

A Study on Taiwanese Readers' Preference of Book Binding Design

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Abstract: With the prevalence of digitization, readers' habit is changing. Many people read e-books on the computer monitor instead of printed books. In Taiwan, the declination of book sales may reflect this phenomenon. However, it does not mean the end of printed books, but shows a good opportunity to improve books' binding design to draw readers' attention and raise their purchase intention. This study focuses on understanding readers' preference of book binding design and to propose design suggestions. Given the above reasons, a questionnaire survey was conducted in Taipei. Novel was selected as a representative due to its best selling on the market. It is concluded that good book cover and binding design plays a key role for drawing readers' attention and motivation of purchase. As different readers perform different consuming behavior, designer should focus on utilizing unique design features on binding to suit different reader groups.

Key words: *book binding design, cover design, readers' preference.*

1. Introduction

The value of textbook is always to provide readers knowledge and useful information. With the prevalence of digitization, however, readers' habit is changing. In the past, people obtain their knowledge by visiting bookstores, looking for books they need on the shelves and bringing the book home. Nowadays, the development of the internet shifts this behavior to another scenario, people can just sit down in front of the computer simply with their fingers on the mouse surfing in the virtual bookstore and obtaining the information in the electronic format. Many people read e-books on the computer monitor instead of printed books. Various information can be easily found in the internet, which could cause printed books lose their importance of existence. It is necessary to create a new value of printed books for readers' purchase.

In Taiwan's book market, it can be seen from some phenomenon that readers' concern is changing. Some novels or textbooks with special and fashion cover and binding design are drawing readers' attention [2]. It seems that the importance of printed books is losing with the coming of electronic age. However, it does not mean the end of printed books, but shows a good opportunity of book sale if more creativity can be seen on books' binding design. Publishers and book designers are trying to make book cover and binding more creative to draw readers' attention and raise their purchase intention.

”Either on aesthetic or creativity, book design now is much better than before. Publishers are doing their best to invite famous designers to transform their originality to book binding design for suiting book content, so as to draw readers’ attention [2].” The above theory shows that creative book cover and binding design could shift readers’ motivation of buying books from book content to “collection”. Most previous studies are focused on book layout design [8], and mostly for magazines [1,7]. Many existing theses are also focused on the design of magazine visual effect and layout [1,3,4,5,6], but very few concerns readers’ preference on book binding design. Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate book binding and cover design from readers’ viewpoint. It is expected that the results can be useful for good book binding design.

2. Methods

This study is based on the theories of book binding design and cover design and select novel as a representative due to its best selling on the market [2]. Through a questionnaire survey, this study collects readers’ opinions and preference on book binding and cover design.

2.1 Participants

All of the participants selected for this study have habit of reading novels. As questionnaire survey is not allowed in the bookstore, this study is conducted outside the Taipei’s Eslite bookstore with careful selection of representative participants. In total 133 questionnaires were collected, with 13 useless responses (incomplete and perfunctory answer) and finally 120 effective questionnaires were ready for further analysis.

2.2 Questionnaire

This questionnaire consists of the following five sections: (1)participants’ background and reading habit; (2)impression on book design; (3)preference of book binding design; (4)preference of cover design; (5)subjective opinions on book design. Additionally, all the participants were asked to answer the question without considering their preference of book content and authors.

2.3 Data analysis

Descriptive statistics, independent sample T-test and one-way ANOVA was used to investigate the relationship between different users and book binding design. The reliability of the questionnaire was further established by conducting analysis using Cronbach’s α value.

3. Results and Discussion

40 men and 80 women aged from 20-30, with university education background were surveyed. Most participants have habit of reading, browsing and purchasing books in the bookstore. The reliability analysis shows a good result of the three main sections of the questionnaire, with Cronbach’s α value 0.766 for “impression on book design”, 0.789 for “preference of book binding design” and 0.861 for “preference of cover design”.

Figure 1 shows the factors that readers consider purchasing after browsing the books. It is clear to see that wrap-

around band, cover design, first impression and cover graphics are the main concerns, without the interference from the preference of book content and author. Book design does play a key role for purchasing motivation.

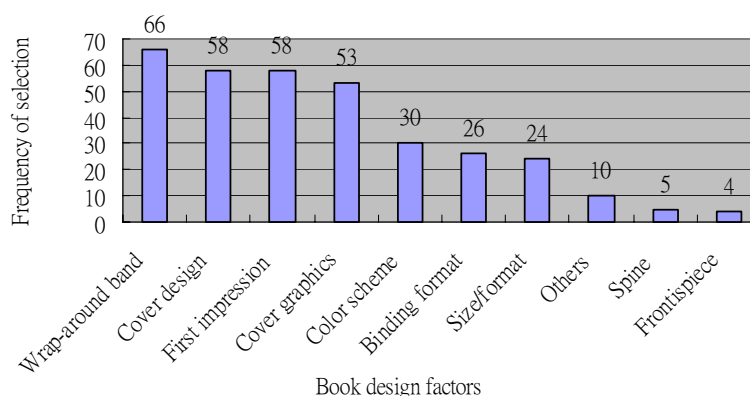


Figure 1: The factors of affecting readers' purchase intention

Although men and women accordingly agree the importance of book design, women present significantly higher result than men (Table 1). Rather than men readers, women think good book design is more important.

Table 1: Independent samples T-test (N=120)

	Gender	N	M	SD	SE	T	Significance(P-Value)
impression on book design	Men	40	3.52	0.59	0.09	2.08	0.04*
	Women	80	3.73	0.37	0.04		
preference of book binding design	Men	40	3.66	0.52	0.08	1.44	0.15
	Women	80	3.79	0.41	0.05		
preference of cover design	Men	40	3.67	0.59	0.09	1.91	0.06
	Women	80	3.86	0.46	0.05		

“ * ” indicates $p < 0.05$ with significant result

As shown in Table 2, different age readers perform significantly different on “impression on book design” ($p = 0.02 < 0.05$). Further analysis using LSD (post hoc) shows the following results:

- (1) Readers’ age under 20 shows more motivation to browse the book, while its design looks differently.
- (2) More readers aged between 31 and 40 go to the bookstore purposely, so their consideration for browsing the books is mainly practicability.
- (3) Readers’ age between 41 and 50 always browse the book after reading the content on the wrap-around bend.

Table 2: one-way ANOVA (N=120)

Questionnaire	impression on book design				preference of book binding design				preference of cover design			
	M	SE	F	P	M	SE	F	P	M	SE	F	P
Age	37.57	0.69	3.12	0.02*	37.90	0.69	1.70	0.16	38.68	0.79	1.18	0.32
Education	36.53	0.56	0.18	0.83	37.65	0.55	0.29	0.75	38.57	0.60	3.69	0.03*
Vocation	36.80	0.64	1.12	0.36	37.09	0.62	1.71	0.10	37.81	0.71	1.15	0.34
Reading habit	36.58	0.49	0.36	0.78	37.71	0.47	1.09	0.36	38.37	0.53	1.67	0.18
Browse in bookstore	36.77	0.49	0.37	0.83	37.58	0.47	0.84	0.50	38.26	0.53	1.12	0.35
Consuming habit	36.32	0.54	0.47	0.71	37.47	0.53	0.55	0.65	38.00	0.59	1.06	0.37

“ * ” indicates $p < 0.05$ with significant result

Additionally, readers from different education background also present significantly on “preference of cover design” ($p = 0.03 < 0.05$). The following results reflect further analysis of LSD.

- (1) Readers of lower education background (undergraduate) have no particular consideration on cover design.
- (2) Readers of higher education background (postgraduate) it is more important if book cover design can transform useful content information to readers.

Participants also provide subjective opinions for book design. Generally speaking, participants comment the instable design quality of book design (*e.g.* color, layout, typography). Although they do not have particularly impression on current books with good binding design, they can still indicate some works which received the Golden Butterfly Award in Taiwan. Additionally, participants indicate the most important thing for book binding design is book cover should show key information to save their browsing time.

4. Conclusions

Through the questionnaire survey for investigating Taiwanese readers' preference of book design, this study is concluded as followed:

- (1) Book cover design is the most important factor for book design. This study further identifies book cover design is an “assistant” factor instead of a “main” factor for book sale. However, it was also found in this study that book cover plays a key role for motivating the reader to pick the book out of the shelf, without considering readers' preference of book content and author.
- (2) Design focus should be based on different reader groups. It was found that different readers perform different consuming behavior and needs in the book store. Younger readers (under 20) are always attracted by creative and colorful book binding design, while elder readers (31-50) indicates cover design should show key information of book content.
- (3) Utilizing unique design features on binding can draw readers' attention. Books which received the Golden Butterfly Award in Taiwan can be good reference for book design. Book Designers can use special materials, wrap-around band to attract readers.

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