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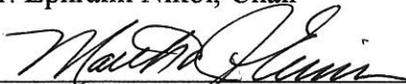
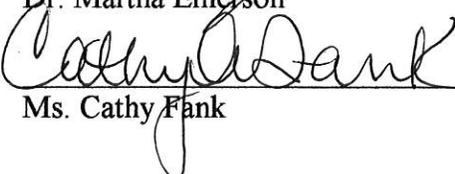
Message in a Bottle:

An Analysis of Modern Perfume Usage as a Nonverbal Communicator

by

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*The beauty of fragrance is that it speaks to your heart...
and hopefully someone else's.*

~ Elizabeth Taylor

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Nonverbal communication has always fascinated me. I think that things such as facial expression and tone of voice are often more communicative than words, and I have always been more inclined to listening and to observing than speaking. Seemingly benign words can be harsh when using the wrong tone of voice and just about any words can seem insincere when the speaker is not making eye contact. Initially my plan was to compare nonverbal communication among the French-speaking cultures in Paris and Quebec City. In thinking about this topic it occurred to me that French people, particularly women, are known for their use of fragrance. At that time I realized that people use fragrance to send a message. I began to seek out information on olfactics (i.e. nonverbal communication through smell). Through this process, my topic evolved into a modern analysis of the use of fragrance as a nonverbal communicator.

I have always had a keen sense of smell and am repelled by bad smells as much as I am drawn to good smells. I have been told that even as a baby I would turn my head away from someone if they had bad breath. My mother has chemical sensitivity, so all the products we used at home had to be unscented. This lack of fragrance at home led me to delight in the smell of fabric softener coming from a neighbor's dryer vent when I passed by on my walk to school. When my peers were secretly smoking cigarettes between classes, I was secretly using apple-scented lotion that I stashed in my locker—it was my delightful small act of rebellion.

According to Lewis (2015), “A number of behavioral studies have demonstrated that smells trigger more vivid emotional memories and are better at inducing that feeling of ‘being brought back in time’ than images.” The sense of smell is closely related to memories; and the more I talk about my topic, the more I hear stories from my friends, family, and colleagues about their scent-related memories. As Shrode stated (2012) “Another way that emotion and memory appear to be connected can be seen by the effect one’s emotional mood can have on the emotionality of the memory recalled” (p. 4). Through these conversations, I quickly came to realize that almost everyone is either an expert or a critic on this topic, because almost everyone has the ability to smell.

I have always been passionate about fragrance—I want to smell wonderful and have others notice it. In having conversations about olfactics, I have learned that this topic has a great deal of potential to be enjoyable as well as relevant to communication research. What I was not expecting in conducting this research was the connection that I would make with each of the participants. The women who participated in this study were all strangers to me, but they were also kindred spirits. I was surprised by the level of candor and vulnerability they revealed in their interviews. This, I believe, is a testament to the emotional connection and importance of fragrance.

Today, fragrance is a multi-billion dollar industry, proving that people place some degree of importance on controlling what they choose to smell like. It is predicted that this trend will continue. According to Wood (2014), “The industry revenue is forecast to reach an estimated \$39.3 billion by 2018” (p. 1). However, fragrance also has a rich legacy within religion, history, and culture. In wearing fragrance, one has the potential to manage the impression he or she sends to a possible mate, employer, business partner,

customer, and others. I believe this is an important topic as it has roots in communication, psychology, sociology, anthropology, business, and religion, each of which will be discussed further in depth in the literature review.

My intent was to analyze modern perfume usage in the hopes of learning why women wear perfume and how they choose what perfume to wear. Do modern women choose a single perfume, different perfumes, or no perfume at all in various social situations, and why? In the following chapters you will find: a review of literature pertinent to this topic, a description of the method used in collecting and analyzing data, an analysis and interpretation of the data collected, a discussion highlighting significant data findings, implications, limitations, recommendations for further research, and finally the conclusion of this study.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

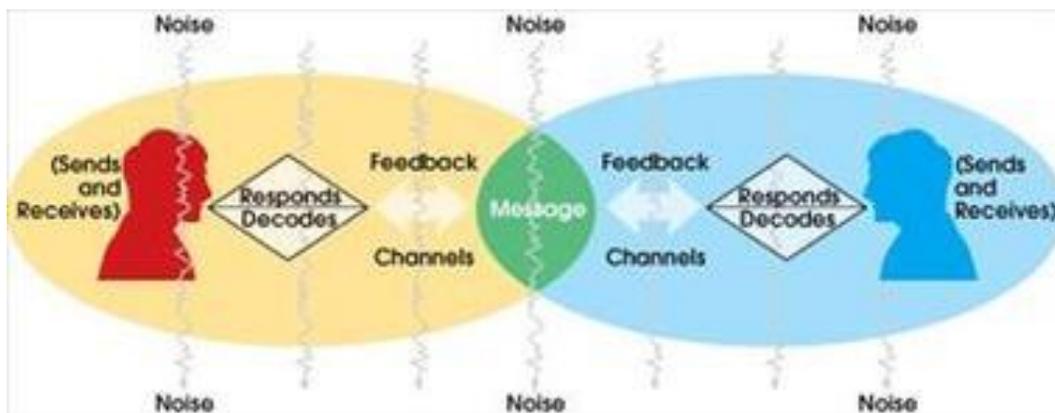
To provide the background necessary for this study, five major areas in the literature were examined. The first section briefly presents the concept of human communication. The second section looks at nonverbal communication. The third section deals with the area of olfactive nonverbal communication. It is this third section that focuses on scent communication in history, religion, culture, and gender. The fourth section covers fragrance categorization. The fifth section addresses fragrance usage.

Human Communication

The process of human communication, as defined by DeVito (2011) is "...the sending and receiving of verbal and nonverbal messages between two or more people" (p. 2). Verbal communication is communication using words, either oral or written. Oral communication uses spoken word, where written communication uses written word. In communication classes, we learn that in the human communication process there are two individuals interacting: the sender and the receiver. The sender must encode the message which, according to Verderber (2010), is "the process of putting your thoughts and feelings into words, nonverbal cues, and images" (p. 3). The message follows a pathway (i.e. channel) to the receiver who must then decode (i.e. decipher, interpret) the message. To complicate the process, many elements interplay: internal or external interference, context, gestures, cultural orientation, choice of words, emotions, and attitudes. To ensure an accurate message was received, the recipient should provide

either verbal or nonverbal feedback (e.g. Are you saying our study group will meet at the library tomorrow at 4 p.m.?)

The model of communication on which this study focuses is the transactional model developed by Barnlund. According to Barnlund (1970) the transactional model of communication depicts individuals as simultaneously sending and receiving messages where mutual experiences are also part of the communication process. The transactional model assumes that people build shared meaning in their communication. In this model personal experiences are present and overlap with each other (p. 8). The following is a graphic represents Barnlund's transactional model:

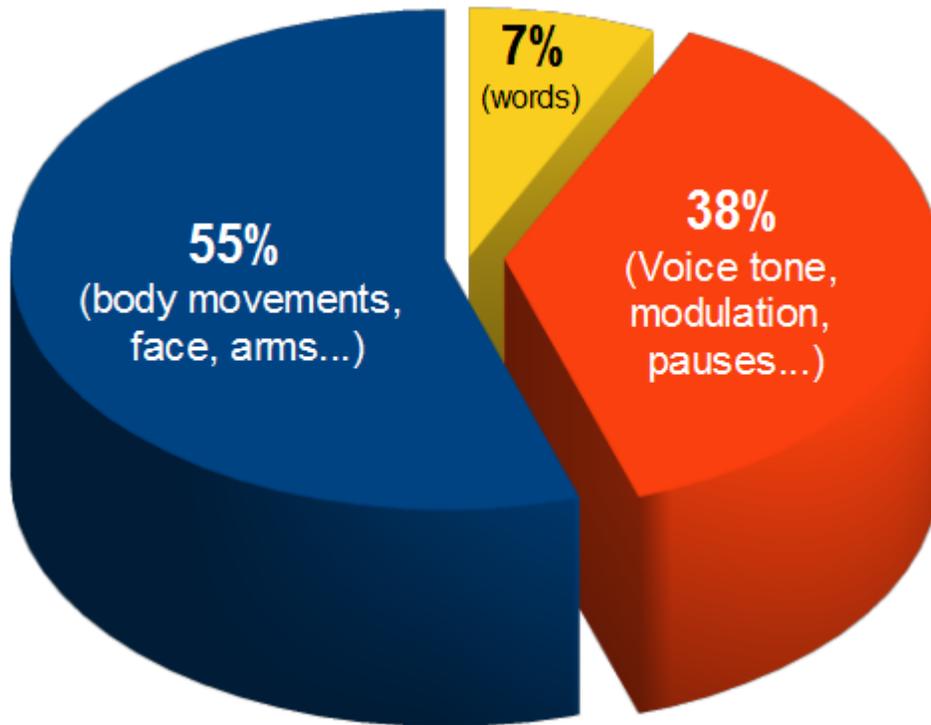


Note: From *Growth as a Learner and Educator: A Master's Portfolio*. Retrieved January 9, 2016, from <http://roshnipatelsporfolio.weebly.com/communication.html>

Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal messages in human communication are everything that goes beyond spoken or written word. Communication researcher Mehrabian (1981) discovered that during communication, only 7 percent of meaning comes from the words used (i.e. verbal communication) with the remaining 93 percent coming from tone of voice and body

language (i.e. nonverbal communication) (p. 76). The following is a diagram that pictorially represents Mehrabian's communication formula:



Note: From *Body Language: The Interesting Facts and Importance of Non-Verbal Communication* (2013). Retrieved September 13, 2015, from <https://mcburgess11.wordpress.com/tag/statistics/>

Neuliep (2015) stated that "...nonverbal communication focuses on the messages people send to each other that do not contain words, such as messages sent through body motions; vocal qualities; and the use of time, space, artifacts, dress, and even smell" (p. 286). The importance of nonverbal communication becomes apparent when reviewing communication research.

According to Hall (1973) nonverbal communication is "...the silent language—the language of behavior" (p. xv). Many researchers (e.g. Hall, Samovar & Porter, Burgoon & Saine, Knapp, and Mehrabian, Birdwhistle) have developed various

categories of nonverbal communication. Neuliep (2015) identified the following categories or codes of nonverbal communication which will be used for the purpose of this study: kinesics, paralanguage, proxemics, haptics, chronemics, physical appearance and dress, olfactics (pp. 286-318).

Kinesics. According to Neuliep (2015), “Kinesic behavior, or body movement, includes gestures, hand and arm movements, leg movements, facial expressions, eye gaze and blinking, and stance or posture” (p. 290). Although all of these channels can be used in nonverbal communication, messages are primarily sent via the face, hands, and arms (p. 290). A popular term for kinesics is body language.

Paralanguage. Paralanguage refers to voice characteristics like pace of speech, pitch, and volume. One can often identify if a speaker is nervous or confident based on paralanguage (p. 286). Neuliep (2015) goes on to state “Through paralanguage, people communicate their emotional state, veracity, and sincerity” (p. 286).

Proxemics. Proxemics is the study of space and the observance of personal space when communicating. According to Neuliep (2015) by studying proxemics “...we can learn how people express intimacy and power” (p. 287). Proxemics differs greatly among various cultures.

Haptics. Haptics is tactile or touch communication. Common forms of haptics are shaking hands or kissing the cheek. According to Axtell (2008) “Psychologists regard the handshake as one of the most powerful of all tactile contacts” (p. 113).

Chronemics. Chronemics is the use of time which communicates punctuality and status. “A culture’s concept of time is its philosophy toward the past, present and future, and the importance or lack of importance it places on time” (Samovar & Porter, p. 29).

Physical appearance and dress (or artifactual communication). Artifactual communication is communication through such things as color, clothing, hairstyle, jewelry, or body art. These items can communicate social class, attitude, style, level of convention, and creativity (Neuliep, p. 315). Some nonverbal communication researchers include olfactory communication in this code, however, for the purpose of this study olfactics will be a separate category.

Olfactics. Olfactics is communication through smell. Olfactics can communicate status, ethnicity, and social class. For the purpose of the study, this research will focus specifically on olfactics as a method of nonverbal communication. Aune & Aune (2008) stated “The study of olfactics includes research on how people adorn themselves with smells such as perfume” (p. 94).

Olfactics

According to Goldney & Gunning (2008), “Whenever the olfactory bulb in the brain detects a smell, a chemical message is immediately sent directly to the limbic system, an enigmatic, primordial part of the right hemisphere of the brain. The limbic system contains the keys to our emotions, our lust, our perceptions, and our imaginations. The result is immediate. When we smell, we feel” (p. 6). Gibbons found that “humans have more olfactory genes than any other type of gene identified in...mammalian DNA” (Neuliep, p. 308). Anyone with a working sense of smell cannot help but receive olfactive communication, as according to Douce & Janssens (2011), “A human being breathes approximately 15,000 to 20,000 times a day. As such, the nose is an instrument that receives communication continuously” (p. 218). Because breathing is an automatic

physiological function, we are mostly unaware of receiving these continuous olfactory messages.

As Hoffmann (2013) points out “Although we are not aware of many spontaneous sensual experiences, we learn about the surrounding world through our senses. One of the objects of sensual experience is smell. It influences our decisions, shapes social interactions and is also a carrier of social meanings” (p. 31). There are two known ways that olfactics can communicate. According to Velasco-Sacristan & Fuertes-Olivera (2006) “On the one hand, olfaction is used to warn an individual of immediate dangers such as fires, leaking gas, spoiled food or beverage, and poisonous substances. On the other hand, olfaction can communicate emotion since it is suggested that it influences mood, memory, emotions, mate choice, the immune system and the endocrine system (hormones)” (pp. 224-225). However, the sense of smell is the least understood of all the human senses. Gibbons goes on to suggest that this lack of understanding is attributed to discouragement from talking about smell and a lack of scent-related vocabulary (Neuliep, p. 308). The language of smell predominantly borrows from the other senses with descriptors such as high or low (hearing), sharp or soft (touch), bright or dark (sight), and sweet or bitter (taste). Similarly, Velasco-Sacristan & Fuertes-Olivera (2006) explain this further by stating “Odors, unlike words or pictures, do not lend themselves to a clear-cut conceptual analysis, since they are not pure but ambivalent categories. As a result of this cognitive drawback the verbalization of olfactory meaning is also difficult. Smells are therefore difficult to name” (p. 224). Reinartz (2014) noted that scent “...is almost always discussed in the past tense; identified smells dissipate and quickly become past scents...” (p. 6). Despite the lack of olfactory understanding, Neuliep (2015) noted that a

study of more than 350 adults in the United States by the Olfactory Research Fund “...found that 64 percent of respondents indicated that smell greatly influenced the quality of their lives” (p. 311). Based on this research, it is clear that scent plays an important role in modern American lives. According to Schroeder (2010), this belief about the importance of fragrance is often considered to enhance personal care products “...to affect the consumer’s perception of product performance. Most often, they add emotional benefits by implying social or economic prestige associated with use of such a product” (p. 36). Olfactic communication does play a part in our everyday lives. Socha & Staten (2005) illustrate this by stating “...scent is used as a form of domestic communication, for example, to: affect family participants’ moods (e.g., using perfumed candles, incense, air sprays, cooking, etc.), signal danger (i.e. smoke, spoiled food, etc.), signal individual’s physical needs (e.g. diapering), create personal identity (e.g., colognes, perfumes, etc.), in family rituals (e.g., scents of holiday baking), and more” (p. 6).

Olfactics in History. Olfactics has a rich legacy in history. According to Hoffmann (2013), the senses have a long history of being studied and ranked by theorists in philosophy, history, biology, and psychology for centuries. These theorists include Aristotle, Herodotus, Darwin, and Freud. In these famous rankings of the senses by order of importance, olfaction often falls low on the list, if not last (p. 35). This trend could be explained by the advanced age of some of these theorists (as the sense of smell tends to diminish as we age), or as Darwin proposed “human beings lost their sharpness of smell in the process of evolution which facilitated the marginalization of the olfactory sense” (as cited in Hoffman, 2013, p. 35). However, many scholars addressed the importance of

olfaction. According to Hoffman (2013) Aristotle, who was fascinated with the sense of smell, created “the first ever classification of odorous substances” (p. 35). Hoffman (2013) goes on to highlight a group of French philosophers who noted the importance of olfaction on human lives (p. 36). One member of this group, Etienne de Condillac, declared “...the sense of smell is what guarantees complete development of the human mind” (as cited in Hoffman, 2013, p. 36). Jean-Jacques Rousseau, another member of this group, referred to olfaction as “...the sense of affects and their secrets, the sense of imagination and desire...” (as cited in Hoffman, 2013, p. 36).

Olfactics in Religion. Olfaction plays a significant role in many religions. Classen, Howes, and Synnott said that “smells are drenched with meaning, often viewed as ‘intrinsic essences’ with the potential to reveal inner truths. Throughout history, such ideas have had a profound resonance, especially in the realm of religious practice” (as cited in Reinarz, 2014, p. 25). One explanation for the significance of scent in religion is explained by Waskul & Vannini (2008), “The fundamentally public nature of odor partly explains why olfaction so directly intersects with morality and moral discourse” (p. 55). The biblical Magi presented the newborn Christ with three gifts of great value: gold, frankincense, and myrrh, with frankincense being prized for its aromatic properties when used as a perfume or burned as incense. Fragranced essential oils and incense are used in baptism, anointing, and other Christian ceremonies. Reinarz (2014) stated regarding these Christian practices “By anointing the forehead, ears, and nostrils with baptismal oil, or chrism, the individual being baptized was granted new senses, which were opened and attuned toward the divine. The scent of oil [also] signified initiation into the congregation and conveyed the convert’s new identity within the group and to the wider

community; the use of incense similarly provides for the senses...” (p. 31). According to Aftel (2014), “In the Bible, olfaction is one of the primary modes of interaction and communication with God. Each properly performed sacrifice was conceived as ‘a soothing odor before God’ ” (p. 133).

The importance of smell in the Christian religion appears repeatedly throughout the Bible. Low (2006) stated that “...deities frequently made their presence known through fragrance, and Christians believed that the presence of the Holy Spirit was made known via a mystical fragrance as well” (p. 610). People of other religions practice the removal of scents or odors to please their deity. Neuliep described Muslim beliefs that “cleanliness of the body and purity of the soul are related” (p. 310). Neuliep went on to describe “The Koran specifies that all five daily prayers must be preceded by washing of the hands, arms, and feet” (p. 310).

Harad (2012) explained that for centuries Buddhist monks have burned incense as a timekeeping device while meditating, using a different scent for each hour that passed (p. 68). Similarly, Aftel (2014) described the use of incense for timekeeping, stating “Around the eighth century, the Chinese developed a highly sophisticated form of incense clock. Powdered incense was spread on a flat surface and incised with characters standing for the division of time” (p. 143). These examples demonstrate the use of scent as a method of communication.

Olfactics in Cultures. Olfactics and opinion on scents vary significantly between cultures. In order to avoid misunderstandings and communicate effectively between cultures, it is important to learn about the differences and values of other cultures. As a reminder regarding intercultural communication, Samovar, Porter, and McDaniel advised

“The largest contextual component is the cultural setting in which the communication is taking place” (p. 18). But what does fragrance have to do with communication and culture?

According to DeVito (2011) “You communicate nonverbally through a wide range of channels: the body, the face and eyes, space, artifacts, touch, paralanguage and silence, and time” (p. 96). In this case, artifactual communication includes the use of body adornment with fragrance as a channel of nonverbal communication. Essentially, the use of fragrance in an intercultural setting can communicate whether you understand the culture, respect their values, and wish to be socially appropriate. According to Dunlop (2012) “Perfume is as much a part of the culture as food and wine; it’s a part of life” (p. 346). Samovar, Porter, and McDaniel assert that we are not conscious of the influence our culture has on our choices and preferences, rather “Because culture influences you from the instant you are born, you are rarely aware of many of the messages that it sends” (p. 28). According to Hayden (2008), “Today tastes and trends must be considered globally...and understanding regional preferences is a prerequisite” (p. S4). That is, culture can inform a person on what is socially acceptable and what smells good or bad.

Kohl and Francoeur (2002) found that Americans tend to follow the “...Puritan tradition of ‘cleanliness is next to godliness’ which may explain the American obsession with deodorants, perfumes, soaps, and shampoos” (p. 43). Ironically, Riley (1979) explained “By one means or another, Americans have been convinced that normal odors resulting from exercise or emotional stress need to be removed and replaced with other smells. Sometimes, as in the case of musk-based perfumes, one animal odor is being

replaced by another animal odor having a similar function” (p. 163). This may be a means of control, giving the wearer the choice of how he or she smells, rather than allowing the body’s natural scents to exist.

The most popular fragrances in the United States tend to have one thing in common: vanilla. Ellena (1996) noted that Americans “...who consume three quarters of the world’s vanilla output, have a pronounced preference for sweet vanilla fragrances” (p. 3). This high level of vanilla consumption pairs well with vanilla fragrances: “Since the skin reveals everything that the body metabolizes, everyone’s skin smells like what he or she eats, and this smell naturally combines with the perfume or eau de toilette that he or she is wearing” (p. 3). Perhaps vanilla has gained popularity because of its relaxing effect. In a study conducted by Warrenberg (2005) testing the effect of fragrance on emotion found that “results for clementine, a citrus aroma, versus vanilla. Both are equally pleasant, but the former is more stimulating and the latter more relaxing (p. 248). Vanilla seems like a pleasant and inoffensive choice in fragrance: it’s mild, warm, and smells like comfort food. However, it is important to know that not all cultures are drawn to vanilla as Americans are. Fox (2014) noted, “Western notions of aesthetically pleasing fragrances are by no means universal” (p. 3). Additionally, different cultures interpret scents in their own ways—some scents conjure different thoughts while some really are universal. For example, Ellena (1996) explained that scent interpretation is all a matter of cultural context. “In the Romance countries, for example, the scent of lemon is associated with beverages or eau de cologne, while Brits and Americans are more likely to think of dishwashing detergents and household products” (p. 3). Ellena goes on to explain that one scent that is rather universally agreed upon is violets. “The scent of

violets is considered to be old-fashioned on both sides of the Atlantic” (p. 3). Samovar, Porter, and McDaniel noted “...what is appropriate in one culture may be inappropriate in another” (p. 167). Indeed, the vanilla based fragrances that are popular in the United States can be considered cloying or overwhelmingly heavy to people from different cultures and areas of the world depending on cultural context.

The French culture highly values fragrance and considers it a rite of passage. As Dunlop (2012) noted “French tradition involves taking young girls of 12 or 13 to shop for their very first perfume” (p. 346). She goes on to explain that French girls are taught how and where to apply perfume. As they mature, this evolves into a ritual of seduction (p. 346). It would be appropriate to consider the French love of fragrance and, as Dunlop describes, “...dark, spicy, statement scents” (p. 346) would be appropriate if we are taking cultural contextual cues from the French culture,

Middle Eastern countries have an interesting and complex attitude regarding fragrance, with religion being a major factor in fragrance choices. According to Davies (2006), “Religious and cultural influences also shape the fragrance sector in Saudi [Arabia] on an ongoing basis—oriental perfumes such as oud, sandalwood and amber account for a high proportion of sales as they are permissible in Islamic tradition” (p. 43). Islamic guidelines on women’s clothing may be a guiding factor in this region. As Dunlop (2012) stated “Fragrance is often considered a spiritual way to anoint yourself before prayer, but it’s also a personal statement: Many women wear strong perfume all over as a way to symbolize arrival, which is perhaps telling in areas where burkas are the local uniform” (pp. 346-348). Oriental fragrances, often considered too strong or risqué in the United States, would be more than acceptable to wear in this region of the world.

Another fragrance-related tradition in the Middle East involves an after-dinner ritual where the host shares and allows her guests to choose from a set of perfumes that is passed around the table. Fox (2014) noted “The appearance of the perfume-box signals the end of the visit, and the guests depart as soon as the perfume ritual is completed” (p. 3). She goes on to state “The ritual serves several important social functions. Guests arrive wearing their best perfumes to honour the hostess, and leave honoured in return by the hostess, whose social prestige is enhanced by the pleasant smells she imparts to her guests” (p. 3). This combining of scents also represents the cultural value of collectivism as it “...promotes a feeling of bonding and unity, in that guests arrive differently-scented, but by the end of the visit are bound together by a shared fragrance” (p. 3), communicating the importance of the group as a whole, rather than the individual.

Larger countries, such as China, often have different climates and weather patterns that determine fragrance trends and preferences. Dunlop (2012) explained “Woody notes do better in dry Beijing, and fruity florals thrive in warmer Shanghai. People in the hot, humid southern areas prefer refreshing but pungent fragrances” (p. 348). She goes on to say “...light scents would simply disappear into the sultry, overwhelming mélange of food, flowers, and people” (p. 348). This demonstrates how weather and surroundings dictate the fragrances women choose to wear.

The Japanese culture, known for its reputation of being reserved, is quite the opposite. Dunlop (2012) noted that Japanese society “...eschews the heavy scents of other cultures and prefers delicate, well-balanced fragrances” (p. 348). One might take into account the concepts of collectivism and personal space when considering how the Japanese, a collectivist culture, prefer light and unassuming fragrances. Samovar, Porter,

and McDaniel (2010) explain that "...space is associated with culture, and associated more specifically with cultural values" (p. 270). They go on to explain "...cultures that stress individualism...generally demand more space than do collective cultures" (p. 270). Consider *sillage* (pronounced *sē'äZH*—a term describing the distance away from one's body that their perfume can be smelled—a fragrance with a large *sillage* can be smelled a long distance away from the wearer, where as a fragrance with a small *sillage* can only be smelled up close to the wearer). Basically, strong fragrances have a large *sillage*, where soft fragrances have a small *sillage*. Thus, a collectivist culture is likely to prefer a scent that does not impose on another's small amount of personal space. Another important communication skill is to listen—a skill that is highly valued in collectivist cultures. According to Aftel (2014), this is demonstrated "In Japanese, the word for 'to sniff' is the same as the word for 'to listen' " (p. 142). When a fragrance with a small *sillage* is used, one must get closer to the wearer in order to smell them, just as one must get closer to a speaker in order to listen to them.

Some areas of the world are experiencing noteworthy progress in the popularity of fragrances, not by scent but by strength of scent. According to Davies (2006), South Africa has seen significant growth in fragrance sales attributed to "...the emerging empowered black female middle class [as they] trade up from body sprays (classed as deodorants) to 'bridge fragrances'. Particular to South Africa, bridge fragrances blur the gap between perfumes and body sprays" (p. 42). One could deduce that this new trend in slightly stronger fragrance formulas communicates the improved confidence of black women in South Africa.

Many cultures value natural bodily smells and do not wish to wash them away or use products to prevent natural sweat and oil production. Further, social anthropologist Kate Fox's research revealed that in some non-Western cultures smell is highly regarded where cultural life focuses on smell. According to Fox (2013), the Ongee people, native to the Andaman Islands, follow a calendar based on when flowers original to the Andaman Islands are in bloom (p. 29). Fox also describes the Dassanetch, an Ethiopian tribe who raises cattle, who hold the smell of cattle in the highest regard and have even been known to wash themselves in cow urine (p. 30). The Dogon people, native to Mali, are attracted to the scent of onions, where it is traditional for men and women to rub onions on their bodies (p. 30).

Olfactics in Gender. Gender also plays a role in modern fragrance usage. According to Wood (2013) "Gender, which is sometimes called gender role, involves outward expressions of what society consider masculine or feminine" (p. 21). There is a difference in how men and women perceive scents, according to Ellen & Bone (1998) "Women apparently have heightened sensitivity to smell and greater ability to label odors than men" (p. 32). The gendering of fragrance has been constructed by cultural and societal influences. Moore (2014) acknowledged these influences in stating "It's mystifying that this divide exists at all because the underlying truth is that fragrance is oblivious to gender...it is little more than the accumulation of cultural ideas about what constitutes reality, and normality" (p. 2). That is, the concepts of masculinity and femininity, and what are appropriate behaviors for men and women, are social constructs. The gendering of fragrances (e.g. La Vie en Rose is for women, Old Spice is for men) is simply a continuation of this concept.

The gender divide in relation to fragrance is likely influenced by patriarchal societies. According to Low (2006), "...the separation of male versus female scents, show that on one level men and women are supposed to smell differently and on another level, this difference results in gender hierarchy where more often than not, it is the women who are 'othered' in relation to male dominance in social life" (p. 610). To demonstrate this, fragrances for men are often based on wood or animal scents depicting strength and power where fragrances for women tend to be scents of flowers and fruit demonstrating fragility and delicacy.

Historically, gender was not a factor in fragrance selection. Moore (2014) recalls "It was commonplace for fragrances in 19th century Europe to smell of floral essential oils, and both sexes wore these without question" (p. 2). This is confirmed by Bender (2013): "Mentions of fragrance in historic documents prior to the Napoleonic Era rarely mention formulaic variations based on gender. Instead, fragrance was discussed in terms of cultural, spiritual, and hygienic properties prescribed equally to both men and women" (p. 1). Bender goes on to say "...during Medieval Times, knights were said to wear the same scent as their ladies when heading into battle, a form of honor akin to wearing their colors" (p. 2). Bender asserted that the shift from universal fragrance usage to gender specific fragrance usage came about in the early 1920's when "...a dressmaker named Gabrielle Chanel, would have a lasting impact on the world of scent, successfully launching Chanel No. 5. Due to the popularity of No. 5 and other designer perfumes, fragrance was to become an essential part of a successful fashion line" (p. 2). Further, Bender suggests that "most areas of the fashion world involve (ad) dressing gender differences. Collections have challenged and affirmed traditional gender norms,

sometimes quite provocatively, influencing how we present ourselves...fashion is a business built on making some things for boys and other things for girls. To marry the two worlds together, it was only natural that the same gender principles used in fashion be applied to fragrance” (p. 2).

Gender division in fragrance does vary among different countries. Bender (2013) stated “A masculine fragrance in one country is not necessarily still read as masculine in another” (p. 2). He elaborated with “There are noted cultural variations based on a multitude of reasons (i.e. access to ingredients, environmental factors, historical significance, etc.) (p. 2). Attitudes about fragrance and gender are learned attitudes. Bender goes on to say “These differences are solidified through societal acceptance and repetition...gender based scent associations, especially when left unquestioned, start forming at an early age” (p. 2). As children we are repeatedly exposed to gender norms through observing our families and the world around us.

With the introduction of unisex fragrances one might assume that gender binary of the fragrance market is becoming a thing of the past. However, McIntyre (2013) described “In the mainstream, mass-market for perfume, there are two distinct genders, ‘for her’ and ‘for him’ (or pour homme and pour femme [sic])...Although unisex is sometimes presented as a product which is beyond gender, it is simultaneously described as something for both men and women, thereby working with those categories rather than disrupting them” (p. 295).

Fragrance Categorization

Categorization and classification of scents and fragrances has been attempted by many. Reinartz (2014) explained that Aristotle attempted to classify odorous substances

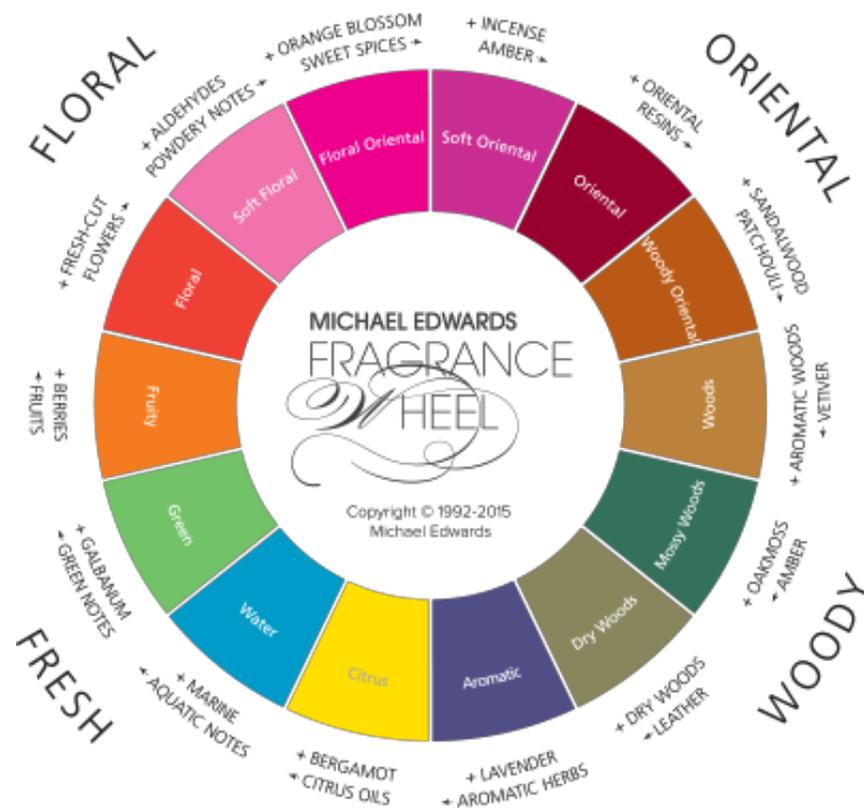
into five categories analogous to the sense of taste (i.e. sweet, astringent, rich, pungent, and harsh) (Reinarz, 2014, p. 8). Despite this effort, Hoffman (2013) noted that Aristotle "...did not think that olfaction played any important role in people's lives and he situated it at the bottom of his ranking of the human senses" (p. 35). Hoffman (2013) goes on to highlight 18th century Swedish naturalist Charles Linnaeus who "introduced his hierarchical categorization and developed a scale of scents, from very pleasant ones to repulsive ones" (p. 36). As time progressed, technology was used to classify scents as well. According to Hoffman (2013), a 20th century Dutch physiologist named Hendrik Zwaardemaker "...was the inventor of the first olfactometer," a machine that measured the level of scent intensity (p. 36). Hoffman goes on to explain that although the olfactometer was thought to be accurate, the process of measuring different scents was too time consuming for extended research (p. 37).

Although many have created scent classification systems throughout time, Laura Donna (2009) stated "historical and contemporary sensory maps of scent descriptors display a remarkable accord" (p. 26). Contemporary scent researchers Manuel Zarzo and David Stanton (2009) cite Michael Edwards' Fragrance Wheel "...as one of the world's most comprehensive references for commercial fragrances, simplifying the classification process and showing relationships among fragrance families" (p. 229). According to *The perfume experts' expert*. (Edwards, n.d.), the Fragrance Wheel is organized according to "...dominant accords that give them their special character" going on to explain "In much the same way that vineyards classify their vintages by grape varietal, classifying fragrances by their main accords opens up a new way for understanding the language of

scent” (Understanding the Fragrance Wheel, n.d.). As you will see in the Fragrance Wheel (see illustration following), the fragrances are divided into four fragrance families:

1. Floral: The most popular of the fragrance families, floral notes are based on fresh cut flowers.
2. Oriental: The Oriental family consists of incense notes such as amber, sandalwood, and patchouli.
3. Woody: Woody notes can be based in herbal, mossy, leather, and dried wood scents.
4. Fresh: The fresh family is comprised of fruits, berries, citrus, green plants, and marine or aquatic notes.

The perfume experts' expert. (n.d.) explains “These four groups are further subdivided to span the range of character within each major family but their distribution within the Wheel clearly shows how one family blends into another as its composition is changed” (Understanding the Fragrance Wheel, n.d.). For the purpose of the study, this research focused specifically on the Fragrance Wheel as a scent classification system.



Note: From *Michael Edwards - The perfume experts' expert*. (n.d.). Retrieved March 20, 2015, from <http://www.fragrancesoftheworld.com/fragrancewheel.aspx>

Perfume Usage

A signature scent is one fragrance that the wearer uses loyally and without variance. In contrast, a scent wardrobe consists of a number of fragrances that the wearer chooses at random. According to Paul (2014) “The whole idea of signature scents may in fact be a relic of the 20th century.”

As demonstrated in the literature review, the use of fragrance has evolved throughout time. Given the vast availability of fragrances in the modern world, I sought to gain understanding of modern fragrance usage, how women choose what fragrance to wear, and if there is a meaning behind these choices. I have conducted additional

research to create a better understanding of modern fragrance usage and to answer the following Research Questions:

RQ1: In modern fragrance usage, do women prefer consistently using one scent (i.e. a signature scent) or multiple scents (i.e. a scent wardrobe, a scent dossier)?

RQ2: What factors/reasons influence women's choice of fragrance?

RQ3: What message, if any, do women who wear fragrance intend to send?

Chapter 3

Method

The purpose of methodology is to maintain a high level of consistency in a research project as well as guide the researcher in ensuring that all pieces of the project are contemplated, assessed, and documented. In a study conducted by Zemke & Shoemaker (2008), focus groups were used to assess the effect of ambient scent on social groups. Another study conducted by Freyberg & Ahren (2011), used participant journaling to assess how two different fragrances affected two different days in the lives of the participants. In this study interviews were used as the method of collecting data. I chose the interview method as it did not limit the scope of the discussion, allowing for an indefinite number of fragrance possibilities for each participant. The following section describes the method in which the data was collected and analyzed.

Data Collection

Fragrance usage has a rich legacy in history, religion, and culture, yet nonverbal communication through olfactics is still largely misunderstood, if understood at all. This study sought to understand how perfume users employ different fragrances...where, when, and why. Formal research in this area will continue to enhance the body of knowledge regarding nonverbal communication through fragrance.

The data reported in this study was collected through qualitative interviews. Advantages to interviewing are the ability to observe social cues (e.g. voice, body language, tone of voice), the lack of time delay between when the question is asked and an answer is provided, and the ability to record an interview (if permitted by the

participant), with potential challenges being the time-consuming transcription process and difficulty in scheduling interviews (Opdenakker, 2006). All interview participants were women who self-identified as fragrance users between 20 and 50 years of age. Fifteen women participated in the interviews.

To gather interview participants, I used the snowball sampling method. According to Biernacki & Waldorf (1981), snowball sampling “yields a study sample through referrals made among people who share or know of others who possess some characteristics that are of research interest” (p. 141). Lindlof and Taylor (2011) asserted “Snowball sampling is well-suited to studying social networks, subcultures, or people who have certain attributes in common” (p. 114).

Conversations about this research topic with friends, family, and co-workers generated a great deal of enthusiasm, and they would often suggest a woman they knew who would be happy to participate in this study—in this way the snowball sampling method of gathering participants presented itself to me. The participants were often most helpful in suggesting other possible participants (e.g. Sophia recommended Natalie who recommended Bette.) Some participants were more eager than others. One participant, Audrey, had to reschedule her interview three times. The most difficult part of gathering participants was finding women to devote the time required to conduct the interview. Using the snowball sampling method, I conducted 15 respondent interviews of women ages 20 through 50.

The interviews were an average of 40 minutes in length and were conducted in the participants’ free time. The participants selected the location of their interviews, seven interviews took place in the home of the participant, five interviews were via the

telephone, and three interviews were conducted in a public space. The interview locations all presented some challenges. The homes of the participants provided the least distraction. Public spaces provided a great deal of distraction given movement and noise from those around us. Phone interviews were often interrupted by children of the participants, and one participant was obviously multi-tasking by cooking while answering interview questions. As the researcher it was my responsibility to keep the participants on task by drawing attention back to the questions while being patient and understanding of the demands of the life of each participant.

The interview questions were developed by analyzing the three research questions and determining how I could best bring the opinions of the participants to the surface. I started with demographic information, ice breakers (e.g. What are some of your more prominent memories triggered by fragrance?) and designed the interview questions to gradually gather more in-depth information as the participants became more comfortable talking about their fragrance usage in a personal way. An interview guide was used to create consistency among the various interviews. However, participants were also encouraged to talk about other items they found relevant to the topic of fragrance usage. Participants responded to questions regarding why they wear fragrance, the number of fragrances they use, how they decide which fragrance to use, and if they believe each fragrance sends a message.

The 15 participant interviews were digitally recorded using the smart phone application "Voice Recorder." It was important to receive the consent of the participant before recording the interview as full disclosure insured the integrity of the project.

The transcription process required roughly 40 hours of reviewing the information provided by the participants resulting in over one hundred double-spaced pages of transcribed interview content. Interview transcription was a lengthy and laborious task involving listening and re-listening to each response in order to ensure accuracy of transcription. This was an opportunity to really familiarize myself with the nuances of the speech patterns, inflection, and emphasis placed on the information each participant provided.

The participants were all assigned pseudonyms. I chose to name the participants after Academy Award winning actresses whom I think of as both glamorous and accomplished. The following are short biographies of each participant along with the actress for whom she was named:

Audrey: Age 18-25, college student, works part-time, estimated 10 fragrances in her scent wardrobe. Audrey was referred by one of my colleagues. First fragrance: Bath & Body Works Sun Ripened Raspberry. Pseudonym: This participant is named after Audrey Hepburn because of her carefree and lively nature.

Barbra: Age 36-45, educator, has exactly 3 fragrances in her scent wardrobe. Bette was referred by Sophia, another participant in this study. First fragrance: Charlie White. Pseudonym: This participant was named after Barbra Streisand because of her self-confidence and unconventional beauty.

Bette: Age 18-25, college student, student teaching, works part-time at Bath and Body Works, estimated at least 50 fragrances in her scent wardrobe. Bette was referred by Natalie, another participant in this study. First fragrance: Bath and Body Works

Blazin' Blueberry. Pseudonym: This participant was named after Bette Davis because they both display individual style and resourcefulness.

Elizabeth: Age 26-35, college student, works part-time, estimated 8 fragrances in her scent wardrobe. This participant was referred to the study by one of my colleagues.

First fragrance: Bath and Body Works Country Apple. Pseudonym: I named this participant after Elizabeth Taylor as they both have dark hair and contrasting light colored eyes.

Julianne: Age 46-50, business professional, has adult children and young grandchildren, estimated 40 fragrances in her scent wardrobe. This participant was referred to the project by one of friends. First fragrance: Something by Avon (cannot remember the name.) Pseudonym: She was named for Julianne Moore because of their red hair and kind nature.

Katharine: Age 26-35, business professional, estimated 25 fragrances in her scent wardrobe. This participant was referred to the project by one of my friends. First fragrance: Tribe. Pseudonym: This participant was named after Katharine Hepburn because of the unique characteristic of her voice.

Liza: Age 36-45, business professional and part-time athletic coach, has two children, estimated 15 fragrances in her scent wardrobe, but said that this is less than she normally has and needs to shop for more. This participant was referred by one of my colleagues. First fragrance: Clinique Happy. Pseudonym: This participant was named after Liza Minnelli for her dramatic nature and desire for the spotlight.

Maureen: Age 36-45, educator and part-time fitness instructor, has one child, estimated 12 fragrances in her scent wardrobe. This participant was referred by one of

my colleagues. First fragrance: Gap Dream. Pseudonym: This participant was named after Maureen O'Hara for her Irish heritage and emotional strength.

Melanie: Age 46-50, educator, has 4 children, has 6-8 fragrances in her scent wardrobe but believes that she has a signature scent. Melanie was referred to the project by one of my colleagues. First fragrance: Love's Baby Soft. Pseudonym: This participant was named after Melanie Griffith for her small voice and sweet disposition.

Meryl: Age 46-50, business professional, estimated 10 fragrances in her scent wardrobe. Meryl was referred to the project by one of my family members. First fragrance: Navy. Pseudonym: This participant was named after Meryl Streep for her versatility and ability to win people over.

Natalie: Age 36-45, educator, has exactly 3 fragrances in her scent wardrobe. Natalie was referred to the project by Sophia, another participant. First fragrance: Love's Baby Soft. Pseudonym: This participant was named for Natalie Wood for her youthful girl-next-door personality and appearance.

Olivia: Age 36-45, business professional, has 3 adult children, has exactly 4 fragrances in her scent wardrobe. This participant was referred to the project by one of my friends. First fragrance: Love's Baby Soft. Pseudonym: This participant was named after Olivia de Havilland for her reserved and quiet personality.

Sophia: Age 46-45, educator, estimated 12 fragrances in her scent wardrobe. Sophia was referred to this project by a mutual friend. First fragrance: Jean Nate'. Pseudonym: She was named after Sophia Loren for her Italian heritage and fiery temper.

Vanessa: Age 26-35, business professional, estimated 15-20 fragrances in her scent wardrobe but would prefer a signature scent. Vanessa was referred to this project

by one of my family members. First fragrance: Debbie Gibson's Electric Youth.

Pseudonym: She was named after Vanessa Redgrave for her elegance and liberal thinking.

Vivien: Age 18-25, college student, part-time health care provider, has 1 child and another on the way, has 5-7 fragrances in her scent wardrobe but believes she has a signature scent. Vivien was referred to this project by Elizabeth, another participant in this study. First fragrance: Love's Baby Soft Rain Scent. Pseudonym: This participant was named after Vivien Leigh for her beauty and dramatic nature.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using a manual thematic analysis method. Alhojailan (2012) described the advantages of using thematic analysis when stating “By using Thematic Analysis, it is possible to link the various concepts and opinions of participants and compare them with the data that has been gathered in different situations at different times from other or the same participants during the project. In this case, the potential for interpretation becomes infinite” (p. 19). After reviewing the interview transcripts multiple times, I identified began the categorization process as defined by Spiggle (1994) “The essence of categorization is identifying a chunk or unit of data (e.g., a passage of text of any length) as belonging to, representing, or being an example of some more general phenomenon” (p. 493). I followed the example of Eckman (2001) in keeping both electronic copies as well as hand-written documents. Significant data and key words from participant responses were written on color-coded index cards signifying which research question it applied, themes, and sub-themes. Gross (2013) described the significance of code cards, stating “All code cards note the original text segment and the full reference where it can be located in the originating full text. The index card heading is the interpreted, ascribed meaning the code” (p. 48). After following this technique, I then tallied the number of times each response was given and organized the cards by manually arranging and rearranging the cards on my dining room table to identify predominant themes.

A pattern of three primary codes became apparent requiring further analysis: (a) quantity of fragrances used, (b) determination of fragrance choice, and (c) intended effect

of fragrance(s) used. Categories were then identified within the primary codes for the purpose of more extensive analysis. For example, the primary theme Determination of Fragrance Choice was divided into categories, which are Environmental Influences (e.g. changes in season), Fitting In (e.g. formality or casualness of the destination), Personal Reward (e.g. mood enhancement), Conflict Avoidance (e.g. considering others when applying fragrance), and Image Development (e.g. enhanced professionalism).

Ultimately, the data collected was analyzed to create better understanding of modern fragrance usage and its possible contribution to olfactory nonverbal communication. Further examination of the coded data was then studied to create an understanding of the extent to which women vary their fragrance choices (Research Question 1), the factors that aid in choosing fragrance (Research Question 2), and if women use fragrance to communicate (Research Question 3).

Chapter 4

Analysis and Interpretation

The following section contains my analysis of the data collected. The analysis is presented in sequential order of the research questions and includes my interpretation of the data.

Indecision Abounds

Research Question 1 asks, “In modern fragrance usage, do women prefer consistently using one scent (i.e. a signature scent) or multiple scents (i.e. a scent wardrobe)?” This seems like a relatively simple question...because it is. Essentially, all of the women interviewed technically have a scent wardrobe, but there was some confusion regarding the true definitions of a signature scent and a scent wardrobe. Sixty percent of the participants admitted to having a scent wardrobe without hesitation. Twenty-seven percent of the participants disclosed that although they have a scent wardrobe this was only because they had not yet found their signature fragrance. Finally, thirteen percent of the women insisted they had a signature scent despite their acknowledged use of other fragrances. These macro results convey the uncertainty, whether admitted or not, that these women possess in relation to fragrance usage.

Multifaceted Lives. Participants who acknowledged having a scent wardrobe did so for various reasons. The prevalent factors cited as contributing to the preference toward a scent wardrobe were (a) varying roles and activities performed by the wearer, (b) the wearer’s need for variety/inability to settle on one scent, and (c) receiving fragrances free of cost/as a gift.

All of the participants who have a scent wardrobe referred to the many different roles they have taken on and how different scents take part in those roles. Many of the participants self-identified as a student, an employee, a leader, a mother, a spouse/girlfriend, a friend, and a mentor. A few of the participants identified themselves as being all of these things. One participant (Elizabeth) noted feeling stressed about the different roles she plays and that choosing a fragrance that fits each role helps reduce this stress:

Elizabeth: Women, in general, are under a lot of pressure to do a lot of different things.

If I know that I smell good, or even proper for whatever role I am in, it's one less thing for me to have to think or worry about because I always have a thousand things on my mind. It helps remind me that I am good enough to do whatever I am doing, like at work, as a parent, at school, with friends, that kind of thing.

Similarly, another participant (Vanessa), addressed the boost of confidence that selecting the right fragrance gives her:

Vanessa: I have a scent wardrobe because wearing the right scent for the right situation really helps my confidence. I sometimes feel like I have to wear so many hats and be so many things to so many people, and I'm not always confident about each role that I play. Fragrance is like a whisper to me, reminding me that I am appropriate and can be good at all the different things I do. I guess different roles require different reminders. (laughs)

Interviewer: How do you decide what scent is right for what situation?

Vanessa: My initial reaction to a scent is what I usually go by. So I have a clean and floral scent, and the first time I smelled it felt like a good scent for work. To me it

smells feminine and capable, so it makes me feel feminine and capable. I wear it if I'm doing a presentation or have a meeting that I want to go in my favor, and the confidence it gives me seems to help. Or, at the end of a long day, after I've tucked my kids into bed, I'll do a couple sprays of a perfume that I think smells sexy. It makes me feel sexy when I'm actually too tired to feel sexy at all.

(laughs)

This strategic situational use of fragrance was a marked trend among participants with a scent wardrobe. Essentially, the participants communicated that different situations call for different fragrances, thus requiring a scent wardrobe.

Polyamory and the Inability to Commit. Sixty-seven percent of the participants admitted to having a scent wardrobe because of their attraction to different scents, citing the need for variety and the inability to settle on a single fragrance without over-thinking the decision of what fragrance to wear. One participant (Liza) mentioned that her preference to having a scent wardrobe stems from two factors: avoiding olfactory fatigue and the need to treat herself:

Liza: I try not to wear the same scent two days in a row. I would grow tired of just one.

I don't really think about it too much, I just apply it. I grew up poor and in a low-income neighborhood. Using perfume was a luxury, and I bought perfume with my very first paycheck when I was 14. It was a status symbol that I had when the people around me didn't. I made me stand out. I think because I was the oldest of four kids and had to help take care of them, I wanted something, just anything, that would get me attention. When I started wearing perfume, people started noticing. It made me confident. I still really value perfume and what it does for

me. It is a big part of who I am. I think I have several kinds because it is still luxurious to me, and I like to treat myself to it.

One factor that contributes to the prevalence of scent wardrobes in modern fragrance usage may be a vast array of fragrance availability. As of October 21, 2015, the fragrance website *Fragrantica* lists 31,886 perfumes in its perfume database, with new fragrances being launched each day. One interview participant (Olivia) explained that her accumulation of a scent wardrobe was due to this variety of available fragrances:

Olivia: I think it's because recently I have found a few different scents that I like on myself. I have a sensitive nose and am really picky. There are many scents that I like on other people, but not a lot that I like on myself, so I was pleasantly surprised to find a few recently that I like to alternate.

With so many scents to choose from and access to purchase rare, foreign, and even discontinued fragrances through the internet, the odds of finding multiple scents appealing are extraordinarily high, while the ability to commit to one signature scent may seem impossible.

The Best Things in Life are Free. Fragrances can be quite costly. This means that building a scent wardrobe has potential to require a significant monetary investment.

One participant (Bette) cited receiving free fragrance through a work-related incentive program as a contributing element to her scent wardrobe.

Interviewer: Why do you have a scent wardrobe?

Bette: A lot of it comes from the amount of free product I get from working at Bath and Body Works. I actually had to buy storage totes for all of my product! (laughs)

Interviewer: About how many scents would you estimate make up your scent wardrobe?

Bette: It feels weird to say this (laughs), but at least 50. Minimum.

Interviewer: If you didn't work at Bath and Body Works would you still have a scent wardrobe?

Bette: I would. I've always loved fragrance. But I probably wouldn't have as many scents as I do if I had to buy them myself.

Although having a scent wardrobe seems to be a personal choice, some of the participants noted that they probably would not have a scent wardrobe had they not received their fragrances as gifts. In fact, two participants (Maureen and Barbra) expressed mild irritation by usage expectations attached to receiving the gift of fragrance.

Interviewer: Do you have a signature scent (one scent you wear consistently) or a scent wardrobe (many scents that you alternate)?

Maureen: I would have a signature scent but my husband buys me a variety of different perfumes, and he gets annoyed or hurt when I don't wear them.

Interviewer: Really? He wants you to have a scent wardrobe?

Maureen: He has a number of different colognes and really values them, so I guess he thought I would, too. For a long time he didn't tell me that he was hurt if I wasn't using them all pretty regularly, but I'm just a creature of habit so I tend to stick with the same thing. We had to compromise because he still wants to buy me perfume for like every birthday, Christmas, anniversary, and Valentine's. He has learned now to only buy me a scent that I've asked for, but they are all pretty similar to each other. I just like what I like.

In contrast to Maureen's arrangement to request specific fragrances as gifts so she would be more likely to use them, Barbra admitted to wearing gifted fragrances that she doesn't particularly enjoy.

Interviewer: Why do you have a scent wardrobe?

Barbra: I think it has to do with getting them as gifts from different people with different tastes. The only perfume I use was a gift that my dad would get for my mom and me every Christmas before he passed away.

Interviewer: What perfume is it?

Barbra: Chanel No 5.

Interviewer: What a lovely gift.

Barbra: (laughs) Yeah. He got it for us because it's supposed to be so elegant, and he wanted us to feel special; but I really don't like how it smells. It's kind of an older lady scent.

Interviewer: So you don't wear it?

Barbra: I wear it every day because I feel like I should. Not using it would make me feel guilty like I didn't appreciate it. But I only use one spray of the perfume, and I wear a scented body lotion and body spray that I think improves it. When it is finally used up, I will save the bottle as a reminder of my dad; and I'll find myself something I like better.

Although Chanel No 5 is not Barbra's first choice of a signature scent, the iconic fragrance bottle will be an artifactual reminder of her father. Chanel No 5 is one of the most prized and respected fragrances ever made. It may be a lovely gift that symbolizes

beauty, femininity, and elegance; but the same fragrance can be loved by one person and hated by another. Ultimately, selecting a fragrance is a matter of preference.

Good and Plenty. Despite differing explanations given for having a scent wardrobe, all of the findings pointed toward the preference of a scent wardrobe among women who identified as fragrance users. When these women were asked why they like to wear fragrance, the most common response was that they wear fragrance because they like to smell good. After further probing, these women revealed that fragrance is meaningful to them in varying ways. Beyond the purpose of smelling good, a scent wardrobe lends itself to self-expression, personal significance, and relationship building.

Under the Influence

Research Question 2 asks, “What factors or reasons influence women’s choice of fragrance?” Given the prevalence of scent wardrobes it seems that women who use fragrance possess many fragrances to choose from. With numerous scent choices, is there a rhyme or reason to how this choice is made? Through analyzing the data, I found that there are several factors that influence fragrance choice.

A Fair Weather Friend. The most common influence noted by participants on how they choose fragrance was weather or season. In fact, 100 percent of participants noted that weather and/or season is a factor in what they chose to spray each day. When participants were asked about how they choose fragrance based on season, they were given the fragrance wheel to help them identify the fragrance family (i.e. floral, oriental, woody, fresh, or none) or describe the scent they would choose to wear. Some participants employ a simplified method of selecting their scent choice by what they find

appropriate for spring/summer and fall/winter. One participant (Melanie) described her simplistic approach to choosing a fragrance by the season:

Melanie: It makes sense to me to match a fragrance to the season so I'm not competing with nature. (laughs)

Interviewer: Can you describe how you match your fragrance to a season?

Melanie: Well, in spring the flowers bloom, and it makes sense to me to wear a floral scent. A floral scent compliments the flowers, or maybe the flowers compliment my scent. Either way, the scent and season work well together.

Similarly, Audrey spoke about selecting scents that match what she considers to be the focal points of particular seasons:

Audrey: The trees and leaves are changing in fall. They are really the focus of fall. The fall makes me think of the woods, so woody scents just feel like fall to me.

Others had a more complex thought processes considering season, temperature outside, and level of humidity. Two participants (Katharine and Bette) described other environmental factors that they take into account before deciding what fragrance to apply:

Katharine: It depends on the sunshine and humidity. If it's very hot or humid, I prefer fresh because I'm sweaty; and I don't want to stink. Fresh smells clean. If it's just pleasantly sunny, I would wear floral. But floral can get overwhelming, like so much I can taste it, and too much heat and humidity accentuates that. It can make me feel claustrophobic or like I'm choking.

Bette: Cool weather doesn't intensify scents, so a strong scent works in cold weather. It calls for a heavier scent. Cooler weather can handle heavy scents.

Ninety-three percent of participants mentioned how heat and humidity can intensify a fragrance. One participant, Liza, talked about the temperature of the fragrance itself:

Liza: I like oriental scents, but I can only wear them in the winter because they actually feel hot on my skin in warm weather.

All the participants were of accord that floral and fresh fragrances work best for spring and summer.

In contrast, fragrance choices varied for fall and winter. One emphasis for fall and winter fragrances was regarding foods that are generally associated with fall and winter. One participant (Bette) mentioned how she associates fall scents with baking:

Bette: Caramel, vanilla, and woody scents feel very fall to me. It's baking season, where I don't mind warming up the house by having the oven on, so warm scents like this work well in fall.

Along the same vein, Katharine mentioned her preference for oriental scents in the fall, stating:

Katharine: I want warm and heavy food or something baked in the fall, and I want my fragrance to be the same. A heavier scent feels comforting to me, like when you lay under a heavy quilt and it sinks into your body. A heavier scent is comforting when the weather is harsh.

In areas with severe winter weather, the need for layering clothing has an effect of fragrance choice as well. Vanessa mentioned her preference for woody or oriental scents in winter:

Vanessa: Winter is dark and cool. I can get away with a heavier scent because it's not humid or hot, and I wear it under probably two layers of clothing.

One participant, Meryl, chooses a fresh scent and sometimes no fragrance at all in the winter where layers of clothing impact ability to detect the fragrance:

Meryl: I wear so many layers in the winter that I don't think a fragrance would get through all my layers. When I do wear fragrance in winter, I just wear what I am most drawn to, which is fresh. I sometimes have to pull my turtleneck up over my nose so I can smell it. (laughs)

Finally, there was a subtle discord in which scents work best in fall and winter. More than half of the participants chose woody and oriental scents for fall and winter, but 47 percent of participants prefer floral or fresh fragrances for fall and winter. Of the participants who prefer floral and fresh fragrances for fall and winter, the majority cited their dislike of the colder weather seasons. One participant (Maureen) explained:

Maureen: I like to wear floral and fresh scents in the fall because I'm trying to hold on to summer! In the dead of winter I crave anything fresh. Spraying a fresh scent is like a breath of fresh air: it's like opening a window when the windows have been closed up for a few months.

Perhaps this is a regional trend. Since Midwest winters can be long and severe, women may feel the need to wear fragrances that remind them of daylight, plants in bloom, warm sunlight, and breathing fresh air.

Different as Night and Day. Other environmental factors influenced fragrance choice as well. Seventy-three percent of participants mentioned that they considered the time of day, specifically whether it was light or dark outside as part of their fragrance decision. Again, using the fragrance wheel to determine which fragrance family they would choose, one fragrance family that was never chosen for daytime was an oriental

scent. Generally, participants often described scents chosen for day as “light” and scents chosen for night as “dark”. For daytime, 93 percent of women chose the floral or fresh fragrance families. Natalie and Olivia both talked about what they consider to be daytime scents:

Natalie: If the sun is shining, floral scents enhance that bright feeling.

Olivia: For day I like a floral or fresh. Both of these types of fragrances make me think of a bright and sunny daytime.

Sophia chose the fresh family for day, citing:

Sophia: Fresh feels like a good way to start the day since I always shower in the morning. Fresh scents are like a shower in a bottle. It wakes me up and makes me feel ready for the day.

For night or darkness, oriental and woody scents were most popular. One participant (Sophia) described woody scents as being appropriate for darkness:

Sophia: If it’s dark outside it goes well with woody scents. It makes me want to be outside by a fire. It’s calming for evening.

Another participant (Bette) chose the oriental fragrance family for night. Bette is employed at Bath and Body Works and she mentioned taking cues from the product packaging as an indication if a scent works well for day or night:

Bette: It (oriental) smells like night or darkness. It’s heavier and I wear heavier scents at night. The packaging colors for oriental scents are usually darker, which make me think of night.

Melding the two environmental factors together, woody and oriental scents were most common during fall and winter when the daily period of darkness are longer, where

floral and fresh were most common during spring and summer when daylight lasts longer.

She's Going Places

The second most popular reason given for choosing a fragrance had to do with the woman's destination. Ninety-three percent of participants said they consider where they are going when they choose their fragrance. Included in this decision is how formal or casual the destination, whether they will be spending time indoors or outdoors, and what they are wearing. It is notable that 73 percent of the participants said that they wear some sort of fragrance every day regardless of their destination, even if they are not leaving their house.

When asked about what fragrance family they would choose for a casual setting, 80 percent of participants said that in a casual setting they choose whatever scent they feel best wearing. It is also notable that 80 percent of participants said they feel best in a fresh scent. Maureen explained:

Maureen: If I'm hanging out and casual, I want what I'm comfortable with. It sets the tone and puts me in a good mood.

Another participant, Meryl, also chose a fresh scent for a casual setting and explained:

Meryl: It (fresh scents) remind me of shopping for produce like oranges. During the day, in casual clothes, I'm probably shopping.

Two participants (Vanessa and Maureen) talked about how different scents help them feel like they fit in to a setting where they are not naturally comfortable:

Vanessa: Fresh scents are clean and approachable. They aren't overpowering, not too fancy, and they feel casual to me. I had a really formal upbringing and I have a

hard time feeling comfortable in a casual setting. I don't even feel comfortable in jeans. So a fresh scent helps me feel like I belong in this casual world we live in.

In contrast, Maureen choose a woody scent for a formal setting, stating:

Maureen: I'm not always comfortable in a formal setting, it's like a gentle reminder to be proper and that I can fit in.

A formal setting typically requires formal dress. Seventy-three percent of participants mentioned that they match their fragrance to their clothing, most notably in a formal setting.

Bette: Oriental would probably go best with my outfit, probably a little black dress.

Oriental scents are darker and sexier and that's probably what I'm going to be wearing--something dark and sexy. Oriental scents smell expensive to me and a formal occasion is when I go all out; if my clothes look expensive, I want my perfume to smell expensive.

Melanie also chose a floral scent to match her clothing for a formal occasion, mentioning the feminine nature for formal events.

Melanie: If I'm at a formal, dressy occasion I will probably wear a dress, and floral smells girly to me. Formal occasions, like weddings where there are flowers around, feel like girly events. A floral scent matches that feminine vibe.

When choosing a fragrance for a professional setting many women choose to go without.

Twenty percent of the participants noted that they did not wear any fragrance when going to an interview with a potential employer, that wearing a fragrance that the interviewer did not enjoy might create a negative association or cost them the job. One participant (Melanie) gave an example of this:

Melanie: I don't wear fragrance for job interviews. The way you smell can make the hiring committee decide not to give me the job. I have decided not to hire someone because their perfume gave me a headache. I don't want that to happen to me.

Vanessa noted that she was advised in college not to wear fragrance to a job interview:

Interviewer: Are there any setting where you wear no fragrance at all? Please explain:

Vanessa: To a job interview. Some people hate certain smells, and I wouldn't want to miss out on a job because of it. It's something I learned in a career exploration class I had in college.

Looking beyond the first impression of the job interview, the continued work environment influences fragrance choices as well. Two participants discussed the need for professionalism at work, citing their fragrance choice as one way they can add to their sense of professionalism:

Melanie: I think woody scents are more serious and I want to be taken seriously at work.

Woody scents make me feel serious, professional, bossy (laughs), and sophisticated.

Vanessa uses oriental fragrance in much the same way:

Vanessa: To me an oriental scent feels sophisticated and professional but not harsh. I want to be taken seriously at work, and an oriental scent sends that message.

Once again, floral and fresh scents were most popular for the work setting.

Participants choose to wear floral fragrances to work 40 percent of the time, while another 40 percent choose fresh fragrances for work. The most common reason given for

choosing floral or fresh fragrances for work was that the wearers anticipated that these families have less of a possibility of being offensive to others.

The Great Outdoors. Spending time indoors or outdoors has an impact on fragrance choice as well. Twenty-seven percent of participants mentioned how they choose their fragrance based on whether they will be spending time inside or outside. Elizabeth spoke about how florals have a way of reminding her of the outdoors:

Elizabeth: When I'm stuck inside all day, florals have a way of bringing the outside in when I can't actually be there. It makes me happy to have the reminder of the outdoors when that's where I really want to be.

Sophia and Katharine both spoke about why they do not wear fragrance when they spend time in nature:

Sophia: When I go camping I don't wear fragrance because it attracts mosquitos and other bugs.

Katharine: I don't wear fragrance when I am outside, if we are doing yard work or something, because fragrance attracts bugs. But if I'm just spending the day outside I don't need to wear fragrance because sometimes I just want to smell the grass or trees or rain. We have such a short spring and summer that I just want to enjoy those smells before they are gone. I don't need fragrance to compete with that.

As it is widely known that insects are attracted by many scents, and we generally want to repel insects from our personal space, these savvy perfume-wearers refrain from wearing scents while enjoying the great outdoors.

What Women Want

The third most common influence in fragrance choice involves how the fragrance user wants to feel. This subtheme focuses on how women strategically use fragrance in order to create or enhance a mood, to attract attention, and most notably, to boost confidence.

We Can Do It! Confidence is something that we all need from time to time. In fact, 93 percent of the women interviewed use fragrance because it gives them confidence. This topic was touched on previously in the section regarding the reasoning behind having a scent wardrobe where Elizabeth and Vanessa talked about how using a different fragrances makes them feel confident about each respective role they play in life. Liza also spoke about how fragrance made her feel confident and special when people around her noticed her fragrance.

Women today often feel pressure to do it all. In addition to the need to work, parent, get an education, lead others, be in a relationship, and be social, we also have pressure to be pretty. Many of the participants talked about how fragrance makes them feel attractive when being attractive takes the back seat to their other obligations. One participant (Maureen) discussed how she uses fragrance to feel good about herself:

Maureen: I want to feel good about myself, and fragrance is one way that I can do that.

This started probably when I got married and had my daughter. I do so much for them, and I am exhausted. Fragrance is a quick little something I can do for myself that makes me feel pretty and young when I feel the opposite.

Another participant (Elizabeth) spoke about how fragrance gives her a confident image:

Elizabeth: I think that people who take care of themselves are more successful, and taking care of myself and using fragrance makes me believe that I can be successful at whatever I choose to do at that moment.

The data revealed that fragrance is related to confidence in other ways as well.

Specifically, 40 percent of the participants mentioned that they began wearing fragrance as an adolescent because they feared being judged by others. One participant, Vivien, related the amount of fragrance she wears to her level of confidence:

Interviewer: Why do you like to wear fragrance?

Vivien: I started it in Jr. High School gym class when I ran the risk of smelling bad around my peers. I didn't want to be known for that. So I started using body spray and cheaper perfumes, and I would apply a lot of it. I mean I would really over-apply it. (laughs) I'm still very conscious of not being smelly; but as I grow more secure in myself, I know that I don't have to over-apply a scent just to smell good. I realize now that wearing too much perfume is probably just as bad as smelling sweaty.

There was a notable connecting in the data between age and why women wear fragrance. Of participants under the age of 35, 73 percent mentioned that the main reason they wear fragrance was for the enjoyment of others. In contrast, 67 percent of participants ages 36-50 claimed that the main reason they wear fragrance was for their own enjoyment. One participant (Meryl) talked about how this changed for her in relation to age:

Meryl: When I was younger I would wear perfume to please others, but as I age and get more confident I wear it more to please myself.

Interviewer: Really? Can you give some examples of this?

Meryl: Well, my boyfriend in high school loved a certain perfume, so I would wear it, but I always hated how it smelled; and it seemed like every other girl in school was wearing it. When we broke up, I stopped wearing it. I met the man who is now my husband, who has a major sweet tooth and loves any kind of baked dessert, I started wearing vanilla-based scents and started using air fresheners and things that smelled like vanilla for his enjoyment. But he never commented on my vanilla perfumes; and one day, after washing his hands with vanilla hand soap, he asked me “Why does everything have to smell like vanilla?” It just made me realize that he was never going to say if he liked how I smelled, so I just decided to use what makes me happy.

Bette, who works at Bath and Body Works, talked about how she can recognize a woman’s level of confidence by observing how she shops for fragrance:

Bette: I think fragrance really has a lot to do with confidence. I can read my customers level of confidence by how they shop for fragrance.

Interviewer: How so?

Bette: If they ask my opinion and can’t make the decision for themselves on what to buy I think it means they have lower confidence. If they know what they want or are willing to try something new, they generally seem more confident to me. You don’t have to know what you want to be confident, but I think a less confident person doesn’t get what they like—they get a fragrance other people will like.

These statements appear to indicate that fragrance selection may be determined by the degree of self-confidence the buyer possesses.

Returning the Compliment. A boost to confidence can be as simple as receiving a compliment. 60 percent of participants revealed that they wear a fragrance or fragrance family more often if it draws compliments or attention from others. When asked “Among your scent wardrobe, do you have a favorite fragrance? If so, why is it your favorite?” Eighty-seven percent of participants responded that they did have a favorite scent, which they attributed to being a scent that they love, and they like the attention it draws. Once again, the ever-popular fresh fragrance family was noted as a crowd-pleaser. Liza spoke about how fresh scents have become her favorite:

Liza: For any kind of group event, I wear fresh scents because people always ask what I’m wearing; and I like that. It really draws attention, so I just use fresh the most. I alternate my fresh scents a lot because people notice the change. (laughs) When I need to feel really good about myself I wear a fresh scent. I wear fresh scents a lot because I guess I always want to feel good about myself.

Natalie described how she uses feedback from others in conjunction with her preferences as a way to know what fragrances smell best on her:

Natalie: I want to smell good and have others think I smell good. I want them to think I’m clean. I almost always choose a fresh scent because they smell clean to me, I like smelling fresh scents on myself, and people compliment me on them. A fresh scent feels most like me and others like them on me, so fresh scents must be best suited to me. I still vary my fresh scents, but people always comment on my aquatic and citrus scents, so I wear them more often than the others.

Further, 27 percent of participants said that they can control the type of compliment or attention they receive depending on what type of fragrance they wear. Elizabeth explained:

Elizabeth: Different scents will bring different attention to me, and I can decide what type of attention I want and use a scent that matches it.

Interviewer: Can you give an example of how you do this?

Elizabeth: I learned it through observing how people treated me when I wore a really sweet, almost cotton candy like scent. At the time I was in a serious relationship, and if I went out for a girl's night wearing this scent, guys would always comment on how great I smelled. At the time I wasn't trying to meet someone, so I learned to wear a different scent. But it has worked as an attention-getter now that I'm single again. It might not be what is bringing me attention, but it definitely seems to be a conversation starter.

However, some people have tried using fragrance to get the attention of someone specific to no avail. Vanessa described how difficult it is to get her husband to approve of a fragrance:

Vanessa: I want my husband to notice my fragrance and tell me that I smell pretty; because if I found a fragrance that he really loved, I would make it my signature. Unless I ask him to smell my wrist and tell me what he thinks, he just doesn't notice.

Although some women are successful in using fragrance as an attention-getter, it is clear that this endeavor is hit-or-miss. Taking into consideration that different people have

different scent associations, personal preferences, scent perceptions, and varying abilities to smell, it can be unclear how others are going to respond to different fragrances.

Come on Get Happy. When asked “If you have a scent wardrobe, please explain how you choose which scent to wear” 87 percent of participants mentioned matching or enhancing a mood or feeling as influences on this decision. The most common moods or feelings the participants wanted to match or enhance were comfort (87 percent), and happiness (67 percent). In addition, 53 percent of participants talked about how they choose fragrance to counteract work-related stress. One participant (Meryl) talked about what fragrance she wears to her stressful work environment:

Interviewer: What fragrance family would you choose to wear to work?

Meryl: Floral

Interviewer: Why did you choose the floral family for work?

Meryl: Florals put me in a happy mood. If nothing else goes right in my day, at least I smell like something that makes me happy.

Maureen also talked about how her favorite fragrance, Nicki Minaj Pink, helps her get through a stressful day and helps her celebrate the end of a long work week:

Maureen: I’m happy when Friday arrives, so Friday is Nicki Minaj day. After a long and tiring week, it gives me a little piece of happiness. Or if I’m determined to have a great day, I will wear it, like when I’m expecting my day to be more stressful.

Most commonly, participants mentioned using fragrance to create a feeling of comfort.

The fragrances most often used to create a feeling of comfort are those associated with comfort foods such as vanilla, caramel, and cinnamon. These edible fragrances were most commonly chosen during the seasons of fall and winter when participants referred

most to the need for comforting. Additionally, scents like vanilla, caramel, and cinnamon were most often described as warm indicating a connection between warmth and comfort, particularly in seasons when the weather is colder.

No Offense. Considering others with fragrance sensitivities is a popular influence in choosing to use or not use fragrance and on choice of fragrance. Eighty-seven percent of participants said that they do not wear fragrance when they will be spending time with people who have known fragrance sensitivities.

One particular group that participants did not want to offend with their fragrance is children. Forty-seven percent of the participants work with and/or spend time with young children, and all but one of these participants choose to wear no fragrance when children are in their company. Bette, the single participant who does wear fragrance in the presence of children, chooses to wear a fresh scent when working with children, stating:

Bette: When student teaching and working with kids, I have to be careful of asthma and allergies and not be overpowering. I have to consider special education when teaching because these kids have disabilities and illness. So I choose to wear a toned down fragrance and a lighter formulation that stays close to my skin. I haven't run in to a problem with it so far. If I was asked to not wear any fragrance, I would respect that.

Forty percent of participants who mentioned specifically being asked not to wear fragrance received the request from their doctor's office. Of these participants, only three were given specific reasons not to wear fragrance, namely as a pre-surgical precaution,

the doctor's sensitivity to fragrance, and the effect fragrance products have on medical equipment. One participant (Olivia) explained:

Olivia: The only time I don't wear fragrance is when I get a mammogram. The doctor's office specifically requests not to wear any fragrance or deodorant because it damages the mammogram machine.

Twenty percent of participants admitted to having their own fragrance sensitivities. When asked about her favorite fragrance, one participant (Vanessa) talked about how prolonged exposure to the fragrance can lead to sensitivity for her:

Vanessa: My former favorite (that I loved more than my current favorite) was Emporio Armani She. It's a really sophisticated scent. It feels like me, and I wore it for many years. After wearing it for a long time, I started to feel sick or nauseous every time I applied it and would have to wash it off my wrists. This sometimes happens to me when I wear the same scent repeatedly. It happened with Clinique Happy, too. When that happens, it makes me so sad to give up something that I love. If I could still wear Emporio Armani, I would.

Further, 93 percent of participants said that they consider the possibility of fragrance being offensive when in a crowd of strangers and generally choose fragrances that they feel have the least chance of being offensive. However, opinions on which fragrance families were least likely to be offensive varied greatly. The fragrance families that participants felt were least likely to be offensive to others were fresh (40 percent) and floral (also at 40 percent). Maureen described how she considers a crowd before choosing her fresh fragrance:

Maureen: Fresh is usually lighter and not overpowering anyone else's fragrances. For formal events, sometimes I can smell the people before I see them; and I don't want to add to that heaviness. It can get overwhelming.

In reviewing the data, there seems to be a connection between fragrance families perceived to be formal (woody and oriental) and the potential for being offensive. The opinion that the oriental fragrance family was most likely to be offensive to others was unanimous, as not a single participant described this family as non-offensive.

Interestingly, the fragrance families considered most likely to be offensive, woody and oriental, are also the fragrance families described in the previous section as comforting.

Public Displays of Intention

After reviewing the data it has become evident that women use fragrance with purpose or intention. Ninety-three percent of participants admitted that they use fragrance, in one way or another, to make an impression. However, the intended impression varies. It varies not only from person to person, but also by situation. Essentially, the impression a person intends to send varies greatly among different social situations.

Squeaky Clean. Smelling clean is the most common intention when choosing a fragrance. Eighty percent of participants talked about how important it is for others to know that they have good hygiene. This is nothing new. It is common knowledge that fragrance masks odor. Among the 80 percent of women who say they want others to think they smell clean, controlling how they smell seems to be somewhat of an obsession. For example, one participant (Vanessa) addressed the possibility of using too much of a good thing:

Vanessa: I think smelling bad is more offensive than even wearing too much fragrance.

It's just that important to me not to smell bad.

Liza also addressed the fear of smelling bad to others. She compensates for this by applying more fragrance than normal on a hot day:

Liza: During the summer, I wear what I have the most of because I apply it more often and use more spray each time I apply. I have more fresh scents, so that's what I would choose. I sweat more in summer and I'm afraid that people will think I stink. I don't want to drive people away by smelling bad. (laughs)

Meryl addressed how she feels people will judge her based on her weight, and she talked about how using fragrance make her feel more secure:

Meryl: As an overweight person, I try to avoid smelling bad and being a stereotype in any way that I can. So wearing fragrance helps me know that I smell great. It makes me feel pretty in a society that glorifies women with perfect bodies.

The desire to smell clean is yet another explanation for the popular penchant for the fresh fragrance family, as fresh scents were most commonly described as clean.

The Romance Languages. If smelling bad has the possibility of driving people away, it is safe to say that fragrance wearers choose a fragrance they think smells good in order to draw someone closer. Thirty-three percent of the women interviewed said that they wear fragrance with the purpose of encouraging romantic interaction. Romance is one area where the fresh fragrances do not apply—none of the participants described fresh fragrances as romantic. In fact, the most romantic fragrance families were woody and oriental. Meryl described how she uses an oriental/floral blend to get her husband's attention:

Meryl: If I'm on a date night with my husband, I wear Spark Seduction which is woody with a little bit of floral. I wear it because I think it smells sexy. He never comments on how I smell, but I hope he thinks it's sexy, too.

It is notable that woody and oriental fragrances were most popular in the seasons of fall and winter, and the most common word used to describe them was "warm." One participant (Elizabeth) described how she thinks of fall and winter, particularly holidays, as romantic:

Elizabeth: Woody scents work really well in fall and winter because they are warm. Fall and winter are romantic because it's dark outside, you are inside the house, maybe with a fire burning, it just makes you want to snuggle and get close.

Again, because winters are so long in the Midwest, I would anticipate that the sale and usage of woody and oriental scents to be much greater in this region during this season.

Leaving a Legacy. The sense of smell has a close connection to memory. When I asked the participants "What are your most prominent memories triggered by fragrance?" I heard an array of stories that were vivid, descriptive, and endearing. All of the participants told stories...mostly of people they loved, a few of people they hate, and some fond memories were of people and things they will never smell again. One participant, Vanessa, talked about how she hopes she is remembered as a role model because of her fragrance:

Vanessa: I think I started wearing fragrance because as a kid I would pass a teacher or a sophisticated lady out somewhere and smell their perfume, and I wanted to be like them. As an adult I have put a lot of effort into being educated and sophisticated.

I want to smell great and be remembered for it. If my fragrance encourages a girl to notice that I have that kind of life, maybe they will be inspired too.

Another participant, Melanie, described her mother's Chanel No. 5 as the smell of home:

Interviewer: What are some of your most prominent memories triggered by fragrance?

Melanie: My mother's perfume—she wore Chanel No. 5. She passed away, and when I'm having a bad day, I smell it and it soothes and comforts me. To me, it smells like the East Coast, where I grew up. My husband is in the military, and we move around a lot; so I really need something that reminds me of home sometimes. Chanel No. 5 makes me feel connected to where I'm from when I'm actually very far removed from it.

Melanie went on to say that she wants her kids to have a similar memory for her:

Interviewer: Do you have a signature scent or a scent wardrobe?

Melanie: Maybe both. I will use up a bottle of something and then switch to something else, but I haven't settled on a signature. I wish I had a signature so my kids would think of me when they smell it, like I think of my mom when I smell her perfume, but I can't settle yet.

Most of the women interviewed, 53 percent, talked about a desire to be remembered for their use of fragrance. The majority of them spoke about leaving a memory for their children. Vivien, one participant who believes she has a signature scent, explained why leaving a scent memory for her children is important to her:

Vivien: I think I wear my perfume because I want to be remembered for it. Just like I have memories related to smells, I would like my kids to remember how I smelled and think of me when they smell it. When I said earlier that I love the smell of

cinnamon, it's because my grandpa kept Big Red gum in his shirt pocket and when we hugged I could smell it. Smelling cinnamon feels like his hugs to me, and I'll never get another real hug from him. Someday when I'm gone, I want my kids smell my perfume and feel like they are getting a hug from me.

As discussed by Lewis (2015), "A number of behavioral studies have demonstrated that smells trigger more vivid emotional memories and are better at inducing that feeling of 'being brought back in time' than images". Certainly this is true given that all of the participants had stories of scent associations that they shared in their interviews. Some of the women were even brought to tears while recounting their memories that were prompted by scent. Scent has the ability to bring back intense feelings and memories for many people. Although Vivien's grandfather did not necessarily choose to be remembered by cinnamon chewing gum, it's likely that Melanie's mother did choose to be remembered by her Chanel No 5. The participants demonstrated that scent association can give meaning to their choice of fragrance.

Message in a Bottle

Research question 3 asks: What message, if any, do women who wear fragrance intend to send? For some, questions regarding the message a fragrance could send were difficult to understand. Fifty-three percent of the women interviewed talked about how using fragrance is part of their everyday routine or ritual. Initially, responses to the intended message their fragrance sends were basic, (i.e. that I smell good, that I have good hygiene, and that I care about my appearance). A few of the participants equated using fragrance to brushing their teeth—basically, they don't think about it, they just do it. Taking this into consideration, I imagine I would get similar responses to the question

“What message, if any, do you intend to send by brushing your teeth?” As we got further into the interviews, the participants started getting more descriptive about the intended message their fragrances send. Although all of the participants described how fragrances can send messages, only 13 percent of them said that they do not use fragrance in this way.

The objective in seeking answers to this question of fragrance usage was to create a better understanding of olfactics as a form of interpersonal communication; and to some extent, it has. However, what I did not anticipate was the overwhelming response that although fragrance is often used to send messages to others, it was more prevalent that participants use fragrance to send messages to themselves. Essentially, women are also using fragrance as a form of intrapersonal communication. In the following sections, I will explore the use of fragrance as it applies to sending messages to others and to one’s self.

Cleanliness is Next to Godliness. Cleanliness is of great importance to the women taking part in this study, as previously noted. Ninety-three percent of participants stated that the main reason they use fragrance is so that others will assume that they, the wearer, are clean or have good hygiene. This could explain the popularity of fresh scents, which are most often described as clean. But why is cleanliness such an important issue? One participant, Sophia, explained her preference for clean and fresh fragrances:

Sophia: I like fresh scents because to me they smell clean. It’s important to me that people know I’m clean.

Interviewer: Why is cleanliness so important to you?

Sophia: My parents really valued cleanliness. I was raised in a very clean house, so I think I've taken cues from that. I work with kids, some of which have pretty poor home lives, and there are some that smell like they haven't bathed or had their clothes washed, and it's proof that they are not well cared for. I think of the kids I work with who have clean clothes and who bathe often as being well cared-for. Sometimes I have to teach them to care for themselves when maybe nobody else at home will. To me, a fresh scent communicates that I took the time to take good care of myself and have good hygiene...that I'm clean.

Cleanliness seemed to have a higher level of importance among the participants who work in close physical proximity with others. One participant, Natalie, wants to send the message that she is clean in order to present her best self to others:

Interviewer: Why do you wear fragrance?

Natalie: I want to smell good and have others think that I smell good. I want them to think I'm clean.

Interviewer: Why is it important to you that others think you are clean?

Natalie: I think of it like this. When I have company over to my house I always clean up first and give a good presentation. Smelling clean is just like that—I work closely with other people, and I want to smell clean to present my best self to them. When I see a co-worker's office space and it's a mess, I also assume that is how their house looks like—a mess. So if I present myself as clean, which includes my fragrance, people will get the message that I am clean in all areas of my life.

Throughout the interviews, the participants talked about their public image and judgement. One thing all of the participants had in common is the knowledge that they

are being judged by others, just as they are judging others. As made evident in the last two examples, we make assumptions about others based on how they present themselves. One participant, Meryl, alluded to this when she talked about how she feels, as an overweight person, wearing a clean fragrance helps her avoid being a stereotype (e.g. she fears that others believe overweight people are more likely to be sweaty and have unpleasant body odor).

Stereo Systems. In some cases, the participants spoke about choosing fragrances that help reinforce a way in which they are categorized. Examples of this are choosing fragrances that are considered to be gender appropriate (73 percent of participants choose fragrances that they described as reinforcing the message of their femininity), age appropriate (47 percent choose fragrances that convey the message of their maturity), and work appropriate (27 percent choose fragrances that they believe sends the message of their level of professionalism.)

Unsurprisingly, the floral fragrance family was most often chosen to convey the message of femininity with 73 percent of participants choosing floral for a setting they found to be most acceptable to display femininity. Most commonly, this feminine setting was a wedding. It is notable, however, that the participants chose fragrances that were never described as sending the message of femininity for the professional setting. In fact, the oriental and woody fragrance families that were most often chosen to send the messages of professionalism and maturity were also described as sending the message of masculinity. This data implies that youthfulness and femininity are generally considered unprofessional, whereas maturity and masculinity are commonly considered professional.

If this is so, do the intended messages of these fragrance choices assist the wearer in accomplishing her goals, do they reinforce gender stereotypes, or both?

In addition, expressing masculinity in a setting where others will not pass judgement influenced a fragrance choice among 20 percent of the participants. One woman, Liza, explained why she feels comfortable using a fragrance to send the message of masculinity with a select group that she trusts to be non-judgmental:

Interviewer: What fragrance family are you most likely to choose in the spring?

Liza: Woody

Interviewer: Why did you choose this family for this setting?

Liza: The fall and winter coaching seasons are done, and I have more free time to hang out with my friends. Woody scents are what I wear around them.

Interviewer: I noticed that you have not chosen to wear woody scents in any other setting. Do your friends have an influence on this choice?

Liza: Um. I choose to be friends with people who will accept me for who I am and woody scents feel most like me.

Interviewer: What message, if any, do you believe a woody fragrance communicates?

Liza: It sends the message that I am rugged and masculine. I don't always choose to express it with everyone, but with my friends I feel comfortable enough to show my more masculine side.

Here the data exposes the pressure for women to communicate masculinity in the workplace but femininity in their spare time. This double standard of expressing masculinity at work and femininity at leisure exemplifies how women are influenced to conform to societal norms in the various functions of their lives.

Friends and Lovers. Friendship and building relationships were major factors regarding the message a fragrance sends. Forty percent of participants said they use fragrance to convey the message that they are approachable, friendly, and welcoming. The data reveals that, once again, the fresh and floral fragrance families are most popular for communicating approachability and friendliness. One participant, Elizabeth, explained:

Elizabeth: Florals send the message that I'm feminine, happy, friendly, and inviting, but they are definitely not sexual.

Another participant, Audrey, agreed with the approachability of a floral scent, with one caveat:

Audrey: Florals can be approachable as long as they are not too strong. A really strong floral might send exactly the opposite message. It might make people think you are trying too hard and that message is the opposite of approachability...it's desperation. (laughs)

Certainly, friendship, particularly at the beginning stage, is something that is best developed organically. When a friendship comes naturally it is comfortable, but what Audrey is saying here is that when a potential friendship feels forced or over-zealous it can drive a potential friend away, and that an over-applied fragrance can also send that message.

Another message fragrance can send in order to appeal to potential friends is that of kindness. Sixty-seven percent of participants talked about how fragrance can send the message that the wearer is kind. However, there was no consensus of the fragrance families described as sending the message of kindness. This may simply be a matter of

personal perception. In fact, the only fragrance family that was not described as kind was the woody family. It is notable that the woody fragrance family was chosen as the most masculine of the fragrance families. Perhaps masculinity is associated with power, success, or strength, but these participants did not equate the masculine scents with kindness.

In 1921, when asked where a woman should apply her fragrance, Coco Chanel's famously quoted response was "Wherever she expects to be kissed." When worn properly, a fragrance should not be discovered from across a room. Rather, it is something that should stay within the personal space of the wearer, a notably intimate distance. Forty-four percent of the participants choose a fragrance that sends the message of being appealing, inviting, and enticing to the opposite sex. As previously described by Audrey, an over-applied fragrance can give the impression that the wearer is trying too hard to attract a friend. Likewise, participants described that one way of using fragrance to draw a potential romantic partner closer is by not coming on too strong by over applying their fragrance. Further, 27 percent of participants said that they use fragrance to send a message about their sexual appeal. To send this message, 25 percent of participants chose the woody fragrance family, while 75 percent chose oriental. Eighty percent of all participants described the oriental fragrance family as sophisticated. One participant, Bette, talked about this correlation:

Interviewer: What fragrance family would you choose to wear for a formal evening event?

Bette: Oriental

Interviewer: Why did you choose this family for this setting?

Bette: It would probably go best with my outfit—maybe a little black dress. Oriental scents are darker and sexier and that’s probably what I’m going to be wearing—something dark and sexy.

Interviewer: What message, if any, do you believe this fragrance communicates?

Bette: That I’m sexy and enticing. Sophisticated, which I think goes hand-in-hand with sexy.

It is important to note that the participants only chose to wear a scent that they thought of as sending a sexy message for evening. When Julianne was asked why she chose a woody scent she described as sexy for evening she said:

Julianne: I work all day, and I’m a professional, a sexy scent would send the wrong message. A woody scent is sexy, and I can be sexy in the evening.

A related message women send through fragrance applies more to a potential long-term connection. Sixty-seven percent of the women interviewed said that they sometimes choose a fragrance to express that they are receptive to the possibility of love. One participant, Audrey, described the message of floral fragrances as:

Audrey: Happy, approachable, and open to love. I would wear it on a date to show that I’m open to a long-term relationship.

Another participant, Elizabeth, described how she used an oriental scent that will send the message that she is receptive to a long-term relationship and that she is sexy:

Elizabeth: I think of oriental scent sending the message that I am sweet, sensitive, and a good lover. It helps me come across as the complete package. (laughs)

According to the participants, the best fragrances to send a romance-related message were floral (40 percent), oriental (30 percent), and woody (also 30 percent). It is

a notable change of pace that the fresh fragrance family was never chosen as sending any type of romantic message.

Message Undeliverable. When using fragrance as a method of nonverbal communication, as with any other form of communication, sometimes the intended message is not the message that is received--or just not received at all. At times, the message is received by someone that it is not intended for. Seventy-three percent of participants said that the fragrances they wear draw compliments from others and that they like this attention. However, when using fragrance to get the attention of someone specific, sometimes the message is undeliverable. One participant, Vanessa, explained that this happens between her and her husband:

Vanessa: I want my husband to notice my fragrance and tell me that I smell beautiful or sexy, but unless I ask him to smell my wrist and tell me what he thinks of the scent, he doesn't even notice.

Another participant, Meryl, described similar difficulties with her husband taking notice of her fragrance, noting his lack of feedback:

Meryl: If I'm on a date with my husband, I wear Spark Seduction (which is a woody floral) because I think it's sexy. He never comments on how I smell, but I hope he thinks it's sexy too.

One problem with using fragrance as a nonverbal communication method is interpretation, as made evident through the examples that Vanessa and Meryl described. Essentially, what one person thinks of as sexy may be interpreted in a completely different way by another person. In using olfactive communication, as with other forms of

communication such as email or cellular texting, assuming that a sent message is a received message is often times incorrect.

Note to Self

In creating the research questions, the main goal was to learn if women who wear fragrance use it to send a message. Although it was not specifically described, the intention was to see how fragrance is used to send messages to others. The data gathered confirms that the participants do use fragrance to send messages to others. However, what I was not expecting is that the participants also use fragrance as a way to send messages to themselves. In fact, using fragrance as a method of intrapersonal communication was significantly more prevalent than using fragrance as a method of interpersonal communication, with 100 percent of participants explaining that they use fragrance to send messages to themselves. Possibly the greatest benefit of using fragrance as a form of self-talk is that the wearer is both the sender and the receiver. This reduces the possibilities of interference and incorrect interpretation, as represented in the model of human communication presented in the literature review.

Liquid Confidence. The realization that women are using fragrance as a form of positive self-talk occurred to me in the first interview I conducted, where Natalie explained what wearing fragrance does for her when asked what message, if any, she believes a fresh scent sends:

Natalie: I think a fresh scent comes across as clean and positive. But, for me, it's not about how it comes across to others. It's about how I feel in the fragrance. For me, fragrance is a confidence booster. When I need a boost of confidence, I wear a fresh scent and it helps me feel good about myself.

In fact, confidence was the most common message women described as sending to themselves through their use of fragrance. One hundred percent of the participants said that they use fragrance to boost their confidence.

One way that women use fragrance to feel confident is by wearing fragrances that draw compliments. Fifty-three percent of participants said that the fragrances they wear most often are ones that receive the most compliments, but these participants do this specifically for the confidence boost they get by receiving a compliment, not necessarily to please those around them. Liza talked about how she gets a confidence boost from attention that her fragrance draws:

Liza: I like the attention I get when people ask me what fragrance I'm wearing. I've noticed that fresh smells get more attention than other types of scents, so I wear fresh scents more often. People ask what I'm wearing, or they say it smells different than it smelled on me the last time I wore it. Fresh scents are my favorite on me. I think they change enough to be noticeable, and being noticed and getting compliments are major confidence boosters for me.

In particular, the scent wardrobe has a way of boosting the confidence of the wearer. Choosing among different scents gives the wearer confidence, not only by letting her know that she smells good, but also by helping her feel like she is appropriate for different situations. One participant, Vanessa, described this:

Vanessa: Fragrance makes me feel attractive, confident, put together, and appropriate for whatever I'm doing each day. Wearing the right scent for the right occasion really helps my confidence. Fragrance is like a whisper to me, reminding me that I am appropriate and can be good at all of the different things I do.

The desire to be appropriate for different situations appears to be a common thread that occurred many times throughout the interviews. Given the prevalence of this need, it seems that societal pressures to fit in and be proper have an intense impact on the need for confidence. Elizabeth explained how she uses fragrance to respond to this pressure:

Elizabeth: Women, in general, are under a lot of pressure to do a lot of different things.

If I know that I smell good, or even proper for whatever role I am in, it's one less thing for me to have to think or worry about because I always have a thousand things on my mind. It helps remind me that I am good enough to do whatever I am doing, like at work, as a parent, at school, with friends, that kind of thing.

Vanessa, along with forty percent of the participants, talked about how she uses fragrance to give her confidence at work:

Vanessa: My career requires a certain degree of sophistication. When I wear a fragrance

I think of as sophisticated, it helps me feel more confident at work. But a sophisticated fragrance doesn't work in all areas of my life. That is a big part of why I have a scent wardrobe rather than a signature scent. I can use my fragrances to give myself confidence in all of the different facets of my life.

The way that Vanessa refers to fragrance as "a whisper" and Elizabeth talked about using fragrance as "a reminder" shows that they are using fragrance as a kind of affirmation.

Fragrance is sending them the message that they can be all the things they are expected to be, and that they are capable of accomplishing their goals. By alternating the use of different fragrances from their fragrance wardrobe, they are using the different affirmations that help them feel confident in what they do each day.

Keep Calm and Carry On. It is easy to understand, with all the tasks and pressure women face each day, that stress reduction and calming would be necessary. Keeping this in mind, one of the most common messages that women send to themselves through their use of fragrance was that of comfort and calm. In fact, 80 percent of participants discussed how they use fragrance to relieve stress in their lives. The most commonly used fragrance family for calming was the oriental family. Specifically, vanilla was used for its calming and comforting messages. One participant, Olivia, explained:

Olivia: Vanilla makes me feel warm and comfortable. So if I need to feel comfortable, like if I know I'm going to have a stressful day at work, I will wear a vanilla scent that helps me feel calm that day.

As I noted in interpreting the responses from Research Question 2, the most comforting fragrances tend to have a direct connection with comfort foods. Sixty-seven percent of participants talked about how the oriental fragrances, particularly fragrances with notes of vanilla and spices, remind them of good times with their families. One participant, Meryl, discussed why she uses an oriental scent as a calming message to herself:

Meryl: I use a vanilla and spice scent and it helps me feel comforted. It makes me think of my childhood and being with my mom and grandma, baking cookies and pies for the holidays, and how comforting those foods have always been to me. I think of how great it is to walk into a house that smells like baking and comfort foods—it feels like home. My vanilla and spice fragrance is a self-reminder of family, closeness, happy memories, and comfort.

The data revealed that comfort scents were mostly reserved for evenings and weekends.

Although 27 percent of participants said that they wear comforting fragrances to work, 73

percent use comforting scents use these fragrances when they are away from work, saving the scents of home for exactly that setting.

It is also notable that the participants say they use fragrances they find comforting more often during the fall and winter months. Katharine talked about how the oriental fragrance family is comforting to her in the fall:

Katharine: I want warm and heavy food or something baked in the fall, and I want my fragrance to be the same. A heavier scent feels comforting to me, like when you lay under a heavy quilt and it sinks into your body. A heavier scent is comforting when the weather is harsh.

Again, this could be a connection to colder weather or the longer periods of darkness in fall and winter. Seventy-three percent of participants talked about the “weight” of a fragrance and the comfort a heavier fragrance brings during the colder months, comparing it to the feeling of wearing a heavy sweater or being covered by a heavy blanket.

Another way that the participants use fragrance to send the message of calming is to further support their already calm state. Thirty-three percent of participants talked about how they apply a fragrance they think goes with an already laid-back feeling. Bette explained:

Bette: If I’m already feeling carefree and relaxed, I wear a fresh scent because it helps me stay in that calm state of mind.

One hundred percent of the participants who use fragrance to encourage their relaxed state talked about how the fresh fragrance family helps them accomplish this. For all of

the participants who use the fresh fragrance family in this way, summer was the reason for their laid-back attitude.

Positive Reinforcement. Happiness, much like a spray of fragrance, is fleeting. Several of the participants referred to how they use perfume to send themselves a message of happiness. In fact, happiness, or a variation of the word (e.g. joyful, carefree), was used by participants more than 70 times throughout the interviews. One participant, Barbra, discussed why she always uses floral fragrances to bring happiness to her work day:

Barbra: It makes me feel happy. My floral scents remind me to be happy and to be kind to the kids that I teach.

Just as these women use fragrance as a way to comfort themselves in times of stress, fragrances that send a message of happiness are also one way that they combat the stress that is part of their everyday lives and demands. The fragrance families these participants use in order to send themselves a message of happiness are floral (60 percent) and fresh (40 percent).

Just as the data revealed the connection between a stress response requiring comfort during fall and winter, it also revealed a connection between a stress response requiring happiness in the spring and summer. One participant, Vanessa, explained why she uses a floral fragrance when she is stressed by work during the summer months:

Vanessa: Summer is the busiest time of year where I work. As the summer goes on, I get busier and busier, which means I'm more stressed. When I leave work I always use hand sanitizer, and I use a great floral scented sanitizer in the summer.

I think I associate this smell with how relieved I am to be done with the day.

Now, when I use this scent, it gives me the feeling of being happy and carefree.

Of the participants who use fragrance to send themselves message of happiness, seventy percent said that their fragrance choice can make them feel as though their happiness is radiating out to others. One participant, Katharine, explained:

Katharine: When I wear a floral it makes me feel bright and glowing; and it has an impact on the people around me, too. If I feel joyous and bright, others around me can sense it and they feel happy too. People comment on how I brighten their days. It's really important to me to be alight, and I choose fragrances that help me achieve and believe that about myself.

Further, forty-seven percent of the participants talked about how they wear fragrances as a way to motivate themselves or create a feeling of energy. Maureen, talked about how she strategically wears her favorite fragrance on days when she needs to get things accomplished:

Maureen: One reason why I love my Nicky Minaj perfume is that it makes me feel productive. If I'm tired or just really need to accomplish something, I wear this fragrance; and it boosts my productivity. Something about it makes me believe that I can accomplish my goals.

On a similar note, the data shows that women use fragrances that send them a positive, hopeful, or uplifting message. This use of fragrance could be a direct response to stress, exhaustion, or simply a way to meet the requirements of their daily lives. One participant, Meryl, explained how she uses fragrance to get through her least favorite season:

Meryl: When I do wear fragrance in the winter, I always choose a fresh scent. I find fresh fragrances uplifting. I think I choose this scent because I just need motivation to get through winter. It's just so daunting. A fresh scent helps me to be positive and optimistic.

Another participant, Maureen, described that she also uses a hopeful scent in relation to the seasons. However, her hopeful and uplifting scent sends more of a message of celebration, rather than motivation. She explained:

Maureen: I always view spring as starting fresh. The snow melts and cleans the slate, and fresh equals clean to me. I want to open the windows and see the light at the end of the tunnel. It's like fresh air. In this case, my fresh scent reminds me to be hopeful. Spring is here, and the sun is shining again. We made it through another long and difficult Minnesota winter.

In reviewing the data, it is clear that the seasons have a major effect on what fragrances women wear. While some women are using fragrance to help them get through a season that they do not particularly enjoy, others are celebrating the seasons as they come.

Given that all of the participants reside in the Midwest, it is unclear if this is a regional trend or if these seasonal fragrance practices occur throughout all climates and weather zones.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to shed light on modern fragrance usage, particularly as a method of nonverbal communication. There are many ways in which the findings of this study compare to, relate to, or expand on the previous literature. In this section I will compare the findings from this study to previous research cited in the literature review while highlighting unexpected results and predominant themes.

As discussed by Paul (2014) “The whole idea of signature scent may in fact be a relic of the 20th century” (The Perfume Diaries, 2014). Based on the information gathered from the participants in this study, it is clear that the majority of women who use fragrance do possess a scent wardrobe. However, despite their use of more than one fragrance, some of the women who participated in this study were reluctant to admit that they have and use a scent wardrobe. Among these women who claimed to have a signature scent, there seemed to be confusion between having a signature scent and having a scent wardrobe with a particular favorite scent. Although Paul’s statement is largely true, what she does not address is the reason behind this movement toward a scent wardrobe. As the findings revealed, more than one-fourth of the participants said that they would like to have a signature scent but have been unable to find the one fragrance they want to wear exclusively. I believe that the vast availability and variety of fragrances may lead to the inability to settle on one signature scent.

While the preference for a scent wardrobe is more common, there are many factors that could be contributing toward this trend. First, throughout the 20th century

women increasingly became part of the workforce. Households traditionally had one income (i.e. the husband earning the income and the wife staying home to run the household). With the prevalence of women working during the world wars while men were in battle (Harrison, 1988) and some significant feminist movements (e.g. radical feminism, liberal feminism, womanism) (Wood, 2013), this eventually evolved into women working full-time, often leading to two-income households adding discretionary income to be spent on luxury items, as well as the feeling of having earned the right to treat oneself. According to Alonso & Marchetti (2008), luxury purchases made by women have increased significantly, stating “It is estimated that in 2006 the luxury sector on a worldwide basis took in around US\$157 billion, spurred by the large scale consumption of items such as fragrances, cosmetics, pens, scarves, wine and other distilled drinks” (p. 40). In essence, now, more than ever, women have the means to select and purchase their own luxury items such as fragrance.

When women entered the workforce, they took on extra roles, which made the lives of women more complicated and multidimensional. Keeping their homemaking duties as well as punching the time clock created further stress. In addition to being wife, mother, employee, and potential caretaker for elderly parents, women also had media-driven pressure to be physically attractive. Many of the participants talked about how, even today, they feel stress about all of the roles that they play in their lives. The participants often spoke about how the versatility of a scent wardrobe helps them feel confident in the various areas of their lives (e.g. work, motherhood, friendship, and romance.)

Olfactics can communicate ethnicity, status, and social class, as stated in the literature review. Fragrance truly is a luxury; we do not need it to live. How people treat luxury items can vary greatly, and there are clearly different ways of thinking about fragrance, a luxury item. One of the participants, Liza, mentioned how fragrance was a status symbol that made her stand out in her low-income neighborhood and how she feels that having a scent wardrobe is an investment in herself and a luxurious treat. Liza uses her scent wardrobe as a way to communicate status to others as she wants them to notice that she frequently alternates high-end fragrances. Several other participants talked about how they use less expensive fragrances and formulations (i.e. body spray/splash, scented lotions) for everyday use and reserve more expensive fragrances and formulations (i.e. Eau de Parfum, Eau de Toilette) for special occasions. In essence, different attitudes about how to use luxury items can lead to having a scent wardrobe.

Personally, I believe the introduction of the retail chain Bath and Body Works in the early 1990s had a major impact on the prevalence of scent wardrobes—I refer to this influence as The Bath and Body Works Effect. To explain, Bath and Body Works is a popular fragrance shop known for its affordable and arguably basic fragrances, as well as promotions which encourage the purchase of several products. One of the store's most notable promotions is to buy three products and receive three products for free. When you consider the minimal investment in each product (roughly \$10 per bottle) and the idea that you are getting 3 bottles for free, it is easy to see how purchasing many different fragrances is not much of a risk or investment. The women who participated in this study were between the ages of 20 and 50 years old, the oldest of whom were young women 25 years ago when Bath and Body Works was in its infancy, the youngest of whom were not

even born yet. This was confirmed by 80 percent of participants who talked about how Bath and Body Works fragrances were among the first fragrances they tried. Thus, Bath and Body Works has likely become a turning point in the buying habits of fragrance wearers and a gateway to having multiple higher-end fragrances. I would anticipate this trend continuing as these women pass this trend on to future generations.

If we take into consideration that all of the participants in this study have a scent wardrobe, whether they choose to acknowledge it or not, and that the average number of fragrances in the participants' wardrobes is fifteen, there needs to be some rhyme or reason to how these women select what fragrance or combination of fragrances they wear each time they apply a scent.

Changes in weather were the most common factor that the participants cited when choosing a fragrance. As previously mentioned, all of the participants live in the Midwest where there are four distinct seasons. The different combinations of hot, cold, dry, and humid do have an effect on fragrance. Many of the participants noted that heat and humidity enhance the strength of a fragrance, and keeping this in mind, would select a fragrance that they often described as light or cool (e.g. the floral and fresh fragrance families) when experiencing this summer weather. On the contrary, cold and dry weather has a way of turning the volume down on a fragrance making it less potent. With the cold and dry winters we experience in the Midwest, the participants typically chose fragrances that they described as heavy or warm (e.g. the oriental and woody fragrance families). This information matched the fragrance preferences that Dunlop (2012) described in reference to larger countries, such as China, that often have different

climates and weather patterns that determine fragrance trends and preferences “Woody notes do better in dry Beijing, and fruity florals thrive in warmer Shanghai” (p. 48).

While the majority of the participants selected the fresh and floral fragrance families for spring and summer and woody and oriental fragrance families for fall and winter, surprisingly some of the women did exactly the opposite. Similarly, the fresh and floral fragrance families were most often described by participants as having the lowest possibility of being offensive to others, but not all were in agreement. Just as the perception of these scents were not completely agreed upon by the 15 Midwestern participants, the same is true of different cultures and their perceptions of fragrance. As noted in the literature review, according to Fox (2014) “Western notions of aesthetically pleasing fragrances are by no means universal” (p. 3). With the United States being a largely immigrant nation, leads me to wonder if the mixed ancestral backgrounds of the participants have had an influence on their fragrance choices.

A great majority of the participants talked about their desire to avoid being offensive to others, particularly those with fragrance sensitivity or allergy to fragrances. They mentioned specifically taking aversions to fragrance into consideration when in a work setting where they work closely with others or do not have their own office (i.e. shared offices or cubicle spaces), as well as situations where they will be in a crowd of people including strangers (e.g. at a wedding or theater). Whether the participants realized it or not, they were considering proxemics when choosing what fragrance to apply, how much fragrance to apply, and even if they should wear no fragrance at all. As noted in the literature review, someone from an individualist culture (e.g. cultures from Western Europe and North America) is more likely to expect a larger amount personal

space and is less likely to consider whether their fragrance imposes on the personal space of others. By contrast, someone from a collectivist culture (e.g. cultures from Asia, Africa, South America, and Central America) is more likely to expect a small amount of personal space and more likely to consider how their fragrance will affect others. For the most part, it seemed as though the participants in this study, who are all from the American individualist culture, were very concerned with not offending others with their use of fragrance. Again, I wonder if the participants' varied ancestral backgrounds had any impact on their consideration of proxemics in relation to their fragrance selection and application.

As mentioned in the analysis and interpretation, 87 percent of participants said that they do not wear fragrance when they will be spending time with people who have known fragrance sensitivities. Yet 13 percent of the participants said that they do wear fragrance when in the presence of people with fragrance sensitivities. These women said that they will wear less fragrance (fewer sprays of fragrance or a weaker fragrance composition) or that they wear fragrances that are from less offensive fragrance families. Of course, in every case the participants had their own idea of what fragrance families were offensive or inoffensive and assumed that others agree with these opinions or olfactive preferences. However, this is an incorrect assumption as, to many people, any and all fragrances are offensive.

Confidence was mentioned numerous times throughout the interviews, not only as something the wearer gets through wearing fragrance but also in relation to what fragrances are chosen and the amount of fragrance applied. Dunlop (2012) noted "French tradition involves taking younger girls of 12 or 13 to shop for their very first perfume"

(p. 346). She goes on to explain that French girls are taught how and where to apply perfume. Although the women interviewed all said that they had a role model who was a fragrance wearer, not a single woman who participated in this study mentioned being taught how to choose a fragrance, where to apply fragrance, or how much fragrance to apply. In fact, several of the participants discussed how they wore too much fragrance in an effort to avoid having body odor or chose a fragrance that they themselves did not enjoy in the name of pleasing others, particularly in their adolescent years. Many of the women talked about how as they aged and their confidence grew they learned to wear fragrances that they themselves enjoyed. Along with this, they learned the art of proper application and how not to over-apply their fragrances. Many of the world's finest perfumes are made in France. As a culture, the French value fragrance a great deal. There is certainly an art to selecting and applying fragrance, and the teaching of these skills seems to be missing from the American culture. Given the connection to fragrance and confidence, I wonder if American girls were taught how to select fragrance, how much fragrance to apply, and where to apply fragrance, would this boost their confidence at an earlier age?

Dunlop (2012) explained that as French girls mature, their fragrance usage evolves into a ritual of seduction involving "dark, spicy, statement scents" (p. 346). By comparison, only one third of the participants in this study said that they use fragrance as a method of seduction or as a way to encourage romance. The participants in this study who do use fragrance to seduce also choose the woody and oriental fragrance families. Although these participants use fragrance to encourage romantic encounters, some of them said their romantic partner has never taken notice of their perfume. However, given

the French teachings on how to select a scent, it is likely that French women, and certainly the consultants in French perfume shops, are more adept at matching a fragrance to the wearer's body chemistry. In comparison, considering the American need for impeccable hygiene, it is possible that Americans are unlikely to recognize their own body chemistry as frequent bathing washes away the body's natural oils with which fragrance oils are intended to intermingle.

As an ice breaker question, I asked the participants "What are some of your most prominent memories triggered by fragrance?" All of the participants told vivid stories of how fragrance reminds them of something or someone specific. Their stories were about the smell of foods, cleaning products, leather, and tobacco and the people, places, and events that these scents evoke. Some of the participants' stories were about disdain, some were disturbing, but most of these stories were endearing. Lewis (2015) said, "A number of behavioral studies have demonstrated that smells trigger emotional memories and are better at inducing that feeling of 'being brought back in time' than images." The women shared stories about their scent associations with candor and vulnerability, and it truly showed how powerful and meaningful scents can be. When the participants talked about choosing fragrances that they hoped would be memorable, it is easy to see how it could be difficult for anyone to decide on one fragrance. With so many fragrances available and so many ways to be remembered, how does one choose? The answer, I believe, is that you cannot choose the scent by which another person will remember you.

Everyone's scent perception is different, and combinations of scents can complicate this further. When one participant told me that the combination of Drakkar Noir cologne and leather reminded her of a past boyfriend, she also mentioned the

Drakkar Noir and leather presented separately did not have the same memory trigger. Another participant talked about her grandmother, who was a perfume wearer, but could not describe the perfume at all. Rather, she mentioned that a specific brand of cigarette and the smell of the smoke it generated reminds her of her grandmother. Essentially, a woman can wear all the fragrance she wants, but another person could remember her by the scent of her shampoo, the aroma of the coffee shop where they first met her, the smell of the old books she likes to read, or a combination of these things.

The question “What message, if any, do women who wear fragrance intend to send?” is the heart of what I aimed to discover in conducting this study. Although it was not explicitly stated in the question, my intent was to examine if and/or how women use fragrance to send messages to others. This proved somewhat difficult, as the concept of olfactive communication is not widely understood; and the sense of smell is understood even less. For most of the women who participated in this study, using fragrance is part of their everyday grooming routine. Asking them if they thought that an aspect of this everyday grooming routine sends a message took some extra thought on their part. With the prevalence of the scent wardrobe, the participants had to ask themselves if they wear fragrance simply because they want to smell good, if they use a strategy to selecting one fragrance from many (the smallest reported scent wardrobe consisted of precisely 3 fragrances, where the largest scent wardrobe was estimated at 50 fragrances) and what their choice of fragrance says about them.

Although some of the participants talked about how they analyze their fragrance choices in depth each time they apply, many of the participants mentioned that they had never put this much thought into their use of fragrance. In seeking an answer to this

research question, I was asking these women to think deeply about fragrance, something that is commonly thought of as meaningless. However when participants were asked to rate how important fragrance use was to them, 33 percent rated fragrance use as fairly important, whereas 60 percent of participants rated fragrance use as very important. But how can something people label as important also be considered meaningless? As noted in the literature review, many theorists have ranked the senses in order of importance, sometimes with the sense of smell ranked with very low importance, and sometimes being ranked with very high importance. Also mentioned in the literature review is the lack of vocabulary associated with the sense of smell.

Considering that there have been centuries of discord on the importance of smell, along with the limited understanding of the sense of smell and lack of language with which to describe smells, it is easy to see that using fragrance in order to send a message to another person can be a hit or miss endeavor. That is, another person receiving and interpreting the meaning or message sent by a fragrance in the same manner that you do is not guaranteed. Essentially, any type of communication which includes a sender and a receiver has the potential to be a flawed method of communication, including and especially olfactory communication.

Another message that can be sent through fragrance with relative accuracy is that of femininity or of masculinity. The floral fragrance family was most often described as sending the message of femininity, while the woody and oriental fragrance families were described as sending the message of masculinity. However, as noted in the literature review, Moore (2014) stated “It’s mystifying that this divide exists at all because the underlying truth is that fragrance is oblivious to gender...it is little more than the

accumulation of cultural ideas about what constitutes reality, and normality” (p. 2). That is, the gendering of fragrance has been constructed by cultural and societal influences, just as gender itself is a cultural and social construct. When taking into consideration the recent attention on gender fluidity, this could be another factor contributing to the need for a scent wardrobe.

Interestingly, although sending the message of femininity through a floral scent or masculinity through a woody or oriental scent may work well when communicating with someone who is American, as Bender (2013) stated “A masculine fragrance in one country is not necessarily still read as masculine in another” (p. 2). Thus, using fragrance to communicate gender in an intercultural context may require research on which fragrance families are considered feminine or masculine in various cultures.

Disturbingly, none of the participants in this study chose to wear a fragrance that they described as sending the message of femininity for the work setting. In fact, the fragrance families most often described as sending the message of professionalism were woody and oriental, which were also described as masculine. Given that we live in a society where working women are customary and accomplished, and that all of the women who participated in this study are either working professionals or students preparing for their future careers, it came as somewhat of a shock to me that not a single participant would choose a feminine fragrance for the work setting. A masculine fragrance choice could be attributed to confidence and independent thinking or a method of self-talk encouraging assertiveness. Despite the fact that gender equality has come a long way, there is still some way to go. Is it that women are choosing scents deemed masculine for work because masculinity is associated with strength and success and this

is something women want to communicate, either to themselves or others, at work? Or, is it that empowered women are confident enough to make an unexpected and independent choice of an unexpectedly masculine fragrance?

Additionally, the woody and oriental families were also the only fragrance families described as being sexy. This is a somewhat perplexing that women labeled the woody and oriental fragrance families as both professional and sexy. Given that none of the women discussed enhancing their sexual appeal in the work setting, I find it hard to believe that they are using fragrance in this way. It is far more likely, given the broad range of scents within each fragrance family, that the participants lacked a definitive way to properly describe fragrances that combine two or more fragrance families (e.g. floral/oriental fragrance or a woody/fresh fragrance.) This notion did not present itself to me until after analyzing the data; and further research could reveal a driving force behind these choices, which may be a coincidence, but are also likely societally influenced.

In the very first interview conducted, when asked “What message, if any, do you believe a fresh fragrance communicates?” Natalie responded “I think a fresh scent comes across as clean and positive. But, for me, it’s not about how it comes across to others. It’s about how I feel in the fragrance. For me, fragrance is a confidence booster. When I need a boost of confidence, I wear a fresh scent and it helps me feel good about myself.” As the interviews continued, time and time again the women talked about how they use fragrance predominantly for themselves, citing the boost of confidence they receive when they wear fragrance that makes them feel appropriate for all of the multitude of demands in their lives. In fact, all of the women who participated in these interviews mentioned that fragrance gives them confidence. Essentially, the data

revealed that women are often using fragrance as a method of nonverbal communication—principally as a form of self-talk.

The connection between fragrance and confidence was mentioned in the literature review where Davies (2006) addressed the growth in fragrance sales in South Africa, stating “...the emerging empowered black female middle class [as they] trade up from body sprays (classed as deodorants) to ‘bridge fragrances’. Particular to South Africa, bridge fragrances blur the gap between perfumes and body sprays” (p. 42). This leads me to believe that perhaps the connection between fragrance and confidence could be a symbiotic relationship where growing confidence changes fragrance preferences; and in turn, the use of fragrance further enhances confidence.

Another connection between fragrance and confidence noted in the literature review comes from Dunlop (2012) in relation to fragrance practices in the Middle East and strict religious guidelines on women’s clothing. She noted “Fragrance is often considered a spiritual way to anoint yourself before prayer, but it’s also a personal statement. Many women wear strong perfume all over as a way to symbolize arrival, which is perhaps telling in areas where burkas are the local uniform” (pp. 346-348). For many women, being told how they are allowed to adorn their bodies is a way of life. The beauty of fragrance is that, once applied, it cannot be seen. With potentially endless combinations of scents, fragrance may be one of the few forms of bodily self-expression these women are permitted publicly. Not only is their use of fragrance a message to others, it is also likely a message to themselves regarding creativity, individuality, and confidence.

The women who participated in this study also use fragrance to send themselves the messages of calm and comfort. The participants used comforting fragrances sometimes as a way to prepare for a stressful day and sometimes as a way to recover from a stressful day. Most commonly, participants use vanilla scents to send themselves a calming and stress relieving message. In the literature review, Ellena (1996) was quoted to comment on the preference for vanilla scents saying that Americans "...who consume three quarters of the world's vanilla output, have a pronounced preference for sweet vanilla fragrances" (p. 3). He went on to say "Since the skin reveals everything that the body metabolized, everyone's skin smells like what he or she eats, and this smell naturally combines with the perfume or eau de toilette that he or she is wearing" (p. 3). The participants talked about using a comforting vanilla scent in a similar way to using vanilla-based comfort foods to self-soothe. One notable connection between the sense of smell and stress relief is breathing. Breathing techniques are commonly taught as a means of relieving stress. Pairing comforting vanilla fragrance with the breath we use to take in the smell of said fragrance is effectively a double dose of stress relief.

Implications of this Study

The findings of this study demonstrate that women who wear fragrance regard it as an important aspect of their lives. These women value the memories, comfort, and confidence fragrance provides for them. They take fragrance seriously. This study is a confirmation of the significance of scent in everyday life, and it has added to the body of knowledge of olfactics a nonverbal communication.

The fragrance industry has a dynamic, expanding and evolving demographic of fragrance users. This study offers an opportunity for the fragrance industry to consider

how the findings regarding gender, culture, and self-image can impact the composition, design, and marketing of fragrance. This research should be replicated on a five year basis to recognize changing trends that will affect the fragrance industry.

A significant finding from this study is the prevalence of fragrance usage as a form of intrapersonal communication or self-talk. Some major advantages to intrapersonal communication over interpersonal communication are that the sender is also the receiver (eliminating the need for clarification), there is not a channel for the message to move along, and external interference is minimized. This is also true in the realm of olfactive communication. That is, when using fragrance to send a message to others an unintended message could be sent. If someone has a negative scent association, either with a specific fragrance or just a base note of a fragrance, they may receive a scent that they consider unpleasant but that the wearer finds pleasant. A fragrance wearer may think that floral scents are inoffensive, but someone with a fragrance allergy might find it completely offensive. A scent that the wearer interprets as romantic may not be received at all by someone whose sense of smell has diminished. Traditional forms of self-talk (through the use of language or thoughts) can be positive or negative, but it is unlikely that anyone would use fragrance as a form of negative self-talk.

Fragrance being used as a method of communicating nonverbally with others is nothing new. What this study is adding to the body of knowledge is that perhaps using fragrance as a way to communicate with one's self is not only more effective, it is more common, and an important way to garner confidence.

Research Limitations

Ellena (1996) said that Americans "...consume three quarters of the world's vanilla output, have a pronounced preference for sweet vanilla fragrances" (p. 3). After having made this reference, it came as somewhat of a shock to me that the fresh fragrance family was, by far, the most popular of all the fragrance families among the participants throughout this study. These findings, however, were in agreement with Kohl and Francoeur who noted the American obsession with cleanliness (as cited in Neuliep, 2015, p. 310). This was certainly demonstrated by many of the participants who talked about their fear of smelling bad or their strong need to communicate their high level of personal hygiene to others.

During the interviews, participants were asked to choose the one fragrance family they would select for each specific situation or season. One possible limitation to finding a preference for vanilla scents (which fall in the oriental fragrance family) to clean scents (which fall into the fresh fragrance family) is that most fragrances are comprised of notes from two or more fragrance families. For example, if a participant has a specific fragrance in mind that she would wear for work that is made up of berry (fresh fragrance family) and vanilla (oriental fragrance family) notes, they would be restricted to choosing the single fragrance family they found most represented in the fragrance. Thus, being told to select one fragrance family may have complicated their ability to choose appropriately.

Additionally, the fresh fragrance family includes relatively familiar scents such as fruits, berries, citrus, green notes (i.e. grasses), and aquatic notes while the oriental fragrance family is made up of the potentially less familiar notes of incense, oriental

resins, sandalwood, and patchouli. Although vanilla is included in the oriental fragrance family, which was explained to the participants, it is not listed on the Fragrance Wheel that was used as a visual aid for the participants. Unfamiliarity or dislike of other fragrances within the oriental fragrance family (e.g. patchouli and incense were the most commonly disliked notes among the participants) coupled with the absence of vanilla on the Fragrance Wheel, may have led to a reluctance to choose the oriental fragrance family for any of the proposed situations, occasions, or seasons.

Some messages intended through fragrance are likely more direct than others. For example, for most of the women in this study, a major reason for wearing fragrance was so other people would think of them, the wearer, as clean. In most cases, the fresh fragrance family was used to send the message of cleanliness and good hygiene. If your fresh fragrance smells like soap and water, it is highly likely that another person will recognize that you smell like soap and water and will receive the message that you are clean. However, what if your fresh fragrance smells like berries? Does this send the message that you are clean or that you were making a pie with berries? Does any smell other than body odor send the message of cleanliness? Could smelling like nothing send the message of being clean? Does wearing any fragrance send the message that you are covering body odor and are specifically not clean? These messages could all be potential interpretations on the meaning of a fresh fragrance, whether intended or not. Although most of the participants described the message of a fresh fragrance as clean, which is likely accurate, one limitation to this study is that the focus was on the intended message and not the received message.

Finally, the participants who took part in this study were a group of 15 women, between the ages of 20 and 50 years old, who identify as fragrance users. Although this is a solid beginning to researching nonverbal communication through the use of fragrance, research on a larger scale with a greater time-frame could include different age groups, men, and people who do not use fragrance would broaden the knowledge of this topic.

Recommendations for Further Research

Through conducting the research for this thesis, a number of areas have been identified where further research would be valuable. The following recommendations are made for further study:

1. The participants in this study exclusively focused on women between 20 and 50 years old who identified as fragrance users. A similar study involving varying age groups as well as men as participants would further define fragrance usage preferences along with communication practices through fragrance.
2. Additional research should be conducted focusing on the importance of the use of fragrance as a form of intrapersonal communication (i.e. self-talk).
3. An in-depth study of the fragrance usage of Americans with varying ancestral backgrounds should be conducted to determine whether collective ethnicities influence fragrance usage.
4. Since this study found that there is a connection between the use of a scent wardrobe and the progressively complex lives of American women, a

comparative study of the evolution of fragrance preferences in conjunction with major events in the rise of feminism throughout the 20th century is recommended.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

In answering the research questions identified at the onset of the research, the following conclusions were drawn based on the findings of this study. The findings far exceeded my expectations. It not only answered the research questions that I formulated, but it opened new avenues for research in the area of olfactory communication (e.g. self-talk.)

Through the interview process, it was revealed that the participants use fragrance predominantly through the use of a scent wardrobe. However, some participants indicated the desire for a signature scent coupled with the inability to decide what fragrance should be their signature scent.

There are many factors contributing to the selection of which fragrance from a scent wardrobe to apply. These factors include weather, time of day, destination, preferences and sensitivities of others, the wearer's mood at the time of application, desired mood, encouragement of romance, and most predominantly, confidence.

The intention of this study was to discover if women use fragrance to communicate with others, and the data revealed that the participants of this study do use fragrance as a method of communication. The women who participated in this study identified several messages they intend to send to others using fragrance. Included in these messages are personal cleanliness, varying degrees of femininity, level of professionalism, and receptivity to potential relationships. However, participants revealed that using fragrance as a form of nonverbal communication is not particularly

accurate. The transactional model of communication explains this inaccuracy as communication is constant, there is interference, personal experiences and shared meanings complicate the communication process (Barnlund, 1970). Basically, the intended message is not always the received message, if any message is received at all.

Most significantly, the data revealed a prevalence for using fragrance as a form of nonverbal intrapersonal communication. All of the participants discussed how their use of fragrance makes them feel, and they are essentially using fragrance as a form of affirmation or self-talk. The advantage to using fragrance as a form of self-talk is the high level of accuracy (i.e. the intended message is the received message). The messages that the participants send to themselves through their use of fragrance are limited. They are positive messages of confidence, comfort, and happiness. The simplicity of these messages are perhaps a direct response to the complexity of the lives of modern American women.

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APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Name of interviewee (optional):

Name of interviewer: Courtney Edwards-Johnston

Age of interviewee (circle one):

- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-50

Date of interview:

Place of interview:

Date of transcription:

Please read the following informed consent form and sign if you feel comfortable doing so. Please feel free to ask questions regarding informed consent. Thank you for participating in this interview.

Interview questions:

1. You have indicated that you regularly wear fragrance (perfume or cologne). Why do you like to wear fragrance?

2. Which forms of fragrance do you use?

traditional liquid fragrance (eau de parfum, eau de toilette, eau de cologne, etc.)

solid fragrance

fragrance powder

fragrance lotion

body spray or splash

soap/body wash

fragrance oil or essential oils

other (please specify) _____

3. Please share how important fragrance use is to you:

- Very important
- Fairly important
- Important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important

4. Why do you wear fragrance? Please explain.

5. Are there any settings where you wear no fragrance at all? Please explain.

6. What are some of your most prominent memories triggered by fragrance?

7. Do/did you have a role model who is/was a fragrance user?

a. If so, do you believe his/her use of fragrance influenced your fragrance usage?

b. If so, did/does he/she have a signature scent (one scent worn loyally) or a scent wardrobe (many scents to choose from)?

c. If this role model has/had a signature scent, please describe it.

8. Do you have a signature scent (one scent you wear consistently) or a scent wardrobe (many scents that you alternate)?

9. If you have a signature scent:

a. Why do you have a signature scent?

b. Explain how you decided it was your signature (e.g. to match your personality, positive responses to this scent, nostalgia).

c. What message, if any, do you believe your signature scent sends?

10. If you have a scent wardrobe:

a. Why do you have a scent wardrobe?

b. Approximately how many scents make up your scent wardrobe?

c. Among your scent wardrobe do you have one scent that is your favorite? If so, why is it your favorite?

d. If you have a scent wardrobe, please explain how you choose which scent to wear (i.e. day/night, seasonally, to match your outfit, to match how you feel, to suit where you are going, etc.)

Fragrances are classified into four fragrance families. They are: floral, woody, oriental, and fresh (use Fragrance Wheel as visual aid). For the next part of the interview I will give you a situation or setting and ask you what fragrance family you would choose to wear in each case.

11. Day:

a. Casual: floral woody oriental fresh none

1. Why did you choose this family for this setting?

What message, if any, do you believe this fragrance communicates?

Comments:

b. Work: floral woody oriental fresh none

Why did you choose this family for this setting?

What message, if any, do you believe this fragrance communicates?

Comments:

c. Formal: floral woody oriental fresh none

Why did you choose this family for this setting?

What message, if any, do you believe this fragrance communicates?

Comments:

12. Evening:

a. Casual: floral woody oriental fresh none

1. Why did you choose this family for this setting?

2. What message, if any, do you believe this fragrance communicates?

3. Comments:

b. Work: floral woody oriental fresh none

1. Why did you choose this family for this setting?
2. What message, if any, do you believe this fragrance communicates?
3. Comments:

c. Formal: floral woody oriental fresh none

1. Why did you choose this family for this setting?
2. What message, if any, do you believe this fragrance communicates?
3. Comments:

13. Seasons:

a. Spring: floral woody oriental fresh none

1. Why did you choose this family for this season?
2. What message, if any, do you believe this fragrance communicates?
3. Comments:

b. Summer: floral woody oriental fresh none

1. Why did you choose this family for this season?
2. What message, if any, do you believe this fragrance communicates?
3. Comments:

c. Fall: floral woody oriental fresh none

1. Why did you choose this family for this season?
2. What message, if any, do you believe this fragrance communicates?
3. Comments:

d. Winter: floral woody oriental fresh none

1. Why did you choose this family for this season?

2. What message, if any, do you believe this fragrance communicates?
3. Comments:

Is there anything more you will like to tell me your use of fragrance that I have not already asked?

Do you have any questions for me?

Are the names/identities of your participants included on the data itself? Or, if someone looked at your data would s/he be able to identify the participant from the data or

instrument? Yes No

Are you gathering any biological samples as part of your research? Yes No

Minimal risk is when the likelihood that participating in your research will not cause harm or discomfort (including physical, mental, emotional, social, or economic) that is greater than those a person would normally encounter in daily life.

Does this research pose greater than minimal risk to participants? Yes No

Title of project: An Analysis of Modern Perfume Usage as a Nonverbal Communicator

1. **Briefly describe your research question (50 words or less):** The purpose of this study is to analyze modern fragrance usage among women. The study will take into consideration why, how, and where women wear certain fragrances.
2. **Will participants include individuals from specific populations (e.g. children, pregnant women, prisoners or people with cognitive delays)?**

No.

- a. **If your participants will include individuals from specific populations, please specify the population(s) and briefly describe any special precautions you will use.** N/A

3. **Briefly describe how you will recruit participants from your study (make sure to include any institutional affiliations of your participants). Please include any recruiting materials in an appendix.**

Interviews: I will recruit interview participants using the snowball referral method.

4. **How many individuals do you expect to participate in your study?**

I intend to conduct 12-15 fragrance user interviews

- 5. Briefly describe what participants in your study will do and where it will take place. Make sure to reference any and all materials/surveys/tests/assessments that will be used. (All materials *must* be included in an Appendix.)**

Interview participants will be recruited using the snowball referral method. These interviews of women who identify that they regularly wear fragrance will provide in-depth information on why they wear fragrance, if they use more than one fragrance, and how they choose which fragrance to wear. Please refer to the appendix for fragrance user interview questions.

- 6. Please describe any risks and benefits your research may have for your participants. Please make sure to include whether the data could damage your participants' reputation or make them liable to conviction. (For example, one study's risks might include boredom and eye-strain. The same study's benefits might include satisfaction from contributing to scientific knowledge and greater self-awareness.)**

Minimal risk to participants is anticipated. However, participants are able to withdraw from the study at any time (as noted in the Informed Consent form) should they feel the need to do so.

- 7. What procedures will you use to ensure that the information your participants provide will remain confidential? In other words, how will you keep your data secure?**

All materials will be stored in a locked file cabinet.

- 8. Will your study use deception? (Please note: withholding details about the specifics of your hypothesis *does not* constitute deception. However, misleading participants about the nature of the research question or about the nature of the task they will be completing *does* constitute deception.)** No.

- a. **If your project includes deception, please fully describe the process you will use, why the deception is necessary and a full description of your debriefing procedures. Projects using deception should include their full debriefing statement here.** N/A

- 9. Do you have funding for this research?** Yes No

- a. **If so, state the name of the funding agency or department (For example, NIH, NSF, Faculty Development Grant, McNair Scholar).**

- 10. Where do you plan to present/publish or share your research?** This research is part of a graduate thesis.

- 11. Will participants be compensated? How?** No

12. Will a written informed consent form be used and signed by participants?

Yes.

a. If yes, attach the informed consent form (see below)

ONLY FOR PEOPLE USING RECORDING (VIDEO OR AUDIO):**1. Will you conduct all interviews yourself or will you have assistance (including a translator)?**

Alone

With Assistance

2. How will you secure the data so that the participants' image and/or voice are kept confidential?

All digital files will be stored on a password-protected computer.

Please read the following statement carefully:

I have read the UWS IRB Regulations. I will comply with the informed consent requirement, and I will inform the IRB if significant changes are made in the proposed study. I certify that all the information contained in this proposal is truthful.

Submitting this proposal means that you affirm the above and will comply with the content. This counts as your legally binding signature.

APPENDIX C**CONSENT FOR RESEARCH STUDY**

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to analyze modern fragrance usage among women. The study will take into consideration why, how, and where women wear certain fragrances.

2. **Procedure:**

You will be asked about your perfume usage habits. You also will be asked to smell scents from each of the 4 fragrance families and provide information about your thoughts about these fragrances and your opinion on what setting (e.g. at work, on a date, in a casual setting, at home) and what season(s) you think each scent is most suited for.

3. **Time required:**

The interviews will take approximately 45 minutes.

4. **Risks:**

It is not anticipated that this study will present any risk to you other than the inconvenience of the time taken to participate. If you are sensitive to fragrances, please withdraw from the study.

5. **Your rights as a subject:**

(i) The information gathered will be recorded in anonymous form. Data or summarized results will not be released in any way that could identify you.

(ii) If you want to withdraw from the study at any time, you may do so without penalty. The information collected from you up to that point would be destroyed if you so desire.

(iii) At the end of the session, you have the right to a complete explanation ("debriefing") of what this experiment was all about. If you have questions afterward, please ask your experimenter or contact:

Courtney Edwards-Johnston (218.780.8011 or cedwar11@uwsuper.edu)

Dr. Ephraim Nikoi, Department of Communicating Arts, University of Wisconsin-Superior, (715) 394-8389

Once the study is completed, you may request a summary of the results.

6. If you have any concerns about your treatment as a subject in this study, please call or write:

IRB Chair

Telephone: (715) 394-8433

Email: [✉irb@uwsuper.edu](mailto:irb@uwsuper.edu)

This research project has been approved by the UW-Superior Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, protocol # _____

I have read the above information and willingly consent to participate in this experiment.

Signed: _____ Date: _____