



**THE
SEXUALIZATION
OF CHILDREN
THROUGH
ADVERTISING,
FASHION BRANDS
AND MEDIA**

**LA SEXUALIZACIÓN
INFANTIL EN LA
PUBLICIDAD Y LOS
ESTILISMOS DE
MARCAS Y MEDIOS DE
MODA INFANTIL**



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RESUMEN

La publicidad y los editoriales representan frecuentemente a los niños como adultos. ¿Son suficientes las leyes y códigos actuales para evitarlo? Este trabajo pretende revisar la regulación española correspondiente e identificar las características sexualizantes realizando diversas entrevistas a expertos en infancia, una encuesta a individuos del entorno infantil y un análisis de contenido de las páginas de publicidad y editoriales de moda en especiales de niños. Los resultados han mostrado que el menor goza de una protección legal reforzada frente a toda comunicación comercial que incluya contenido sexual, ya que éste puede perjudicar a su desarrollo psicofísico. Pero se requieren reclamaciones que apelen a esta regulación para que sea aplicada. Además, los niños están siendo sexualizados a través de nuevos formatos comerciales y nuevos ítems: maquillaje, accesorios y posturas y gestos provocativos.

Palabras clave

Sexualización; Menor; Moda; Editorial; Publicidad; Ley; Código ético.

ABSTRACT

Kids on advertising and editorials are often portrayed like adults. Are legal and ethical codes enough to avoid them? The double aim of this research is to review the regulation in Spain and to identify sexualizing characteristics through in-depth interviews to childhood experts, a survey among individuals from children environment and a content analysis of children commercial pages in fashion magazines. The results have showed that minor has a reinforced protection about every communication activity aimed to the trade of products that has a clearly sexual content because it can influence negatively in the psychophysical development. Nevertheless, complaints are needed to apply the regulation. Besides, children are sexualized in new formats added to conventional advertising and though new items related to makeup, hairstyles, accessories and provocative postures or gestures.

Keywords

Sexualization; Minor; Fashion; Editorial; Advertising; Law; Ethic code.

1. Introduction

The problem of the sexualization of children has stimulated debate last years, especially due to the activity of fashion brands and media. A turning point was the denounced advertising campaign of Cadeux in Vogue Paris (Periodista Digital, 2011) (Image 1). Besides, the controversy provoked by the campaigns where the sisters Fanning and the actress Mia Goth (Image 2) where involved –respectively designed by Marc Jacobs and Miu Miu (Instagram, 2015) and both inspired in The Lolita Myth-, have also contributed to the huge concern about the use and treatment of the underage by the collusion of renowned brands and media when broadcast this kind of campaigns.

Recently, the focus has changed from the adolescents to the children, spreading sexualizing images to social networks. For example, Millie Belle Diamond (Image 3), 14 months, has reached 115.000 followers in Instagram (2015) due to the fashion designing style of an adult that promotes luxury fashion brands. Another example of the same social network is the 9 years old model Kristina Pimenova (Image 4), followed by more than 700.000 people (Instagram, 2015). Her presence in the catwalk Barcelona 080 started the debate about the dangers of the exposure of the underage to this kind of spectacles (Pantaleoni & Rocabert, 2015).

In this sense, not only brands through conventional advertising but also editorials of fashion media are using eroticizing images of children. Facing this outlook, research is focused on the following question: are editorials sexualizing children more than advertising? If so, to what is due this trend? The suggested reasons revolve around values that luxury brands plan to communicate, taking into account that the initiative

is theirs. The concern is serious, and the media are conspiratorial in the communication of these images without thinking about the consequences for children and for the consumer society. There is no doubt that renowned fashion brands and fashion media are responsible for the declining society that shows because of the money they invest on this business.

Images 1 and 2. Cadeux Vogue Paris denounced and Miu Miu advertising banned in UK



Source: Image at Spanish journal Periodista Digital and Miu Miu profile at Instagram

In light of that situation, it turns out Justice has to establish enough mechanics to ban this type of actions. The legislator has always protected to the underage as a weak group of society, based on his special vulnerability to any stimuli, particularly from advertisement. Children are a special target whose criteria and preferences are not clearly defined yet. Are legal and ethical codes enough or is it necessary to regulate in a more specific and strict way?

Images 3 and 4. Images of babies and Kristina Pimenova's profile



Source: Instagram official profile of Labuarque and Kristina Pimenova

Society has already recognized that these images impact on the lives of children, taking into account that “childhood is a unique period of rapid physical and psychological development during which young people’s physical, mental and emotional health and well-being can be permanently affected for better or worse” (UNICEF, 2012). Save the Children, The UN Global Compact and UNICEF (The UN Global Compact, 2012; UNICEF, 2012) have elaborated a code named Children’s Rights and Business Principles (Image 5). On one hand, the code considers children a key stakeholder of business “as consumers, family members of employees, young workers and as future employees and business leaders (...) key members of the communities and environments in which business operates”. On the other hand, the code recognizes “children are the most marginalized and vulnerable members of society and this is evident from their lacking a public voice”.

Young workers are in this case models. There is a petition through Change.org to regulate industry by a woman who was abused as a child model. She advises that the apparent glamour of this profession hides a traumatic experience that has longed all

her life. Among the disadvantages, she stands: “foreign languages that she couldn’t understand, career decisions without proper guidance, work long hours many times late into the night”, but more important, “inappropriate sexual situations a fourteen years old is not prepare to handle” (Jennifer Sky, 2014). Some of the data show the big presence of underage at fashion industry: “54% of models begin working on or before the age of sixteen. Agencies start recruiting at age thirteen. Many of the pictures in your favorite fashion magazines are little girls dressed up to look like women”.

The objective of Children's Rights and Business Principles code (The UN Global Compact, 2012; UNICEF, 2012) is to encourage enterprises to put in practice their responsibility to protect human rights, which “requires business to both prevent harm and actively safeguard children’s interests”. Regarding to the aspect studied in our research, point six of the code determines that the corporate responsibility to respect includes: Ensuring that communications and marketing do not have an adverse impact on children’s rights... in assessing whether there is or may be an adverse impact on children’s rights and taking action to integrate and act upon the findings, consider factors such as: children’s greater susceptibility to manipulation, and the effects of using unrealistic or sexualized body images and stereotypes”. The way to promote the code was a video starring by children (The UN Global Compact, 2015). At point six, a boy makes the following request: “make sure your marketing and advertising does not make us feel bad or discriminate us”.

The critic about promoting “the premature sexualization through all kind of advertising messages” worried the British Government of UK, who put in charge of experts the report of the topic (Bailey, 2011).

Spontaneous comments on Internet have also gather up some critics about the videos that sexualize children. For instance, the two dancers Larsen Thompson and Taylor Hatala, 14 and 11 years old respectively, are classified “too sexualized at their age” (S MODA, 2015).

Particularly in Spain there are some other data from the consequences of these images on children. A research from Valencia University revealed that “childhood of Spanish is being reduced little by little and kids adopt adults’ behavior since 11 years old” (Cantalejo, 2011).

Image 5. UN video of Children’s Rights and Business Principles



Source: The UN Global Compact official channel at Youtube

Another experimental research that has measured the impact of fashion images on children was named “Children versus fashion” (Image 6). Domínguez (2015), a visual artist and an activist, showed pictures of fashion luxury advertising to some children.

Kids' comments about what they saw on images of a woman were related to the insane appearance: "she seems scared", "it is like she is poor", "she needs a first aid kit to get healed", and "maybe she is drunk", "she seems to have an illness", "maybe she took some pills with drugs or stuff like that", "I would like to be that girl". About the question "how do you think she is feeling?", the answers were: "alone", "frightened" or "hungry", "maybe she had a fight with someone and she is feeling guilty", "it looks like she is crying", "maybe she is about to die or she fainted" "she is with her eyes closed like if she was dead or passed out, "she could be hungry and she could die".

Regarding to a group of women, children identify the violence: "a lots of ladies fighting each other", "they are bad and the other girls are trying to stop them and call the police", "I'd tell them to stop fighting because they could be friends and talk it out", "three girls had a fight and one of them has passed out", "two dead girls on the road because they have been run over by a van". Nevertheless, pictures of men are interpreted by kids in a different way: "look like heroes", "he is a superhero", "happy", "spies or the FBI", "they are studying to go to the university", "I think it is a corporation and that one is the boss", "I think it is a very good company because people are happy and it's very pretty".

Dominguez's project has been published by Elle, GQ, Cosmopolitan and other lifestyle magazines all over the world. Besides, she has collaborated in some other initiatives that point fashion industry as a responsible for social concern on. For instance, in order to support the request of Change.org to ban websites pro anorexia, she prepared a performance on Madrid's subway between two girls who argue about how to lose weight by vomiting. She concluded the low concern for this mortal illness

on Spain because nobody took part on the damaging conversation. She has also done a performance where women simulated the postures of models at real fashion advertising, most of them ridiculous but also worrying.

Image 6. "Children vs. Fashion": an experiment about children's perception of advertising



Source: Yolanda Dominguez channel at Youtube

2. Objectives

The first aim of this research is the analysis of the current legal and ethical regulation in Spain in order to assess if it provide the necessary mechanisms to avoid the abusive and harmful sexualization.

The main purpose is to guarantee the rights, integrity and interests of the underage against the business and profitability of luxury brands and fashion media derived from sexualization.

The second goal is the analysis of the advertising for childlike fashion developed by luxury fashion brands and the childlike editorial in fashion magazines provided by the special number for kids published by Telva, Vogue and Hola in 2014. It would be determined if the image showed contribute to the sexualization of childhood and if the communications media are accomplice of this behavior.

3. Methodology

To aim the objectives, the exploratory design of the research is structured in two parts: 1) A on field study conducted to revise the current regulation to protect childhood not only from the abusive and harmful use by media but also from the damaging effects that these images can generate specially in children's target, and 2) an empirical research mixed qualitative-quantitative that combines the in depth interview, the half-structured survey and the content analysis of the advertising pages of luxury fashion brands with children fashion lines and the fashion design pages at women's lifestyle special editions.

Regarding to the empirical research:

Firstly, eight in-depth interviews with childhood experts (parents, educators, psychologist, lawyers, sociologist and styling creative) have been conducted. Then, in order to validate the results of the in-depth interviews, an online survey completed by 144 individuals belonged to children environment was conducted. Finally, the researchers have carried out a content analysis of the children fashion design pages and advertising pages from the luxury fashion brands with children fashion lines spread across the "children special edition" numbers of women magazines. In

particular, 193 pages with 414 images of children have been analyzed. Some of the pages belong to children fashion designs created by the magazines themselves and some of the advertising pages portrayed children fashion lines of traditionally luxury fashion brands for adults.

The choice of the formats (every number of 2014 for children special edition" numbers of the magazines *Telva*, *Vogue* and *Hola*) and pages analyzed (advertising of luxury fashion brands with children fashion lines and the fashion design pages) are based on the results obtained in the first stages of the empirical research: in depth interviews and survey. In relation to the content analysis, it has been applied according to the items identified as sexualizing in those stage of the empirical research. The resulting scale has been used as several authors indicate when content analysis of any communication format (Sanz de la Tajada, 1994; and Graff et al., 2013). That is, it has been identified the number of appearance of each item from the scale in each analyzed image (determining in each case the studied brand and the child's sex depicted in each image). After evaluating all images of the pages chosen for the research, the corresponding statistical analysis has been carried out based on the registered frequencies.

4. Content

4.1. Legal and ethical regulation of digital advertising for children

4.1.1. Concept and protection of the minor from the sexualisation

The article 39 of The Spanish Constitution guarantees the social, economic and legal protection of the family, specially, of the minor. The protection to the minor is a constant concern of the legislator, and that has been proved through the ratification of the diverse International Treaties. Among them, it can be outlined Convention of the Children's Rights, United Nations, November 20th 1989, in which the prominence of the minor in civil life is recognized (UNICEF, 2006). Therefore, from an advertorial approach, the Law 1/1996 January 15, Legal Protection of the Minor (from this point forward LOPJM), legal text recently modified by the Law 26/2015, July 28th of modification of the system to protect infancy and adolescence, allows to guarantee a full protection of the minor in Spain.

Although the age of majority is planned to be when children reach eighteen, through the minority there are two turning points delimited between twelve and sixteen. At the age of twelve children are considered to have got a maturity enough to be listened by a Court and at the age of sixteen children can be given the emancipation.

From an ethical point of view, the section n) of the article 1 in the Online Trust Code (from this point on, CCOL) establishes a distinction when it comes to the concept of minor. On one hand, the minor is every physical person minor than fourteen; on the other hand, the minor is the adolescent whose age includes between fourteen and

eighteen. Besides, the point one of the III Section in the Auto regulation Code about Television and Infancy (from this point forward, CACTI), establishes a protection for the childhood. Particularly, there is a reinforced preservation for the target under twelve. Consequently, children under twelve should be specially defended because its maturity to take important decisions is reduced and there are highly vulnerable.

Finally, on June 20th 2012, the European Parliament published a Report related to the sexualization of girls, among six and thirteen. It considers that in this stage the signs about sexualization can influence negatively in the psychophysical development of them, distort their relations with equal and damage their feelings and self-esteem, even to provoke food disorders. The report sets out a series of recommendations, which include the prohibition of the use of children as brand ambassadors and control children's access to sexualized advertising content.

4.1.2. Concept of digital and audiovisual advertisement

From the legal and the ethic point of view, not only the legislator but also the auto regulation organism has been generous to delimit the concept of advertisement. In Spain an example is the Law 34/1988 November 11th, of Advertising (from this point on LGP) as a law that regulates advertising as a general rule. Secondly, the Law 34/2002 July 11th, of services of information society and electronic commerce (from this point forward, LSSI), as a special rule, regulates digital advertising and Law 7/2010, of March 31 th, General Audiovisual Communication (from this point on LGCA), specially regulating the digital and audiovisual advertising respectively. All these pieces of legislation provide for very broad concepts of business communication.

All these legislative texts prepare very wide concepts of “commercial communication”. Thus, the article 2 LGP defines “advertising” as “every way of communication that aims to the direct or indirect trade of goods and services”. Moreover, the section f) of the Appendix LSSI defines “commercial communication” as all way of communication directly or indirectly aimed to the promotion of the image, the goods or services of an enterprise, organization or person”. Finally, paragraph 24 of Article 2 establishes that LGCA commercial communication all the images or sounds designed to promote, directly or indirectly, the goods, services or image of a natural or legal entity pursuing an economic activity.

From an ethical perspective, the deontological rule 1 at Advertising Behavior of Autocontrol Code (from this point forward, CCP), applied as a general rule to the commercial advertising, establishes that the Code “will be applied to every communication activity that encourages directly or indirectly the trade of goods and/or services, or the boosting of brands and commercial names”. It excluded as advertising the domain name, email address, online public relations, editorial content of Web pages, institutional advertising and political propaganda.

Moreover, the section p) of the article 1 CCOL, as a special ethic rule that regulates digital commercial communications, determines that “advertising” is “all way of communication that plans to promote directly or indirectly the trade of goods and/or services excluding as advertising the domain name, the mail, public relations on Internet, editorial on Websites, institutional advertising and politic advertising.

To sum up, it can be said that every communication activity, in any digital format, that promotes directly or indirectly the trade of goods and/or services, and the boosting of brands and commercial names, can be named as digital advertising.

When it comes to the childish advertising, we should differentiate between (i) the regulation of the use of a minor as the protagonist of the message and (ii) the regulation of the advertising of products and/or services targeted to the minor. Taking into account this classification, it could happen that in an advertisement the two elements, that is, advertising targeted to and stared in by minors, coincide. This advertising would be more effective because the minor is used to sell something to another minor.

With that being said, the use of the image of a child on Internet with a commercial purpose, meaning, with the objective of boosting the trade of goods and/or services, and the boosting of brands and commercial names, the catalogues of fashion brands for children at websites can be considered digital advertising.

Secondly, the editorial of childlike fashion and any other digital content that directly or indirectly promotes the bought of clothes, footwear and accessories targeted to the minor, posted on blogs, social networks, digital magazines and reviews that has a digital version, also should be classified as digital advertising.

If an underage person has the leading role of a digital advertisement or is targeted for a digital advertisement, there is no doubt that all the legal and ethical normative provided by our set of laws should be applied to guard childhood. The debate focuses on the existence of the legal and ethical rules enough to ban the digital advertising that sexualizes, erotizes or represent the minor as if he were and adult.

The question would be whether there is much debate legislation as sufficient ethical and legal or self-regulatory mechanisms that can target digital content sexualized, eroticized or provide a treatment of adult children in their advertising.

4.1.3. Regulation and self-regulation of advertising to children

Analyzing the legislation and codes of conduct that regulate children's advertising, we must affirm that it regulates general situations, without going into each case. The rules governing general premises include a multitude of situations that benefit from this postulation. Their interpretation and adaptation to the specific case shall be for the Judicature, the Advertising Jury, and even government agencies, among others, the Ministry of Telecommunications for the Information Society.

Articles 4 and 5 LOPJM, Article 30 of Law 3/1991 of 11 January on Unfair Competition (LCD), Articles 8 and 12a and Article 7 LSSI LGCA protect minors against all types of content that can be harmful morally or physically to the child. In addition, advertisers may be sanctioned if it can be proved that children are exposed to situations with a clearly sexual and / or erotic content, harming integration and moral development.

Moreover, the various codes of conduct, and more specifically, the Self-regulation Code on childhood contents requires both in the broadcasting of children's programs, and during their commercial breaks, to avoid messages or scenes of explicit violent or sexual content.

All the legal texts cited above anticipate the momentum of specific codes of conduct as well as self-regulatory mechanisms in order to prosecute and sanction advertising against infancy. In fact, on 19th December 2003, SETSI and Autocontrol entered an agreement establishing that within the self-regulatory framework, authorities and competent bodies should impulse, among the mass media, the creation of conduct codes aimed at limiting the access to images and digital contents harmful to minors.

Since now, there has been one complain on fashion advertising by the Advocate of Minor had provided a resolution on sexualization of children.

Up to now, that body has only had one case to rule on the lawfulness of an illegal advertisement that, according to Madrid Community Ombudsman and numerous complaints lodged by individuals, favored exploitation of sexual tourism, on depicting to minors in an advertisement of GIORGIO ARMANI, SPA, disseminated on Internet (Image 7).

Children Ombudsman of Madrid Community focuses the illegality of an advertising campaign on the following grounds: (i) that clothes worn by minors aged between eight and ten are not the most adequate for their age (ii) that makeup, and more specifically lips painted do not give an appropriate image of infancy, especially in the case of girls; (iii) and finally, just point out that with the commercial advertising of ARMANI JUNIOR the promotion of the kid line is not achieved, on the contrary sexual tourism and children abuse are promoted.

On their part, ARMANI JUNIOR defended their position in asserting (i) that, even though the protagonists of the advertisement were two minors, the claimed advertising was targeted at adults, and consequently the Ethical Standard 28 CCP,

aimed at children's advertising, is not applicable; (ii), That their advertisement does not contravene current legislation, neither constitutional values regarding the defense of minors; (iii), and, finally, that their advertisement does not attempt against decorum, public morals and good taste. In order to substantiate their claims, ARMANI brought in politicians and artists' opinions, etc., who asserted that minors' dignity was not violated.

Image 7. Armani Juniors' controversial advertisement



Source: Image of advertising at the Spanish journal 20 minutos.es (EFE, 2007)

The ruling of the Jury of Advertising, of 9th April 2007, that affirmed the legality of the campaign, said the following:

"On the other hand, we should bear in mind the nature of the product, that is, children's clothing. So, we must not lose sight of the fact that regarding

activities of promotion of children's fashion (fashion shows, presentations, advertisements, etc.) it is common ground that the boys and girls participating as models wear make-up and that their clothing is configured in a very striking way for the promotional act in which they sit. To what it must be added that the clothing worn by the girls appearing in the advertisement is but that which forms part of the spring collection of the advertising firm. In a nut shell, the examined advertising is not far away from what is common in the presentation of collections of children's fashion, irrespective of that the way in which children are presented in this context may seem, in general, more or less appropriate. And the Jury understands that only the utilization of a girl with Asiatic features has motivated that, what is common in the sector, has led in this particular case to an association with sexual tourism, link that, as it has already been said, is more due to the social context in which the advertisement has been broadcasted (and to the social preoccupation generated by the expansion of that scourge in certain areas of the Asian Continent) than to the own configuration of the advertising of the messages explicitly or implicitly transmitted”.

In the light of the above said by the Jury of Advertising, this body of control has taken into consideration several criteria in order to determine the lawfulness of the campaign. In the first place, minors' make-up has been justified by holding that, in promotional events of children's fashion; girls wear make-up to produce the greatest sensation. In the second place, it is argued that to present girls in this kind of clothing should not be reprehensible since the garments are of the kid line of ARMANI

JUNIOR trademark. And, in third place, it is considered that neither sexual tourism nor minors' abuse is fostered.

In this way, the Advertising Jury understands that the association made by individuals and the Minor Ombudsman that advertising is identified with sexual tourism obeys much more to the current social context of that moment (perhaps as a consequence of the issues simultaneously arisen with the campaign) than to the advertising activity of ARMANI JUNIOR. Consequently, the campaign was declared legal.

As a final analysis, the following considerations should be made: first, it is not understood how, after having been pointed out by the trademark itself that it was a promotional campaign of clothes meant for adults, the Advertising Jury affirms that it is an advertising of children's clothing. Consequently, the decision is contradictory in itself since the underlying assumption of the Advertising Jury is erroneous as ARMANI JUNIOR clearly states that it is a campaign of adults' clothing. Secondly, all along the decision and in several occasions it is acknowledged that minors are being treated as adults. It looks, therefore, as if the advertising campaign does not give girls the treatment they should be entitled to on grounds of age.

And, finally, this decision aims at providing some parameters, such as attire and make-up, to be taken into account to determine the lawfulness of the campaign. We consider, however, that the analysis is not carried out with the depth this advertising requires. In a forthcoming paper and after a detailed study of a great number of campaigns of children's clothes we will try to determine which requirements should meet a commercial communication to be considered as advertising contravening the minor.

4.2. Empirical research

As already it noted in the section on methodology, in order to achieve some of the objectives of this work we have carried out an empirical study using diverse investigation techniques.

First, we have done eight in-depth interviews with childhood experts. Then, in order to validate the results of the in-depth interviews, we have done an online survey that was completed by 144 individuals belonged to children environment. Finally, we the investigators we have carried out ourselves a content analysis of the children fashion design pages and advertising pages of luxury fashion brands with children fashion lines spread across the “children specials” numbers of women magazines.

Let us consider the main results obtained:

Regarding the in-depth interviews and the survey:

- We have confirmed that the term ‘sexualisation of children’ generates sufficient confusion given that a large part of research participants associate it with the gender identity of children, understanding that an image that sexualises a child reinforces or modifies the masculine or feminine identity of the child.
- As such, the majority of research participants highlight that they prefer to use the term ‘adulthood’ to refer to when a child appears much older than he or she really is and he or she is provided with items or characteristics that sexualise him or her and sexually attract other individuals.

- All of the people studied show clear concern for this phenomenon and the majority highlight children's fashion magazines aimed at women as the main media for showing images of early-sexualised children. Within these media, particular attention is called to the images that appear on conventional advertising pages of child fashion lines developed by traditional, high-end fashion brands for adults (such as Guess, Armani, Tommy, etc.) and even more so on those that show the fashion designs developed by the magazines themselves.
- Research participants believe these images sexualise both girls and boys, although they consider girls to be more sexualised than boys.
- Regarding the items or characteristics considered sexualising for children (see Table 1), those outlined in the scale by Graff et al (2013) are noted, as are new features related to make-up, hairstyles, accessories and the posture or gestures of children. In this regard, a large number of the research participants state that posture and gestures (for example, "provocative and challenging") are determining factors in the degree of sexualisation exhibited.

The following Table 1 indicates all of the items and characteristics identified as key elements in the sexualisation of children.

Table 1. Items that sexualise children.

Girls	Boys
Sexualising items or characteristics referred to in the scale by Graff <i>et al.</i>	
Tight-fitting clothing, e.g. <i>leggings</i> Tops and items of clothing that leave the belly and/or back exposed Imitation or adult jewellery (e.g. long necklaces) Shoes with high heels Clothing with terms, words, scribbles, illustrations and/or images with sexual meaning Very short clothing (skirts, dresses, shorts...) Highlighted or dyed hair Items of clothing that accentuate and draw attention to the chest "Lingerie-style" items of clothing or materials Clothing in dark colours (black, grey...) Piercings Animal prints	Tight-fitting clothing, e.g. <i>leggings</i> Clothing with terms, words, scribbles, illustrations and/or images with sexual meaning Highlighted or dyed hair Clothing in dark colours (black, grey...) Piercings
New sexualising items or characteristics identified in this study	
Makeup Adult accessories (belts, bags, sunglasses...) Sexy poses/gestures Forced poses/gestures Serious poses/gestures	Makeup Adult accessories (belts, ties, hats, sunglasses...) Sexy poses/gestures Forced poses/gestures Serious poses/gestures Shirts or t-shirts that are open and/or rolled up sleeves Upturned collars Adult clothing prints (double-breasted suit...) Adult items of clothing (raincoats, trench coats, blazers...) Oxford, Italian and pointed-toe shoes, etc. Adult hairstyles (shaven headed, quiff, Mohican, spiked up...)

Sources: Graff *et al.* (2013) and results of the current study

Regarding the content analysis:

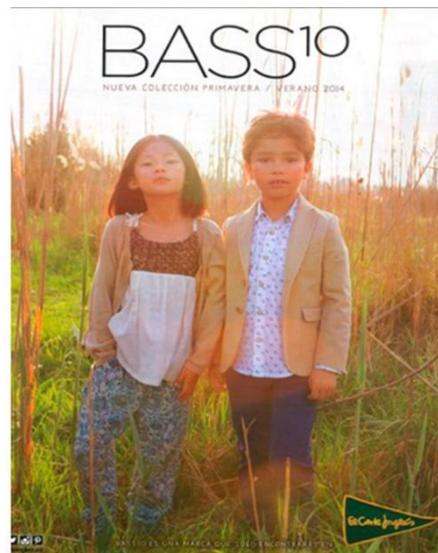
We have analysed 193 pages with 414 images of children. Some of pages were of children fashion designs created by the magazines themselves (e.g. Image 8) and some of advertising pages of children fashion lines of traditionally luxury fashion brands for adults (e.g. Images 9 and 10). From now, we are going to name the first ones fashion design pages and the second ones advertising pages.

Image 8. Editorial page at VOGUE kids 2014



Source: Vogue print version

Images 9 and 10. Some of the advertisement analysed in the research



Source: Vogue kids and Hola kids

The Table 2 also shows the main results of this analysis:

- Therefore, the first aspect to highlight is the undoubted sexualisation of children in the pages we have analysed: 88% of children appear sexualised, with each having an average of 3.6 sexualising items or characteristics. It can be confirmed that this sexualisation is greater on fashion design pages than on advertising pages (89% of children appear sexualised on fashion design pages compared to 83.6% on advertising pages) but slightly more intense on advertising pages than fashion design pages (with 3.8 and 3.5 sexualising items or characteristics per child, respectively).
- In addition, we must point out that girls are much more sexualised than boys are. Firstly, because 68% of all the children who appear sexualised are girls and 32% are boys and, secondly, because 90% of the total number of girls who appear on the pages studied are sexualised, compared to 84% of the total number of boys who figure on these pages.
- This information worsens when we investigate the degree of sexualisation shown by girls and boys. Each sexualised boy shows an average of 3.3 sexualising items or characteristics while each sexualised girl presents an average of 3.7 sexualising items or characteristics.
- All of this enables the confirmation of an imbalanced and sexist treatment of girls in the field of commercial communication carried out by the magazines studied.
- Regarding the most used items in the sexualisation of children, postures and gestures that are serious or forced, highlighted or dyed hair, clothing in dark colours and accessories traditionally used by adults stand out among both

boys and girls. Specifically regarding girls, the use of makeup is notable and regarding boys, adult hairstyles are prominent.

- Focusing on the fashion design pages, the presence of girls is 102% greater than that of boys and the percentage of sexualised girls is greater than that of boys (91.4% compared to 84.3%).
- Regarding the advertising pages, although the presence of girls is greater than that of boys (68% greater), the difference is not quite as marked as on fashion design pages: it is peculiar that the percentage of sexualised boys is slightly superior to that of girls (84% compared to 83.3%).
- Differences are also observed in relation to the items or characteristics used to sexualise children on the two types of pages analysed. Both types of pages stand out for showing children making forced and serious poses or gestures, using adult accessories, changing the hair colour of children with highlights, and abusing makeup with the girls and adult hairstyles with boys. However, it is important to highlight that advertising pages show notably more girls making sexy poses or gestures and wearing very short clothing than fashion design pages. In comparison, fashion design pages show a greater amount of imitation or adult jewellery (girls) and dark coloured clothing and sexy poses or gestures (boys).

Table 2. Content analysis of pages selected

	TOTAL	Fashion design pages	Ads pages
Total pages	193	161	32
Total children	414	347	67
Girls analysis			
Total girls	274	232	42
Total sexualised girls	247	212	35
Sexualising characteristics	% of sexualised	% of sexualised	% of sexualised
Tight-fitting clothing, e.g. leggings	13,4%	13,2%	11,9%
Tops and items of clothing that leave the belly and/or back exposed	4,9%	4,7%	5,7%
Makeup	42,1%	42,5%	40,0%
Imitation or adult jewellery (e.g. long necklaces)	13,8%	15,1%	5,7%
Adult accessories (belts, bags, sunglasses...)	41,3%	41,0%	42,9%
Shoes with high heels	2,0%	1,9%	2,9%
Clothing with terms, words, scribbles, illustrations and/or images with sexual meaning	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
Very short clothing (skirts, dresses, shorts...)	10,5%	7,1%	31,4%
Highlighted or dyed hair	57,5%	54,7%	74,3%
Items of clothing that accentuate and draw attention to the chest	0,4%	0,5%	0,0%
"Lingerie-style" items of clothing or materials	19,0%	18,9%	20,0%
Clothing in dark colours (black, grey...)	29,1%	27,4%	40,0%
Piercings	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
Animal prints	8,5%	8,5%	8,6%
Sexy poses/gestures	18,2%	15,1%	37,1%
Forced poses/gestures	68,8%	66,5%	82,9%
Serious poses/gestures	43,7%	45,3%	34,3%
Boys analysis			
Total boys	140	115	25
Total sexualised boys	118	97	21
Sexualising characteristics	% of sexualised	% of sexualised	% of sexualised
Tight-fitting clothing, e.g. leggings	8,5%	10,3%	0,0%
Shirts or t-shirts that are open and/or rolled up sleeves	13,6%	12,4%	19,0%
Makeup	3,4%	3,1%	4,8%
Upturned collars	5,9%	6,2%	4,8%
Adult accessories (belts, ties, hats, sunglasses...)	36,4%	38,1%	28,6%
Clothing with terms, words, scribbles, illustrations and/or images with sexual meaning	0,8%	1,0%	0,0%
Highlighted or dyed hair	22,0%	21,6%	23,8%
Adult items of clothing (raincoats, trench coats, blazers...)	22,0%	22,7%	19,0%
Clothing in dark colours (black, grey...)	35,6%	40,2%	14,3%
Piercings	0,8%	1,0%	0,0%
Adult clothing prints (double-breasted suit...)	11,0%	11,3%	9,5%
Sexy poses/gestures	12,7%	14,4%	4,8%
Forced poses/gestures	59,3%	55,7%	76,2%
Serious poses/gestures	51,7%	56,7%	28,6%
Oxford, Italian and pointed-toe shoes, etc.	0,8%	1,0%	0,0%
Adult hairstyles (shaven headed, quiff, Mohican, spiked up...)	42,4%	42,3%	42,9%

Source: Own development

5. Conclusion

To answer the research questions we can make conclusions in three aspects: the regulation, the content analysis and the way to face this trend, which will derive on further research.

Concerning the analysis of the Spanish regulation, these are the following conclusions:

- Until twelve years, the child is considered very vulnerable in advertising, not having formed his personality. For this reason, the law should be especially protective and warrantor with any kind of advertising to the child, and with the one where the child is the protagonist.
- Advertising to children could be defined as any communication aimed at children or where children are the protagonists, that directly or indirectly promote the procurement of goods and / or services, as well as the enhancement of trademarks and trade names, in any medium, children's fashion catalogs magazines printed or electronic edition, in the web sites of brands in the industry, in their blogs, social networks, etc.
- The legal and ethical standards generally regulate children's advertising. The interpretative work is for the Judges or Advertising Jury, who, in each case, determines the wrongfulness of advertising, to high, sexual, erotic or replicating adult behaviors, inappropriate for a child.

Taking into account the content analysis, the following aspects are particularly worrying:

- The results obtained in the empirical research expose the unquestionable sexualisation of children through the "children specials" numbers of the main women magazines published in Spain.
- The practise of greater sexualisation of children from the creative line of the magazines themselves, which can be deduced from the fact that the children's fashion designs developed by these magazines show a greater

number of sexualised children than those who appear on the advertising pages of children lines of luxury adult fashion brands.

- The imbalanced and sexist treatment of girls in the images analysed, which sexualise them more intensely than boys.

Our conclusions about this trend, far beyond the collection of “young adults”, is that the new line of business designed and advertised has been imitated even in a worse version by the editorials and by the own personal profiles on social networks. For further research there could be studied the following aspects:

- To define harmful sexualizing characteristics in Spain, in order to help judiciary or Jury to judge these images. Our next research will focus on the analysis of many campaigns for fashion kids to determine what requirements should be present in a commercial communication to be classified as a damaging advertisement for minor.
- To establish a code for the fashion industry as other industries has already done: toys, perfume and food industry. We will detect specific ways of doing it, such as Spanish Cosmetic Toiletry and Perfumery Association (STANPA) Code does.
- To elaborate a national report of erotization of childhood from experts in childhood, as it has been already done in some other countries.

Moreover, if the current regulation is enough and efficient to protect the minor on Internet and new formats, and to avoid the abuse if someone interested complains about it, we must wonder why brands act without punishment in this area. This suggests a new proposal of research questions that will originate the further research: is there awareness on sexualization among citizens beyond parents and teachers?

Does citizenship know the regulation and mechanism to denounce these illegal practices carried out by brands? Is it necessary to provide more information and awareness citizens about this phenomenon?

Future research would extend the analysis of these problems in not only fashion advertising and editorials, but also regarding to children's images on TV series and social networks as Instagram, and to measure the perception that society, especially kids, have on these problems.

Limits on the research can be considered in terms of extending the number of individuals related to children's environment that can be interviewed and surveyed.

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