

**DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINE IDENTITIES IN NEWSPAPERS
PULLOUT MAGAZINES IN KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

The study analyzed the discursive constructions of masculine identities in newspapers' pullout magazines in Kenya. It examined if there was a disconnect between the way Kenya's mainstream newspapers' pullout magazines constructed masculinity and the way the readers of these magazines constructed it. The objectives of the study were: to identify and describe the types of masculine identities that are constructed by lifestyle magazines and determine how these magazines justify or legitimize their construction of these identities; to identify and describe the types of masculine identities constructed by readers of pullout magazines and the language they use to construct these identities; to investigate how readers conform to, negotiate or resist the masculine identities constructed by these magazines, and to find out why readers conform to, negotiate or resist these masculine identities as constructed by pullout magazines. The study adopted a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the social constructionist view of gender and the encoding decoding model as its theoretical framework. Purposive sampling was used since only information rich magazines were relevant. Data was collected from *The Nation* and *The Standard* newspapers' pullout magazines published between February, 2012 and January, 2013. Two weekly pullout magazines were selected from each paper. The *Saturday Magazine* and *Lifestyle* were selected from *The Nation* while *Woman Instinct* and *The Dude* were selected from *The Standard*. Data was also collected from readers. Respondents read the magazines individually, and then held a discussion which was tape recorded in focus group discussions. These readers were drawn from male and female students at Kimathi University College and Kagumo Teachers' College in Nyeri. The CDA method of analysis was used. To begin with, the analysis of the construction of masculine identities by the magazines not only revealed multiple identities but also contradictory ones at times. The same tendency was manifested by the readers' construction of male identities. Significantly, the study found out that readers conform, negotiate or oppose pullout magazines' construction of masculine identities. Additionally, both magazines and readers used different linguistic forms to justify their constructions of masculine identities. The analysis also found out that adopting any of the three positions was informed by different ideologies. The finding that masculine identities are multiple reinforces the argument that there is no normal or abnormal masculinity. Thus, Kenyan institutions such as the family, the school,