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SEXUALITY IN ADVERTISING:
A COMPARISON OF ADVERTISING IMAGES FROM THE UNITED STATES AND FRANCE IN *VOGUE*

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Abstract

As globalization becomes a more dominant force in the advertising world, many companies must now advertise multi-nationally. Advertisers must determine how to best reach these new target audiences in an ethically responsible manner. It is therefore important to examine cultural norms and how they affect local advertising and the use of different appeals. Sexuality is a largely culturally subjective concept, and its use in advertising varies worldwide. Examination of this widely used appeal reveals different approaches and uses from one culture to the next. This study analyzes print advertisements from two separate versions of *Vogue* magazines, France and the United States, in order to compare the differences in sexual content and the use of sexual appeals between the two countries. Few researchers have expanded a comparison in sexual content to include a broader range of sexual categories of manifest content or used a culture-specific approach. The study compares advertisements by looking at the differences in several categories of sexual content in advertising, such as nudity, dress, model behavior, and verbal appeal. Results found small differences between the sexual advertisements in each magazine. However, results also point to the difficulty of quantifying the concept of sexuality, and the necessity for further research.

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I. Introduction

Advertising transnationally is becoming more common as globalization and increases in technology have allowed for better communication and the sharing of ideas and products. Many advertisers argue that with this increasing phenomenon, many countries have become so homogenized that using the same advertising would work transnationally (Solomon, Cornell, and Nizan 2010). General Motors tried this approach when they introduced the Chevy Nova in South America, expecting the new model to appeal to this new audience as it had to consumers in the United States. Instead, car sales completely flopped and the Nova was not selling. GM did not account for the Spanish translation of the name Nova, or “no va”, which translates to “it won’t go” (“Advertising Bloopers” 2007).

As more companies are advertising globally, mistakes like these could damage an entire campaign. Although the use a singular advertising strategy across countries is both simpler and more cost-efficient, many advertisers have multiple concerns regarding this approach. These opponents cite not only language barriers but also large cultural differences and interpretations. Additionally, many are concerned about the effects of standardization, namely the “spread of transnational culture and the breakdown of traditional cultures” (Noreen 1983). Western products and lifestyles presented in ads are constantly being associated with modernity. In essence, this association is not negative except when it implies that traditional values are old-fashioned and outdated. Advertising certain products, while seemingly harmless, can make people question their own culture and values. For instance, advertising skin-lightening products might make people ashamed of their dark skin. In the same way, anti-aging serums make women fear age even if their culture has a tradition of great respect for elders (Noreen 1983). Cultures are inherently different, possessing their own value and belief systems.

One social component that reflects these “culturally related [...] values and attitudes” (Boddewyn 1991) is sexuality. People maintain culture-specific attitudes towards the concept of sexuality, making it important to examine within the context of each culture as well as that culture’s own advertising practices. One study by Nelson and Paek stressed the importance of examining local standards and values. They noted that past researchers have not addressed “cultural components of the portrayal of sexuality” (Nelson and Paek 2005). Knowing the differences in how sexuality is used and portrayed in advertisements can provide insight into each culture’s view of sex roles and sex appeals.

There are, however, other benefits of obtaining this knowledge. It is important to be aware of cultural norms so as to not offend people of a certain culture or belief system. In a culture that is more open to sex and expressing sexuality, a suggestive advertisement would be more accepted than in a culture that is more sexually discreet. For example, in Muslim countries, women’s bodies must be completely covered, and an advertisement featuring a model in a bathing suit would seem completely inappropriate while it is commonplace in the United States.

Furthermore, using certain types of sexual content in an ad could influence how a person feels or thinks about sexuality. If women are constantly portrayed as sex objects in ads or subservient to a man, people might begin to adopt these stereotypes in their everyday life. The much-debated woman’s body type issue is rampant in advertisements as tall, skinny models fill the pages of magazines. Using this body type in advertising has led many girls strive to achieve the same ideal. This type of body image promotion is already pervasive in the United States, but could potentially have the same negative influence on people in other cultures around the world.

With these perceived effects of advertisements, it is important for companies to know the culture in which they are advertising. With sexuality as an important culturally-specific concept, the examination of sexual content in advertising could give insight into the way a culture depicts sexuality and sex roles. This paper seeks to discover some of these differences in sexual content in advertising between two countries: the United States and France. Using a content analysis method, several categories of sexual content will be compared from advertisements in French and United States *Vogue*. Previous research has included sexuality among other factors when doing content analysis, but not many have gone further to look into specific sexual content in the ads nor have they used a more “culturespecific approach” (Nelson and Paek 2005).

The two countries chosen for research, the United States and France, are both westernized and share similar value systems. In a comparison between a western country and an Asian country, great disparity is expected to be found. One would also expect two countries that are fairly similar to have much less variation. However, a comparison of French and American advertisements could find more differences than anticipated, even in small nuances and minute details. Results could reveal how each country differently portrays the sexual appeal, reinforcing or contradicting current expectations. There is a stereotype that labels the French as more sexually liberated compared to the United States. France is seen as a romanticized country, with its capital of Paris labeled as the “city of love” and the ideal movie backdrop for great love stories. While the United States is no stranger to sex and controversy, France in comparison is still seen as more sexually expressive.

Exploring this area of advertising is important for advertisers to gain knowledge about the differences and even the smaller nuances of different countries and cultures that have become their newest target audiences. Global advertising is growing rapidly and advertisers must realize

they are no longer targeting just teenagers or parents in the United States, but French teenagers or parents in China. An advertisement made for the United States could be completely inappropriate for another country and end up being harmful not only for profits, but for the image of the company. It is important for advertisers to be socially responsible in their work, part of which means knowing the audience, knowing how advertisements can influence them, and the best way to advertise responsibly to them. While this study is limited to the comparison of two countries, hopefully it spurs further research into the advertising nuances in other countries to gain a deeper understanding of how to use sexual appeals in the best, and most responsible, manner.

II. Literature Review

Globalization and its Impact on Advertising

Globalization is a strong force in society today that can have meaning and influence in several areas, ranging in definition from “the increasingly close international integration of markets for goods, services and factors of productions, labor and capital” (Bordo 2002) to the “rapidly developing and ever-densening network of interconnections and interdependencies that characterize modern social life” (Tomlinson 2006). In any case, the common thread is a greater international connection as the world seems to become a smaller place. Traveling halfway around the world is as easy as booking an airline flight, learning about a government election in a different continent requires flipping to the World section of your newspaper, and watching that new highly-talked about Spanish movie can be found in a few minutes on the internet.

As the world becomes more and more globalized, an increasing number of companies have become international and have branches in countries all over the world. When a company becomes multinational, it must discover which business strategy works most effectively and responsibly in each separate country. In the same way, multinational companies who engage in global advertising must figure out which strategies work best when targeting different countries and cultures.

The main debate about these global strategies is centralized around two main approaches: a standardized campaign, or a series of localized campaigns (Nelson and Paek 2007). Each approach has its own pros and cons and both have seen success and failure.

Standardized Campaign Strategy

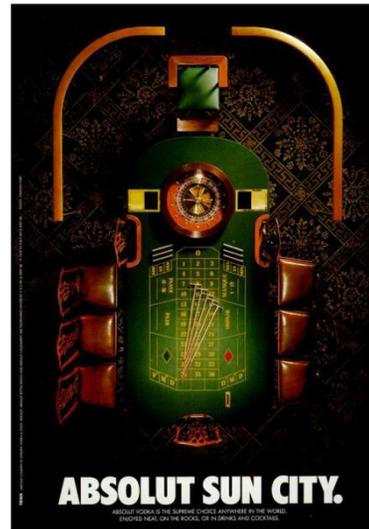
Advertisements can convey a set of signs and symbols as well as values and attitudes that are shared by target audiences around the world (Nelson and Paek 2007). Supporters of standardization base their views on these shared consumer traits, believing consumers want similar products and respond to similar appeals (Nelson and Paek 2007). As a consequence, many companies see a singular, standardized campaign as the preferable approach. Two of the large attractive qualities of this strategy are the economic savings and the ability to create a global brand (Nelson and Paek 2007). Economically, the use of one campaign throughout multiple countries would undoubtedly maximize profits if, for instance, only one model or spokesperson needs to be hired, or one television advertisement needs to be filmed. Strategically, using one campaign would have the added benefit of creating a stronger, more unified, global brand (Nelson and Paek 2007). Using one model as the face of a campaign or one catchy slogan as the draw-in creates a stronger central image for people to associate with the brand (Nelson and Paek 2007).

A notable example of implementing this type of approach is Coca-Cola, a company that does not change its advertisements to blend in with local culture (Bezuidenhout 1998). Small cultural elements are sometimes used in the advertisements, but the overall “spirit and essence of American culture” is always present (Bezuidenhout 1998). The text is almost always in English except in countries where English is not prominently spoken or known (Bezuidenhout 1998). The advertisements sell a lifestyle, the “American concept of what a ‘feel good’ experience should be” (Bezuidenhout 1998). Coca-Cola is an example of a company that keeps its advertising fairly standard across nations with great success.

Localized Campaign Strategy

The other side of this debate sees a necessity for more localized advertising strategies that would differ between countries and cultures. While using one campaign idea globally would have the added benefit of a better global image, not all audiences around the world would necessarily be able to relate to that one image (Nelson and Paek 2007). Under normal circumstances, when an advertiser creates a campaign within one country trying to advertise to teenagers he or she would try to make that product look cool or trendy. Advertising the same product to parents, that same advertiser would need to use a different approach. Now that globalization has increased the realm of audiences for advertisers, not only must they think about targeting teenagers or parents, but French teenagers or Chinese parents. For instance, if the “face” of the campaign is a British model, a consumer in South America might not be able to relate to her (Nelson and Paek 2007). In the same sense, if one catchy slogan in English is used in a country where English is not the predominant language, consumers would have a difficult time understanding the advertisement itself.

In contrast to Coca-Cola’s campaign, Absolut Vodka uses a more localized advertising approach with equal success. Absolut Vodka has one of the most successful global advertising campaigns, effectively making it a “world product” (Bezuidenhout 1998). While the bottle’s logo states the vodka comes from the “Country of Sweden”, the advertisements vary depending on the audience. For an advertisement in Playboy magazine, the usual bottle was printed without its label and the caption read “Absolut Centerfold” (Bezuidenhout 1998). Absolut also uses cultural influences such as local artists from the different countries to paint the bottle, references to the country itself, or use of foreign languages, like in the ad for “Absolut Boeretroos” used for the South African market (Bezuidenhout 1998). One advertisement was created to depict Monte



Carlo with a roulette table and chairs in the shape of the vodka bottle. The caption originally said “Absolut Monte Carlo” but was changed to “Absolut Sun City” for use in South Africa (Bezuidenhout 1998). “Sun City” is associated with gambling there, so South African consumers would feel “addressed in terms of images and names within his local frame of reference” (Bezuidenhout 1998).

The Influence of Advertising on Culture

“Media in general and advertising in particular are often cited as major forces shaping the drive toward globalization” (Nelson and Paek 2007). Using media and advertising as methods of communication among nations seems to give a great deal of power to the players behind these channels. It is important for the sake of those who might be unknowingly influenced by these ads for these players to understand the ramifications their advertising has not only on individuals, but whole cultures.

Understanding culture is not a simple process as culture itself is a complex term to define, as it is a combination of values, beliefs, language, social structure, history, and even food

that governs the behavior of a group of people (de Mooij 26). Culture is what conditions members of that group to “act in certain manners” (de Mooij 26) and think in certain ways. The culture and these individuals are intrinsically intertwined. Culture cannot exist independently of its members, and the members of a culture depend upon it to order their behavior (de Mooij 26). Cultural differences are often overlooked by advertisers in the new realm of globalization. Marieke de Mooij notes that it has been agreed that globalization has created a convergence of lifestyles and beliefs, but as of yet no empirical evidence can support this claim. Many people might assume that along with a more global society comes a more unified world view. Henry Assael wrote one of the top books on consumer behavior and states how the influence of television channels like MTV and CNN will create viewers with “similar perceptions of reality” (de Mooij 3). De Mooij counters this statement, noting how CNN and MTV both have more localized versions concerning language and content, respectively. The evidence is found when looking at macro-developmental data, such as number of telephones or televisions per household. Countries around the globe are becoming more comparable in regards to these numbers. Any similarities found on this level, however, usually hide diversity on the micro-level (de Mooij 5). The fact that countries are economically similar does not imply that its citizens therefore have a convergence of consumer choice or media usage (de Mooij 5). In fact, with increased wealth the Chinese actually stray further from any convergence with Western values and actually return to core Confucian values and teachings (de Mooij 7).

A large offshoot of the assumption of convergence is the assumption of universalistic thinking. De Mooij cites Americans and northern Europeans as people who believe their values are the correct ones, to be shared by the rest of the world. An excellent contradictory example is of the Chinese and American views of human rights. The Western point of view states that

democracy and human rights should be universal and westerners increasingly try to extend these rights to other areas of the world (de Mooij 11). A journalist for the official Xinhau News Agency in China says that the problem is the definition of human rights. In the West, this term means “the right to be elected president, change your government, or establish a political party” (de Mooij 12). In China, however, human rights is defined as “the right to be with family and friends, the opportunity to make money and go to school and have access to good health care” (de Mooij 12). With two completely different definitions and interpretations of human rights, a fundamental concept at the heart of many countries, other narrower values will most certainly be dissimilar as well.

Cultural Concerns to Advertisers

This idea of convergence is largely challenged and it remains important to look back to the definition of culture and recognize how its several components can create incredible variance within subcultures (de Mooij 5). Some groups might share a language or a religion or a system of values, but difference in other areas such as social structure and history set them apart. Other cultures might have none of these components in common and are even more dissimilar.

This difference can create difficulties when advertising cross-nationally, both obvious and more subtle. Beginning with the most evident, language barriers can many times have disastrous effects on advertising campaigns. Even translations do not always come out as clear as necessary, as has happened in several advertising blunders over the years. Italians did not respond well to Schweppes Tonic water advertisements since the translation made it appear that Schweppes sold Toilet water (“Advertising Bloopers” 2007). Kentucky Fried Chicken had its own blooper when their slogan “Finger-Lickin Good” translated into “Eat your fingers off” in

Chinese, which obviously does not sound appetizing to potential consumers (“Advertising Bloopers” 2007).

Moving towards less obvious cultural barriers shifts to the realm of cultural sensitivity. It is important to be aware of the cultural norms of a potential target audience so as to not offend the culture or its belief system. As such, global advertising has brought up a new set of responsibilities for advertisers. With advertising as such a powerful tool of influence, it can be potentially harmful. One largely discussed issue about a negative effect of advertising on culture is in regards to body image. Advertisements usually feature beautiful and skinny models, emphasizing sexuality and physical attractiveness to help sell products (Body Image and Advertising 2008). One study found that 69% of the girls interviewed cited magazine models to be their ideal body type (Body Image and Advertising 2008). Additionally, the proliferation of these images can affect how people view their own cultures’ standards of beauty. Advertising skin-lightening products might make people ashamed of their once-valued dark skin (Noreen 1983). In the same way, anti-aging serums make women fear age even if their culture has a tradition of great respect for elders (Noreen 1983).

Additionally, advertisers should consider the effects of advertising that does not necessarily offend a certain culture’s values, but undermine it in a way that could persuade people that their own way of life is inferior to another. One of the more obvious and probably most discussed examples of this is the selling of the “American lifestyle” (Bezuidenhout1998) in many United States advertisements. People from other countries see this concept and the happy care-free attitude of models portraying it and begin to doubt their own cultural norms and lifestyles. This occurrence on a large scale could eventually lead to the breakdown of traditional cultures as they move towards westernization (Noreen1983).

This argument goes back to the theory of social responsibility. In this ethical model, advertisers should operate “at the behest of the public” (Bivins 28), refraining from advertising that could be potentially harmful in its message. Noted philosopher John Stuart Mill discusses this concept that has come to be known as the “harm principle”. Even though he was an avid advocate for freedom of speech, Mill considered such a liberty to be “justifiably [...] restricted [...] in order to prevent harm that the person’s actions would cause to others” (Bivins 94). The main issue with the harm principle in regards to advertising is deciding what constitutes “undue harm” (Bivins 95). Correlation between advertisements and their effects is hard to find and prove. Even so, advertisers should try to steer clear of anything that might cause harm to society if not for their own personal reasons of wanting to be an ethical advertiser, than for the good of their clients who could gain a bad reputation from any “harmful” advertisements.

The Influence of Culture on Advertising

Not only can advertisements have great effect on a culture, but the reverse is also true; culture can have a great influence on advertising. Advertising is a “social practice” and “must be considered in light of cultural expectations” (Kang 1997). It is not a practice that occurs in a vacuum, and is therefore likely to be interpreted in different ways depending upon circumstances. Members of the same cultures share certain thoughts and ideas enabling them to interpret things like advertising in similar ways, giving way to a “shared meaning” as suggested by Kang, 1997. In Nigeria, religion is a large part of everyday culture which can in turn affect advertising strategies. Islam dominates northern Nigeria, prohibiting beer parlors and consumption of alcohol while Christianity in the South allows for the selling of alcohol everywhere (Ekerete 2001). Advertising in these two areas must consequently be much different in regards to alcohol.

This example shows the “reflective” quality of advertisements and how they reproduce social standards, situations and lifestyles. Using such a reflection of society ensures that the audience can relate to the subject of the ad itself. Other examples can illustrate what happens when companies try to take the influence of culture out of their advertising. Among these companies have been Ford, C&A clothing retailer, and Wal-Mart. Ford centralized its global management, taking its focus off of local strategy and consequently leading the company to lack competitive offerings in about 35 percent of European markets (de Mooij). C&A standardized its buying and advertising in Europe and had to close 109 of its stores due to significant losses. Even Wal-Mart suffered losses when Indonesians seemed to prefer the store Matahari down the street. Against the pristine supercenter, Matahari reminded the people of local street markets where they were able to haggle prices. By removing any sense of a specific culture, these companies failed to attract the members of that culture and therefore failed in their initiatives.

On a practical level, understanding the role of culture can help advertisers develop better marketing strategy as they can make “better predictions of how markets will develop and new products and services diffuse” (de Mooij 288). De Mooij uses the example of the internet to illustrate this idea. People expected the Internet to be immediately adopted worldwide, increase productivity everywhere, and “make all societies more egalitarian” (de Mooij 288). Today, the Internet has become more pervasive and has been adopted worldwide. When it first entered markets, however, it was embraced not only in different magnitudes, but also for different purposes, ranging from a productivity enhancer to a way to improve quality of life, leisure time, and education (de Mooij 289). Additionally, governments had influence on how the Internet was embraced; the French government strongly supported the Minitel system and the South Korean government backed broadband communications (de Mooij 289). Interestingly, South Korea

logged the most time spent on-line in 2001(de Mooij 289), revealing the strong influence a government endorsement can have on its peoples' behaviors.

Additionally, there are less obvious ways that advertising reveals the culture from which it is produced. Called the "language of advertising" by Stephen Unwin in his article, "How Culture Affects Advertising Expression and Communication Style", the manner and style of expression used by an advertiser can manifest itself in surrounding cultural norms. Unwin goes on to say that examining this "language" often proves more telling about a culture than the less subtle images of situations and lifestyles (Unwin 1974). For this reason, it is important to examine the different types of advertising appeals used to communicate in advertisements.

Sexuality in Advertising

In order to advertise responsibly and effectively to different countries, it is important to study how these different countries use certain appeals in their advertisements. One study conducted by Biswas, Olsen, and Carlet examined the use of emotional appeals, sex appeals, informational appeals, and humor in print advertisements from the United States and France. They examined the prevalence and method of implementation of these different appeals to discover innate differences between the two countries.

One especially interesting appeal to study is the sexual appeal. Researchers have spent considerable time investigating how the sexes are portrayed in media (Courtney and Whipple 4). In her book, The Feminine Mystique, Betty Friedan "looked for the social definition of women's role in the pages of women's magazines" (Courtney and Whipple 3). What Friedan found were portrayals of women that were "shaping forces in the social fabric" and created "for woman a view of her ideal self" (Courtney and Whipple 4). The same portrayals of sex roles and sexuality in advertising could have the same reflection and/or influence on society. Sexuality is

growing in its prevalence in advertisements (Soley and Reid 1988) and has become one of the most “potent tools of advertising” (Berger 84). As such, examination of sexual appeals in advertisements should provide a look into the treatment of the sexes and sexuality in society.

One of the difficulties with examining this type of appeal is that sexuality is difficult to define. It reflects “a large variety of personally subjective, culturally related and historically changing values and attitudes” (Boddewyn 1991). In her textbook Sexuality Now: Embracing Diversity, Janell Carroll defines sexuality as all of the “ideas, laws, customs, fantasies, and art surrounding the sexual act” (Carroll 29-32). Another article describes sexuality as the use of sexual imagery or suggestiveness.

With a concept so rooted in subjectivity, it is difficult not only to define but also to measure. Within advertising, however, many previous researchers have created their own definitions and scales to measure sexuality within advertisements.

Tom Reichert discusses in the book Sex in Advertising: Perspectives on the Erotic Appeal how “sexual content can vary in form and meaning”. In order to counter this variance, he provides five categories of sexual content identified in advertising research: Nudity/dress, sexual behavior, physical attractiveness, sexual referents, and sexual embeds (Reichert and Lambaise 14) in order to evaluate sexual content.

A second study comparing print advertisements in France and the United States measured sexual appeals in a print advertisement by assessing the use of nudity, scantily dressed models, and sexual suggestiveness (Biswas, Olsen, and Carlet 1992). This scale was less complex than Reichert’s, using only more obvious sexual imagery to evaluate sexual content.

A third study conducted by Soley and Reid, 1988, looked at the difference in sexualized images in advertisements between the years 1964 and 1984. They assessed the advertisements by creating a scale for the amount of clothing worn by models. This scale is the most restrictive, accounting only for nudity as an indication of sexual content

Referring back to cultural sensitivity, one could arrive at a definition of sexuality and more specifically, what is too sexual, based on a culture or country. Many predominantly Muslim countries do not approve of any kind of display of the human body nor of any type of sexual reference (Boddewyn 1991). The same advertisement would be received differently in this type of country where religion is a large core to its structure as opposed to one more open about sexuality.

In France, nudity is more of an aesthetic quality rather than a sexual one (Nelson and Paek 2007) as the female body is “used as a metaphor for beauty” (Mooij 123). This viewpoint, however, is in direct contrast to the beliefs of Asian and Middle Eastern countries where consumers are more sensitive to nudity than any other advertising appeal (Nelson and Paek 2007). A German underwear brand, Sloggi, had an ad banned that featured four women in thongs because it was shown too close to a largely Muslim area (Rock the List 2010). Other countries deal with many of the same issues concerning sexual content. In Sweden, an advertisement for Lavazza Coffee was banned due to “sexual discrimination”; the ad featured a beautiful blonde woman dressed scantily in a pilot uniform (Rock the List 2010). The advertisement itself would most likely have passed in several other countries, only further showing how culture can influence the type of ads one might see. One advertisement that received heated criticism worldwide in 2007 was for Dolce & Gabbana, featuring a woman lying

on her back with a blank expression as a man holds her down while four others watch with snide expressions (Bivins 220). People had such fierce opposition to the ad that it was banned in Spain and Italy following several protests (Bivins 220).

The concept of cultural sensitivity also relates back to an advertisers' social responsibility. Sex appeals in advertising are widely effective; however, effectiveness should not hold rank over responsible advertising. This belief is from an ethical standpoint that follows the model of social responsibility, and not every advertiser has the same ethical stance. As of yet, there are no laws or rules governing the finer aspects of sexuality in advertising. Even so, it is important to consider how sexual content in advertising can influence society. As mentioned before, sexual appeals have been growing in use in the United States. The widespread concern of body image in America can trace roots back to the images portrayed in many of these ads. Tall, thin, and strikingly beautiful women (and men) are used to portray the ideal body type and to convey "sexiness". It is no wonder that studies show the majority of girls viewing this usually impossible body type as the ideal. The same concept can be carried over to other countries. What happens when a culture of dark-skinned people who value plumpness are persuaded otherwise? Effects of this persuasion and its damaging effects can already be seen by the use of skin-lightening products in Asia and arguably even the widespread use of anti-aging products.

Reason for Research

As has been discussed, globalization has created a new frontier for advertisers. Multi-national advertising requires an understanding of many countries and their cultures, and how their culture influences or is influenced by advertising. As a result, there is a great need for further research into the finer nuances of advertising appeals used in different countries. This study will look further into the sexual appeal as it is one of the fast-growing appeals used in

advertising today, in hopes of obtaining information regarding sexuality and gender roles. Using two countries for examination, the United States and France, will further explore these views on sex in advertising by finding differences or similarities between the two.

These two countries are seemingly fairly similar as they are both Westernized cultures with similar socioeconomic qualities (Biswas, Olsen, and Carlet 1992). They are both highly industrialized and technologically advanced. There are several cultural differences, however, that lead to the creation of different advertising strategies. A comparison might prove more interesting between the advertisements of two countries with similar structures and value systems as opposed to comparing a pair such as American and Asian cultures that have greater cultural disparities (Biswas, Olsen, and Carlet 1992). Additionally, France is typically seen as a more liberal country than the United States, especially when considering an issue like sexuality. In France, “creative liberty is respected just as much as sexual liberty” (“Sex and Shopping” 2004). Sex is more out in the public sphere in a way “not tolerated in America” (Pascucci 2008). Advertisements featuring women’s breasts can be seen on the Paris Metro, whereas that kind of nudity would never be seen on a New York subway (Pascucci 2008). A study of each country’s advertising could prove an interesting illustration, or not, of these preexisting stereotypes.

Being a socially responsible advertiser means knowing your audience. Globalization has increased the scope of audiences and advertisers must therefore be responsible to a greater number and variety of people. Studies such as this one are necessary in order to responsibly and effectively advertise to these diverse audiences. Studying sexual appeals is only a starting point for the research that still needs to be done. Advertising effectively and responsibly on a global scale requires knowledge not only of a certain group within a culture, but also an understanding of that culture as a whole.

Research Questions

The following is the list of research questions used in this study to analyze the collected data.

The results are discussed in the subsequent chapter.

1. Relationship between the use of both gender models in French Vogue and brand company. *(This relationship not tested, n=14, 18% of total too small)*
2. Relationship between the degree of clothing and the brand country? *(no brand country differences)*
3. Relationship between when degree of clothing and the model gender(s)? *(no gender differences)*
4. Relationship between the model pose and the model gender(s)? *(no males, compared females to both males and females, no difference)*
5. Relationship between model pose and brand country? *(no difference)*
6. Relationship between model pose and degree of clothing? *(no difference)*
7. Relationship between model attitude and model pose? *(equal split between dominant and submissive poses)*
8. Relationship between model contact and model gender? *(no difference)*
9. Relationship between model contact and model pose? *(no difference)*
10. Relationship between product advertised, brand company, and magazine of origin?*(no difference)*
11. Relationship between model expression² and model pose? *(frequencies and percents)*

III. Methods

This study compares advertisements from the United States and France in terms of sexual content. A coding scheme was developed in order to rate the advertisements using different variables. The scheme was influenced by the five categories outlined by Tom Reichert as the five types of sexual information in advertising: Nudity/Dress, Sexual Behavior, Physical Attractiveness, Sexual Referents, and Sexual Embeds (Reichert 14).

Content Analysis

This study used the process of content analysis to compare the different advertisements. “Content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (Kassarjian 1977). Kassarjian expresses the ability to examine both latent content and manifest content in a content analysis, both of which will be explored in the study.

The goal of a content analysis is to “better understand advertisers’ practices, specific brands’ advertising strategies, and the effects of advertising” (Davis 392). Decisions about the elements of an advertisement are not created in a “vacuum” (Davis 392). The results should therefore provide some insight into the differences in approach to sexuality between the United States and France.

Examples of Content Analysis

Several other studies have successfully used this process to compare advertisements. The following are a few examples of other content analyses that examine advertisements on some

level of sexual content. They provide a basis of reference for the content analysis conducted in this study in regards to coding and sampling procedures.

Janeen E. Olsen, 1992, conducted a comparison of print advertisements from the United States and France. Olsen looked at the difference in use of emotional appeals, informational contents, sex appeals, and the use and nature of humor. Previous scales were used to evaluate level of emotion and informativeness, and sex appeal and humor were evaluated by the judges.

Another study entitled “Sex in Magazine Advertising: Examining the Past 15 Years” used content analysis to study the “changes in male and female dress” as well as the “amount of physical content between models” in advertisements between 1993 to 2008. Bridgette Desmond successfully coded for categories of dress and model contact to find an increase in “suggestively” dressed women as well as physical contact between models.

A third study examined advertisements in *Cosmopolitan* magazine across seven countries to find the differences, if any, of the degrees of sexuality between the countries (Nelson and Paek 2005). Results showed differences in “the portrayal of women and sexuality cross-culturally” (Nelson and Paek 2005). Their findings are incredibly interesting, considering the magazine used as the sampling source is a transnational Western magazine.

Magazine Selection

Sampling involves selecting a few parts of a whole “in order to draw conclusions about the larger population” (Davis 166). This study uses a purposive sample, with Vogue fashion magazine as the source for the advertisements used in order to draw conclusions about the larger fashion magazine populace. First published in 1892, Vogue is currently owned by Condé Nast Publications, Inc. French Vogue was started in the 1940’s following the success of the British

version of Vogue (“Condé Nast Publications, Inc.”). Both editions release monthly issues with content revolving around the latest fashion, fashion icons, and beauty related articles.

In a book review by Caroline Weber for the New York Times of “In Vogue: The Illustrated History of the World’s Most Famous Fashion Magazine”, Weber agrees that Vogue has become “the world’s most influential fashion magazine” (Weber 2006) as a pioneer in the fashion media and industry published in multiple countries worldwide. In addition, Forbes has recently named current Vogue editor Anna Wintour as the most powerful fashion magazine editor of 2009 (Sherman 2009). Vogue magazine is therefore an excellent representation of women’s fashion magazines from which to obtain a sample.

Advertisement Selection

Advertisements were chosen subjectively from the magazine depending on observed content. Any advertisements that did not reveal any sexual content were not used, as they would not be useful to the results. From the advertisements deemed sexual, every fifth ad was subsequently coded.

Coding Procedures

When developing a coding sheet for studying the advertisements, the categories in a content analysis must be defined so precisely that when applied to the same content by a different researcher, the same results would be obtained (Kassarjian 1977). Objectivity is important when it comes to advertising content analysis; the validity of results is enhanced when personal biases are not influential in the examination (Davis 393).

A coding sheet was developed for this study based on several aspects of sexuality. The first variables were informational in order to gain information about general characteristics of the advertisement and differentiate between the French and American advertisements.

Several levels of sexual content were then coded for, including image, nudity/dress, sexual appeal of the model, and verbal appeal. In regards to image, gender of the featured models was coded in order to see whether or not one gender was more frequently used in sexual appeals. Additionally, a differentiation was made between whether the model or the product was being shown as a sexual object or exuding sex appeal.

The next level of sexual content examined was nudity and dress. In order to ascertain the level of nudity, each ad was examined on a nudity scale, ranging from fully clothed to exposing breasts or genital areas. An additional variable looked at the type of clothing, if any, that was worn by the model(s) to see if a certain type of dress was used more often in a sexual appeal.

The level of sexual appeal of the model was used to investigate the physical actions of the model as they related to creating a sexual appeal. Variables included which body part was the main focus of the camera, what type of pose the model was in, the attitude of the model, the facial positioning of the model, his or her facial expression, and lastly what type of contact, if any, was occurring between other models in the advertisement.

The last level on the code sheet pertained to verbal appeals. Many times, phrases and wording within the copy or headline of an advertisement are what make the ad sexual. The appearance of a sexual verbal appeal as well as the type, whether subtle or obvious, was observed.

The following is a sample copy of the exact code sheet used in this study:

Sample Coding Sheet:

General Information:

1. Title of Magazine: _____
2. Year: _____ Month: _____ Page Number of Ad: _____
3. Size of the Advertisement: _____ Date of Observation: _____

Product Advertisement Type

- Fashion
- Perfume
- Hair Care
- Jewelry
- Other

What country is the brand owner based in?

- France
- United States
- Other

What language is used in the ad?

- French
- English
- Mixture
- None

Image

Model(s) featured in ad

- Females
- Males

Which aspect of ad is sexualized (exudes sexuality, or is made into a sex object)?

- Product
- Model(s)
- Both

If model is sexualized aspect, which model?

- Man
- Woman
- Both
- n/a

For the following questions, if there is more than one model present, use the more sexualized model or if this appears equal, code for most prominent model.

Definitions of Levels of Nudity:

Nude: No clothing on the model with breasts or other genitals exposed

Nudity Implied: Model is thought to be nude, but breasts/other genitals covered by the product or other obstruction

Scantily dressed: Model is wearing little clothing (lingerie, swimsuit, skin-revealing outfit)

Fully Dressed: Model has normal clothes on

Nudity/Dress

Degree of clothing:

- Nude
- Nudity Implied
- Scantily dressed
- Fully dressed

Type of clothing:

- Casual
- Formal
- Going out/clubbing/date
- Lingerie
- Swimwear
- Other objects/ atypical material used
- None

Sexual Appeal

Camera Focus

- Full Body
- Waist-Up
- Legs
- Face
- Back
- Buttocks
- Breasts
- Other

Model Pose:

- Explicitly Sexual Pose
- Subtle Sexual Pose
- Non-Sexual Pose

Model Attitude

- Submissive
- Dominant
- Not apparent

Model Gaze – Face Position

- Straight toward camera
- Profile
- Over shoulder
- Gaze not shown
- Other

Model Expression

- Happy
- Surprised

Angry
Sad
Neutral/Serious
Suggestive
N/A

Model Expression – 2

Seductive
Innocent
Neutral (no connection with viewer)
N/A

Model Contact with Other Model(s)

No other model
No Contact
Simple Contact (hand holding, touching shoulder)
Intimate Contact (kissing, embrace)
Sexually Intimate Contact (Suggestion of sexual activity)

Verbal Appeal

Sexualized Verbal Appeal

Yes
No
N/A

Was the sexualized verbal appeal either

Subtle (double entendre, sexual innuendo)
Obvious sexualized speech
N/A

IV. Results

A total of 77 advertisements were examined in this study. Out of the total, 52 of those advertisements, 67.5 percent were from French *Vogue* and 25 of those advertisements, 32.5 percent, were from United States *Vogue*.

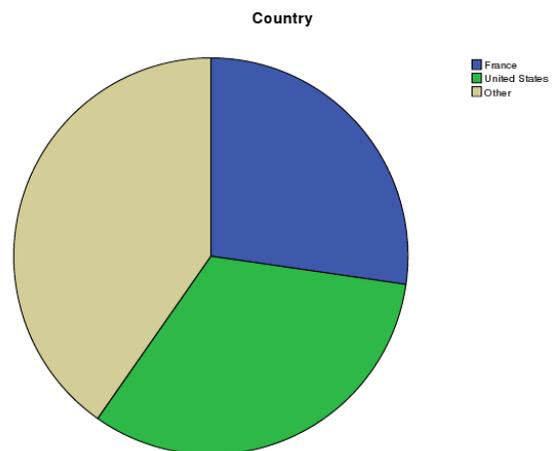
Analysis

Due to the small size of the sample and its skewed nature towards only *Vogue* advertisements, few of the analyses conducted found statistical significance. Any statistically significant findings are presented below, along with other relevant results.

Informational Variables

General findings from the first few informational variables include that the majority of advertisements (54.5%) were two pages in size, fashion was the overriding product being advertised (64.9%), and the majority (70.1%) of all of the advertisements did not use any text in copy or headlines. *Vogue* itself is a fashion magazine, so these results are most likely biased towards the subject matter of the magazine.

In addition to being a fashion magazine, *Vogue* is an international publication with local editions in several countries around the world. The general breakdown of countries in which advertised brands were based reveal the international nature of the publication, as well as its local flavor. About 27.3 percent of all brands were based in France, 32.5 percent in the United States, and 40.3 percent in other



countries, which was mainly comprised of other European countries. When comparing the separate versions of French and United States *Vogue*, there is a more even distribution in French *Vogue*, most likely due to the proximity of the European countries.

Magazine Country of Origin

One of the first variables examined was the magazine country of origin in relation to several other variables. Each magazine contained approximately the same amount of general advertisements per issue. When looking at solely advertisements with sexual content, there was a clear difference in quantity. The overriding majority (67.5 %) of the sexual advertisements came from French *Vogue*. This conclusion supports the general expectation that French advertising uses sexual appeals more often than advertising in the United States, a finding also found in previous research (Biswas, Olsen, and Carlet 1992).

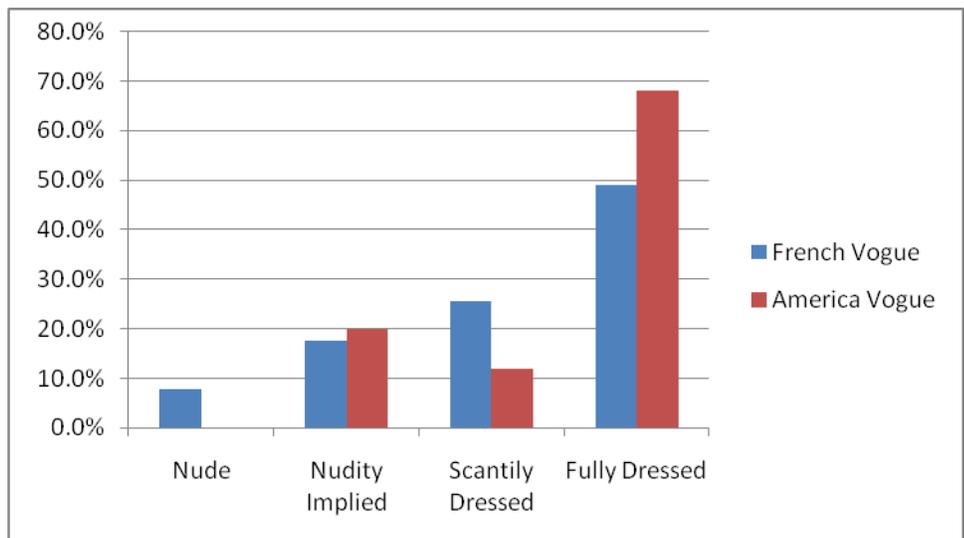
Statistical significance (p-value= .003) was found when analyzing the country of the brand in the advertisement against the magazine country of origin. This result is not surprising as it is certainly logical for a magazine to advertise products and brands originating from its home country. It is interesting, nonetheless, when looking at an international magazine like *Vogue* to see that each localized issue remains loyal to local brands. While there is some crossover of French brands in the United States *Vogue* and vice-versa, the majority of advertisements were for home-country based brands.

A comparison between the language used in an advertisement's copy/headline and the magazine country of origin was also found to be statistically significant (p-value = .001). Again, the significance here is not surprisingly, as the country's language is normally used in advertisements. One interesting related result, albeit small, was that while absolutely no

advertisements in United States *Vogue* used another language, there were a few instances (n=5) when ads in the French version used English.

When comparing between magazine country of origin and degree of clothing, about half (49%) of the advertisements in French *Vogue* used fully dressed models, while almost two-thirds (68%) of models in United States *Vogue* were fully dressed. About 25 percent of French *Vogue*

models were scantily dressed, while only 12 percent appeared so in United States *Vogue*. Models with nudity implied comprised 17.6 percent of ads in French *Vogue* and a similar 20 percent in United



States *Vogue*. While only four advertisements in the entire sample showed actual nudity, all four were from French *Vogue*. With the exception of models shown as scantily dressed, these percentages reveal sizeable difference in models' dress between the two versions of *Vogue*. Supporting previous research and expectation, nudity and/or a lack of clothing is much more prevalent in French advertising than that of the United States.

The relationship between models' pose and the appearance in either French or United States *Vogue* is subtle but interesting. As the pose becomes less sexual, moving from explicit, to subtle, to non-sexual, the split in number of ads with each pose between the French and United States issues lessens. Of the 16 advertisements with explicitly sexual poses, 81.3 percent were in French *Vogue* and 18.8 percent in United States *Vogue*. 66.7 percent of the ads using subtle

sexual pose were in French *Vogue* and 33.3 percent in United States *Vogue*, an already narrowing divide. Lastly, advertisements with observed non-sexual poses were split the most evenly between French and United States *Vogue* with 59.1 percent and 40.9 percent respectively. These percentages support the belief that French ads use more sexual poses more often than the United States.

Additionally, 50 percent of advertisements within French *Vogue* were subtly sexual and 52 percent in United States *Vogue* were subtly sexual. While the French advertisements use more sexual poses in their advertising than the United States, both versions use a moderate sexual pose half of the time. This last finding is contrary to original expectations that advertisements in French *Vogue* be of a more sexually explicit nature the majority of the time. Statistical significance ($p\text{-value}=.001$) was found in the analysis of the magazine country of origin and the model's attitude of either submissive, dominant, or not apparent. French *Vogue* showed much more variability in model attitude, with a fairly even distribution of 34.6 percent, 34.6 percent, and 30.8 percent respectively. In American *Vogue*, a majority of 76 percent of models showed neither characteristic. When looking at dominance and submission as more atypical or experimental sexual practice, it can be inferred that the French are more open about their sex lives. This finding is supported by a sex study conducted in France that reports the French to engage in less common sexual activities than people in the United States (Gagnon et al. 2001)

Verbal Appeals

Several of the findings in this study support previous expectations regarding the importance of imagery in sexual appeals against verbal appeals. A large majority, 70.1 percent, of all of the advertisements were absent of copy; most showed only an image and brand name

and/or logo. This absence might be attributable to the concentration on fashion of the magazine but could also suggest the visual nature of sexual appeals. While copy or headlines are certainly able to incorporate a sexual component and help to create a sexual appeal, it appears that visuals are the preferred vessel of demonstrating sexuality. This finding relates well to the scale used in a study by Biswas, Olsen, and Carlet that measured sexuality in terms of this more obvious sexual imagery. It would be interesting to examine in future research whether other advertising appeals contained a greater amount of text when compared to sexual appeals.

As mentioned previously, most of the ads in the sample did not contain text. This result is associated with another finding of the lack of verbal appeals used in the advertisements. Almost the entire sample, 97.4 percent, did not contain a verbal appeal, 89.6 percentage points of which had no text at all. Again, the trend that is appearing is the importance of imagery over text in the creation of a sexual appeal.

Model Behavior

A few of this study's findings point toward the importance of another element in the creation of a sexual appeal: audience interaction with the human model featured in the ad. The object of the sexual appeal in the advertisements was primarily the model (96.1 %), with only a few instances of both the model and product together. The product itself was never sexualized on its own. Interestingly, the strategy here for a sexual appeal almost never has anything to do with the product being advertised. At times, it is not even clear what is being advertised. In advertisers' attempts to break free of the white noise of everyday advertising of products, the focus on attention-grabbing sexual appeals seems to have put the promotion of a product in the background. Interestingly, this desperation to be noticed has recently caused a new phase in

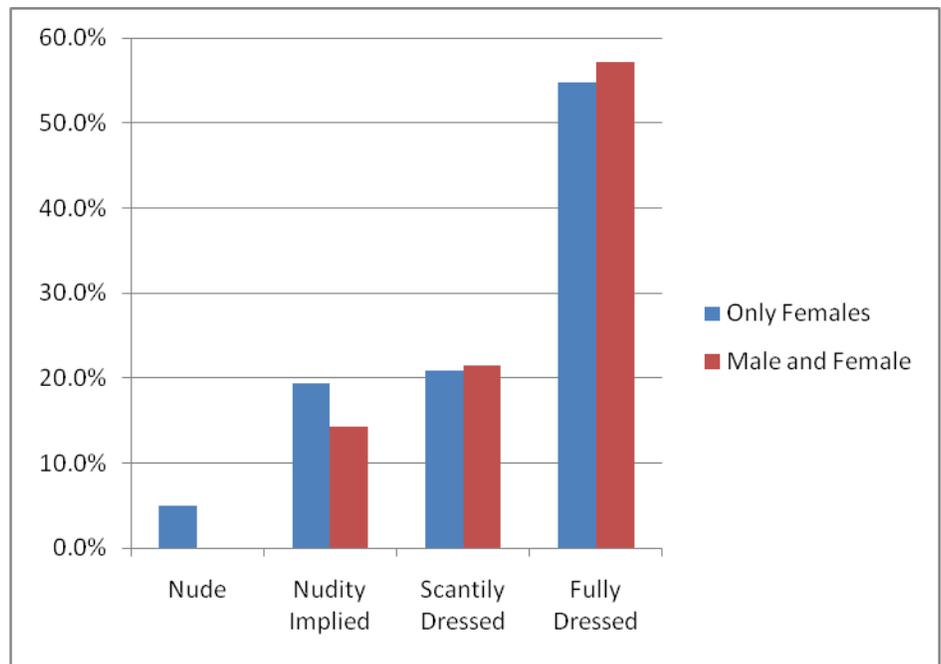
France called “porno-chic” (“Sex and Shopping” 2004) that has advertisers pushing the sexual envelope to new extremes.

With the model(s) being the typical sexualized object in the advertisement, further analyses examined several model behaviors that contributed even more to the appeal. The majority of the advertisements (72.7%) examined also showed the model’s gaze to be straight toward the camera. Eye contact and facial connection to the viewer appears to be an important part of creating a sexual appeal. Interestingly, 75.3 percent of advertisements featured only one model. The nature of a sexual appeal, therefore, does not necessarily include interaction between two models, but interaction with the viewer as can be seen in the previous results about model gaze.

More support for the validity of the sexual imagery scale used by Biswas, Olsen, and Carlet was suggested in other findings. The camera focus of the overwhelming majority of the advertisements was either full-body (55.8%) or waist-up (24.7%). This result falls once again into the category of the importance of visual appeals in the definition of sexuality; the more of the body shown, the more visual stimulation available.

When comparing between model pose and model attitude, the majority (45.5%) of models in the advertisements did not show an apparent attitude of either submission or dominance. Among the advertisements where model attitude was apparent, there was an almost equal split between submissive and dominant attitudes. Additionally, for the instances where attitude was again apparent, submission and dominance were both shown equally among the three model poses. No one pose was used in association with a specific attitude of dominance or submission and vice versa. While this conclusion does not relate to previous expectations, it is an interesting finding.

An interesting comparison can be made when looking at the variables of Model Attitude (Submissive, Dominant, Not Apparent) and Model Expression -2 (Seductive, Innocent, Neutral, or N/A) when both are compared



between the two versions of *Vogue*. Statistical significance was found for the first variable, but not for the second even though both variables are similar in what they measure. Reasons behind this outcome could be that the variable Model Attitude was thought to give a stronger impression than Model Expression. The variables in the Model Expression category of seductive, innocent, and neutral are more difficult to form conceptual definitions for and this could have led to a great deal of coder interpretation.

Degree of Clothing

An analysis of models' gender and the degree of clothing shows similar percentages for the degree of clothing worn by the models, no matter the gender. Of the advertisements that had only females (81.5 % of sample) 54.8 percent were fully dressed, similar to the 57.1 percent of ads with both genders who were fully dressed. About 20.9 percent of the ads with only females were scantily dressed, similar to the 21.4 percent of ads with both genders. Approximately 19.3 percent of female-only ads had nudity implied, close to the 14.2 percent of ads with both male and female. Lastly, nudity was shown in five percent of female-only ads and seven percent of

ads with both genders. While none of the ads used only male models, these results still convey that it seems male and females are treated similarly in regards to levels of nudity in advertisements.

The following table shows examples of advertisements and how they would have been labeled using the scale for degree of clothing in this study. The label of fully dressed is in the top left quadrant, scantily dressed in the top right, nudity implied in the bottom left, and nude in the bottom right.



V. Discussion

Summary of Results

This content analysis was conducted to evaluate the use of the sexual appeal in advertisements from the French and United States editions of *Vogue* magazine. Results that were statistically significant included the country of the brand in the advertisement versus the magazine country of origin ($p=.003$) and the language used in the advertisement against the magazine country of origin ($p=.001$). These results reveal that local editions of a magazine most often advertise brands from their own country and use the native language. The third result with statistical significance was in the analysis of the model's attitude (submissive, dominant, or not apparent) and the magazine country of origin ($p=.001$). This result revealed much more variability in model attitude in French *Vogue* and the expression of atypical sexual behaviors.

Further results suggested several patterns of the components of sexual appeals on a general basis, mainly the importance of visual imagery and audience interaction with the human model. What appears to be most important in the creation of a sexual appeal in an ad is the use of visuals, namely a full-body image of a model and a lack of text. Additionally, most of the sexual appeals did not include the use of more than one model or, when two models were present, physical contact. This finding, in association with the finding that the majority of models made eye contact with the viewer, illustrates the importance of audience interaction with the model rather than a voyeuristic quality into a sexual scenario.

Additionally, results revealed the localized nature of each edition of *Vogue* through the use of the country of origin's language as well as the use of local brands in advertisements. Results from comparisons of the French and United States advertisements supported previous expectations that French advertising is more sexual in content than advertising in the United

States (Biswas, Olsen, and Carlet 1992). France *Vogue* uses more nudity, more explicitly sexual model poses, and more expression of atypical sexual behaviors. The extent of this difference, however, was not found to be as large or comprehensive as was expected. The major divergence in sexual content was most commonly found in the more extreme categories of sexual content. Only France showed any total nudity, had the overwhelming majority of models in explicitly sexual poses, as well as showed greater variance in model expression depicting atypical sexual behaviors.

Perhaps these findings can be attributed to the effect of globalization on the world of advertising. As companies begin to advertise multi-nationally, advertisers might prefer to use methods and images more acceptable worldwide (Nelson and Paek 2007). As was mentioned previously, the controversial Dolce and Gabbana 2007 advertisement is a perfect illustration of a sexual image that was not acceptable worldwide and consequently met its demise. This is a strong argument for the proponents of using standardized advertising campaigns. With results finding more similar strategies in forming sexual appeals, the standardization of advertising campaigns might be on the rise.

The expected results of this study anticipated more significance due to the creation of a more developed code sheet in comparison to previous studies. A study by Nelson and Paek, 2005 used only a scale of nudity to measure sexual content. In their discussion, they suggest ideas for future research that might help improve their own results, including the examination of a “broader range of items to examine the degrees of sexuality, product use, and gender norms” (Nelson and Paek 2005). They also suggest that “[a] more nuanced or culturespecific approach to examine sexual imagery could be adopted in future studies to detect the subtle ways in which bodies are displayed to convey sexual imagery” (Nelson and Paek 2005). This study attempted

to use a broader range of coding variables in order to detect more subtle attributes of the advertisement. The majority of results, however, were still not statistically significant.

With results that did not meet expectations, questions are raised about the ability for sexuality to be measured by manifest content. Manifest content describes content which is “coded as it appears rather than as the content analyst feels it is intended” (Stempel III 121). Researchers must choose what kind of content they want to examine in their study: manifest or latent. The concept of manifest content has been largely debated with arguments over occurrences when intent seems to contradict apparent content. If this is the case, coding for the manifest content can subsequently distort the communicator’s true meaning (Stempel III 121). However, this debate against manifest content leads to a great deal of subjective interpretation in coding procedures. This study attempted to code for manifest content, creating variables that could be clearly defined, in order to avoid such interpretations, but it remains questionable as to whether or not this avoidance is even possible.

An illustration of this point can be seen with examination of two expectations of the researcher that were decidedly contradicted. The first was that the majority of sexual appeals would feature a man and woman in the advertisement, with some type of physicality that would obviously depict sexuality. The second was that text and/or headlines would give textual proof of a sexual appeal, whether obviously or through some sort of double entendre. The overwhelming majority of the advertisements in this sample had neither a physical relationship nor a verbal appeal; however, each of these advertisements was described as using a sexual appeal. If the appeal is not physical or verbal, what is it?

Referring back to previous researchers’ operational definitions of sexuality, Reichert outline five different categories by which to identify sexual appeals. At the end of his article,

however, Reichert states the need for future research that takes a “more unifying view of sex in advertising” (Reichert 34). Maybe this “unifying” view is one of just knowing whether an ad is sexual or not. Both of the aforementioned expectations are perfect examples of manifest content that leave no room for subjectivity or interpretation. The measurement of manifest content might not be able to yield intended results, since many of the other aspects of sexuality could be seen as latent content, prone to interpretation.

The issue of defining sexuality and related concepts has been debated all the way to the Supreme Court of the United States level. In the 1964 Supreme Court Case of *Jacobellis v. Ohio*, the issue of what is and is not pornography was debated. Justice Stewart Potter said that he did not wish to define pornography, and said that he might “never succeed in intelligibly doing so”. He said simply, “I know it when I see it” (*Jacobellis v. State of Ohio*, 378. U.S. 184, 84). It is interesting to note that this case involved the showing of a French film, “Les Amants” (The Lovers). This same concept could conceivably apply to the definition of sexuality; its presence or lack thereof is just innately known, which brings the discussion back to the impact of culture. As demonstrated by previous research, a person’s culture influences their thoughts and behaviors (de Mooij 26). This influence extends to views of sex roles and sexuality (de Mooij 122), so people of different cultures “know” sexuality when they “see it” in accordance with the ideas and standards of sexuality present in their own culture.

VI. Conclusions

The results of this study are limited due to its scope, but it succeeded in raising other questions and opportunities for future research. A content analysis of manifest content might not be able to properly measure sexuality; future research should explore other and possibly more effective methods of examining sexual content.

In regards to findings presenting differences or similarities between French and United States sexual advertising, the effects of globalization might already skew results that consequently do not represent cultural disparity. Interestingly, during the coding process and exploration of the magazines, it was discovered that the majority of the differences between the sexual content of the magazines was presented in editorials. In French *Vogue*, editorials featuring the magazine's own fashion recommendations showed models with both breasts completely exposed. One of the more shocking was a picture used in an article about plastic surgery; the model had tape and hooks attached to various parts of her body, including her exposed nipples. However, the more common image depicting nudity featured a model in a casual pose with no sexual suggestion other than her exposed breasts. Future research might explore these editorials and further content of magazines as opposed to their advertisements. Perhaps with the increase in global advertising, French advertisers have tamed down their own work in order to use it in other countries. This occurrence could be why less nudity is seen in advertisements and a great deal more in the content of the magazine itself.

Additionally, the limitations of this study were considerable. Future researchers might explore magazines of different subject matter, a larger time period of magazine issues, and a larger number of advertisements. Exploration into the issue between the manifest and latent

content surrounding sexuality would also be beneficial in creating a more specific and successful coding process, less prone to interpretation.

Future research should be conducted not only to further knowledge about the constitution of a sexual appeal in advertising, but to provide a more responsible view for future advertisers. Even though this study did not find a great deal of difference in the use of sexual appeals in French and United States advertising, knowledge of even the small nuances discovered would help an advertiser to better tailor a sexual appeal in each country. Even considering the small amount of nudity present in both United States and French advertisements, the same content would be offensive in more conservative cultures. Future study on this topic would help to prevent not only any of the advertising miscommunications that were mentioned earlier but also the advertising of any culturally offensive or harmful images and views in order to maintain an ethical and socially responsible model of work.

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