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## Creative Women in Peru: Outliers in a Machismo World

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## Creative women in Peru: outliers in a machismo world

### Abstract

Gender segregation begins early and is reinforced within the workplace. Advertising creative departments appear to have extreme gender segregation with women representing just 20% of all those working within creative departments worldwide. Yet, creativity does not depend on gender. Thus, the underrepresentation of women is particularly troubling. In Peru women comprise 3% to 10.4% of all people working in advertising creative, which suggests the situation for creative women in Peru is dire. In order to understand this phenomenon, and with the hope of finding solutions, this study uses in-depth interviews to explore the experiences of Peruvian women working in advertising creative departments. The study investigates three primary aspects of Peruvian creative women's experiences. First, it looks at relationships with colleagues and clients. Second, work/life balance is explored. Third, the study examines how the environment within creative departments constrains creative women's employment and advancement opportunities. Findings suggest that Peruvian creative departments are strongly machismo environments where discrimination and gender segregation are staunchly entrenched. This machismo environment creates challenging relationships between creative women and their colleagues and clients, it negatively impacts creative women's work/life balance and it leads to severely constrained hiring, promotion and retention of creative women in Peruvian advertising agencies. The discussion closes with suggestions to help creative women succeed in Peruvian creative departments.

### Keywords

Advertising agency, creative, discrimination, gender, Peru, women

### 1. Introduction

This article explores the experiences of creative woman in Peruvian advertising creative departments, investigating how the environment within creative departments influences creative women's relationships, their work/life balance, and their employment and advancement opportunities. Within advertising agencies in North America and much of Europe women tend to be well represented in account services,

media, planning and finance, but women are not well represented in creative (García-González & Otero-Piñeiro, 2011; Klein, 2000; Martín-Llaguno & Hernández Beléndez, 2007; Mallia, 2009; Nixon, 2006). Similar cross-departmental data on women is not available on Peruvian advertising agencies. However, according to data from the Standard Directory of Advertising Agencies within advertising creative departments worldwide women represent only 20.3% of all art directors, copywriters and creative directors, or creatives, as they are known in the advertising industry (Grow & Deng, 2014). This same study suggests women make up just 3% of the creative workforce in Peru (Grow & Deng 2014). One of the rare studies looking at Peruvian advertising agencies suggests that within creative there are 89.6% men and only 10.4% women (Mensa, 2012). Clearly the number of women in Peruvian creative departments is at a dire low, be it 3% or 10.4%. The most important question is, why.

## **2. Literature review**

While we know there are few women in creative departments, we also know women are driving the majority of consumption decisions. In fact, women make 80-85% of all consumption decisions across the world (Grow & Broyles 2011; Mallia, 2009); and in South America they drive 80% of the consumer decisions (Luengas & Velandia-Morales, 2012). These data would suggest that Peruvian women also take the lead when it comes to driving consumption choices. Considering the dire lack of women in Peruvian creative departments in tandem with the large role women play in consumption decision making, it seems appropriate that women should play a larger role in creative messaging. To that end, this study explores the experiences of creative women working in advertising agencies in Lima, the capital of Peru, and the heart of Peruvian advertising.

### **2.1. Peruvian economic and cultural framing**

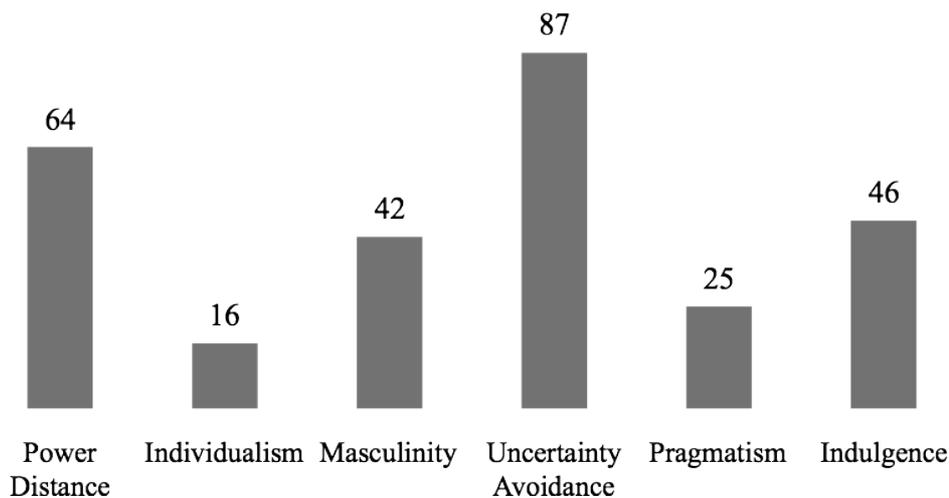
Charles (2012) stresses the importance of advertising research from all regions of the world. Unfortunately, most research focuses on North America, Europe and Asia. Further, only a modest amount focuses on the experiences of people working in creative departments and even less on the underrepresentation of women in creative. There is strikingly little research on South American advertising (Bedoya, 2013; Castillo & Mensa, 2009; Figari 2014; Larco & Reynoso, 1998; Mensa, 2012; Montalvo, 2010; Vargas, 2002; Yezers'ka, 2003). Only Mensa (2012) looks at advertising creative in Peru; however, it does not look at what drives gender segregation.

Economically, Peru is in the driver's seat. According to the International Monetary Fund, Peru has a 5.7% growth rate, the highest in Latin America (Andina, 2014). Peruvian ad spending increased by 5% in 2013, with an 8% increase forecast for 2014 (Gestión, 2014). South America, as a region, is ready for growth (De Onis, 2008; Dollar, 1992). Considering this, together with Peru's positive economic growth forecast, it is surprising that there is so little research on South American or Peruvian advertising in the literature.

Peruvian culture needs to be understood in context. Hofstede's (2001) work provides a lens for contextualizing Peruvian cultural norms. Five cultural dimensions framed Hofstede's original work. Each dimension is ranked on a scale of 1-100 with 50 as the median. First, power distance (PDI) refers to the extent to which power is understood and how wealth inequality is tolerated. Peru ranks 64, suggesting a higher power distance with a greater than average tolerance for wealth inequity. Second, individualism/collectivism (IDV) measures the culture in terms of individualism or collectivism related to social considerations. Peru ranks 16, suggesting a highly collectivist culture. Third, masculinity/femininity (MAS) determines the degree to which masculine or feminine characteristics are preferred. Peru ranks 42, suggesting a slightly feminine culture, which we argue does not represent Peru. This is addressed below. Fourth, uncertainty avoidance

(UAI) identifies the degree to which people respond to ambiguity and try to avoid uncertainty. Peru ranks 87, suggesting a strong tendency toward avoiding uncertainty and significant discomfort with ambiguity. Fifth, long- versus short-term orientation (LTO) reflects the cultural norms of persistence and stability relative to perceptions of time. Recently, Minkov and Hofstede (2011) reframed (LTO) to reflect pragmatism (PRA). Here, Peru ranks 24, suggesting a fairly pragmatic culture. Minkov and Hofstede (2011) added a sixth dimension, indulgence versus restraint (IVR) addressing tendencies toward gratification across a spectrum between indulgence and restraint. Peru ranks 46, suggesting that Peruvians lean away from indulgence and are a bit more restrained. (See Figure 1)

**Figure 1.** Peruvian Cultural Dimensions (Hofstede Centre)



Scale of 1-100 with 50 as median.

Putting Peruvian culture into context, all of Hofstede's dimensions ring true except for MAS and the notion that Peru is a slightly feminine culture. Peru would more accurately be described as a patriarchal society. Men are preferentially treated in most aspects of society (O'Phelan & Zegarra, 2006). While Peruvian women today have more opportunities, the society is still perceived as "machista." According to the University of Lima, 82.7% in Lima's women believe that discrimination against them is still omnipresent (Boesten, 2012). Social justification theory, which explains that discrimination is justified as "the normal order of things," also plays a role here (Del Moral, 2000; Velandia-Morales & Rodríguez-Bailón, 2011). Further, an investigation by the Ministry for Women and Social Development found that over the last decade sexual violence has been on the increase (Mujica, 2011). Peru is sixteenth in the world for the number of registered cases of sexual violence reported and number one in South America (Mujica, 2011). Peru does not lean toward femininity. Rather, it is a country framed by gender inequity and patriarchal rules.

## 2.2. Gender segregation in advertising creative

In recent years the academy has begun to show an interest in studies related to the underrepresentation of women in advertising creative departments. However, the regions studied are generally limited to the United States in North America, and Britain and Spain in Europe (Cooper & Puxty, 1996; García-González & Otero-Piñeiro, 2011; Gregory, 2009; Grow & Broyles, 2011; Grow, Roca & Broyles, 2012; Klein, 2000; Mallia, 2009; Martin, 2007; Martín-

Llaguno, Beléndez & Hernandez-Ruiz, 2007; Nixon, 2003; Nixon & Crew, 2006; Roca & Pueyo, 2011; Windels, 2011; Windels & Lee, 2012). These studies generally indicate a strong tendency toward gender segregation in advertising creative departments. South America is yet to be explored. Peru is a perfect starting point.

Gender segregation both horizontally and vertically results in essentially artificial barriers, which mitigate women's ability to reach their full potential (Grow & Deng, 2014; Lemons, 2003; Martin, 2007; Stockdale & Nadler, 2013; Weeden, 1998). Specifically, horizontal segregation refers to gender distribution across a professional area, in this case advertising creative departments. Bourne Özbilgin (2008) suggests that if women do not see other women within a particular professional area, it is difficult to recruit and retain women. Additionally, it is clear that creativity does not depend on gender (Csikszentmihalyi, 1998). In fact, creativity appears to be highly influenced by social and environmental factors (Del Río, 2007). Studies also indicate that if women feel alienated from their colleagues, their creativity has limited capacity to develop (Grow & Broyles 2011; Mallia, 2009). Within creative departments social groupings are strong and these social groupings greatly influence creative output (Del Río, 2007). It appears that the culture and social groupings within creative departments are highly colored by masculinity. Studies also demonstrate that female creatives are often segregated within "pink ghetto," assigned to female products (Grow & Broyles, 2011; Mallia, 2009; Nixon & Crew, 2006). Within this patriarchal environment creative men are able to consolidate power, often to the detriment of creative women.

Vertical segregation refers to the inability of creative women to rise into senior management (Cooper & Puxty, 1996). In advertising agencies, men monopolize management and leadership positions (Gregory, 2009) while women are overrepresented at lower organizational levels. Additionally, research suggests that women have little chance of success in creative because their ideas are not valued (Grow, Roca & Broyles, 2012; Nixon & Crew, 2006). Research suggests that men in Spain are twelve times more likely than women to occupy management positions in advertising (Martin 2007; Retamero & García-López-Zafra, 2006). Masculine dominance of advertising management is also demonstrated in Britain (Klein, 2000; Nixon & Crew, 2006) and the United States (Grow & Broyles, 2011; Mallia, 2009). This gender bias is even more strongly articulated within advertising creative departments, making it more likely that creative men, and not women, will rise to leadership positions (García-González & Otero-Piñero, 2011; Gregory, 2009; Klein, 2000; Martin, 2007; Mallia, 2009; Nixon & Crew 2006; Roca & Pueyo, 2011). Some argue that this is largely due to unconscious gender bias (Grow & Broyles, 2011). It is time to make gender bias in advertising creative departments a part of the advertising industry's consciousness.

Clearly both horizontal and vertical segregation impedes female creatives' advancement. If we consider this in tandem with the scant research on advertising in South America, and specifically Peru, the importance of this study becomes more evident. Only Mensa's (2012) work explores Peruvian creative, pointing to the lack of women in creative departments; specifically among 11 Peruvian agencies there were 164 male creatives identified and only 19 of them are women. (See Table 1.)

In short, a qualitative exploration into the experiences of female creatives in South America is important, and this study of Peruvian creative women lays the foundation. To that end, this study is the first step toward expanding our understanding of the culture within advertising creative departments across South America. The more we come to understand the culture of advertising creative departments, including their limitations, the more we can work toward improving that culture and thus improving creative outputs; for any limitation on creative outputs in a limitation on the advertising industry as a whole. With South America poised for growth (De Onis, 2008; Dollar, 1992) and women driving

consumption choices (Luengas & Velandia-Morales, 2012) this study lays an important foundation.

**Table 1.** Creative Department in Peru

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Total</b>
Causa Advertising	Local	23	6	29
Circus Communication	Local	17	2	19
Fahrenheit Communication	Local	13	2	15
Garwich BBDO	Multinational	15	1	16
JWT	Multinational	9	3	12
Ogilvy	Multinational	22	2	24
Pragma DDB	Multinational	12	1	13
Publicis	Multinational	15	0	15
Quorum/Nazca S&S	Multinational	11	1	12
TBWA/Peru	Multinational	15	1	16
Young & Rubicam	Multinational	12	0	12
<b>Total</b>		<b>164</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>183</b>
		<b>89.6%</b>	<b>10.4%</b>	<b>100%</b>

(Data courtesy of Mensa, 2012)

To that end, four research questions guide this research and inform the choice of methodology. 1) What are the experiences of creative women within Peruvian creative departments? 2) How do Peruvian creative women perceive their relationships with colleagues and clients? 3) How do Peruvian creative women achieve, or not achieve, a work/life balance? 4) Finally, what are the factors influencing Peruvian creative women's hiring and advancement?

### **3. Methods**

We begin with an examination of sample selection, then define the protocol and conclude with a discussion of the analytic process.

### **3.1. Sample selection**

An initial list of creative women was gathered from the Association of Peruvian Agencies of Publicity (APAP) and included only five women. The work of Mensa (2012) was then referenced, which indicates eleven advertising agencies, eight global multinationals and three local Peruvian agencies. (See Table 1 above.) Using this list we generated a cohort of nineteen women, among which the five women from the APAP list could be found. However, of the nineteen women on the list, six no longer worked at the agency listed, four did not reply to contact requests and three declined to be interviewed. The remaining six women were interviewed. We then employed snowball sampling, asking each of the six for the names of other women to be contacted. Three names were received and contacted via Facebook. All three responded, two were subsequently interviewed with one declining to be interviewed. The final sample included eight women from seven agencies all in Lima, the heart of Peruvian advertising.

### **3.2. Interview protocol**

In-depth interviews were the chosen methodology because they allow subjects' experiences to be explored more intimately, thus producing richer and more nuanced findings. The interview guide was patterned after research done by Grow, Roca and Broyles (2012) exploring the experiences of women in Spain and United States.

The script consisted of a series of questions used to more deeply explore the four overarching research questions. Twenty-seven questions were used in the final analysis. There were nineteen open-ended questions, two more questions were designed to illicit creative descriptors and were limited to three word responses, and six questions focused on demographic information and closed the interview. Of the nineteen open-ended questions, seven explored relationships with colleagues and differing ways of working; four explored upper management and the how to get there; eight were designed to tease out creative women's overall experiences within the advertising creative environment, including finding a work/life balance. The six demographic questions focused on information such as age, time in the industry and marital status.

A native speaker conducted all of the interviews in Spanish. Each interview was conducted face-to-face. Each participant was given the choice of having the interview done at work or at home. Half chose to be interviewed at home the other half were interviewed at the agency. All interviews were conducted between March 2013 and March 2014. Each interview lasted 60 to 90 minutes and was recorded. At the close of each interview, participants were invited to provide any further information they deemed relevant. All participation was voluntary and no one was compensated.

### **3.3. Analysis**

The responses from the participants were analysed through a four-step analytical process: (a) data collection, (b) data organization, (c) data coding and (d) inductive analysis of the coded data (Blythe 2007). Once the interviews were completed each was transcribed and then translated into English. With the data in hand a simple quantitative analysis was conducted to quantify and organize the responses that could be quantified. This included the six demographic questions along with the two creative descriptors questions, which were limited to three word responses. At this stage in the analysis the words were quantitatively summarized. Finally, narrative verbatim comments from all nineteen open-end questions, from all the participants, were clustered by question.

Content analysis combined with aspects of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1999) was then initiated. This combination facilitates a systematic and rich qualitative study of verbatim comments. It is used to condense codes and can often illustrate themes (Crewell,

2007). Coding the data was a systematic process with data coded into three categories. Each category paralleled research questions two through four and looked at (a) relationships with colleagues and clients, (b) finding a work/life balance and (c) advancement opportunities. Krippendorff (2004) suggests that open-ended interviews lend themselves well to content analysis because they allow themes to be identified across interviews and cross categories. Two different coders did this phase of coding independently, each trained and using the same protocol. All verbatim quotes, across all open-ended questions, could be coded into any or all of the three categories, as categories were not mutually exclusive. Each coder ended the analysis of the open-ended questions by inductively analysing the verbatim quotes found within each of the three categories, looking for themes. Finally, each coder independently reviewed the summarized data from the three-word creative descriptors. Here too, they looked for themes.

Finally, both coders worked together holistically analysing the data. Across nineteen open-ended questions with eight participants there were 152 verbatim quotes. Within the individual coding there was disagreement with only nine of the verbatim quotes, in terms of the category placement. Thus there was 94% inter-coder reliability. The nine disputed quotes were not used in the final holistic analysis. The final analysis focused on the first, over-arching, research question designed to explore the overall experiences of creative women. This analysis drives the final conclusion.

#### **4. Results**

The eight Peruvian creative women interviewed were between 21 and 35 years old, with an average age of 28.1. Four of the women were copywriters, two were art directors and two were creative directors. Seven women were single and had no children. One woman was married with one child. Their time in advertising ranged from one to seven years, with an average of 3.5 years of experience. Three of the women studied at technical schools, which is common for people working in Peruvian advertising. Four women had bachelor's degrees and one had a master's degree. All of the participants joined the creative workforce because they had a teacher who worked in advertising and functioned as their mentor. However, none had a mentor at their current agency.

In-depth analysis of verbatim quotes clarified the significance of the three thematic categories: (a) relationships with clients and colleagues, (b) finding a work/life balance and (c) hiring and advancement opportunities. A selection of quotes was used to illustrate the main themes within the results section; while the discussion section articulated the significance of the findings within the context of the literature. The three-word creative descriptors informed the categories by adding to our understanding of how these women perceived themselves and their male colleagues.

Based on thematic categorization, the three-word descriptors expressed eight categories for male creatives and eight categories for female creatives. (See Table 2.) Only one of the eight categories was explicitly and equally shared by both men and women, that was "passionate." Three other categories had strong similarity: "fun" for women and "humor" for men; "brave" for women and "risk-takers" for men; along with "hardworking" for women and "responsible" for men. Four notable anomalies were found within the descriptors for female creatives. Two were gender-based descriptors: "masculine" and "feminine." Two were skill-based descriptors: "creative" and "intelligent." Four notable anomalies were also found within the descriptors for male creative. Three were behavioural in nature: "relaxed," "tenacious" and "communicative." "Simple" was also noted as a male descriptor. Clearly these descriptors do not have statistical significance. However, viewed through a qualitative lens they provide a bit more insight into how Peruvian creative women see themselves and their male creative colleagues. The fact that female descriptors related

to bravery were noted twice as often as male descriptors related to risk-taking is noteworthy. Additionally the descriptor “creative” was applied exclusively to female, while the descriptor “humor” was applied exclusively to males.

**Table 2.** Creative Descriptors

<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
9 Brave	4 Risk-takers
3 Passionate	4 Simple
2 Hard-working	4 Relaxed
2 Intelligent	3 Passionate
2 Fun	3 Humor
2 Creative	3 Responsible
2 Masculine	2 Tenacious
2 Feminine	1 Communicative

#### 4.1. Relationships

Gender was the single most significant theme within the responses relative to relationships, whether related to relationships with clients or colleagues.

##### 4.1.1. Female clients

When it came to working with female clients, the participants expressed a range of experiences from supportive to competitive.

- “They (female clients) are grateful to have a woman on the creative team because the advertising will be more feminine.”
- “If the client is a woman of 40-years-old and is married, she listens more to women.”
- “If the client is a young, unmarried woman she listens to the man.”
- “When the client is a woman and the creative is also a women there is creative friction and rivalry.”

##### 4.1.2. Male clients

When it came to experiences with male clients the participants again expressed a range of experiences from surprise, to gratitude, to lack of respect.

- “The client is surprised when he sees a creative woman on a team. If the creative is good, the (female creative’s) sex is forgotten.”
- “If the client is a man, he listens more to the creative men and less to women.”
- “It’s machismo, what men say will be better than what women say.”
- “Male clients like to see creative women, because they know that the purchase decisions are made by the women.”

- “Clients like that women have emotional intelligence and understand the consumer better.”

#### 4.1.3. *Male colleagues*

Comments about relationships with male colleagues were universally expressed as difficult.

- “Creative men do not like to work with a female creative.”
- “The creative men consolidate themselves within the club, they make ironic jokes with a large sexist dose.”
- “They bond with their colleagues and are accepted within the group.”
- “My colleagues segregate or exclude me. Men create (pink) ghettos in agencies.”
- “I get tired of their phallic jokes and the comments about other women. They see women as sex objects.”
- “(Male) CEOs don’t trust creative women.”

#### 4.2. *Work/life balance*

All participants expressed difficulty in achieving a work/life balance. They also spoke of balance as being highly desirable for women, with societal norms privileging men in the workplace and women at home. Again, gender framed the work/life balance.

##### 4.2.1. *Men’s playground*

The women perceived that men had a very different experience because creative was their privileged space, where they defined the rules.

- “Creative men like to spend hours and hours working at the agency... just sitting around doing nothing.”
- “Men get balance, women no.”
- “Men do not need social life (outside) because they already have (it) within the agency.”

##### 4.2.2. *Women’s work*

Achieving a work/life balance was far more difficult for women, largely based on societal stereotypes. Domestic expectations cast a long shadow over women’s professional lives.

- “Women cannot find it (balance). The reason for that is because society has created a stereotype, women have to take care of children and men can work.”
- “There is no balance. I have no other life outside of the agency.”
- “My colleague told me that if I want to succeed in advertising, first for me must be my job and nothing more.”

##### 4.2.3. *Children the double standard*

For women a work/life balance was shaped by family challenges, which highlight a double standard that perpetuates stereotypes.

- “Women stop work for their children.”
- “Men can balance their work with their family and private life.”
- “Women have emotional intelligence, they prefer family. The man has no empathy for his children.”
- “If I have a child, I must quit.”

### 4.3. Advancement opportunities

Creative women's ability to advance was highly constrained by their gender, to the point that some women went so far as to mask their gender. Gender-bound constraints appeared in school and extended across all stages of their employment experiences.

#### 4.3.1. Embedded stereotypes

Most limitations appeared to be driven by gender-based stereotypes, which appeared embedded within creative departments.

- "If they (students) want to work as a creative they need to be a man."
- "Creative women are hired because they can entertain creative men."
- "No, (I don't have the same opportunity) because woman can marry and can be pregnant."
- "I have masculine profile. I'm more masculine than feminine."
- "I feel that I do not exist."

#### 4.3.2. Pink ghetto

Women were frequently segregated onto "pink" accounts. This offered limited, but not impossible, opportunities for advancement.

- "My boss gives me accounts about compresses or perfumes... One day I fight to get a motorcycle account. My boss does not give it to me because I am a woman."
- "Yes. I hate that (feminine accounts). My colleagues pigeonhole me."
- "My boss gave me a... very feminine account. I did not like it. I'm not female."
- "I started with women's accounts. But eventually I got the Toyota account."

#### 4.3.3. Suggestions for management

All, except for one woman, stated there were unequal chances for women to get ahead. Yet, participants had suggestions for those at the top.

- "CEO should not be macho, he must lead by example."
- "Create (more) female teams to give more opportunity to women."
- "(Leaders) should value the (women's) creative work."

#### 4.3.4. Suggestions for junior women

The participants also had suggestions for young women entering creative.

- "No surrender. Have patience and be calm."
- "Have (make) a guide on how to treat men."
- "You have to become rougher... to survive in men's territory."
- "Do not be very sensitive."

## 5. Discussion

Gender bias cast a long shadow over all of the findings from client and colleague relationships, to work/life balance, to advancement opportunities. The words with which these women describe themselves and their fellow male creatives frame a starkly gendered-bound world, which suggests that they must see themselves as both "masculine" and "feminine." Yet, they did not consider such gendered framing when considering their male

colleagues. Only “passion” was perceived as shared by both female and male creatives. Valcárcel’s (1992) work suggests that the creative women may have had a greater willingness to attribute masculine traits to themselves if they perceived it as a way to gain higher status. Further, López-Zafra (1999) suggest that women adopt masculine attributes when they want to be perceived as leaders and having authority, even when it was virtually impossible. Masculine gender identifiers threaded themselves throughout these data, not just in the three-word descriptors. For instance, some women said, “I’m not female” or “I’m more masculine than feminine.” Thus, it is also not surprising to find that these creative women felt the need to be “brave.” Bravery was articulated within their relationships with colleagues and clients alike. Virtually every woman held this sentiment, with bravery referred to nine times as a descriptors. Conversely men were never thought of as needing to be brave, though risk-taking had some parallels. Yet, what has the outcome been for Peruvian creative women? Few women in creative departments, with even fewer in creative management.

In fact, exclusion was clearly articulated by comments such as, “the creative men consolidate themselves within the club” to the men “make ironic jokes with a large sexist dose” to “they see women as sex objects.” Grow, Roca and Broyles (2012) note these kinds of jokes are also common in the United States and Spain and work to subjugate women. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) suggest that sexualized jokes are tools men use to consolidate power within a particular structure. As one Peruvian creative woman said, “You have to become rougher because you have to learn how to survive in men’s territory.” Gregory (2009) argues that creative departments are defined by a male hegemony, which is framed by humor. Thus it is also not surprising that “humor,” as part of the three-word descriptors, was attributed only to men. It appears that creative women may have internalized their place within the creative system, even while they bristle against it.

### **5.1. *Thoughts on relationships***

Creatives and clients often have a difficult and complicated relationships (Hackley & Kover, 2007; Verbeke & al., 2008), as is articulated by these data. The women described working with male colleagues in terms of isolation and exclusion. They spoke of this in terms of “men consolidate(ing) themselves within the club,” and men bonding “with their colleagues.” This is similar to the experiences of creative women in other countries (Grow & Broyles, 2011; Grow, Roca & Broyles, 2012; Klein, 2000; Mallia, 2009; Martín, 2007; Martín-Llaguno, 2007), which suggests a systemic global issue. The women perceived one of the most damaging effects to be “men creat(ing) ghettos in agencies.” This too is common for women across the world. However, the sheer lack of women in Peruvian creative departments, 3% (Grow & Deng, 2014) to 10.4% (Mensa, 2012) depending on the data, suggests a much more dire situation in Peru than elsewhere.

However, the most interesting finding may be creative women’s relationships with clients. In this sense this study breaks new ground, articulating the dynamics of this important relationship. The participants in this study noted problems with female clients, which some described as “friction and rivalry,” while others described it as the client “seeing me as her opponent.” On the other hand, a few spoke of female clients as being “grateful to have a woman on the creative team” or suggesting that female creatives “know how to better treat the client.” The creative women also referred to themselves as having more “emotional intelligence and understanding the consumer better.” Yet, there was a tension between having “emotional intelligence” and being seen as the client’s “opponent.” It appears that within the highly patriarchal Peruvian creative culture, female creatives feel at risk of being dethroned by other females, including clients. This might be due to the perception that there are few opportunities for creative women (Mallia, 2009). When it came

to male clients the women expressed sentiments that reinforced an overall sense of isolation. As one said, they “listen more to the creative men and less to women,” while another said the clients simply “ignore them.” Yet, as with female clients, the women perceived some appreciation. Said one woman, “If creativity is good, (their) sex is forgotten.” Another noted that male clients appreciated creative women “because they know that the purchase decisions are made by the women,” which is substantiated by Luengas and Velandia-Morales (2012).

## **5.2. Reflections on work/life balance**

Though both creative men and women work long hours, the experience is much different for men and women. Every participant said they “have no private life” and “no time.” Men, also have little time for a private life. Long hours are the nature of creative (Grow & Broyles, 2012; Mallia, 2009). However, men have male friends within the creative department, where bonding is paramount (Gregory, 2009). Unlike these creative women, the creative men, especially those at the top, also have the luxury of having stay-at-home wives. This is also common in Spain (Martín-Llaguno & al., 2007; Roca & Pueyo, 2011) and the United States (Grow & Broyles, 2011; Mallia, 2009). Thus, men are able to spend more time at the agency without the need to tend to family obligations. Further, this lack of external responsibilities gives men the luxury of time. Said one woman, “Creative men like to spend hour and hours working at the agency. The reason? To prove they are essential. But many men are just sitting around doing nothing.” The privilege men experience at home, within the agency and across social circles allows them to more easily balance their professional and private lives. Or perhaps it is that the creative department becomes men’s private lives, allowing men to enjoy the spoils of a system that privileges masculinity over femininity.

On the other hand, all of the creative women in this study, except one, are unmarried and without children. The women in the study expressed an acute awareness that if they want to have children they will not have the same privileges the men have. As one woman said, “If I want children I know I will have to leave the creative department.” There is a glaring double standard in Peruvian creative departments. However, it is a double standard that is all too common around the world (Grow & Broyles, 2011; Mallia, 2009; Martín-Llaguno, 2007). It appears that in creative, men’s family responsibilities impact their professional lives far less. However, when creative women have children it is often perceived as a lack of professional commitment. Additionally, according to Roca and Pueyo (2011), the lack of flexibility and the guilt that creative women feel when having children appears to prevent them from having professional success while being mothers. The participants articulated this and spoke about the fear of “being fired” simply because “women can give birth.” They indicated a constant need to prove that their gender and motherhood would not negatively impact their work. Adding to this tension is the fact that in Peru the housewife stereotype is powerful and psychologically justified as “the normal order of things” (Del Moral, 2000; Velandia-Morales & Rodríguez-Bailón, 2011). In fact, 94% of women in Peru are married with children and 57% of the mothers stay home (IPSOS, 2015). Yet, among the women in these Peruvian creative departments only one is married and she has one child, which means 13% of these creative women are married with children and 0% stay home. This is a stark contrast to the general Peruvian population. These data support the women’s perception that they are outliers and they are acutely aware of the double standard that perpetuates this. For as one woman said, “You only are asking me this because I am a woman.”

### 5.3. *Dreams of advancement*

These data clearly demonstrate horizontal segregation (Lemons, 2003; Martín, 2007; Stockdale & Nadler, 2013; Weeden, 1998). Many of the participants said women can not even get in the door simply because they "can get pregnant." Schools may function as gatekeepers, driving women away before they even arrive. According to more than one participant, teachers routinely tell their classes, "If they (students) want to work as a creative they need to be a man." None of the participants had a current mentor, and Bourne Özbilgin (2008) suggests that if women do not see other women within a particular profession, it is difficult to recruit and retain women. Thus, we suggest the problem begins at the top, as articulated by one woman who said, the "CEO doesn't trust creative women." The single person who spoke of opportunities for women said, "If you are a good creative you get the job." Creative directors commonly hold this sentiment worldwide, male and female alike (Grow & Broyles, 2011; Klein, 2000; Mallia, 2009; Nixon, 2003). However, this sentiment is often a smoke screen for gender bias.

These data also clearly demonstrate vertical segregation (Cooper & Puxty, 1996) with men monopolizing leadership positions (Gregory, 2009). A hostile environment, which is clearly expressed by this data, is strengthened by the consolidation of an exclusive group formed exclusively by creative men. Cueno (1997) and Grow and Broyles (2011) refer to this as "the boys' club." The results also support Del Río's (2007) argument that creativity is influenced by social and environmental factors, which are highly impacted by the social groupings that create and sustain the boys' club. In short, a machismo culture appears to permeate Peruvian creative departments where boys' clubs flourish.

When queried about the possibility for equal advancement in the boys' club, most of the participants indicated they felt it was impossible. One woman said, "The creative director does not help women integrate within the agency... He does not value her ideas." Other participants said men simply have more opportunities. "My creative colleagues (men) segregate me. Sometimes they don't tell me when they meet. When I am with them they don't give ideas. It's when I leave that they start to release their ideas between themselves." Another women spoke about the lack of promotional opportunities saying, "this is normal," which articulates social justification (Del Moral, 2000; Velandia-Morales & Rodríguez-Bailón, 2011). However, the single woman who said there was a fair chance for women to be promoted said, "If you are a good creative you get the job." This, of course, negates the multitude of environmental factors these data present. It is, again, an example of a smoke screen for gender bias.

The normalization of men in power also justifies lower salaries (Gregory, 2009). When exploring salary equity, without a single exception every woman perceived that creative women had lower salaries than creative men. Their perceptions are justified as there is a 20% wage gap, between men and women, across both public and private sectors in Peru (INEI, 2012). Two women spoke of "fighting" for or "demanding" more money, to no avail. One woman put it very simply, "If you are a man you earn more money." Salary data is notoriously hard to come by. Yet within the patriarchal Peruvian society it is more than plausible that men with families are paid more than women, with or without families, based on embedded social justifications (Del Moral, 2000; Velandia-Morales & Rodríguez-Bailón, 2011). Additional, lower salaries for women in creative are found globally (Grow & Broyles, 2011; Klein, 2000; Mallia, 2009; Martín-Llaguno et al., 2007; Nixon, 2003; Roca & Pueyo, 2011). Add to that the global wage stagnation for women, which has occurred over the last decade (Cha & Weeden, 2014).

Another significant roadblock to women's advancement in creative is being trapped in the "pink ghetto," which means being assigned to work on female products (Grow & Broyles, 2011; Mallia, 2009; Nixon & Crew, 2006). These accounts rarely win awards or

industry praise and thus mitigate creative advancement. Kleiman (2006) suggests that women may be relegated to the “pink collar” work for two reasons. First, there are preconceived notions that female product accounts reflect women's work. Second, the women within the pink ghetto are there because men are not comfortable working on these products. Yet creative women want more. Said one participant, “Creative women do not want to be recognized for their gender, but for their talent. But often within the agency they are put on... the pink accounts.” Another said, “I have been given certain accounts because I am a woman. But I hate these accounts.” The data clearly illustrate patterns of women being assigned to “pink accounts” and excluded from others. Nixon and Crew (2006) argue that women have very little chance of advancing if they are limited to female accounts. The perceived lack of value is not surprising (Grow, Roca & Broyles, 2012; Nixon & Crew, 2006). According to Hirschman (1989), the creative environment needs to positively influence creativity and originality. Without positive influences, the creative output is negatively impacted (Koslow & Sasser, 2003; Grow, Roca & Broyles, 2012). The alienation expressed by these data suggests that creative woman may withdraw, which is detrimental to their advancement (Del Río, 2007; Koslow & Sasser, 2003). In the end, it is undeniable that not celebrating women's work truncates their career advancement.

#### **5.4. Culture and change**

Contextualizing the findings further, we return to Hofstede's (2014) work. Through this lens Peru has a higher than average power distance, which would support the strong structural patriarchal hierarchy that has been demonstrated by these data. Peruvians are also highly collectivist. This is strongly articulated by the social structure within advertising creative. However, the strongly gendered component driving this collectivism suggests that the benefits are likely available only to creative men. Hofstede's work suggests that Peru is moderately feminine. As previously discussed, this is not the case (O'Phelan & Zegarra, 2006). However, a possible interpretation could be that the feminine attribute of cooperation is, in fact, alive and well in Peruvian creative departments. Except that it is reserved for men. On Hofstede's uncertainty avoidance scale, Peru is rated high and that may be another explanation why creative women stay in creative for such short durations or simply choose not to apply. Another interesting divergence with Hofstede's findings is that Peruvians score very low on pragmatism. In contrast, these creative women seem highly pragmatic. If there is no place for them, they leave to avoid the uncertainty. At the same time, the male creative directors appear to exhibit pragmatic behaviors in hiring, unconsciously doing what they have always done, hiring men. Finally, the Peruvians demonstrate average tendencies toward indulgence. In the case of advertising creative departments men appear to be greatly over-indulgent, while women benefit little from over-indulgence. Perhaps these two extremes reflect an ironic average indulgence, one colored by gender bias.

The data have exhibited significant difficulties for Peruvian creative women. However, the data also highlights four opportunities for change within Peruvian creative departments, and frankly creative departments worldwide.

First, don't tolerate sexism. Call it out. As one participant said, “Change the system.” Listen to and publicly congratulate creative women on work well done. To accomplish this, the agency CEO must “value women and lead by example.”

Second, banish “pink accounts.” To eliminate “pink accounts,” or at least lessen the stigma associated with them, there needs to be more mixed gender teams. Additionally, the need to hire, retain and promote more women needs to become conscious. As one woman said, “give more opportunities to women,” and make those opportunities come to life on award-winning accounts.

Third, stop glorifying all-nighters. The fact that women do not routinely stay all night does not mean that they are less dedicated. On the contrary, these data suggest that women are dedicated and well organized. Further, these data suggest that all-nighters may be more about reinforcing male status than about actual productivity.

Fourth, allow flexibility. Creativity can often be done anywhere. Enable all creatives, men and women alike, the ability to flex their creative muscle outside of the agency. Working from home or other non-agency environments could free women from the machismo environment that weighs them down. More important it could allow all creatives the ability to transform the way creative is produced, adding balance to their lives and bringing fresh perspectives to the art of creativity.

### **5.5. *Limitations, opportunities and closing thoughts***

This study has three primary limitations. First, the sample size is small. However, in this case context provides a reasonable explanation. The Peruvian advertising community is small. It has eleven advertising agencies of note with just 183 creatives and only 19 women making up just 10.4% of all creatives (Mensa, 2012). In fact, this study represents a high response rate of 50%; but it is, nonetheless, small. Second, Peru represents one South American country and it is only the fourth largest country in South America, behind Brazil, Colombia and Argentina. However, we also know Peru is predicted to have the highest growth in the coming years (Andina, 2014). Further, with this as a baseline study, expanding this research to other South American countries would be extremely useful and add much to our understanding of the dynamics within creative departments across Latin America. Third, this study explores only the perspectives of creative women. Future studies exploring creative men's perspectives, in Peru and across Latin America, could offer new and useful insights. Exploring the number of women in other departments within advertising agencies could offer another point of comparison. Additionally, insights could be gained by research exploring client experiences. However, we view this study as a foundation for Latin American perspectives on gender in creative; with the number of women in the creative departments at such dire lows beginning with women is imperative. Moving forward, broadening the range of insights may lead to better creative outcomes, ultimately leading to better return on investment for agencies and clients alike.

The introduction of new insights on the relationships between creative women and their clients is a unique contribution to the literature. Previous to this, no other study exploring women in creative had unearthed the nuances shared in this study, especially those related to the gendered aspects of these relationships. This is a significant contribution and suggests a new line of research to be explored, which could offer important insights into what makes female client/creative relationships work. Thus this study offers new insights that could impact agencies positive abilities to build and maintain successful long-lasting relationship with clients. Beyond this new line of research on client/creative relationships and the geographical opportunities discussed previously, this study also suggests two other possibilities for future research. First, a review of the advertising educational system in Peru might offer insights into whether they are, in fact, gatekeepers limiting the number of women entering creative. Second, a longer-term study tracking women as they leave creative, which looks for patterns that could be used to draft systemic changes to help keep women in creative and support their advancement.

In closing, the creative women interviewed for this study were often surprised to learn that the other women had similar experiences. Likewise, they were relieved to learn that they are not alone. Let the words of these women remind us that, "evidence of a glass ceiling for women is abundant" (Lemons, 2003: 248). Let us also not allow their brave testimony to fade into the pages of academic obscurity or allow their "emotional intelligence and

understanding (of) the consumer” to be squandered. With female shoppers driving consumption (Luengas & Velandia-Morales, 2012), let this work be a call to action, a call to make a positive difference for creative women in Peru, in South America and across the world.

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