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Scientific interests: Polish media system, women's newspaper, breakfast television, media guidance

GUIDANCE IN MASS MEDIA – ANALYSIS OF THE SELECTED EXAMPLES

Guidance in media is not a new phenomenon. Looking for the answers to more or less complex questions about human existence seems to be as old as human society. A great deal of books are guidance books. Guidance has always been present in the press. Guidance programmes are also found on television. The Internet is dominated by the communication guidance based on one to one or/and one to few principles. However, the popularity of some websites, portals and blogs makes this way of communication similar to the traditional, periodical mass media (one-to-many).

Contemporary media, and to be more precise, media offer has become a commodity. In order to be sold, it undergoes the processes of tabloidisation. Due to this, the owners can count on higher profits as the product reaches a larger audience. Guidance in press and on television has become one of the ways to make money.

The article is based on the offer addressed to the female mass audience and is an attempt to answer the questions: what are the characteristics of mass guidance, what subject matter dominates in the popular media offer addressed to the mass audience, and what benefits does the sender get from the message?

KEY WORDS: Mass Guidance, Breakfast Television, Women's Press.

Media is an attribute of a man living in a modern society, which is defined as a media society (Michalczyk 2008: 16–22; Goban-Klas 2011: 177–192). The media filling, called media saturation and application by Kopecka-Piech, includes the elements of social space that are not noticed by the 21st century man (Kopecka-Piech 2013: 11–27, 2015: 51–63). He lives immersed in a mediatised space (Krotz 2009: 24–25). He uses the applications to reach the goal, set a diet, check the weather, sort out the day schedule. The media also sets the hierarchy of the importance of information, the latest trends in fashion, promotes lifestyles. To use the media metaphors, media is “window”, “mirror”, “filter or selector”, “forum” or “platform”, “promoter”, “disseminator” “talker”, and “lodestar, guide” (McQuail 2005: 70–71). Following in the footsteps of the British media expert, it can be described as

a guide and an adviser. Due to the convergence of media, a mobile phone with an access to the Internet makes it possible to seek advice at any time.

The choice of media is determined by demographic and social characteristics. Among them, user's age has the strongest influence on the kind of media we use. The younger the users, the more often they use the Internet and new information and communication technologies. Older media consumers prefer television and newspapers (Diagnoza społeczna 2015: 311).

Researchers claim that "we live in the economic climate for guidance" (Kargulowa 2010: 9), which has been defined by an English expression "counselling boom". A man, living in symbiosis with the media, treats the media, including periodical mass media, as a basic source of guidance and advice on both the practical dimension of everyday life and the personal sphere connected with interpersonal relationships (Górska 2013: 174–188).

The article is an attempt to answer the questions: what are the characteristics of mass guidance (one-to-many), what theme was dominant in a popular media offer addressed to a mass audience, and what benefits did the broadcasters get?

Guidance and media – mutual relationship

The media has been a guidance carrier almost since the very beginning of its existence. The emergence of high-circulation press targeted at the mass audience has increased the scope for the provision of advice. Strictly speaking, it seems that press guidance as consciously-oriented support can be mentioned only with special guidance columns appearing as the response to the readers' questions or entire periodicals, whose headlines or subheadings include words: guide, tips for example: "Poradnik Domowy", "Dobre Rady", "Claudia Radzi. Pomaga. Informuje". Till the end of the 20th century this type of guidance was closely associated with the women's press. However, the progressive processes of segmentation and profiling of the publishing offer by major media companies resulted in the emergence of numerous guidance books focused on one of the leading topics such as automation, legal issues, culinary help, fishing, etc. The contemporary press market offers periodicals covering almost every field of life.

Research shows that television is still the most important means of communication for the Poles (Internet Users 2015: 2). The Poles spend on average 4 hours and 25 minutes a day in front of the TV sets (Diagnoza społeczna 2015: 310). In an extensive television offer there are both programmes on advice directed to different target groups such as youth, drivers, tourists or future parents (e.g. "Automaniak", "Podróżuj z Nami") and the ones that try to "smuggle" advice, guidance in other forms. The examples of the latter are: TV series, reports, discussions with experts, etc. (Kargulowa 2005: 40–41) Most of the programmes broadcast on Polsat Cafe and TVN Style stations are of guidance nature. The research shows that women look for advice on daily functioning more frequently than men. This is probably due to their social roles (Twardowska, Olczyk 2003: 282).

Małgorzata Bogunia-Borowska emphasised the fact that TV guidance oriented towards change in personal and social life refers to the two dimensions of human functioning (2012:

151–164). Firstly, television guidance concerning diet and healthy eating, house-keeping, beauty and style, raising children and family care trains the viewer to transform space around himself/herself into a part of the media trends. Secondly, television did not shun extreme advice that the researcher describes as metamorphosis. Its purpose was a radical change that could affect the various spheres of human life. It was frequently performed through surgical operations, drastic diets as well as hairdressing services and beauty treatments¹. All those events naturally had a finale on screen available to all recipients. Most frequently it happened in the show convention, which was supposed to gather the audience group that would satisfy the given television station in front of the TV sets.

Searching for advice online is different. Digitisation of the message facilitated the transformation of the audience into content producers and presumption, social production and obsessive use of Wikipedia became an essential part of the social communication system (Benkler 2008: 78–80). The user uses the network resources at a convenient place and time. Mobile devices have improved comfort level greatly and favoured the popularity of the Internet.

It is also important that in participation culture the person seeking advice may come into direct interaction with the adviser. Personalised advice related to your personal problem can be granted. In this situation, anyone can be an advisor regardless of their knowledge, skills and life experience (Keen 2007).

Therefore, poorly educated amateur, who cares about the popularity measured by the number of displays, can be met in the Internet space. One can also come across an amateur-specialist whose knowledge can be compared to an expert knowledge. In fact, both types of people might be met.

Mediated guidance

Guidance is a form of help or social activity involving the transmission of information, advice, tips, etc. to one entity in a problematic situation, namely: the person seeking advice from the other person who is an adviser, or expert. Guidance can also be treated as a relationship, interpersonal interaction of supportive nature, as well as the action of organised institutions².

For the first time in Poland, mediated guidance was observed by Olga Czerniawska, when she mentioned indirect guidance (1977: 170). Mediated guidance is usually understood as a type of guidance addressed to the mass audience or to the specific audience group (Zielińska-Pękał 2009a: 8). This type of guidance is based on two main pillars: media and guidance. Researchers of this social phenomenon emphasise that it came into being “at the intersection of guidance and media activities” (Zielińska-Pękał 2009b: 19).

¹ The analysis of media metamorphoses in the contemporary culture of transformation was described by LISOWSKA-MAGDZIARZ, M., 2012. *Feniksy, labędzie, motyle. Media i kultura transformacji*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.

² The author does not research guidance in the latter meaning.

Guidance and media have a decisive influence on the emergence and the course of mediated guidance, on the development of guidance relationships, on the style of guidance, and on the guidance function performed by the media. It can be clearly visible that this type of guidance meets all the requirements for help, namely, there is a person who helps, participant or participants in the meeting, and moreover a certain kind of relationship concerning guidance is established between or among them. It should be emphasised that the situation depends on politics and media logic. This type of help must gain viewership, listening, high copy sales, or the right amount of displays (clicks). Therefore, it must be attractive enough to the recipient to make him/her choose this media offer rather than another. Colloquially speaking, it cannot get anyone bored, but must be attractive, emotionally coloured, practical. Referring to the theory of “uses and gratifications”, media offer must bring benefits and fun.

Choice and characterisation of the research attempt

The classical breakfast programmes on Polish television are: “Kawa czy Herbata?” (TVP1³), “Pytanie na Śniadanie” (TVP2), “Dzień Dobry TVN” (TVN) and “Nowy Dzień” (Polsat⁴).

“Pytanie na Śniadanie” debuted in 2002. Three years later the commercial broadcaster introduced “Dzień Dobry TVN”. Since the beginning, the programmes have been broadcast at the same hours, which made them direct competitors in the battle for audience. Any change in one of the programmes, whether on broadcast time or the appearance of the studio, made the competitor introduce the changes too.

The regular Nielsen Audience Measurement research shows that “Dzień Dobry TVN” enjoys the biggest popularity among morning viewers. Certainly in more than 20-year history of the programmes there were cases when “Pytanie na Śniadanie” was first in the ranking (Dąbrowska-Cendrowska 2014: 26–37). However, it does not change the fact that TVN’s programme was the leader among the morning audience⁵. For example, in the period from 1 September to 8 April 2011, an average of 619 thousand people watched “Pytanie na Śniadanie”, which amounted to the market share of 12.1% in a commercial group aged from 16 to 49. In the corresponding period of 2010, the average viewership of the programme was lower and amounted to 611 thousand people with the share of 12.6%⁶. At that time the competitive “Dzień Dobry TVN” was watched by an average of 641 thousand viewers, which gave the station 18.2% of the market share. From 1 to 30 September 2016 the average viewership of “Dzień Dobry TVN” amounted to 471 thousand people which constitutes 10.8% of the market share in this commercial group. The programme enjoyed 89 thousand viewers less than a year before. The second place belonged to the competitive “Pytanie

³ The programme debuted on 30 August 1992. In August 2013, after 21 years of being on air, it was taken off.

⁴ “Nowy Dzień” was launched in 2012. Due to the fact that the programme aired at 6:30 AM, it did not compete with viewers of “Pytanie na Śniadanie” and/or “Dzień Dobry TVN”. It rather took the place of “Kawa czy Herbata?”

⁵ The programmes competed for the viewer from 8:00 or 8:30 AM to 11:00 AM. Probably looking for an optimal time to broadcast, the editorial board changed the airing time of the programme..

⁶ Source: “Dzień Dobry TVN” wygrywa z “Pytaniem na Śniadanie”. Available at: <http://www.wirtualnemedial.pl/> [Accessed 15 October 2017]. Nielsen Audience Measurement.

na Śniadanie”, which attracted an average of 325 thousand TV viewers in the analysed period and dominated 8 per cent of the market share. A year before the programme was emitted at the station Dwójka, this station attracted 370,000 viewers, who kept up with it. Its audience share amounted to 8.9%. The third place was taken by the magazine “Nowy Dzień”, which was shown at Polsat station at 6:00 AM every day. In September 2017 its audience amounted to 289 thousand viewers, and its share amounted to 13.19%. Compared to the same period of the previous year, this programme gained 19 thousand viewers.

The presented facts indicate that the morning programme broadcast by TVN enjoyed the greatest interest of the audience, it was most frequently chosen and watched. Therefore, it can be presumed that it set the standard for the Polish breakfast television. That is the reason why it was chosen for research on mass guidance.

The women’s press has always been based on guidance. There is a wide offer of popular magazines addressed to women. In 2017, Bauer Media offered 51 periodicals, Edipresse Polska – 23 magazines, Burda International – 10, and Marquard Media Polska – 5. There were also several smaller publishers functioning on the market. The choice of the magazine was based on the results of the average copy sales. Among all sub-segments of the women’s press, the highest scores were achieved by the magazines that belong to the group of entertainment and gossip magazines. This group contained 9 magazines: “Życie na Gorąco”, “Twoje Imperium”, “Na Żywo”, “Rewia”, “Świat&Ludzie”, “Relaks”, “Dobry Tydzień”, “Dobry Czas”, “Retro” (Dąbrowska-Cendrowska 2017: 81–101). They were all published by the company Bauer Media. The above-mentioned magazines do not directly connote the press guidance functions, because they focus on providing information about the lives of celebrities. It is worth emphasising that since 2010 their editors have systematically increased their guidance sections. Therefore, the author has chosen the leader of this press segment – the magazine “Życie na Gorąco”, whose average sales amounted to 600 thousand copies. No other magazine targeted at women and present on the Polish press market reached such results (Dąbrowska-Cendrowska 2016: 424–439). The table shows the copy sales.

Table 1. Average paid circulation in 2010–2015 in thousand ⁷ copies

Rok	“Życie na Gorąco”	“Na Żywo”	“Twoje Imperium”	“Relaks”	“Rewia”	“Świat&Ludzie”
2010	610	175	326	102	256	201
2011	623	182	320	99	250	194
2012	615	179	325	107	245	197
2013	604	174	317	99	231	194
2014	589	181	324	85	230	196
2015	555	181	311	72	220	187
Average	600	177	320	94	237	195

Source: created by the author based on ZKDP Press Circulation Control Office

⁷ The table includes only those magazines, whose copy sales were controlled by ZKDP.

Research analysis

The research covered a television programme and high-circulation magazine, namely a representative of electronic and printed media. A research method which enabled to make general inference has been chosen. It is known that there is no precise paradigm of electronic media research, thus the content analysis method by Walery Pisek and Irene Tetelowska was implemented, which was used both for the research of guidance materials broadcast in “Dzień Dobry TVN” and published in “Życie na Gorąco”.

In order to analyse the guidance material included in “Dzień Dobry TVN”, detailed studies covered the sections of the programme, which were broadcast on air from 27 September to 8 October 2010, then from 21 February 2011 to 4 March 2011 and from 30 May 2011 to 9 June 2011. 30 episodes with the total duration of 4450 minutes or 74 hours 16 minutes were analysed. The episodes with the topic of guidance have been selected from the collected material. In total, they amounted to 60 conversations. It seems that such corpus of research texts will allow for general inference about guidance in breakfast television. In the case of “Życie na Gorąco” 12 issues which appeared on the published press market from September 2010 to September 2011 were analysed. Out of the chosen issues, 60 articles of guidance character were selected⁸. Both in the case of “Dzień Dobry TVN” and “Życie na Gorąco” the presence of a defined guidance adviser, who was carrying out the principles of mass guidance, helped the viewers and readers, i.e. the media audience, determined the guidance character of the programme and the magazine. According to the research conducted in “Dzień Dobry TVN”, the advice and guidance on health, fashion and beauty as well as broadly understood interpersonal relations were the most frequent⁹. The last category amounted to 55% of the research material. Health care and health prevention guidance gained less interest – 28%. The third place was taken by the guidance in the field of fashion and beauty – 17%.

In “Życie na Gorąco” the most frequent advice was about health – 48%. Advice on culinary issues came second with 33%. There were also advice on fashion and beauty (19%). This weekly magazine was addressed to women over 45, from small and medium-sized towns, stay-at-home housewives. A target group with such demographic characteristics influenced the content of the periodical.

It should be assumed that the differences in the subject matter of the guidance were determined by the nature of the examined medium. Women’s magazines include a variety of colourful photos. They are a good means for publishing appetising dishes that supplement recipes and advice in the style of “pearls of wisdom”. The breakfast programmes also contain this kind of guidance. In fact, cooking was done on the camera, but showing the whole process of forming a dish would be boring to the recipient, so the camera accompanied the cooks at the beginning, when they were describing what they would cook, were presenting

⁸ Guidance in “Życie na Gorąco” concerned health, work, money management, culinary issues, fashion and beauty as well as interpersonal relationships.

⁹ Due to the formal requirements the author of the article describes only first three categories.

the products and talking about their nutritional values. Short episodes of the dish preparation in the kitchen, so as the viewers could see the progress, were broadcast. At the end the ready-made dish cooked during the programme was occasionally tasted.

In breakfast television programmes based on meetings with numerous guests, guidance on interpersonal relationships, especially between men and women, was explored. The advisers, psychologists, therapists, interpersonal trainers, sexologists were invited. They talked to the programme hosts, trying to give advice on how to build a partnership, how to make friends, how to talk to grown up children, etc. It is worth mentioning that some of the experts became regulars, almost on-call specialists in specific fields of knowledge. A good example is the sexologist Prof. Lew Starowicz.

The advice on health was very frequent both in “*Życie na Gorąco*” and “*Dzień Dobry TVN*”. According to the public opinion polls, health is the most important value for society (CBOS 2016: 1–2). In Polish homes, women take care of the health of their children, husbands and partners. Meeting the social demand for the material on health prevention and health care in spring and autumn seasons, desirable guidance was presented. Many materials concerned advice on taking vitamins, micro and macro ingredients, herbal preparations, etc.

The research conducted showed that the media has taken the form of an adviser. The TV programme emphasised the place of work and the scope of duties performed, for example, a psychologist from the Institute of Child Health who specialises in working with autistic children. The specialists were frequently identified by their academic title presented at the bottom of the screen, for example: Dr., PhD hab., Prof. Academic degrees and titles were shown to validate the advisers and raise the importance of their guidance, suggestion, or speech. In such situations, a television viewer was convinced that he had met an expert whose advice was reliable and diligent. In “*Życie na Gorąco*”, degrees and titles were rarely shown. It would emphasise: “our expert Dr. Andrzej Wejchert, Internist advises” (*Życie na Gorąco* 2010, 42: 46) or “our expert Dr. Rafał Kotras, endocrinologist advises” (*Życie na Gorąco* 2011, 33: 32). Occasionally, “our expert, Irena Walecka, MD, Clinical Director of Dermatology, Central Clinical Hospital MSWiA in Warsaw” (*Życie na Gorąco* 2011, 52: 44). Degrees and titles appeared only in the case of doctors. When an expert was a psychologist, pedagogue, lawyer or other specialist the information “our lawyer, Piotr Wójcik” (*Życie na Gorąco* 2010, 21: 23) or “psychologist cooperating with us” appeared (*Życie na Gorąco* 2011, 33: 27).

The history of “ordinary” people called life story, was the starting point for the conversation, or the beginning of the article both in the morning programme and in the researched periodical. It is clearly visible that here the personalisation of the message characteristic for infotainment, which fits in with the logic of commercial media, whose aim is to generate profit, takes place. The analysis of the material shows that 83% of the advice provided in “*Dzień Dobry TVN*” used the content of personalisation. In the case of “*Życie na Gorąco*” this percentage was slightly lower and reached 52%. An example of such a phenomenon might be a conversation with an expert on Brader Willy’s rare disease. The meeting began with the mother of the ill child. The woman brought the audience closer

to her family daily life. She also talked about her son and his problems (“Dzień Dobry TVN” 28th February 2011). Only after this introduction did the expert start speaking. The personalisation of the content in “Życie na Gorąco” is illustrated by the article “Psoriasis – You Can Limit its Symptoms”¹⁰ (Życie na Gorąco 2011, 5: 45), which is a response to the reader’s letter. Mrs. Danuta described her situation and asked an expert how to deal with this disease that hinders her daily functioning. The doctor advised that “the disease can only be partially cured. In the case of the patients with a lighter form of psoriasis the treatment means using local ointments, creams or salicylic acid or urea gels”¹¹ (Życie na Gorąco 2011, 52: 45). Ewelina from Kołobrzeg asks: “My grandmother Iwona when she was young worked in the cold storage chamber. Unfortunately, constant exposure to cold temperatures resulted in the frostbite of her palms. After a few years of such work, she had to change her profession and now she has got constant problems with her circulation <...>. Baths in the brew of hay brought relief to the grandmother. I do not remember how to prepare them” (Życie na Gorąco 2010, 13: 48). The history of the heroine of the article becomes the starting point for presenting behaviour in case of psoriasis.

Entertainment elements in the guidance of “Dzień Dobry TVN” and “Życie na Gorąco” are presented in simple language without sophisticated vocabulary. Actually, no professional terms related to health, medicine, widely understood interpersonal relationships appeared. If the advisor, the expert used a “difficult” term for example: “today we have more and more problems with dyscalculia” one of the programme hosts reacted immediately, for example: “Doctor, let’s put it into understandable language so that everyone knows what’s going on” (“Dzień Dobry TVN” 31th May 2011). The psychologist changed his statement, “dyscalculia means the problems with learning math” (ibid). Similar dialogues concerned the terms such as: limbic system, precursor, interlocutor, bipolar disorder, amniocentesis, spermatogenesis. The analysis of “Życie na Gorąco” showed that special vocabulary was used in the collected material. The exception concerns the word autoimmune. Short articles, with separate subheadings, tables, frames and illustrations favoured browsing through the weekly magazine and confirmed the convention of the entertainment. The articles were written in simple language adapted to the perceptive capabilities of a well-defined target group.

The offered guidance was fragmentary, lacking a broader context. In a few words the gynecologist Dr. Przemysław Ustianowski advises whether probiotics can protect from infections, how to test breasts, why a pregnant woman cannot dye her hair. Research shows that the morning programme and the weekly magazine treat only the surface level of the subject matter. The segmental structure and the formula of the programme focused on the dynamic variability of the subject matter favours this phenomenon. Entertainment-gossip magazines also use this strategy. They often recall brochures with the clips of the taken topics.

¹⁰Translated by the author.

¹¹ Translated by the author.

Conclusions

Periodical mass media carries out a variety of functions in society, e.g. it informs about current events, integrates society, provides entertainment. Media does not act in a vacuum. It is a part of the social structure, its important component. It meets the needs of society and individuals. One of the important needs or motives for using the media is searching for advice on practical matters and/or decision-making. The development of a guidance offer presents the social need for the guidance. Commercial broadcasters, adapting their offer to the well-profiled audience, in the case of “Dzień Dobry TVN” and “Życie na Gorąco” for women, take care of the content so that it could meet the needs of a particular social group. Therefore, the advice on the interpersonal relations, health, fashion and beauty and culinary issues is the most frequent. This subject matter of the media correlates with a stereotyped perception of the role of a woman.

The present research justifies the statement that another type of hybrid – guidetainment – emerged in the Polish media. It is a compilation of guidance and entertainment. The elements of personalisation, fragmentation, concretisation and sensationalisation of the content can be found in “Życie na Gorąco” and “Dzień Dobry TVN”. Commercial media treat their offer as a commodity and use various aspects of tabloidisation of the message in order to achieve the highest possible results of copy sales, and the highest audience ratios. Broadcasters use a proven formula to generate revenue while reducing the risk of introducing a new product to the market. Recipients receive the advice catalogues facilitating life in their private and public space. Both broadcasters and recipients gain benefits.

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Pateikta / Submitted 2017 11 10

Priimta / Accepted 2018 01 17