* reaching 103,862 copies in March 1981 the first time a magazine in Malaysia to achieve such a high circulation (*Utusan Melayu Annual Report, 1981*). The figures from the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC), however were slightly lower with 93,432 copies in 1985 while the *Jelita* lag behind with 29,537 copies. In 1988, the circulation of both magazines increased to 109,000 copies for *Wanita* and 35,000 copies for *Jelita*. In the following year, readers of *Wanita* increased by 8.5% to 604,000 from the previous year of 519,000 readers. In terms of readers' composition, 587,000 readers are Malay while 32,000 Chinese and 17,000 Indian.

In terms of age, the majority of *Wanita* readers aged 15-24 years with 241,000 persons followed by 119,000 persons aged 25-29 years and 30-39 years with 161,000 persons. *Wanita* also have male readership of 124,000 persons. The figures are still able to be expanded based on the improvement of the country's economic situation and the growing number of working women who become targets of magazine readers. Commenting on *Wanita*'s high circulation, the editor states:

What is the wisdom behind the success and ability of *Wanita* to continue attracting the reader? The answer is simple because *Wanita* have gladdened the hearts of all people both in the palace and among the villages. *Wanita* rarely failed to get cooperation from any party whatsoever when we want to get the information to be used including getting the personality to be the cover girl for every month

Three other women's magazines which was published in 1970's are *Keluarga* (Family) (Apr. 1976), *Alam Wanita* (Woman's World) (Apr. 1978) and *Selecta Femina* (Jan. 1978). The readers of *Keluarga*, published by Amir Enterprise went up to 177,000 in 1985. In 1986, the circulation rose to 45,000 copies and the readers number increased to 200,000 (*Media Index, 1986*). The founder, Harun Hassan still leads the magazine until 1983 when he was succeeded by his son in law, Abdul Jalil Ali. Instead, Harun change his focus to film business. The members of editorial department of *Keluarga* still had Nik Rahimah Hassan who helps the magazine since 1979. She later assisted by M. Jusof Taib (1984-88), Salmah Mohsin (1985-87) who rejoined Amir Enterprise from *Jelita*; Webah Salleh (1985-87) and Mohd Yusuf Harun (1986-89). Since 1984, Nik Rahimah was appointed as the editor of the magazine, a position she held until Amir Enterprise were acquired by *Karangkrak* in 1991.

Alam Wanita was published by *Pustaka Antara*, a company renowned for its book publishing business. Founded by Datuk Abdul Aziz Ahmad, the company also published a political newspaper, *Watan* which was short lived. For *Alam Wanita*, M. Ghazali still given the trust to edit the magazine, assisted by Zon Hasyim, S. Munajat, Drs. Darwis Harahap, S. Denak (1980) and W.S. Uzala, Sharifah Abu Salem, Shalina Hj. Umar, Zaiton Hj. Ahmad (1982). After M. Ghazali resigned for health reason, Ashidah Minin was entrusted by the publisher to be the new editor. However, the response for the magazine is declining, especially due to the increasing number of materials taken from Indonesian magazines. Their editorial staffs are largely consisted of writers from the neighboring country and it distanced the magazine from the readers. As a result, *Alam Wanita* has to be closed in December 1984.

Meanwhile, *Selecta Femina* which was published in Penang by *Warta Negara Press* in January 1978, moved to Kuala Lumpur in March 1979 when the magazine was taken over by *Utusan Melayu Press*. Its founder, Dato Seri Hussein Nordin was appointed as managing director of *Utusan Melayu Press* and the *Warta Negara Press* publications incorporated into the larger organization's media. From the concept of "Monthly Women for Every Level", *Selecta Femina* changed slightly to "Magazine for Youth", even though the image is still dominated by feminine content. Almost simultaneously, Roseminah Ahmad was appointed to replace Latifah Hamzah as the editor.

The circulation for *Selecta Femina* in the early decades of the 1980's is 26,048 copies in June 1982, 20,983 copies in December 1982, 18,355 copies in June 1983, 19,669 copies in December 1983; 15,498 copies in June

1984 and 15,931 copies in December 1984 (Media Index, 1982-1986). The circulation for Alam Wanita was not able to detect as the magazine was unaudited. Based on current market situation, the circulation is probably not >20,000 copies.

Besides the five magazines, 15 new magazines for women were published in the decade of 1980s. Among them are Dewi (Goddess) (Aug. 1980) published by Khalid Jafri through Jasika Corporations; Dunia Fesyen (Fashion World) (Jan. 1982) by Qamada Publishing House; Family (Jun. 1982) by Mustafa Ton in Variapop Groupnya; Timang (Buckle) (Jul. to Sep. 1986) by the National Population and Family Development Board (NPFDB) and Ibu (Mother) (Mar. 1989) by the former editor of Wanita and Timang, Rahmah Saad in Pustaka Wira which she co-owned with her husband, Salleh Hamzah. Islamic women's magazines were also published in this decade Muslimah (Nov. 1984) by the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS), two women's magazine by Al-Arqam Organization, Al-Mukminah (Feb. 1986) and An-Nashah (Dec. 1987) and Ummi (Nov. 1988) by the Ummah Media.

A tabloid newspaper for women was also published in the same year, the Mingguan Wanita (Women's Weekly). The publisher, Amir Enterprise is also a publisher of another woman's magazines, Keluarga (Family). The tabloid publishing many elements of unfair and violence faced by women in their daily life. It managed to attract readers who are increasingly aware of the women's right in the family. Amir Enterprise managed to pull in famous women's magazine editor, Nik Rahimah Hassan to lead the Mingguan Wanita and overseeing Keluarga. Earlier, Mingguan Perdana (Prime Weekly) in 10 Jan., 1982) and Mingguan Tanahair (Homeland Weekly) in 20 January, 1982 was also published as a tabloid and each having at least two pages of segments for women. This was followed by Bacaria (27 Nov., 1982) and 2 years later, Harian Nasional (National Daily) newspaper in 10 January, 1984.

What does the emergence of tabloid newspapers mean to women's magazines? For weekly tabloid with a cheaper price (RM 0.50), the presence of newspapers in itself diminishes women's magazines readers. Magazines are not high enough to breathe the air and light in the middle jungle of Malay printed media publishing. Ailing magazines, Alam Wanita and Selecta Femina had to admit defeat when they forced to withdraw from the market in July and December 1984. For Alam Wanita, inability to continue is due to the position of the publisher. Pustaka Antara suffered poor health, especially after the failure of Watan newspaper and the detained under the ISA of their owners, Abdul Aziz Ahmad and their journalist, Halim

Mahmood. Both were arrested in November 1981 following the reporting of Watan deemed threats to national security. But the decision by the publisher, Utusan Melayu Press to stop Selecta Femina, undoubtedly made after considering the unprofitable of the magazine. The effort itself would be related to measures to reduce internal competition to make the space more comfortable for Utusan Melayu pet magazine, Wanita to stay ahead of the market.

On January 1, 1986, five women's magazine Wanita, Jelita, Keluarga, Famili, Muslimah and a tabloid, Mingguan Wanita were in the market. The number seems to have been excessive for Malay women readers each magazine has to jostling for attention in a short free time among women with their careers not to mention of their focus to household chores. Furthermore, the questions regarding womanhood also get regular coverage in the mainstream newspapers, at least once a week. However, rushing prompted a reader to choose reading materials that really interest or needed by them. They crave more specific reading materials which can meet their needs.

ISLAMIC ORIENTED OF WOMEN MAGAZINE

Over the last years of 1970s, Islamic revivalism began to be felt in Malaysia. This rise generates numerous books and magazine which interpreting Islam in a broader framework, particularly in relation to everyday life. The view that religion is limited to the question of life and death, heaven or hell and sin or reward simply being replaced with a growing awareness that the holistic and religion are inseparable in everyday life. Interpretation and this new awareness of itself have an impact on the development of reading materials including magazines. Thus, we find in the 1980s for the very first time, religious magazines that are more practical to readers emerged including magazines for women's segment.

Muslim women's magazine has a little different compared to the usual women's magazine. Physically, women's magazine cover is usually decorated with pictures of the stunning celebrities who acted in various style of flirting to entice readers. Islamic women's magazines still use the beautiful photos of pretty girls but with more modest appearance; they usually wears a head scarf with more casual style. Muslim women's magazine fashion pages are also filled with pictures of models but with cover up according to Muslim teaching. In terms of philosophy, the Islamic women's magazines not only provide information and knowledge to the reader but to educate them to be a good follower. That's the biggest goal of the Islamic magazines not for financial gain as the common bottom line of ordinary women's magazines.

In the 1980s, there are five magazines that can be classified as Muslim women's magazine. The five are *Muslimah* (Nov. 1984), *Al-Mukminah* (Feb. 1986), *Fatima* (May 1986), *An-Nasihah* (Dec. 1987) and *Ummi* (Nov. 1988). Three of the magazines published are supported by Islamists. *Muslimah* have a close relationship to Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) while *Al-Mukminah* and *An-Nasihah* were published by *Al-Arqam* movement.

With the motto "Women Islamic Magazine", *Muslimah* emerged as an alternative reading for women after all these years were shackles by *Wanita* and *Jelita*. Led by a businessman sympathetic to the struggle of PAS, Syed Mohamed Syed Hassan, the first Islamic woman's magazine was edited by Ahmad Lutfi Othman a former student leader who just expelled from Malaysian University of Technology (UTM) following the confrontation with management on the issues of face-veil (*pardah*). This is the first magazine that provides the most useful experience for Ahmad Lutfi who in next the decade established as one of the key figures in the world Malay magazine.

Like *Wanita*, *Muslimah* were firstly managed by a male editor. Ahmad Lutfi was assisted by Mashudi Bunyani and later by Zin Mahmud. The concept of *Muslimah* is reflected from its first editorial that the magazine was "appear for the community to work together to continue to uphold the ideals of honour and forbidding what is wrong, based on the glorious Qur'an and as-Sunnah. The appearance of *Muslimah* by your side hopefully will strengthen the community and also highlight the meaning of Islam to other Muslims". Its editorial concepts were established from time to time and the trend is increasingly apparent. Stated later, "Al-Muslimah is trying to produce something different to provide reading materials that is expected to reshape the Islamic way of life. Nonetheless, we were concerned to the traps installed along the journey. We try to be careful by not to take side although by the insistence of certain groups" (*Muslimah*, 1985).

Ahmad Lutfi initially had difficulty in mobilizing *Muslimah*. The magazine relies solely on circulation revenue due to the reluctance of advertisers to purchase spaces inside the magazine. Even *Muslimah* circulation limited to female members of the PAS. Fortunately, the publisher does not incur huge overheads and even *Muslimah* should have been buried if not the passion and education (*tarbiah*) among activators that the more important goal behind the magazine is not commercial. Thus, *Muslimah* move as generated by enthusiasm, despite the activators had to sacrifice to get a little remuneration. However, when the situation cannot be

saved, *Muslimah* women forced to stop briefly in October 1985, before being published back in July 1986 when new capital is injected. Ahmad Lutfi continued to lead the magazine while efforts are made to find a suitable editor to edit *Muslimah*; they only discovered in 1990 when Rohana Ahmad replaced Ahmad Lutfi.

Women's magazines that actually meets the requirements of Islam is *Al-Mukminah* (Feb, 1986) published by *Al-Arqam* movement. The magazine is patroned by the founder of *Al-Arqam* itself, Hj. Ashaari Muhamad and the editorial staff is led by one of his wife, Khadijah Aam. This magazine contains a wide range of advice and guidance as well as lessons on how to be a good Muslim who loyal to her Creator and to her husband. Stated that the magazine is "a monthly magazine that guides women to build the real environment of household and community life desired by Allah (*Al-Mukminah*, Feb. 1986: 5). The magazine is "born for all Muslim women, particularly as an alternative to replace the magazines that are selling nonsense today. *Al-Mukminah* will drive women to live as a *mukminah* which pleases by Allah and *Al-Mukminah* will challenge the pornographic and superstition magazines..." (*Al-Mukminah*, Feb. 1986: 5).

With illustrations by Rosdin Sadin who before joining *Al-Arqam* was one of the initiator of *Gila-Gila*, the leading humour magazine, *Al-Mukminah* were easily penetrated in the market. Although, their main targets are the *Al-Arqam* sisters themselves, its presence also attracted ordinary women. *Al-Mukminah* is like a true Muslim woman, anticipated its presence, likable and her words are heard. The magazine is "more focused towards forming character of women, especially mothers" (*Al-Mukminah*, Feb. 1986: 5).

In addition to the writings of a cool mind and stimulating towards good, *Al-Mukminah* attractions also on its innovative design and charming illustrations. A letter in February 1988 stated "the pictures in *Muslimah* are interesting and educational, unlike other magazines that can bring damage to the community. The cover page is lively with a particular message. It is also a magazine with a stand, unlike other magazines who do not know the meaning or message." In a relatively short period, the presence of *Al-Mukminah* to the Malay woman magazine is deeply felt. Its circulation is increased to 80,000 copies within a year of his appearance on the market and jumped to 100,000 copies by the end of 1987.

Along other *Al-Arqam* publications such as *Al-Arqam*, *Al-Ain* and *Fardhu Ain*, *Al-Mukminah* acts as a banner in raising the organization. The growing popularity is short-lived, however, the image appearance of righteous woman with black attire and face-veil and

loud calls for the reader to go back to the golden age of Islam was seen as a threat to the liberal status quo who tries to be maintained. Discordant voices that questioned the comprehensiveness image of Muslim women who are sponsored by Al-Arqam began to spread, especially by the two mainstream newspapers, Utusan Malaysia and Berita Harian.

Ironically, both the newspaper had close connections with Wanita and Jelita two women magazines who still in publishing to guide readers as a modern career woman. The voices that “Al-Arqam and its magazines worship their leader” or “Aurad Muhammadiyah philosophy that is followed by Al-Arqam is against Islam” eventually followed by calls to ban the publications. The Ministry of Home Affairs which is responsible for approving the issuance of an annual publications permit did not approve the renewal of the permit of Al-Mukminah as well as other Al-Arqam magazines. Therefore, as called by Muslimah to their readers to obedient and loyal, did not object to her husband, Al-Arqam had to accept the government’s decision with a heavy heart.

However, Al-Mukminah pulse continues to beat. While waiting for the Ministry of Internal Affairs to decide the future of the magazine, a former staff of Al-Arqam, Abdul Aziz Ismail set up its own publishing company, Penerbitan Al-Munir. In December 1987, a similar Islamic women magazine, An-Nasihah is published. It seems to be published as a direct successor for Al-Mukminah to continue the Islamist agenda of the organization related to Al-Arqam. In its debut issue, An-Nasihah is “dedicated to illuminating the role of real Muslim women. The woman is a pillar of the country and the left wing in the struggle to uphold Islam. Therefore, their soul, mind and feelings must be educated and guided to produce a true Islamic woman” (An-Nasihah, 1987: 3).

At the early stage, An-Nasihah tried to distance them from the influence of Al-Arqam and to target teenagers as their readers. But, when the founders realized the fate of Al-Arqam publications staff that lost their jobs due to the failure to get extension of the publishing permits, An-Nasihah opened the door for them. Penerbitan Al-Munir eventually became the new publishing house for Al-Arqam. In a short period, Al-Arqam movement managed to recover from the problems due to the suspension of earlier publications. By the new decade of the 1990s, new magazines, Al-Qiadah (Jan. 1989), Anak Soleh (Dec. 1990) and Generasi (Aug. 1991) as well as An-Nasihah continue to wave the struggle flags for Al-Arqam.

Another magazine that use Islam as the basis is Ummi (Nov. 1988). The name of Ummi itself reflected the women as their target readers, although, the concept is slated for family, especially from a religious perspective. The

publisher, Ummah Media Sdn Bhd was formed in partnership between Aznan Nik Abdullah who holds the largest share and act to manage the marketing with Kamsani Nasir who decide the aspects of design. Ummi is published to educate Muslim family with various aspects of the formation of a happy family. To strengthen its editorial content, popular writers like Dr. Halimah Ali, Dr. Muhammad Hatta Shaharom, Rukaini Abdul Rahman, Mohd Hamdan Adnan and Ustaz Safwan Fathy were invited to contribute on a regular basis. The mixed of religious and Islamic family experts has managed to form an image for Ummi to sustain in the market for more than 10 years, despite a pretty stiff competition from other women’s and family magazines. Ummi’s success has somehow helped to grow the company to be able to publish two other magazines, Adik (Jan. 1990) and Anak Sayang (May 1993).

The presence of Muslim women’s magazines discussed above that include Fatima (May 1986) in itself reflects the changes in the interest of women Malay reading. While women’s religious magazines continue to flourish, interests and readership for usual women’s magazines continue to rise. Husband-and-wife Salleh Hamzah and Rahmah Saad, through their owned publishing company, Pustaka Wira published Ibu in March 1989. Salleh, former editor of the Berita Minggu and his wife who have 5 years experience with Wanita before edited another family magazine, Timang, risking their capital and destiny through Ibu. Stated that Ibu was “the only magazine for a happy family”. Also, mentioned that parents should not wander in obscurity and mortgaging the future of their children because of their ignorance in parenting. “We were sick of listening the ridicule and criticism for mothers for social problems facing our kids today. Recognizing this fact, I published Ibu just to help you to gain knowledge for better educate our children”.

The editorial contents were no different from other women’s magazines. A cover image of a mother with her children was not so attractive than the cover girl picture for Wanita, Nona or Jelita. Design for Ibu is less creative than other magazines with less quality in production of photographs. But why is Ibu so special to be able to put itself in a tough women’s magazine market? It’s largely due to the small size of the magazine and the direct involvement of its owner. Salleh and Rahmah directly manage the publications of Ibu with all limitations for the family run company. Small working capital has force them to save money and determination was their major asset. In fact the success of Ibu is directly responsible for the publishing of other magazines by the publisher such as Usahawan Malaysia (Jan. 1990), Cahaya Matakau (Aug. 1993) and Pesona (Oct. 1994).

Commitment and determination by Salleh and Rahmah definitely boosted from the fact that they owned the company and that they directly involved in the operating of the magazine. They do not rely for other people and they themselves have the ability to write and have experience in magazine publishing. This specialty is not owned by Ahmad Mahir Kamaruddin, the owner of Mahir Holdings which published *Sayang* (April 1989) through its subsidiary, D' Enterprise. As a well established company, particularly in the book publishing industry, Ahmad Mahir owns greater financial resources than Salleh and Rahmahs *Pustaka Wira*. But success in magazine publishing do not simply depends to capital. Commitment, ability, creativity, determination and patience are also prerequisite for success. These attitudes among others have contributed to the success of *Ibu* which is not enjoyed by *Sayang* which had to cease publication after just four issues on the market.

CONCLUSION

With, the vast number of women's magazines published in the 1980s, the question that arises is why such magazines continue to get the attention from publishers? The success of the *Wanita* and *Jelita* may be a stimulus to them but more important is the fact that women's magazines have a better chance in commercial terms than other types of magazines. In addition to the increase of circulation as main income for the publisher, women's magazine is the only reliable Malay magazine for advertising revenue.

With, a high circulation and readership, advertising rates for Malay magazines are much cheaper than women's magazine in English or Chinese. In 1985, for example with 177,000 readers every month, the black and white Run-on-Book (ROB) ad rates for *Keluarga* was mere \$1,050 or 600 for a half page. For female magazine (in English) with only 73,000 readers, the rate was \$1,650 and \$1,070 while *Feminine* (in Chinese) with only 69,000 readers, the rate was \$1,050 and 600. For *Wanita* with circulation of 93,432 copies and a readership of 455,000, the rate was \$3,080 while *Jelita* with 147,000 readers, the rate was \$900 and \$525. For colour advertisements, advertising rates for *Wanita* was \$4,347 while *Jelita* \$1,610 and \$1,650 for *Keluarga* (Media Index 1985: 49-58).

It is clear that the advertisement rates offered by Malay magazines are cheaper compared to magazine in English and Chinese. Despite the inferiority of cost per thousand by itself reflected the low rank for Malay magazines than magazines in other languages, the effect was positive. Malay women's magazines, particularly

those published by larger company were easier to pull the advertisement. No wonder *Wanita* and *Jelita* became target for advertisement; sometimes to an excessive amount that often criticized by its readers. In a response to reader criticism over the crowded of ads on their pages, *Wanita* states:

Actually advertising is a way of raising funds for our magazine (same goes for other magazines). With advertisements we continue to breathe for a living and continued to meet you in every month. With the increased financial resources, a lot plans can be arranged for the benefit of readers. This means none of us are getting loss. We are equally mutual in giving and receiving. Moreover, we do not fill all our pages with advertisement. Because of our responsibility to you, we have to limit the extent of only 40% of our pages for advertisements, while other pages are filled with useful and quality articles

Jelita also give a very similar reason when stating:

Actually, if the colour page is not filled with ads, it may remove because nobody will bear the costs. The number of color page is decided based on the number of ads that we sell. The more ads, then more color pages for readers. As a private magazine, we rely entirely on advertising to cover the expenses of printing and production as well as daily management expenses. The cost is very high because we want to maintain the quality by using good type of paper, layout and photograph by experienced artists and photographers. In fact every time we expect more advertising for *Jelita* to continue find readers forever

However, while established women's magazines continue to attract advertisers, new magazines failed to compete. Magazines must prove their ability to draw the reader before advertisers are confident enough to buy spaces on their pages. This is an uphill task for new publisher of women's magazines. They need to have a significant working capital to be able to survive before advertisers are convinced to buy the spaces. If they put the price of the magazine higher than the magazines that supported the ads, they will struggle to attract readers. Thus, many of new women's magazines do not survive in the competition dominated by *Wanita* and *Jelita* which published by the print media giant.

Thus, was the plight of women's Malay magazines in the 1980s. The changes in demographics, the competition from other print and electronic media, the complexity of women's free time, the growing ability of woman to buy, the growing of economy and many other factors have shaped the magazine market for woman. The two giant Wanita and Jelita continue to strengthen their grip on to the magazine reading for woman. Others, including religious and family magazines continue to look for remaining slices of the most valuable cake market segment. Some of them such as Nona, An-Nasihah, Ummi and Ibu, managed to steal pieces of the growing market while others such as Keluarga, Dewi, Dunia Fesyen, Alam Wanita and Sarina did not have enough strength to compete and eventually die. Time will continue to pass

and market conditions may change, the competition to grab new market segment in the future will be more intense.

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