

Effects of the Digital Age on Intercultural Communication:
An Analysis of Mexico's Multicultural Tourism Campaign Material

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Abstract:

Standardization and localization methods of cross-cultural strategic communication are investigated through the Mexican Tourism Board's most recent campaign. As globalization spreads, and the internet gives multicultural audiences access to nearly all marketing material, standardization appears to be a more useful technique; however, research still shows that no two cultures are identical and must be targeted accordingly. This study produced many of the methods used in tourism advertising including the use of vivid imagery to provide the viewer with part of the actual experience of traveling to the destination, as well as standardization techniques such as minimal verbal language and culturally neutral non-verbal communication.

Introduction:

Even in an era of rapid globalization, most experts in intercultural communication insist that cross-border messages need to strategically reflect the values and interests of a specific audience. At the same time, we all can recognize that the world is becoming a smaller and smaller place, there seems to be a McDonalds or a soon to be opened Starbucks on just about any corner of our planet. And yet from multiple language campaigns to culturally tailored menus, cultural adaption is still key to global success. So, to standardize or localize, that is the question.

This study explores this concern by examining the Mexican Tourism Board's recently launched campaign, "Mexico the Place You Thought You Knew," and looks at how a single campaign can reach multiple culturally distinct audiences effectively and yet maintain a consistent brand image. This subject's relevance is clear at a time when nearly all organizations are multicultural in some sense. Although globalization has worked in favor of promoting understanding between groups that are culturally diverse, those who originate messages must

consider the many outstanding differences of their receivers that require attention in order to be effective in culturally diverse settings.

Significant research has been done in this area to develop ways to have a successful multicultural taskforce within a company using Hofstede's (2001) pioneering work on cultural differences. This study uses Hofstede's work to analyse the promotion of cross-cultural marketing and public relations material to the targeted audience of potential tourists for the same product or service in one or multiple campaigns and in one or multiple languages.

The focus of this study is timely as it takes on the tourism industry in Mexico, which constitutes 8% of Mexico's GDP, is the nation's third largest source of revenue and has taken a number of beatings in recent years due to the H1N1 flu scare and the current drug violence (Beaubien 2009). In May of 2009, the H1N1 flu scare was in full force in Mexico and tourists who weren't able to cancel their plans found themselves in a very different Mexico. Many hotels closed temporarily and the minister of tourism, Rodolfo Elizondo, was predicting tourism to drop to "almost zero" which could devastate Mexico's economy (Beaubien 2009). In recent months the struggle against the drug cartels has escalated leaving nearly 30,000 Mexicans killed in drug related violence, and cities once known for peace have become danger zones (Sakur 2010). Additionally, Americans are constantly bombarded with news stories of deaths in Mexico and even the US government has issued a travel warning for Mexico leaving many Americans happy to stay home or find another place to go for vacation.

In July of 2010 the Mexican Tourism Board launched a strategic campaign to revitalize tourism in Mexico and to revamp Mexico's brand called, "Mexico the Place You Thought You Knew." This research analyzes the campaign material for Canada and the United States, and one of the campaign's products, "Rutas de Mexico," whose videos have been promoted

internationally. How this campaign is presented to audiences and what kind of localization or standardization techniques were implemented in order to effectively reach audiences in an economically viable way will be discussed. Ultimately, an audience for such a campaign is universal as promotional material is available on the Internet and therefore worldwide. As a result, any marketing material should be created in such a way recognizing that due to today's distribution channels, the universality of the message may be essential. This study found that the Mexican Tourism Board developed an effective message through use of the natural beauty of Mexico in still photographs and video, however, some standardization and localization was discovered in the campaign material appropriately.

This study was conducted through a qualitative and quantitative content analysis. The content analyzed and coded according to a predetermined set of guidelines was advertisements and videos created for this campaign.

Method:

This study will analyze the Mexican Tourism Board's strategic communications campaign, "Mexico the Place You Thought You Knew" and attempts to identify the practices of localization and standardization through the campaign material to build an understanding for how these campaigns are adapted to their audiences. The methods used will be both critical content analysis and the constant comparative method also known as grounded theory.

In a grounded theory study, the theory is developed out of the data as it is produced which is a cyclical method (Daymon & Holloway 2002, p. 117). This study does not completely follow the grounded theory method; however, it gives the researcher a way to explore the content in order to develop categories for the content analysis.

Content analyses, according to Rosenberry and Vicker (2009), are objective, systematic, quantitative and manifest. This means that categories must be set so that all countable items fit into a category; there must be such a way to code the content that any coder could get the exact same results as another coder. Ultimately, one should end up with numerical values as results (p. 43). Wimmer & Dominick (2006), also call this method systematic and state, “Systematic evaluation simply means that one and only one set of guidelines is used for evaluation through the study” (p. 151). Wimmer & Dominick (2006) also note that objectivity is another important goal, however, it is often hard to perfect as each category must be defined in a somewhat subjective manner by the researcher (p. 151).

This method is begun by developing a research question and defining how each construct fits with this research question. Next, categories must be created along with rules to make sure all counted elements have a category to fit into, and these “rules” for the operationalization must be documented so that any coder could end up with the same results as another. And finally a sample must be selected (Rosenberry & Vicker 2009, p. 43).

This study is both quantitative and qualitative, as the countable items have been determined subjectively by the researcher to understand how culture interacts with the practice of standardization and local tailoring in these specific campaign materials. In order to analyze the content in the most objective manner possible, all available videos and print advertisements for “Mexico the Place You Thought You Knew” and 14 videos from “Rutas de Mexico” were selected at random to be coded according to differences and similarities in culture and potential reasons to standardize discussed in the literature review.

The research began in an explorative manner. The researcher viewed a number of videos both introducing “Mexico the Place You Thought You Knew,” targeting American and Canadian

audiences, and videos being used worldwide to promote the new product for this campaign “Rutas de Mexico.” After viewing these videos, the researcher developed coding categories to count in the videos. These categories include: whether language is used in the advertisement, whether it is written or spoken and whether it is in English or Spanish, the images featuring people in the advertisements (whether they are tourists or locals which was determined by both appearance and what they were doing in the videos), culturally symbolic images used, whether the advertisement promotes an individual getaway to relax and rejuvenate or overcome a personal challenge or whether it promotes getting closer to family and friends through travel, the use of natural beauty and architectural beauty and the beauty of food, and how the advertisements call their audience to action.

Literature review:

To standardize or to localize, that is the question. This study begins by analyzing the literature and recent events in favor of the standardization of strategic campaigns, which is followed by an analysis of research on the importance of campaign adaptation to effectively reach culturally distinct target markets.

The world as a whole suffered a great economic crisis and as organizations recover, marketing financing is still being cut leaving communication professionals looking for new ways to effectively reach their audiences on a tighter budget. For many organizations, campaign standardization looks like a good place to start, and with the proper research done up front, has the potential to be a very effective method.

Reasons to standardize campaigns are generally based on the following factors: financial reasons, consistent branding, and westernization of cultures leaving the needs of the masses similar enough that environmental differences are of lesser importance (Okazaki, Taylor, & Zou,

S. (2006), Sinclair & Wilken (2009), Hornikx, van Meurs & de Boer (2010) and Bulmer & Buchanan-Oliver (2006).

According to Okazaki, Taylor & Zou (2006), the question is not should organizations standardize their communication materials and messages, but *how* should they standardize them (17). The discussion of localization vs. standardization has left many organization working to find a balance in “glocalization” with the goals of taking care of the bottom line *and* meeting the demands of localization (Sinclair & Wilken 2009, p. 148). Pure standardization no longer exists, as its use was not as successful as hoped for many organizations, but standardization in not gone from strategic communication tactics. Rodrigo Esponda (2010), Midwest director of the Mexican Tourism Board, works with a team to maintain the overall message of a new campaign and then tailor it to the audience for which it is intended (personal communication, November 9, 2010).

Many organizations determine the level of standardization employed according to the following factors: Environmental, strategic and factors related to the internal characteristics of the organization. Environmental factors include similarity in customers and market, which requires strategic standardization (Okazaki, Taylor & Zou 2006 p. 19). Organizations have done this by grouping similar audiences together, which does not necessarily mean neighboring nations, rather, culturally similar nations. One method is called, “country clustering,” which could mean instead of regionally grouping all of Latin America together, grouping countries with similar cultures such as France and Argentina (Sinclair & Wilken 2009, p. 150). Coca-cola had a global standardization strategy in the 1980’s, but when the company saw sales drop in the 1990’s, it was restructured and now works out of 13 hubs that create a number of standardized ads for a campaign that can easily be adapted to the 200 countries in which the company operates (Sinclair & Wilken 2009, p. 150). Similarly, McDonalds creates global television commercial

“templates” that leave space for “local touches” (such as use of local pop icons) to be added as needed (Sinclair & Wilken 2009, p. 152).

Globalization gives a strong argument for standardization. McDonalds can now be found all over the world, and although menus and prices are often tailored to bring in the local population, the golden arches, toys with happy meals and friendly playgrounds have become part of many children’s childhood. This in turn makes the great fast-food chain feel less like a foreign enterprise and makes it a part of the local culture (Sinclair & Wilken 2009, p. 153). A study conducted by Hornikx, van Meurs & de Boer (2010) found that even standardized language, (the part that most of us think requires localization for comprehension) can be more effective than localized translation. In this study, English language slogans were preferred or seen as equally effective as their translations in the local language (p. 185). This study included comprehension of the slogan; however, previous studies have shown that comprehension is less important than the symbolism of a foreign language in an advertisement. For example, audiences associate English with prestige and modernism and French with beauty and elegance without ever understanding a word of the language (Hornikx, van Meurs & de Boer 2010, p. 173).

Much of the research conducted in regards to why communication must be adapted in accordance to the culture of the receiver of the message is based on Geert Hofstede’s (2001) study of culture. He developed five dimensions in order to understand the cultures of over 50 nations. These dimensions are: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity and long-term vs. short-term. For the purposes of this study, only two of these five will be elaborated upon.

Power distance looks at the hierarchy between people in a society. For example, Mexico and most Latin American countries have a very high power distance index (Hofstede 2001, p.

216). This can be seen in the respect shown to elders and superiors particularly through language. Many languages have levels of formality for the pronoun, “you,” something that a low PDI country such as the United States does not have. Low PDI countries expect equality between individuals; high PDI countries expect an order in inequality to know that everyone has his or her place (Hofstede 2001, p. 98).

Individualism and collectivism is measured in many ways, but ultimately comes down to the importance placed on the individual (what’s best for me) vs. the group (what’s best for the group). The United States, Canada, and much of Western Europe fall into the primary category while Latin American and Arab countries fall into the latter. Hofstede measured individualism by such things as the importance an individual places on personal time, freedom, challenge, and use of skills (in daily life) (Hofstede 2001, p. 214). Individualistic cultures expect members to look after themselves, while collectivist cultures protect their group for “ultimate loyalty” (Hofstede 2001, p. 216).

In a 2008 study, Kang and Mastin used Hofstede’s principles to analyze the effectiveness of English versions of national tourism websites. They determined that the sites most similar to the United State’s culture (showing low PDI in “family friendliness” and availability to everyone and high IDV scores) ranked the highest as tour sites (p. 20). They therefore proved their theory that sites that are that are receiver-culture oriented, rather than sender-culture oriented, are the most financially successful. Interestingly for this study, Mexico was one of only three countries that appeared to not be receiver oriented and yet was highly ranked in sales. The authors believed that this could be caused by the country’s “... affluent natural and cultural tourism resources,” which leave the tourism organization less aware of the need go deeper into strategic communication to attract potential tourism customers (Kang & Mastin 2008, p. 18).

Language is another key element of multicultural communication. Miscommunication of a verbal foreign language has left many communicators feeling silly such as Coca-cola's translation to a Chinese language as, "bite the wax tadpole" (Sinclair & Wilkin 2009, p. 148). It's not just verbal language that can trip up foreigners, *non-verbal* communication (more prevalent in high PDI cultures) can come in so many forms that communicators must take great care in sending their intended messages global.

Many Americans view Canada as closely linked to United States. However, when it comes to culture and communications there are some significant differences. Graves (1997) conducted a study that analyzed political marketing letters sent to American and Canadian households and discovered that each letter was directed to the cultural identity of each country (p. 238). These letters were a great example of the difference in PDI in American culture and Canadian culture through written language. The letters to Canadians began with formal introductions such as, "I am writing to inform you..." while the letters to Americans often began with, "Dear friend" (Graves, 1997, p. 243-244).

Malcolm Gladwell writes in his book, *Outliers* (2008), of how intercultural miscommunication can turn deadly. This example looks at power distance as well as high context vs. low context cultures. In a low context culture such as American culture, messages are expected to be sent in a direct manner that is easily decoded. High context cultures, such as many Asian, Arab and Latin American cultures, send messages not just through verbal transmission, but there is a stronger emphasis on *how* the message is expressed (through tone, pauses, gestures, etc) (Ting-Toomey & Chung 2005, 169). A prime example is this stereotypical conversation between a male and female: Male: "Are you okay?" Female: "I'm fine." Is she really fine? As far as the male is concerned, that is what she said, so she must be. If this occurs on a micro level

within the same culture and language, one can imagine the effects this could have in a global context. Gladwell takes this notion and makes a case for why the qualities of an American pilot may have helped in avoiding the Avianca flight 052 crash.

The Colombian Avianca flight crew was to fly into New York, a place that is notorious for pushy people. The first officer requested permission to land saying the plane was low on gas (as all planes should be by the time they land), but was quickly offended by the air traffic controller's curt response after which he kept quiet (Gladwell 2008 p. 208). First of all there was a language miscommunication, they were not just low on gas, they were *out* of gas, and there was also a miscommunication due to the fact that Colombia is a high context culture and the United States is a low context culture. The flight crew saw themselves as receivers responsible for interpreting the message and any hidden contextual messages leading them to believe that the ATC was mad at the crew (Ting-Toomy & Chung, 2005, p. 172). The ATC, coming from a low context culture, saw him or herself as responsible for sending a message that was easy to decode (meaning there was no hidden meaning in the response) and was not angry with the pilot, he was merely doing his job and hypothetically, an American would be have interpreted that correctly (Ting-Toomy & Chung, 2005, p. 172). The cause of the accident was determined to be a lack of fuel.

Non-verbal communication exists in all cultures; however, learning the non-verbal communications of another culture can be similar to learning a foreign language with no set rules, particularly in a high context culture that values non-verbal communication more than a low context culture. The following are some of the many elements of non-verbal communication according to Ting-Toomey & Chung (2005, p. 203-215):

Physical appearance: height, skin color, shape as well as clothing, which can show the time period, culture or status of a person.

Paralanguage: not only what we say but how we say it including accents, pitch, volume, etc.

Facial Expressions: Basic facial expressions are easy to code such as anger, sadness, surprise etc.

Gestures: can be used in place of the verbal message, or to help illustrate the verbal message.

(There is a danger with gestures used across cultures since American gestures often have different potentially vulgar or overtly intimate meanings in other parts of the world.)

Boundary regulations: often thought of as “personal space” which differs in distance between cultures.

Important elements of any strategic communication campaign are the images selected to promote the product or service. In certain circumstances, images (another form of non-verbal communication) can make a stronger impression and be more persuasive than any form of verbal communication. According to a study conducted by Caldas-Coulthard (2008) specifically on Brazil’s use of scantily clad women on beautiful beaches in tourism ads, part of the tourist experience must be offered through the advertisement (in videos or photographs) in order to promote the experience itself (p. 455). For many of these “larger ticket items,” images relay honesty to consumers. “Non-verbal messages can oftentimes express what verbal message cannot express and are [therefore] assumed to be more truthful than verbal messages” (Ting-Toomey & Chung 2005, p. 199). In a multicultural context where words from one culture may fall short in marketing a particular product in another, the images can speak for themselves and help the sender to avoid having to create multiple verbal messages for multiple groups.

Bulmer & Buchanan-Oliver (2006) claim that images are useful for international advertising, as they *can* be understood; the only problem is that the sender must understand *how* they are understood (p. 60). In order to understand an image, the viewer will refer to language, and cultural traditions to make sense of it. An ad that uses the story-line of little red riding hood, for example, will be misinterpreted in a non-western culture that doesn't know that story (Bulmer & Buchanan-Oliver (2006, p. 65). There may be no verbal message to translate, however, the images must be culturally respectful and effective for the target audience. Young, bikini clad women in Brazilian ads might not translate as well into Arab culture as they do into American culture. Arab cultures value the elders far more than youth. Many Arab campaigns are centered on the idea of gaining wisdom from the older generation, and not youthful, Western appeals (Kanso, Sinno, & Adams 2001, p.73). An image may be worth 10,000 words, but it is important to understand that those words will not be universally the same (Bulmer & Buchanan-Oliver 2006, p. 58).

What all communication requires, particularly intercultural strategic communication is research. Six years ago, Macnamara (2004) developed a study on the importance of research in cross-cultural communications. At that time he said that research was public relation's Achilles heel, and that often it lacked funding, and time, but more specifically, the PR models did not support it (p. 329). His point is still raised today, but much research has been conducted in the field since then as professional communicators become more aware of the importance of cultural research before attempting to implement a strategic campaign in another culture.

Research question

Consumers are becoming more similar culturally and easier for marketers to reach and yet there are still multitudes of cultural differences that according to previously conducted research should

require organizations to promote the same material in different ways to different groups.

Combining the needs of cultural differences and consistent branding, can the marketing material of the campaign, “Mexico the place you thought you knew,” and its product, “Rutas de Mexico,” be accurately understood universally and does it promote a culturally effective experience to more than one cultural group?

More specifically, the research will answer the following questions: will the advertisements focus on the natural beauty of Mexico in images? Will images/symbols be used that are not universally understood? Will the advertisements have minimal verbal communication? Will the advertisements promote both individual desires and communal ones? As Caldas-Coulthard (2008) suggests all tourism advertizing must do, will these advertisements offer the viewer part of the experience in the promotional material itself?

Findings

Print Advertisements for Mexico the Place You Thought You Knew. Four print ads were coded.

All contained English text, and the tagline, “Mexico the Place You Thought You Knew” and the logo, MÉXICO. All of the images featured the natural beauty of Mexico, and one featured the historical/architectural beauty. The only two elements that could be culturally specific to North America were one reference to the Empire State Building and one image of a church.

Video Advertisements for Mexico the Place You Thought You Knew. Four television spots created for the target market of Americans and Canadians were coded. Three of the four videos showed a tourist off on an individual experience. One was to rejuvenate and relax, and the other two to challenge their own abilities (60%). Two of the four videos (40%) promoted a group experience, one with friends and the other with family. (See figure 3. in Appendix A.) Of the four videos only one (10%) focused on a local person, while there were nine (90%) instances of tourists

appearing in the advertisement. (See figure 1. in Appendix A.) All four videos strongly depicted the natural beauty of Mexico, and one portrayed the food. Three of the videos depicted tourists sharing a romantic experience with a partner. All of the videos had voiceovers in English and ended with the text, “Mexico the Place You Thought You Knew.”

Video Advertisements for Rutas de Mexico. The following 14 videos from the “Mexico The Place You Thought You Knew” campaign’s product, “Rutas de Mexico” were coded: Baja California, Baja California Sur, Chihuahua, Sinaloa, Jalisco, Michoacán, Queretaro, Yucatan, Guanajuato, Coahuila, Oaxaca, Colima, Nayarit, and Durango.

These videos contained no spoken language and only identical text introducing each video with the name of the state and ending with the logo “Vive México.” The people shown in these videos differed from the “Mexico The Place You Thought You Knew” videos. In these videos, there were 121 (66%) different images featuring local people and 61 (33%) different images featuring tourists. Of these images of tourists, 13 (40%) could be clearly coded as images of individuals relaxing and rejuvenating and/or challenging their own personal physical abilities while 19 (60%) of these images could be clearly defined as groups of either friends or families enjoying a vacation together. (See figure 3. in Appendix A.) Six of the 14 videos depicted tourists experiencing a romantic trip with a partner.

The strongest focus for all 14 videos was on footage of the natural beauty of Mexico, the architecture of the cities and historical sites. Only nine of the 14 videos displayed the foods and drinks of Mexico including tequila, wine, mole, tortillas and chili peppers.

Cultural symbols that were encountered in these videos included 14 different featured churches in 11 of the 14 videos, eight different featured crosses, four depictions of the Madonna, 3 depictions of Jesus on the cross and a child angel. Additionally there were 23 young and

beautiful European-Hispanic looking women who were shown standing alone gazing directly at the camera in 12 of the 14 videos. (See chart B. in appendix A.)

The calls to action varied on each of these advertisements. All of the print ads contained the text, “Discover the routes of Mexico at visitmexico.com, the videos in English read, “Discover more at visitmexico.com, and the videos for “Rutas de Mexico” had no call to action apart from the Vive Mexico logo at the end of each video.

Discussion

Language: Language is clearly an important element of any communication, which in general must be modified to the common language of the culture. The advertisements that were focused on Canadian and American publics contained solely English language as these two audiences have a majority of English speakers. However, the videos for the “Rutas” product contained no spoken or written language and could therefore be used across many cultures from the perspective of language. A study by Hornikx, van Meurs & de Boer (2010) mentioned in the literature review suggests that standardized English slogans can be equally or more effective in a country with a different common language as they often act as symbols for modernity. However, with text and voiceovers as extensive as they are in these ads, the symbolic element would lose its effect due to a lack of comprehension.

Another example of the use of language in these articles is with the logos México and Vive México. Both of these are the Spanish spelling of Mexico (with the accent over the “e”) and of course “vive” is also Spanish. According to the Midwest director of the MTB, Rodrigo Esponda, the logo was created this way because the Mexican Tourism Board felt it would be interesting to people of other languages and nations. In accordance with the previously

mentioned study, it is most likely symbolic to see a logo in the native language. This logo now appears on all strategic communication material.

Country clustering: One of the standardization techniques employed in the campaign is “country clustering.” The United States and Canada have been grouped together for this campaign partly because most of Mexico’s international tourists come from those regions, and also because there is a similar audience in these two nations (even though a previous study analyzed the differences between these two nations, they are clearly more similar than they are different.) The similarities in the people could be seen in the videos from “Mexico the Place You Thought You Knew.” From the four videos, 10 images were coded as featuring a group of people or an individual person. Of these 10, only one featured a local person and the other nine (or 90%) featured mostly white tourists. In the “Rutas de Mexico” videos, there was a much stronger focus on who a tourist will see when going to Mexico, rather than who will be going. 66% of the people featured in these videos were locals while only 33% were tourists (who were again mostly white). When using a single advertisement to reach many culturally different audiences, it is harder to stereotype the kind of tourist in the video. Also, Caldas-Couthard suggests that seeing visuals of natives helps viewers “experience” the culture before even deciding to travel to the destination (2008, p. 454). These are two potential reasons for focusing on the locals rather than on the type of person who will be travelling to Mexico in more standardized campaign material.

Individualism-collectivism: As expected, the videos targeting the American and Canadian publics showed a stronger focus on travelling to rejuvenate oneself and/or challenge one’s own physical abilities and have an experience that was special for the individual. 60% of the images of tourists showed tourists taking care of their individual wants and desires, while 40% focused on a group experience of friends or family. This is not a significant difference for the number of

ads analyzed, however, numerically it does coincide with Hofstede's categorization of the United States and Canada as nations more focused on individual needs than collective and therefore shows that these videos were created receiver-culture oriented. The videos from "Rutas de Mexico," depict exactly the reverse, 60% of images of people promoted the group experience while 40% promoted the individual one. Again these percentage differences are not very significant leading the research to prove our hypothesis that there would be an equal focus on both the group and the individual experience as these videos will be seen worldwide by both collective and individualistic cultural groups.

High context- low context: The calls to action on these advertisements were the only example of high vs. low context communication. The videos and print ads directed at Canadians and Americans had a more direct call to action than the "Rutas" videos, which had no call to action at all. The four print and video ads ended by directing the viewer to "discover more at visitmexico.com." Meanwhile, the "Rutas" videos merely ended with the logo, "Vive Mexico."

Our hypothesis predicted a great use of natural imagery, which was not countable due to the fact that the majority of each video and print ad focused far more on the natural, architectural and historical beauty of Mexico than on the people themselves. As Kang & Mastin (2008) noted in their analysis of international tourism websites, Mexico's site did not fit the profile for an effective site, however they assumed that due to the abundance of natural beauty in Mexico, it was appreciated equally as those that did fit the low PDI profile. The use of imagery is most likely what makes these ads so effective cross culturally. Not only are they beautiful, as Caldas-Coulthard (2008) and Ting-Toomey & Chung (2005) say, the ads give part of the experience of travel in the video itself and through imagery are seen as more truthful depictions of what the tourist will actually get by going to Mexico.

Cultural Symbols: Beyond language, other symbols were encountered in these ads that might not translate as clearly and effectively across cultures. The majority of these symbols were Christian symbols such as churches (which are abundant in Mexico and could as equally fit into the beautiful architecture category), crosses, and religious figures such as the Virgin Mary, Jesus and angels. These symbols might not translate as well into a culture with a strongly distinct religion; however, the videos strive to show Mexican culture, and religion has become a powerful part of the culture.

Another image that the researcher determined was a symbol was that of a young Hispanic-looking woman. The use of images of the young female body was discussed in Caldas-Couthard's study of Brazilian tourism advertising (2008). She writes that, "In many of the adverts investigated, the persuasion is conveyed through the feminine body, often exoticised and/or eroticised – the journey implies an exotic encounter and perhaps even a sexual encounter" (p. 457). Additionally she writes that when the person in the image is looking directly at the viewer, the image is making a demand of the viewer, otherwise, the image is offering the viewer something (p. 458). In nearly all of the examples from these videos, the woman turned to look directly at the camera.

Limitations and future research:

There were not as many videos from "Mexico the Place You Thought You Knew" available to analyze as there were from "Rutas de Mexico" therefore only a selection was analyzed of the second group that in number was not equal to that of the first group. Also, this research cannot be applied to all nations as the cultural focus was mostly on Western European nations and the Americas.

Future research could take on studying the reactions of people from different cultural groups to standardized and localized campaigns and learn about the effects of globalization on the need for localization in future campaigns according to the responses of the participants.

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Appendix A

Figure 1.

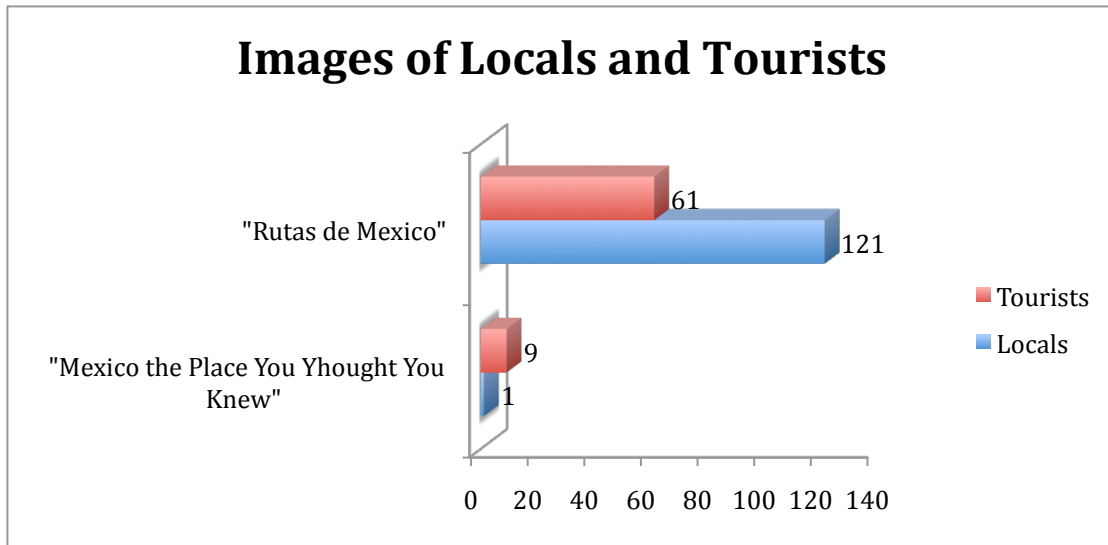


Figure 2.

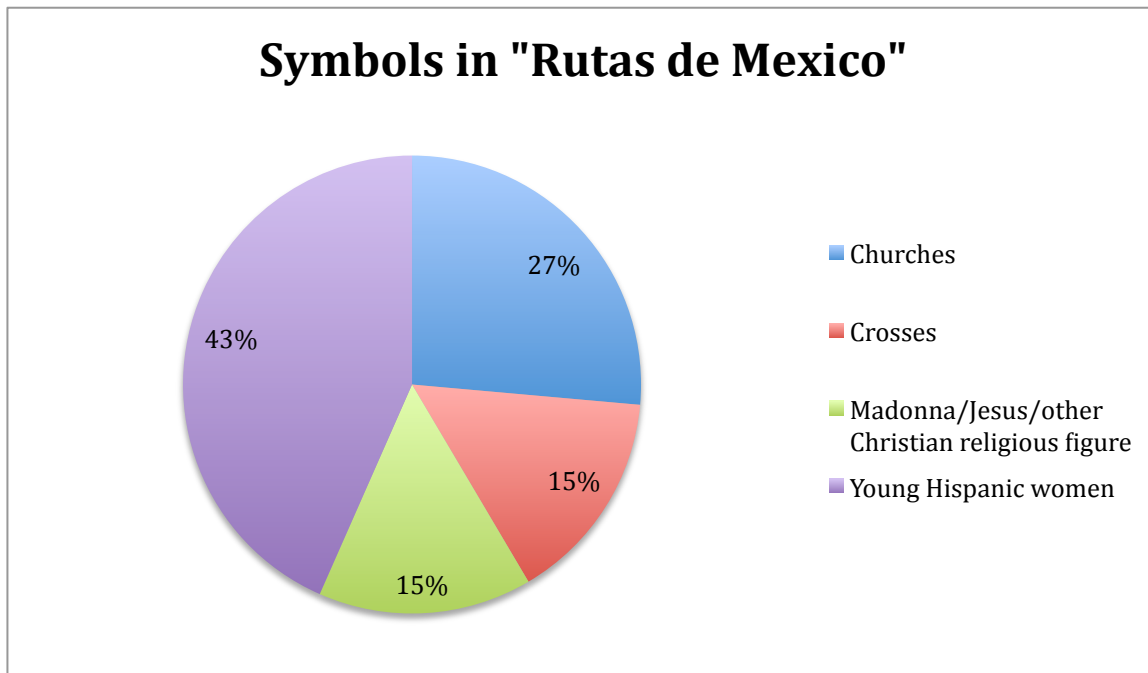


Figure 3.

