

# GRAPHIC DESIGN FOR WOMEN.

## PACKAGING ANALYSIS FOR MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS. CASE: 2022 MENSTRUAL CUPS

Graphic Design - Sensorial - Packaging - Woman - Menstruation - Menstrual Cup

**Abstract.** This paper aims to analyse the packaging of menstrual products, taking into account that they are indispensable for women in their cycle days. Within this range of products, menstrual cups stand out. A quantitative analysis of the packaging of the most sold menstrual cups in 2023 will be carried out, looking at the colors, shapes, typographies, materials and textures to see if they respond to the particular state of women on those days. There are numerous studies that investigate the advertising of this type of product, but there is no analysis that explains how the packaging design is adapted to the situation of women during menstruation. This research aims to fill that gap and provide data on this. The conclusion reached is that the most superficial needs of menstruation have been taken into account in the designs observed, but without delving into a more realistic design. The environments evoked are far from reality and therefore from the understanding of women in those days.

**Resumen.** Este trabajo tiene como objetivo analizar el packaging de productos menstruales, teniendo en cuenta que son algo indispensable para las mujeres en sus días con el ciclo. Dentro de esta gama de productos destacan las copas menstruales. Se realizará un análisis cuantitativo del packaging de las copas menstruales más vendidas en 2023, atendiendo a los colores, formas, tipografías, materiales y texturas para ver si responden al particular estado de las mujeres en esos días. Existen numerosos estudios que investigan la publicidad sobre este tipo de productos pero no hay un análisis que explique cómo el packaging se adecua a la situación de la mujer durante la menstruación. Esta investigación pretende cubrir esa carencia. La conclusión a la que se ha llegado es que en los diseños observados se han tenido en cuenta las necesidades más superficiales de la menstruación pero sin ahondar en un diseño más realista. Los ambientes evocados están alejados de la realidad y por ende de la comprensión de la mujer en esos días.

### 1. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

Menstruation is a biological process that all women go through, and it is made more bearable thanks to the wide variety of menstrual products. The menstrual cup has become one of the most consumed and even more so in Spain. According to a study published in 2019 by the journal *The Public Lancet Health*, Spanish women are the European women who use menstrual cups the most. This research aims to contribute to improving the quality of packaging design in this sector, and to promote a design that responds to the

preference of women on the days of the menstrual cycle.

#### OBJECTIVES

- **Analyze** the packaging of menstrual products, specially the cups.
- **Identify** the elements most present in these products.
- **Determine** the graphic language for a female audience.

#### HYPOTHESIS

- **General hypothesis:** The packaging design of menstrual cups does not address the needs of women on the days of menstruation.

This hypothesis is further elaborated in the following sub-hypotheses

- **Sub-hypothesis 1:** “The packaging design of menstrual cups does not exploit the therapeutic value of colors”.
- **Sub-hypothesis 2:** “The packaging design neglects the synaesthetic value of shapes”.
- **Sub-hypothesis 3:** “The packaging design of menstrual cups evokes positive values that do not correlate with women’s emotions on those days”
- **Sub-hypothesis 4:** “The packaging design recreates idyllic environments that do not reflect the reality of the days of menstruation”.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

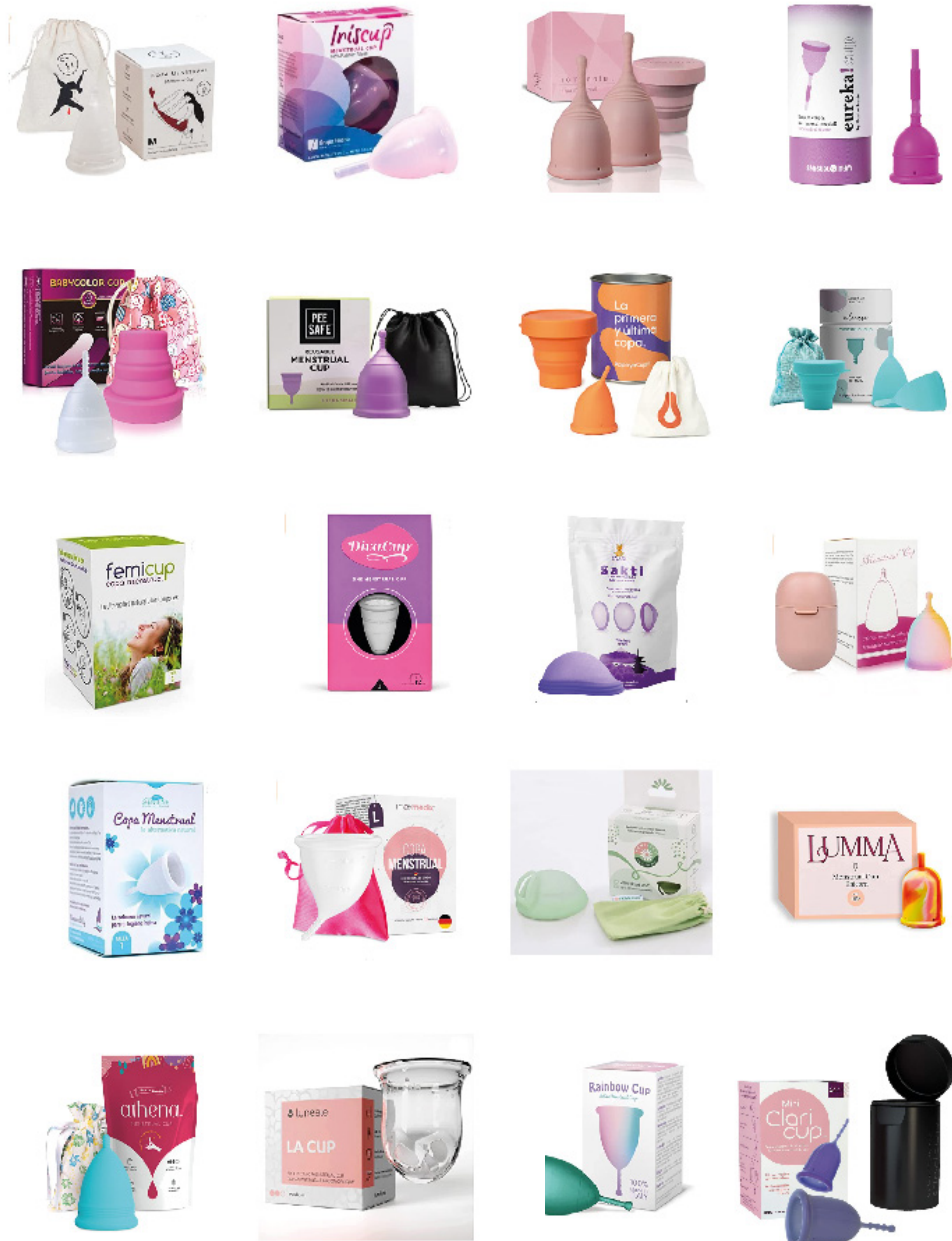
This paper analyzes the graphic design of the packaging of menstrual products. Specifically, the menstrual cup has been selected, as it is a booming product in our days. With our research we intend to study if the visual language used in the packaging and accessories of this type of product, and if it approaches the needs of women in the days of the period. In the following, we will describe how this research has been carried out.

In order to see if the hypotheses raised are fulfilled, an analysis has been carried out. This is based on the technique known as content analysis, which is defined as a valid and replicable method through statistical inferences from the text to its sources and properties, which serves to formulate certain reproducible and valid data to be applied in a context (Krippendorff, 1990).

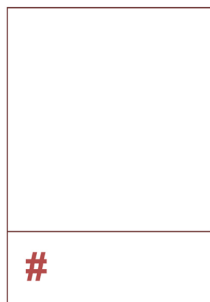
In addition, a quantitative approach was applied, which according to Hernández Sampieri, Fernández Collado y Baptista Lucio (2018) is defined as research that seeks to describe, explain, compare and predict phenomena (causality), generate and test theories. For the development of this research project, we have combined methodologies, considering that they are the ones that adapt to the object of our research.

The analyzed sample is composed of 40 menstrual cups. This selection was made according to the following criteria: the most sold according to the Amazon online store website in the year 2022. In the next images we can see the analyzed products.





**Image 1:** Composition of analyzed sample. The 40 menstrual cups most sold in Amazon 2022. Source Amazon.es



**Packaging**

- Box
- Envelope
- Container jar

**Components**

- Cup
  - 1
  - 2
- Glass cleaner
- Instructions
- Aplicator
  - Gift
  - Sachet

**Visual language**

Materials	Reusable
Cardboard	Yes
Soft plastic	No
PVC	<b>Texture</b>
Tinplate	Smooth
	Rough
	Matt

**Typography**

**Ranking**

- Romanes
- Dry stick
- Manuscript
- Calligraphic
- Gothic

**Forms**

	Types
Geometric	kiki
Organic	bouba
	Other

**Brand**

- Logo
- Corporate colours
- Product name

**Values**

Friendship	Guarantee	Security
Love	Equality	Tenderness
Beauty	Freedom	Technology
Well-being	Maturity	Fun
Commitment	Nature	Ecological
Success	Peace	Hygiene
Family	Health	Irony

**Graphics**

- Typography
- Illustration
- Photography
- Photomontage

**Elements represented**

- Human figure
- Object
- Animal
- Vegetation

**Evoked environments**

- Reality
- Fiction
- Idyllic
- Fantasy
- Hightec
- Glamour
- Kawai
- Space/moon

**Colour**

Monochromatic	Colours
Duochromatic	White
Polychromatic	Black
<b>Gama</b>	Green
Warm	Red
Cool	Blue
Neutral	Turquoise blue
<b>Shade</b>	Violet
Intense	Pink
Pastel	Yellow
Harmonic	Orange
Contrast	Grey
	Brown

**Image 2:** Analysis matrix. (Own elaboration)



**Packaging**

- Box ●
- Envelope
- Container jar

**#5**

**Components**

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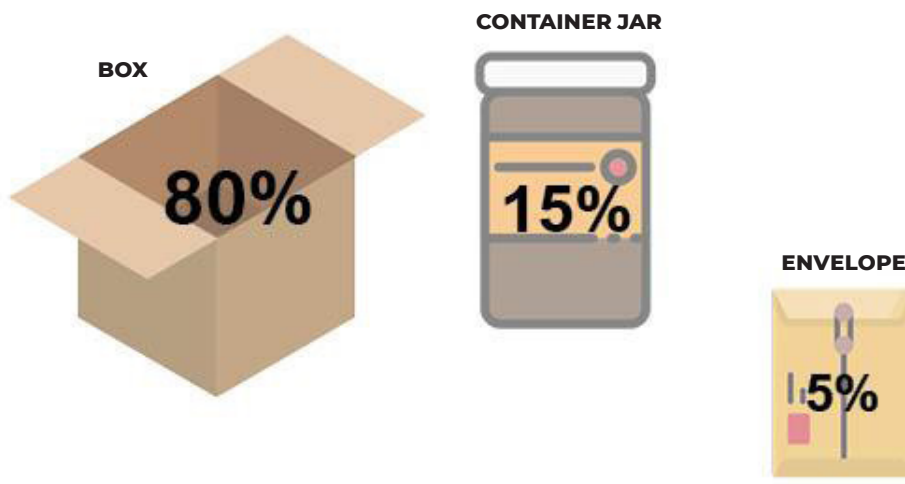
- Reality
- Fiction
- Idyllic ●
- Fantasy
- Hightec
- Glamour
- Kawai
- Space/moon

**Colour**

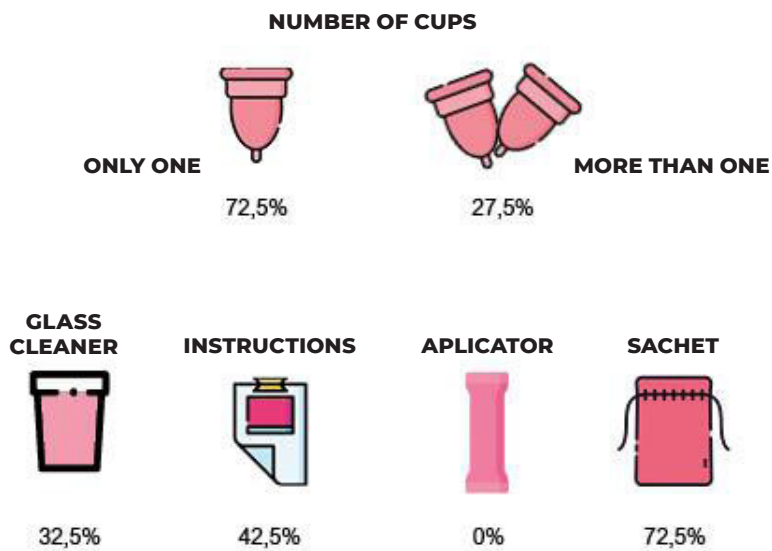
Monochromatic	Colours
Duochromatic ●	White ●
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Shade	Violet
Intense ●	Pink ●
Pastel	Yellow
Harmonic ●	Orange
Contrast	Grey
	Brown

### 3. RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

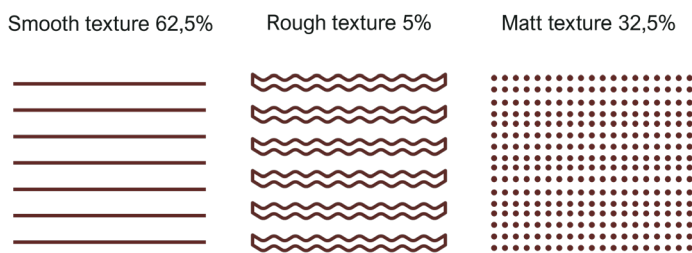
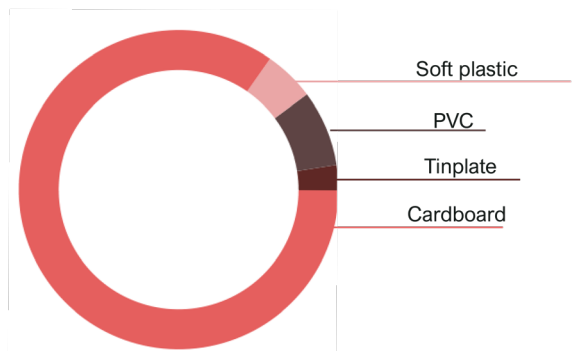
#### PACKAGING



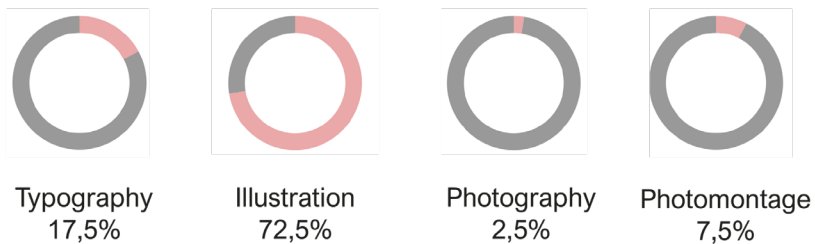
#### COMPONENTS



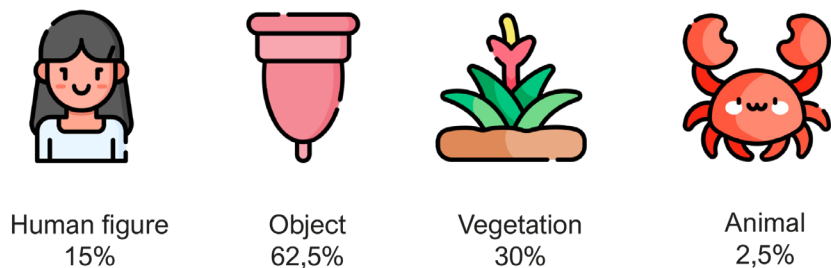
**VISUAL LANGUAGE**



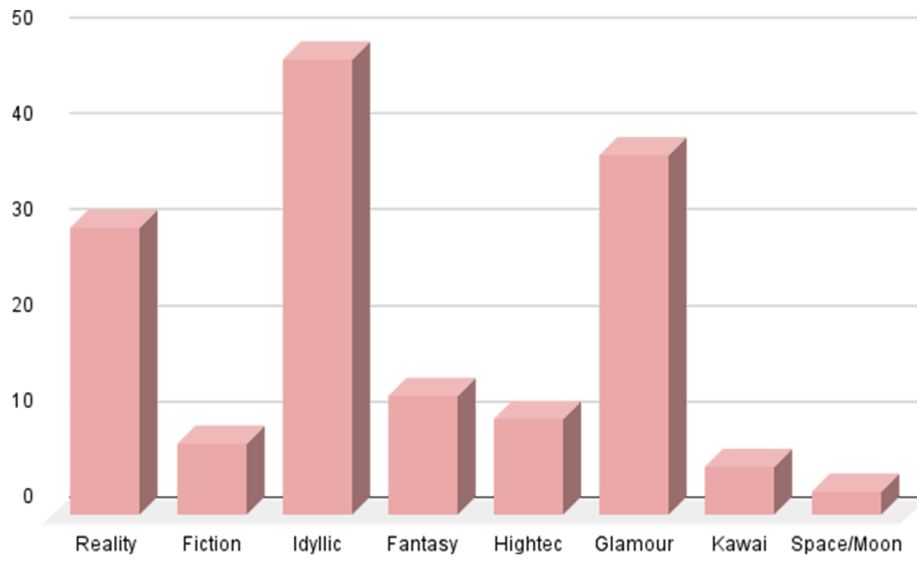
**TECNICS**



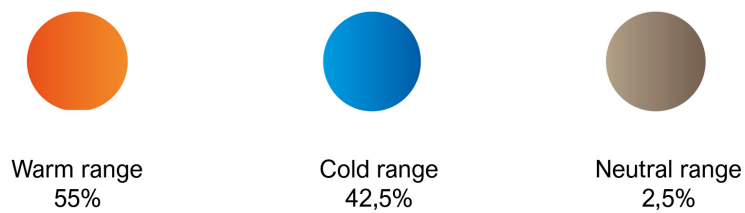
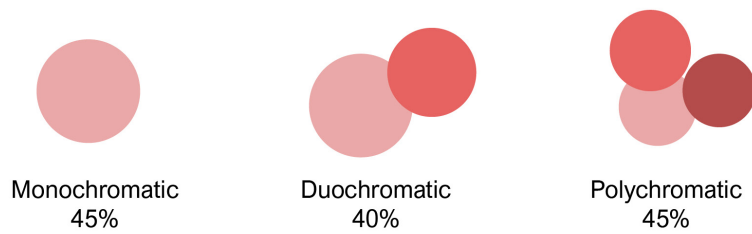
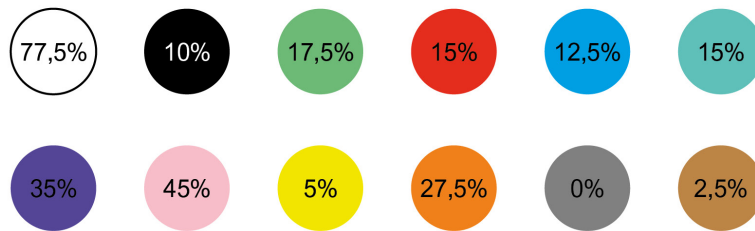
**REPRESENTED ELEMENTS**



**EVOKED WORLDS**



**COLORS**



Harmony  
65%

Pastel  
47,5%

Contrast  
35%

Intense  
52,5%

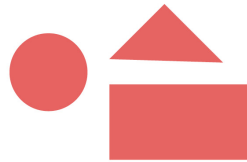


**TYPOGRAPHY**

**Sans Serif** 45%  
**Serif** 10%  
**Gothic** 0%

*Caligraphy* 22,5%  
*Handwritten* 22,5%

**FORM**



Geometric  
42,5%



Organic  
57,5%

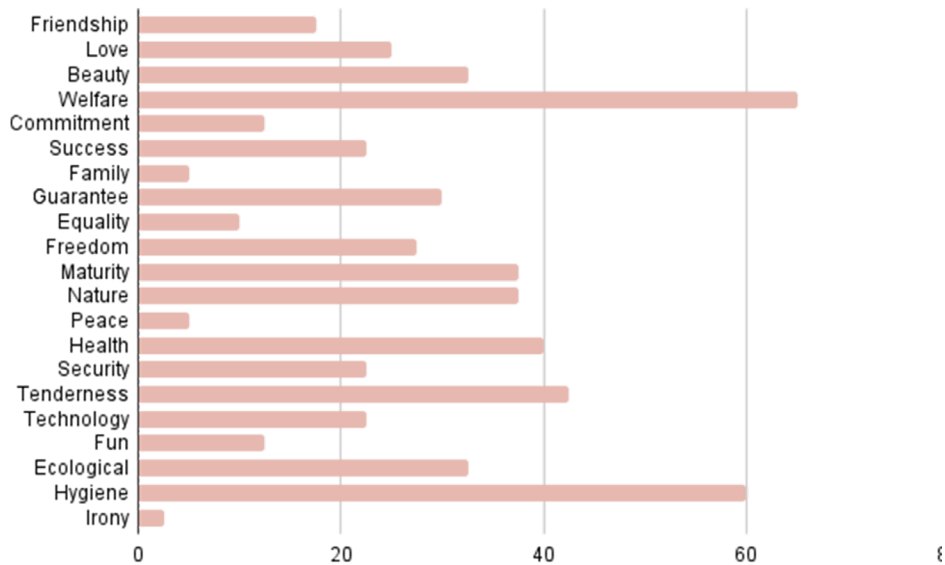


Kiki  
42,5%



Bouba  
57,5%

**VALUES**



From the results obtained we can formulate the following conclusions.

In relation to **SH1**: “Packaging design does not take advantage of the therapeutic value of colors”, white is by far the most used color. According to color psychology it transmits peace, purity, cleanliness and innocence. From this we can say that this sub-hypothesis is not validated and that the packaging design of menstrual cups takes into account in a timely manner the selection of colors. The second most frequent color is pink, which is not surprising since it has traditionally been the color associated with femininity. This color conveys sweetness, friendship, tenderness, love and is related to positive and pleasant emotions. Thus, it continues to emphasize that the packaging design has taken into account the mood of women in the days of menstruation. In third place, we find the color violet, which currently represents the feminist movement, in addition to this, it conveys elegance and spirituality. However, blue and green are underused, something that is striking since they transmit tranquility and hope; in the case of blue, ecology, relaxation and wellbeing with green.

Continuing with **SH2**, “Packaging design does not take advantage of the synaesthetic value of shapes”, we can say that this statement is not valid since the most represented shapes are mostly organic, “bouba/ boluba” type (Abad, 2017). With this type of silhouettes, sensations of warmth and closeness are transmitted. Therefore, we can say that the design in the analyzed cases does respond appropriately to women in the days of menstruation. However, in half of the cases, the typographies are dry stick, that is to say, they present sharp endings, which correspond to the “kiki / takete” (Ibid.) that transmit violence, or at least do not evoke balance or serenity. On the other hand, calligraphic and handwritten typographies are rarely represented and those that have been observed are usually rounded and spontaneous, which transmit cordiality.

Regarding **SH3**: “The packaging design evokes positive values that are not correlated with women’s emotions in those days”. This hypothesis is fulfilled since the value of wellbeing presents the highest percentage. Thus, we can affirm that the real emotions of women on those days are not captured. However, it is co-

herent because through this message the need to feel better is being answered. In second place comes hygiene, which can have two perspectives: the hygiene value in this product is in line with the woman’s need to feel clean, but all this is accompanied by a negative connotation of menstruation being a dirty process, when the reality is that menstruating women are healthy. In third place is the value tenderness, it may be contradictory since irritability and sadness are very present emotions in those days. However, as we said before with the wellness value, this is a way for the design to fill a gap in the target audience.

According to **SH4**: “Packaging design evokes only one type of environment, without taking reality into account”. It can be said that this sub-hypothesis if fulfilled, since the environment evoked with more percentage has been the idyllic one. This can be associated with the example of not putting the blood of menstruation in a way that does not correspond to reality, as well as emotions, and therefore with the environment it evokes. This is followed in second place by a glamorous atmosphere, this is associated with what we commented before of a stereotype of a woman with maturity when menstruating. This does not relate to any of the real environments in which women find themselves on those days. It should be noted that in third place is the real environment, this should be in first place, since there is no better environment for a woman in those days than to feel understood with the reality of them.

As a final conclusion and in relation to the **general hypothesis**, “The packaging design of menstrual cups does not meet the needs of women on the days of menstruation”, it can be said that it is fulfilled, since both the emotions and the environments evoked are far from reality and therefore from the understanding of women on those days. This design has taken into account the most superficial needs of menstruation, but without delving into a more realistic design.

#### 4. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abad, M. (2017). *¿Cómo influye una tipografía en un olor y un sabor?* Yorokobu, 86 (53-55).
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