

THE APPEARANCE OF MICHELLE OBAMA:
AN ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST LADY'S EXPOSURE IN MAGAZINES,
FROM JANUARY 2008 to DECEMBER 2009

by

SARA BROOKE TOLUBA

(Under the Direction of José Blanco F.)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to analyze the exposure given to Michelle Obama's fashion and clothing choices in six different magazines over a period of two years. The sample consisted of 144 magazines total, twenty four each from the fashion, news, and celebrity entertainment genres. A content analysis approach was used to gather and analyze the data. Framing theory was also used to further analyze the data in this study. Simple descriptive statistics such as, average and standard deviation, were used to represent and summarize the data collected.

INDEX WORDS: First Lady, magazines, appearance, content analysis, framing theory

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SARA BROOKE TOLUBA

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SARA BROOKE TOLUBA

Major Professor: José Blanco F.

Committee: Jan Hathcote
Patricia Hunt-Hurst

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Justification

A large amount of press has been given to Michelle Obama in recent years and I was curious to see if the tone (mostly positive, mostly negative, or neutral) of each article, mention, or feature -along with the general coverage of Michelle - changed between the three different magazine genres of fashion, news, and celebrity entertainment. Also, I was curious to see if fashion magazines were the main publications writing about Michelle Obama's appearance and fashion choices and if the news magazines were discussing her political views and social engagements, or if both types of magazines touch on fashion, appearance, and political news. Finally, I wanted to see where the celebrity entertainment type magazines fit in with their coverage of Michelle Obama. I wanted to explore what topics these six magazines were highlighting when discussing the current First Lady. I also wanted to know what the similarities and differences were between the three genres of magazines in their coverage of the First Lady.

The time period for this research (January 2008 to December 2009) was selected because during the years leading up to and immediately following the 2008 United States Presidential election there was considerable media attention given to the now First Lady, Michelle Obama. I selected for analysis the entire year of 2008 - the year

leading up to the Presidential election - and 2009 - the year immediately following the Presidential election.

Purpose and Goals

This research analyzed three different genres of magazines (fashion, news, and celebrity entertainment) to uncover trends, similarities, and differences in their coverage of Michelle Obama during the time period of January 2008 to December 2009. Two magazine titles from each genre were selected for analysis. This research used content analysis to examine each magazine - 144 magazines total - to analyze written and visual communication about Michelle Obama.

The purpose of this research was to explore which genres of magazines gave the most/least attention to Michelle Obama's appearance during the period under review; and of the coverage given to Mrs. Obama, how it differed from magazine to magazine. I was curious to see if each magazine type covered the same topics when the First Lady is involved, or if each magazine type was more selective in its coverage pertaining to the First Lady, concentrating on specific aspects such as her appearance and fashion choices.

McCombs and Shaw (1972) state that mass media plays an important role in shaping the reality that is conveyed through the news. Consumers of news media are influenced by the aspects of the stories that news producers highlight or downplay. So, in choosing to highlight certain aspects of an issue, the news media influences opinions about public and political issues (p. 176). The concept of framing was used to see if and how the magazines under review, frame or portray, Michelle Obama. Generally, the

mass media as a whole actively sets the frame of reference that readers or viewers use to interpret and discuss public events (Tuchman, 1978). This means that the way in which the media presents a story will have some influence on the way in which the public perceives that story.

Gitlin (1980) describes framing as, “persistent selection, emphasis, and exclusion” in terms of how the media portray their message. Gitlin goes on to state that framing enables the media to “process large amounts of information quickly and routinely and to package the information for efficient relay to their audiences” (Gitlin, 1980, p. 7). Gamson and Modigliani (1987) further define framing as being the central organizing idea or storyline that produces meaning to events related to the issue at hand (p. 143). The framing and presentation of events can thus systematically affect how recipients of the news come to understand these events (Price, Tewksbury, & Powers, 1995, p. 4).

Research Questions

The research questions for this research are as follows:

1. What types of magazines have more coverage of Michelle Obama during the period under review?
2. What types of magazines have less coverage of Michelle Obama during the period under review?
3. What category (feature, note on social event, fashion trend report, other types of brief mentions) was given the most coverage?

4. What category (feature, note on social event, fashion trend report, other types of brief mentions) was given the least coverage?
5. What type of tone (mostly positive, mostly negative, or neutral) do the majority of magazines take in their coverage of Michelle Obama?
6. Of the coverage given to Michelle Obama, which types of magazines are most likely to comment on her appearance?
7. How have magazines framed Michelle Obama during the period under review?
8. Is the framing of Michelle Obama different in different genres of magazines?

Limitations

Limitations of this study pertain to the particular magazines chosen for analysis and the selected time period of the research. A third limitation to this research project was the lack of previous research studies that use content analysis as their method when discussing a public figure's coverage in the media. Therefore, there were not many previous studies similar to this one that have already been conducted to follow when I was building this study. There are, however, two previous studies that were used in developing this research study.

Only two magazines from each category of fashion, news, and celebrity-entertainment, were chosen. Many other magazine titles fall into these categories. The magazines that were not selected for analysis may give some additional coverage of Michelle Obama during the period of this research. Therefore, the results for each magazine type cannot be generalized to represent all fashion magazines, news, or celebrity entertainment magazines as a whole.

Only two years, from January 2008 to December 2009, were considered during this research. These years are of significance because they are the year leading up to the 2008 United States Presidential election and the year immediately following this election. The research could be continued by expanding the time period.

A final limitation lies with the lack of published research that is similar in method. This limits the availability of instruments and methods that I could use to design my study. Similar studies have previously been conducted using only one form of media, such as newspapers or cartoons, to analyze their data. Scharrer (2002) conducted a study similar to this one about Hillary Clinton's newspaper coverage in her transitioning role from First Lady to a United States Senator. I have partially molded my research after Scharrer's and have also adapted several of her tables to fit the data I collected.

A second similar study conducted by Scharrer and Bissell (2000) used a content analysis approach to examining text and photographs that assess the media's coverage when a First Lady is framed as politically active in a news event. They explored when and how frames of three First Ladies, Nancy Reagan, Barbara Bush, and Hillary Clinton were portrayed. They also explored when and how these frames are changed to encompass the First Ladies' ventures into matters of policy and politics. The theory developed from this research was that the more politically active the First Lady was framed in newspaper content, the more negative the tone of the story will be and also the more prominent the coverage will be.

Definitions

The following are definitions of terms that are used throughout this research.

1. Magazine: printed and bound publications offering in-depth coverage of stories often of a timeless nature. Their content may provide opinion and interpretation as well as advocacy. They are geared to a well-defined, specialized audience, and they are published regularly, with a consistent format (Johnson & Prijatel, 1999).
2. Fashion Magazine: a magazine whose contents are generally geared towards fashion and/or beauty.
3. News Magazine: a magazine devoted to reports on current events, usually published weekly (news magazine, 2011).
4. Celebrity-Entertainment Magazine: a magazine whose contents generally include information, news, and/or pictures of celebrities, usually published weekly.
5. Fashion: the prevailing style (as in dress) during a particular time period.
6. Appearance: outward or visual aspect of a person or thing.
7. Dress: an assemblage of modifications of the body and/or supplements to the body. Dress is less than appearance because it does not include, as appearance does, features of the undressed body, such as its shape or color as well as expression through gesture and grimace (Eicher & Roach-Higgins, 1991).
8. Style Icon: a person who is looked upon as being fashionable and making fashion statements in the public arena.

9. Framing: selecting some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communicating text to promote a problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or problem treatment (Entman, 1993).
10. Content Analysis: a detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of material for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes, or biases (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Michelle Obama may have only been in the public eye for a few short years, but she has taken the fashion world by storm and transformed the way in which people have perceived First Lady fashion in recent years. Horyn (2009) describes Mrs. Obama as a bold and serious woman from Chicago and Harvard who is not afraid to express herself through fashion. Her clothes tell us that she has an adventurous spirit, as well as a sense of humor, and if some of her clothing choices have an almost old-fashioned womanly quality, then they will tell us she is not certainly the everyday fashionista. Since her husband, Barack Obama, was elected President in November 2008, Michelle Obama has been looked upon as a style icon to many American women and has even captured attention abroad. Her relaxed, yet chic, style is very refreshing from that of her recent predecessors. She makes looking fashionable easy, fun, and affordable, which has become increasingly enticing to women of all ages.

A large amount has been written about Michelle Obama's sudden rise to fame in the world of fashion by the news media. My main research questions relate to how Michelle Obama has been framed by the printed media during the time period under review. This review of literature will begin with how the traditional roles of the First Lady have changed over time, followed by a look at the media's coverage of the First Lady in recent years. I will then discuss how Michelle Obama's appearance has been

portrayed through various news media outlets. The reasons why magazines as a form of news media were chosen will also be discussed. Finally, I will discuss similar studies that laid the groundwork for this one

The Changing Role of First Lady

Betts (2011) says that, "Every First Lady makes an impression, whether she means to or not. Some arrive at the White House already well versed in the sartorial requirements of the job...and embrace the style-setting authority of the role with gusto, as Jackie Kennedy did in 1961. Other First Ladies resent the expectation, or from insecurity or ambivalence they struggle with the language of imagery, failing to grasp why what makes them comfortable should be any of the public's business" (p. 21). Betts goes on to talk about whether the First Lady is popular or unpopular or whether they know anything about fashion or do not does not really matter. The role of First Lady highlights the ongoing evolution of the American woman. The purview of the job itself makes them symbols (p. 22).

The First Lady essentially has one of the highest profile jobs in the United States government; however, this responsibility comes with no official duties, no paycheck, and almost limitless possibilities. Although the role of the First Lady has been traditionally limited to host and escort, a few First Ladies have taken on roles of leadership and decision making. Hillary Clinton, for example, broke from the traditional mold set by many of her predecessors by being active in political issues like health care reform. Because of recent increase in First Ladies' political activity, it is important to learn how the mass media has responded. With the media's potential to play a

powerful role in shaping public opinion about political leaders, the public's perceptions and attitudes toward First Ladies can be formed from the information the mass media transmits (Scharrer and Bissel, 2000).

In the twentieth century a few First Ladies began to break through the barriers of official social duties and took a more hands-on approach to their husband's Presidency. Helen Taft, Lou Hoover, and Eleanor Roosevelt were three such First Ladies who completely changed their role into one that was focused on communication, social activism, and political partnership (Eddins, 2008). First Ladies have a great deal of influence over the President and can exercise a degree of political power over policy and legislation (Anthony, 2008). Bess Truman stated that she was "on call twenty-four hours a day as her husband's helper"; she believed that the First Lady should uphold traditional feminine views of a wife, primarily as a "husband-helper" (Burns, 2008, p. 90). Burns (2008) notes that the partnership between the President and his First Lady depicts modern day Presidencies as "Co-Presidencies" which have focused on "joint image-making, not power-sharing." First Ladies roles have since moved from inside the home, where she is a wife and mother, to forefront of the nation's political drama. Franklin (2000) points out that much of the past media coverage of First Ladies in the U.S. focuses on their roles, with the assumption that, although there is no official role prescribed by the Constitution, there is an assumed role to which the First Lady does conform to.

First Ladies' Fashion and Style Influence in the Media

Along with these more or less “official” responsibilities comes increased media attention in all that the First Lady does. A focus is especially put upon the First Ladies social life as well as the clothing that she wears and the fashion statements that she makes. Since the beginning of our nation’s history the American people, and of course the press, have been fascinated by the First Lady and she has used the media as her primary outlet in which to get her ideas, images, and words into the public arena (Burns, 2008, p. 3, p. 6). Throughout the years, journalists have taken an interest in writing about anything and everything from the First Ladies’ fashion sense to her political opinions. By the mid 20th century many publications that targeted women began to expand their coverage of First Ladies (Burns, 2008). The First Lady has always been seen as a public figure but more attention began to focus on the First Ladies’ sense of style with the increased use of photographs and illustrations in magazines and newspapers (Burns, 2008, p. 36).

Puente (2008) notes that it was during the 2008 Democratic National Convention where the fashion world began talking about Mrs. Obama’s fashion sense. Tomer (2009) states that with each night that passed, “Mrs. Obama’s fashion choices seemed to grow more chic: the unexpected choice of designers, the clever use of accessories, the confidence and ease with which she wore each ensemble. There was an unparalleled thoughtfulness and cohesive attention to detail with each look that made for a dramatic, lasting impact. It was during this week that many American women found themselves captivated by Michelle Obama’s style”

(p. 51).

Betts (2011, p. 7) says, "Some First Ladies needed designers and image makers to guide them, while others, like Nancy Reagan and Jacqueline Kennedy, arrived at the White House with an established look and a fluency in fashion." Wilson (2010) believes that Mrs. Obama's sense of style rivals that of Jacqueline Kennedy. Betts (2011) contends that there are two approaches that First Ladies have taken throughout history, some based in style, other in substance. The first approach, which is the most closely aligned with traditional First Ladies' roles, runs from Dolley Madison to Jackie Kennedy and includes First Ladies who used style and image to advance their husband's agendas and to cultivate their own influence. The other approach follows twentieth-century feminism more closely. This approach runs from Eleanor Roosevelt to Hillary Clinton and includes those First Ladies who broke with traditional limits of the role and threw themselves into the political fray, testifying at congressional hearings, challenging conventions, and championing causes. For most of the 20th century, style remained the primary way that First Ladies were able to exert influence (Betts, 2011). Since Michelle has been given a lot of attention as one of the most stylish women to inhabit the White House in recent decades, one might think that she belongs to the Madison-Kennedy lineage. However, her background states otherwise. Betts (2011), goes on to state that, "No one can claim that Michelle Obama doesn't know what it's like to work, or entered marriage because she didn't get an education and lacked economic power of her own" (24). It is clear that Michelle Obama has learned as much from the example of Hillary Clinton as from the example of Jacqueline Kennedy.

Since coming into the public eye, Michelle Obama has boosted the spirits of the American fashion industry and has been known to wear such labels as J. Crew and Talbots. Designers, store buyers, shoppers, and stock investors watch her every move. Within one day after Michelle Obama appeared on the *Tonight Show* with Jay Leno on October 27, 2008, the J. Crew outfit that she wore was sold out online (Gregory, 2009). This shows how much attention and adoration is given to the fashion choices of First Ladies. Betts (2011) points out that, "Somehow having style has come to be associated with the idea that people can be judged solely on their appearance rather than, as Martin Luther King Jr. remarked in another context, the content of their character. Nothing could be further from the truth; Style is a part of the content of one's character" (ix-x). Betts goes on to say that Michelle Obama's style matters, and one of the reasons she exemplifies the power of style is that she is helping to liberate a generation of women from the false idea that style and substance are mutually exclusive (x).

In an article for *USA Today* written by Maria Puente (2008, p. 2A), *Women's Wear Daily* was quoted as saying, "The American fashion industry hasn't had a catch this big since another icon of Democratic chic took up residency on Pennsylvania Avenue in 1961," referring to Jacqueline Kennedy. Jacqueline Kennedy captured the attention and adoration of people around the world. Jacqueline and her clothing choices in particular, would always gather attention whenever she and her husband visited Europe (Lowe, 1996). Michelle Obama seems to have the same worldwide appeal. Tomer (2009)

believes that Michelle Obama has transformed the role of First Lady and has become a 21st Century icon while attracting attention from all over the world.

Theoretical Framework

Entman (1993) describes framing as a way of synthesizing a key concept's disparate uses, showing how it invariably involves communication, and how one can construct a coherent theory based on it. He also says that framing is a way to describe the power of communicating text and that the analysis of frames illustrates the precise way in which influence over a human consciousness is exerted by the transfer (or communication) of information from one location-such as a speech, utterance, news report, or novel-to that of consciousness. This emphasis on specific aspects of an event, in turn, shapes the ways in which audience members receive and interpret media messages (Scharrer, 2002). The theory of framing was used in this study of Michelle Obama. I wanted to see if and how Michelle had been framed by the media in a particular way and if she was framed differently by different types of magazines.

A study that uses framing was done by Scharrer (2002) who analyzed newspaper coverage of Hillary Clinton during her transition from First Lady to Senate candidate. Scharrer analyzed three hundred and forty-two newspaper stories to determine whether the press responded to her political activeness with a negative tone. The coverage of Clinton was compared to that of former New York City Mayor, Rudy Giuliani during the same period. As her method for data collection, Scharrer (2002) used the search term "Hillary (Rodham) Clinton" in the Lexis Nexis database to find articles from the period of October 1, 1999 to February 6, 2000. Every fourth source was chosen for

analysis, bringing the total number of stories used to 342. Each story was coded in such a way as being either politically active or not. When data are coded, they are “broken down, conceptualized, and put back together in new ways” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 57). Stories about issue positions, poll results, campaign visits, and policy discussions were coded as politically active. Stories about traditional First Lady roles such as, escort, entertainer, home decorator, fashion plate, and charitable works were coded as non-politically active. For example, stories where Clinton visited a hospital were coded as politically active if it was under the heading of campaigning but coded as non-politically active if it was within the charitable role common to a First Lady (Scharrer, 2002, p. 397). The tone of each story, after being coded as being politically active or not, was then assessed on a Likert scale of 1 (extremely negative) to 5 (extremely positive). My study pertaining to Michelle Obama was modeled after Scharrer’s. Each piece of written communication in this research study was coded using the same Likert scale. Each piece of visual communication was first coded according to which category it pertained to (full-length feature, letter to the editor, cartoon, etc.). Then each piece was coded as mostly positive, positive, neutral, negative, or mostly negative.

Frames are said to have four locations in the communication process: the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture. All four of these locations are relevant to this study. The communicators make conscious or unconscious framing judgments in deciding what to say. These judgments are based on the frames they are examining. According to the placement or repetition of certain bits of information, some texts can become more salient to audiences (Entman, 1993). In this study, the

communicators are the magazines chosen for analysis, more specifically, their editors and writers. The text contains frames which are brought about by the presence or absence of certain keywords, phrases, images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments. The texts in this study are the different articles analyzed. The receiver develops their own interpretation of the frames in the text, which may differ from the framing intention of the communicator. Receivers are the magazine readers and anyone influenced by the magazine content. The selection of information about a First Lady, or any other subject under review, and the dissemination of that same information can influence what audiences remember most. The frame essentially helps audiences understand and remember a problem as well as influences how audiences act upon it (Entman, 1993). The culture can be described as the common frames that are exhibited in the thinking of most people in a social grouping. The four locations of framing include similar functions: selecting and highlighting particular items and then using the highlighted elements to construct an argument about problems and their causation, evaluation, and/or solution (Entman, 1993, p. 3).

The media can take any event and frame it however they want. Frames in the media involve decisions on the part of news gatherers regarding what aspects of an event to cover, how much attention to give it, what facets should be emphasized, and what angle to take in covering the story. Framing is less about the actual coverage of an event, but how the media chooses to describe it and what aspects are emphasized. Framing also suggests that due to the decisions of the media, only portions of

information about the target group are getting passed along to audiences. Therefore, since audiences are getting only selected information about a target group – in the case of this research, Michelle Obama – it is conceivable that audiences’ perceptions about the target group can be affected (Scharrer & Bissel, 2000). Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock (1991) also note that salience of one value or issue over another may be an effect of framing. They indicate that through framing, ideas, issues, or values are primed differently, and this can directly influence the salience an individual has for those values, ideas, or issues.

The Framing of the First Lady

The way in which photographers, journalists, and editors have chosen to present information regarding the activities of the First Ladies can result in specific interpretations or evaluations by readers. Frames in the media are used in making decisions on the part of the news gatherers regarding what aspects of an event to cover, how much attention to give it, what facets should be emphasized, and what angle to take in covering the story (Scharrer & Bissell, 2000). According to Neuman, Just, and Crigler (1992), the media, “gives the story a ‘spin’...taking into account their organizational and modality constraints, professional judgments, and certain judgments about the audience” (p. 120). However, at the same time, people’s information processing and interpretation are influenced by preexisting meaning structures or schemas (Scheufele, 1999). The media sometimes picks and chooses certain aspects to emphasize when covering a story, and as framing suggests, due to the decisions of media personnel or a media organization, only portions of information about the target

group are getting passed along to audiences. Since audiences are only getting selected information about a target group, it is plausible to think that audience perceptions about the target group are affected (Scharrer & Bissell, 2000). Shoemaker and Reese (1996) discuss that editors can predict what an audience will find appealing or important, thus making a news judgment based on agreed-upon news values such as prominence, proximity, timeliness, conflict, or unusualness.

There have been a few studies written about the Columbine High School shooting in Littleton, Colorado in May of 1999 that use framing in their analysis. Lawrence (2001) says that the school shooting “was an illustrative example of how dramatic news events are defined in the news in ways to contribute to the social construction of public problems” (91-92). Ogle, Eckman, and Leslie (2003) believe that the media made connections between the shooting and appearance cues, including the appearance of the gunmen, their victims, and the appearances of others who were either involved or affected by the incident. Appearance became a variable in the media’s interpretation of the incident, the investigation, and the public’s reaction to the incident and the investigation. The goal for the Ogle, Eckman, and Leslie research was to understand the “process by which the print media transformed the Columbine incident into an appearance issue, or a social problem linking school violence to appearance” (p. 2). Their work focused on the form and content of media texts. Regarding form, they explored issues such as the varied voices represented, and the types of information provided by these sources, and the possible motives of these sources. The analysis of media content focused on the description of the shootings as

an appearance-linked social problem, the explanation provided for the problem, and the solutions offered to alleviate the problem.

Content Analysis of First Ladies in the News

Scharrer and Bissell's study (2000) about media coverage of Nancy Reagan, Laura Bush, and Hillary Clinton was one of the first to investigate the First Ladies' coverage in print media, using both photographs and text. The goal of their research was to uncover patterns of content in an area that has not received much attention in the past. A similar study was conducted by Busher (2006) and dealt with the framing of Hillary Clinton in *New York Times* articles written during the 2000 New York Senate election. Busher explored the frames of political activity, horserace, gender stereotype, and traditional First Lady and how the media responded to Clinton's run for a seat in the New York Senate. This study concluded that Hillary Clinton running for political election was depicted more in terms of her candidacy than in terms of her role as a First Lady or based on gender stereotypes. The study also contradicts previous research that found that when a woman oversteps traditional boundaries the media react by covering her more negatively. Busher found that the majority of news coverage was neutral (Busher, 2006, p. 44).

Scharrer (2002) conducted another similar study that used content analysis to examine *New York Times* coverage of both Hillary Clinton and Rudolph Giuliani during their run for the New York Senate seat. Each article was rated on a scale of 1 (very negative) to 5 (very positive). In regards to the findings for their research, when Clinton was framed as being politically active, the tone of the story was more negative than in

stories where she was not framed as being politically active. The average tone for Clinton in politically active stories was 2.61, on a scale of 1 to 5. In non-politically active stories, it was 3.30. Also, stories that pertained to Clinton's Senate race were more negative in tone than stories about Clinton dealing with other topics. The average tone of the stories commenting on the Senate race was 2.65 whereas the stories that dealt with other topics received an average rating of 3.15.

The results for this study explain that in the stories in which Clinton was politically active and in which the focus was on the Senate race contained both a greater number of negative statements and, overall, a more negative tone. This study found when Clinton was framed as performing traditionally supportive or "soft news"-oriented roles, she was rewarded with positive coverage. When the coverage was about her independent political activity, she was given more negative news coverage (p. 403). These results agree with those found in Scharrer and Bissel's 2000 study entitled, "Overcoming Traditional Boundaries: The Role of Political Activity in Media Coverage of First Ladies."

The News Media's Portrayal of Michelle Obama's Fashion

The news media guides the perception of the public and the way people tend to think about anything from the current state of the economy to the latest celebrity gossip. Since her arrival on the fashion scene, Michelle Obama has been on the cover of several magazines, including, *People*, *Essence*, *More*, *O: The Oprah Winfrey Magazine*, and *Vogue* (Swarns, 2009). Several newspapers have also featured articles on the First Lady, including, *The New York Times* and *USA Today*. Mary Tomer is the author of a

well-read blog featuring all things Michelle Obama, entitled, *Mrs. O: The Face of Fashion Democracy*. Tomer also authored a book by the same title in 2009. Another blog devoted to Michelle Obama's sense of style is entitled, *Michelle Obama's Mirror* written by Motus. Both of these blogs, along with many others, are devoted to showcasing pictures and descriptions about the First Lady's latest fashion statements. Several other authors have penned books about Michelle Obama. Some of these titles include, *Everyday Icon: Michelle Obama and the Power of Style* by Kate Betts, *Michelle Obama: The First Lady of Fashion and Style* by Susan Swimmer, and *Michelle Obama: The First Lady in Photographs* by Deborah Willis, as well as many others.

Magazines as a Popular Information Source

The majority of similar studies about First Ladies' coverage in the media used newspapers as their main source of information. Magazines are an important part of the fashion industry. Consumers depend on magazines to report the latest trends and news concerning fashion topics while people in the industry depend on trade magazines for relevant information and news occurring in their field (Walton, 2010). This study was different in that its main and only source of information was magazines. Magazines were selected for this study because they are a popular consumer choice for information pertaining to fashion, news, and celebrities. Past issues are also widely available on the internet or library collections and this aided me while collecting the data I needed for this research.

Magazines are highly specialized in content and in audience and their main purposes are to inform, interpret, entertain, advocate, and provide service (Johnson &

Prijatel, 1999). This is why three different genres of magazines were chosen for this study. Each genre of fashion, news, and celebrity entertainment, will generally appeal to three different groups of consumers. However, the likelihood of each genre covering the same issues dealing with politics and fashion is probable. Since the mid-1700s, the magazine has played a role in shaping what individuals think and how they respond to the world around them (Johnson & Prijatel, 1999). Therefore, this study adds to the current body of literature dealing with this topic.

Vogue and *Glamour* are the two magazines that were used to represent the fashion genre. *Vogue's* mission statement states, "For 118 years, *Vogue* has been America's cultural barometer, putting fashion in the context of the larger world we live in – how we dress, live, socialize; what we eat, listen to, watch; who leads and inspires us" (*Vogue* Mission statement, 2009). In 2010, *Vogue* had over 1.2 million copies of their magazine in circulation. The majority of their readers (87.7%) are women with the media age for their average reader being 35 years old (Circulation/Demographics, 2010).

Glamour can generally be described as a "lifestyle" magazine and their mission statement says that, "*Glamour* is a magazine that translates style and trends for the real lives of American women. Our award winning editorial covers the most pressing interests of our 12.4 million readers: from beauty, fashion and health to politics, Hollywood and relationships" (*Glamour* mission statement, 2010). For the purposes of this study *Glamour* will be one of the two magazines that represent the fashion genre.

Time and *The New Yorker* were used to represent the news category of magazines for this research. In the United States alone in 2010, *Time* had a reading

audience of 19 million people, with the average age of their reader being forty-eight. *Time's* readership is split fairly evenly between men (53%) and women (47%) (*Time* media kit, 2011).

The New Yorker is described on its website as being, "A national weekly magazine that offers a signature mix of reporting and commentary on politics, foreign affairs, business, technology, popular culture, and the arts, along with humor, fiction, poetry, and cartoons." The magazine considers itself to be a classic, while reporting on news that is of the cutting edge in society (*The New Yorker: About*, 2012). According to the media kit for *The New Yorker*, it has a total reading audience of almost 3.9 million, with the majority of their readers being between the ages of 18-34 (22%) or over 65 (23%). Sixty-seven percent of *The New Yorker's* readers have graduated from college and over half (51%) are employed full-time (*The New Yorker Media Kit*, 2012). These statistics seem to show that *The New Yorker* is targeting a well-educated reader who likes to be informed about events in politics, business, and foreign affairs.

People and *OK!* magazine were used to represent the celebrity entertainment genre of magazines. This genre is less formally known as "gossip" magazines or tabloids. *People* describes itself as "defining celebrity, driving conversation, and inspiring action. We're America's trusted connection to the people you want to know and the moments that shape their lives" (Editorial Statement, 2011). The majority of *People's* readers (67%) are between the ages of eighteen and forty-nine. More than half of *People's* average readers (79%) are women (Rate Card, *People*, 2011).

OK! magazine's target market is a bit younger than *People*'s with the average age of their readers as being between eighteen to twenty-four (32%) and twenty-five to thirty-four (23.4%). Again, like *People*, more than half of *OK!* magazine's average readers (84.7%) are women (*OK!* magazine - Readership profile, 2011). A quote from their website describes the work of *OK!* magazine as, "Packed with the biggest stories, the best photographs, exclusives with the hottest stars from the world of showbiz and entertainment, *OK!* magazine and okmagazine.com bring you the truth and inside scoop about celebrities" (About *OK!*, 2011).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Goals and Objectives

The method of research for this study is content analysis. Content Analysis is a detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of material for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes, or biases (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The main focus for a content analysis is any verbal, visual, or behavioral form of communication. An important step in content analysis research is the tabulation of the frequency of each characteristic found in the material being analyzed. Therefore, content analysis can be both a qualitative and quantitative method of research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). For this research project I used written communication about Michelle Obama as she appeared in the different magazines. Each magazine under review was carefully examined page by page for any mention, feature, or article about or referencing Michelle Obama in the period between January 2008 to December 2009. Each mention, feature, and/or article was further categorized using a Likert scale as being extremely positive to extremely negative.

Magazines were chosen for this study because they are a popular consumer choice for information pertaining to fashion, news, and celebrities. Three different genres of magazines were selected to give some variety to the results of the study and to better compare and contrast their coverage of certain topics.

All forms of visual communication, including photographs, cartoons, graphs, and tables, which are associated with written communication in the six magazines selected were also taken into consideration for this study. The procedures for data sampling and analysis are discussed in the following section.

Research Questions

The research questions for this project were as follows:

1. What types of magazines have more coverage of Michelle Obama during the period under review?
2. What types of magazines have less coverage of Michelle Obama during the period under review?
3. What category (feature, note on social event, fashion trend report, other types of brief mentions) was given the most coverage?
4. What category (feature, note on social event, fashion trend report, other types of brief mentions) was given the least coverage?
5. What type of tone (mainly positive, mainly negative, or neutral) do the majority of magazines take in their coverage of Michelle Obama?
6. Of the coverage given to Michelle Obama, which types of magazines are most likely to comment on her appearance?
7. How have magazines framed Michelle Obama during the period under review?
8. Is the framing of Michelle Obama different in different types of magazines?

Data Collection and Sample

Different categories from the types of coverage given to Michelle Obama will be taken into consideration while collecting data for this project. These categories include:

- Full length (feature) articles. These include articles that are usually at least two pages in length and discuss Michelle Obama in detail.
- Notes on social events. These include any mention about Michelle Obama's appearance at a social and/or political events.
- Fashion trend reports. These include reports that are specifically written with the only intention of discussing Michelle Obama's clothing choices in terms of current or past fashion trends.
- Other types of brief mention. These include letters to the editor, columns that briefly mention Michelle Obama.
- Photograph. These include any picture or photograph of Michelle Obama that occurs alongside any written communication in any magazine. Also included in this category are any picture or photograph of Michelle Obama that is featured by itself in any magazine.
- Cartoon/Drawing. These include any cartoon or drawing that depicts Michelle Obama that occurs alongside any written communication. Also included in this category are any cartoon or drawing that depicts Michelle Obama that is featured by itself in each magazine.

Each piece of communication will be classified according to the categories above. Each source indicated will then be further categorized by either being mostly positive, mostly

negative, or neutral in their description or discussion of Michelle Obama. These categories are the essence of this research project since all of the research questions presented above are linked to the data through these categories.

Six magazine titles in total were selected for this research: two fashion magazines (*Vogue* and *Glamour*), two news magazines (*Time* and *The New Yorker*) and two celebrity entertainment magazines (*People* and *OK!*). Twelve issues a year were selected for analysis, one from each month of publication during the period of January 2008 to December 2009. This period was used because it includes the year leading up to the 2008 United States presidential election and the year immediately following this election. The political candidates, as well as their spouses, received a lot of media attention during these two years, so it seemed natural to focus this study on this specific time period. *People* and *OK!* magazine are published weekly, so one issue per month was selected and used in this study. To simplify the data collection for the study, the first issue published in the first week of the month was chosen and analyzed.

Each magazine was selected for a particular purpose. I wanted to look at and analyze three different types of magazines to compare and contrast the coverage given to Michelle Obama during the period in review. I wanted all of the magazines selected to have the same likelihood of discussing Michelle Obama's appearance during the period discussed. Each genre selected was hypothesized to have differing approaches to Michelle Obama's appearance and was assumed to cover different aspects of her image.

Data Analysis

During the process of data analysis I looked for certain themes or occurrences in the six magazines. Each of the 144 magazines in the sample was analyzed for any mention, article, picture, cartoon, or feature of Michelle Obama. Each time an item was found it was further analyzed and categorized by the tone of the piece. The words in each piece, or the words accompanying each picture, were used to determine tone. The tone of each piece was determined using a Likert scale from 1 to 5. Pieces that used very unflattering language or that show blatant disapproval were given a score of 1. A score of 3 was given to pieces which remain neutral in their tone, neither favoring nor slighting Michelle Obama's appearance or fashion choices. Pieces that used approving, flattering, and positive language received a score of 5. Each article that discussed Michelle Obama was included in the data analysis, but the main emphasis of this research was Michelle Obama's appearance, clothing choices, and accessories.

Descriptive statistics were used to explain the basic features of the data in the study by providing simple summaries about the sample. Descriptive statistics describe what the data shows. They form the basis of every quantitative study (Trochim, 2006). Descriptive statistics were used to organize data and provide answers for this study. Research questions one, two, three, four, and five were answered with descriptive statistics. Questions six, seven, and eight were addressed using a qualitative analysis. Framing was the type of qualitative analysis chosen to address these three questions. Entman (1993) defines framing as a way of describing the power of communicating text and the analysis of the frames and as a way to illustrate the precise way in which

influence over a human consciousness is exerted by the transfer (or communication) of information from one location-such as a speech, utterance, news report, or novel-to that of consciousness. In this study, I was looking to see if the different magazines reviewed framed their coverage of Michelle Obama in a particular way in order to influence their reader's opinions.

If a particular magazine made no mention of Michelle Obama's fashion or fashion choices, the row in their respective table was filled in with a "N/A" to indicate that there was not any appropriate information in that particular magazine. When Michelle Obama was mentioned in an article, but the mention did not pertain to her clothing or fashion choices, the mention was included in the table, but was differentiated from other usable mentions with an asterisk by the month and year of the issue.

Past issues of *OK!* magazine were difficult to come by, since the magazine is a publication of the United Kingdom. Therefore, the data collected on this magazine was gathered from their website, using a search for "Michelle Obama" and the time period in question. One article, or posting per month was selected, if applicable. The search yielded no results for all of 2008 and only 3 months of 2009 made mention of the First Lady's fashion.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results were compiled from the master tables for each magazine (*Vogue*, *Glamour*, *Time*, *The New Yorker*, *People*, and *OK!*). All tables can be found in Appendix one. Research questions one, two, three, four, and five were answered with descriptive statistics. Questions six, seven, and eight were addressed with qualitative analysis.

Question one asked, “What types of magazines have more coverage of Michelle Obama during the period under review?” The type of magazine with the most Michelle Obama mentions during the time period under review was the fashion genre. This is not surprising considering the research focused primarily on the First Lady’s fashion and clothing choices. *Vogue* magazine had a total of 32 photographs and 17 of the 24 *Vogue* magazines reviewed contained a mention of Michelle Obama’s fashion and clothing choices. *Glamour* magazine had a total of 44 photographs and 10 of the 24 *Glamour* magazines under review contained a Michelle Obama fashion mention. Combined, these two magazines included a mention of Michelle Obama’s fashion and/or clothing choices in over 50% of the issues published during this period. *Vogue* had 20 different mentions (83%) and *Glamour* had 12 (50%). The celebrity entertainment genre had the second most mentions with four mentions in *People* and three mentions in *OK!* (15%), totaling seven. These results can be seen in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Summary of Communication of Michelle Obama, January 2008 to December 2009

Title	Full-Length (feature) Articles	Notes on Social Events	Fashion Trend Reports	Other Brief Mentions	Total
<i>Vogue</i>	2	3	4	11	20
<i>Glamour</i>	2	0	3	7	12
<i>Time</i>	2	0	1	1	4
<i>New Yorker</i>	0	0	0	0	0
<i>People</i>	2	0	1	1	4
<i>OK!</i>	1	1	0	1	3
Total	9	4	9	21	43

Before conducting this research I hypothesized that the two fashion genre magazines would have the most to say about the First Lady's fashion and clothing choices. Michelle Obama's role as a style icon has only increased since her husband ran for President. I also hypothesized that the celebrity entertainment genre would have much to say regarding Michelle Obama's fashion choices because of her fashion icon status.

Question two asked, "What types of magazines have less coverage of Michelle Obama during the period under review?" The least amount of Michelle Obama coverage was in the news magazines. Again, this was not surprising because this type of magazine does not typically report on issues pertaining to fashion or clothing. There were 36 total pictures in *Time* magazine. Only five months of the 24 reviewed mentioned Michelle Obama's fashion (17%). She was not mentioned a single time, in a single issue (regarding her fashion and clothing choices) in *The New Yorker* during the

time period under review. The news magazine genre focused more on the Presidential contenders in the months before the election and then on the President himself and his policies after the election. The articles that appeared in this genre were more politically charged and less concerned with fashion. Spouses, fashion, or anything popular culture related was not the focus in this genre. The news magazines were more concerned with what was happening in the political arena, not in the world of fashion.

Before conducting this research I hypothesized that the news magazine genre would have the least amount to contribute to the conversation about the First Lady's fashion choices, but I was surprised at just how infrequently she was discussed, especially in *The New Yorker*. On the other hand, Michelle Obama did make the cover of two issues of *The New Yorker* that were not analyzed in this study, but I happened to come across them in my research. Both covers were cartoon drawings of Michelle Obama. The first was the June 21st 2009 issue where she was depicted in full camouflage gear carrying an AK-47. Her husband, Barak Obama, was also depicted on this cover wearing a robe and turban, depicting him as a Muslim. They are fist bumping in the drawing. The second cover with Michelle Obama appeared on the March 16th 2009 issue. She is walking on a fashion runway wearing three different outfits. This is the closest thing to a mention of Michelle Obama's fashion and clothing choices by *The New Yorker* in the time period under review. However, since it did not appear on one of the magazines selected according to my data collection process, it was not included in the formal results, but was worth a brief mention here. Michelle Obama was also featured in a full-length feature article in the March 10, 2008 edition of *The New Yorker*

entitled, “The Other Obama,” written by Lauren Collins. No mention of fashion was given. The article discussed Michelle Obama’s demeanor and lack of pretenses, saying this is what makes her attractive to the media, whereas those First Ladies who came before her were colder and more difficult to relate to. The article also discussed Michelle Obama’s role as a mother and highlighted some of her opinions regarding issues and concerns of other working mothers.

Table 4.1 gives a summary of the results for research questions three and four.

Table 4.2 gives a summary of the visual communication, the photographs and cartoons, found in each magazine under review.

Table 4.2

Summary of Visual Communication of Michelle Obama, January 2008 to December 2009

Title	Photographs	Cartoons or Drawings
<i>Vogue</i>	32	0
<i>Glamour</i>	44	0
<i>Time</i>	36	6
<i>The New Yorker</i>	0	0
<i>People</i>	22	0
<i>OK!</i>	10	0
Total	144	6

In the issues of *The New Yorker* that were reviewed for this paper, I came across two articles that mentioned or featured a topic about fashion. The first was in the August 3, 2009 issue and contained an article called, “Itsy-Bitsy Teeny-Weeny: On the Trauma of Swimsuit Shopping” by Patricia Marx. This article briefly described the

history of swimming and swimwear, the rise of the bikini, and suggests an array of swimwear options available for purchase in New York City boutiques.

The second dealt with political fashion of sorts. It was found in the October 5, 2009 issue and was entitled, “Big Pin” and was written by Lauren Collins. It discussed Madeleine Albright’s use of brooches to signal or sway the diplomatic mood. It talked about how she would choose her brooches depending on what event she was attended and what the political mood was for that particular event. For example, if she was attending a friendly summit, her brooch of choice might be a dandelion. Or if something political that she was involved in was stalled, she might choose a turtle (Collins, 2009). These two articles were not included in this research study but were worth a mention here to show that on very rare occasions *The New Yorker* discussed the slightest bit of fashion. I thought it was interesting that the one article about Madeleine Albright was discussing the fashion of someone in the political arena. It just seemed more fitting that this type of article was found in *The New Yorker* because every article they published seemed to be politically focused in some way or another. The articles published in this magazine seemed to discuss the Presidential nominees and their policies more frequently than fashion and clothing choices.

Question three asked, “What category (feature, note on social event, fashion trend report, other types of brief mentions was given the most coverage?” The category known as “Other Types of Brief Mentions” included 20 pieces of data. These categories did not include pictures and cartoons. Of the 42 total mentions collected, almost half came from this “other” category (48%). If a mention could not be easily

identified or categorized as being a feature article, or a note on a social event, for example, it was given the label of “Other Type of Brief Mention.” Therefore there were several mentions, notes, or just brief discussions that were put into this category. Examples of these other types of brief mentions were found in four of the six magazines reviewed: *Vogue*, *Glamour*, *Time*, and *OK!*. One brief mention was located in the December 1, 2008 issue of *Time*. In an article entitled, “TV’s Fall Ratings Hit: Meet the Obamas,” author James Poniewozik says that there once was a time when fashion magazines hardly ever featured a model of color on their cover, now they’re all jockeying to get Michelle Obama to appear on their cover. A second brief mention was found in the February 12, 2009 issue of *OK!*. This piece just briefly mentioned that Michelle Obama was going to be appearing on the March 2009 issue of *Vogue* magazine. The article is entitled, “Michelle Makes History with *Vogue* Cover” (Michelle makes history, 2009). The article does not list an author but is quoted as saying, “Her husband may run the country, but Michelle Obama is leading America in the fashion stakes,” and discusses the fact that Michelle Obama is the second First Lady to ever be featured on the cover of *Vogue*. Hillary Clinton was the first and was featured on the December 1998 cover.

The second most featured category is a tie between full-length feature articles and fashion trend reports, each with nine, which is 21% of the total mentions found for the study for each individual category. Full-length feature articles and fashion trend reports would account for 43% of the total mentions.

Question four asked, “What category (feature, note on social event, fashion trend report, other types of brief mentions) was given the least coverage?” Notes on social events were given the least amount of coverage, with only four pieces of data, totaling 10% of all the data collected for this study. These four pieces of data were found in the September 2008, May 2009, and July 2009 issues of *Vogue* magazine and April 1, 2009 issue of *OK!* magazine. The September 2008 mention in *Vogue* is pertaining to giving speeches on the campaign trail with her husband, Barack Obama. The article shows her wearing a Gap dress and describes her as having “classic American style.” The July 2009 issue of *Vogue* discussed Michelle Obama’s appearance at the American wing of the Museum of Modern Art, where she was wearing a sculptural dress by designer Azzedine Alaïa. The social event of note in the April 1, 2009 issue of *OK!* discussed how Michelle Obama outshined the British Prime Minister’s wife, Sarah Brown, before the G20 Summit in London. She was seen in several pictures to be wearing a mint green pencil skirt and J. Crew sequin cardigan whereas Sarah Brown was photographed wearing a simple, plain black dress.

Question five asked, “What type of tone (mainly positive, mainly negative, or neutral) do the majority of magazines take in their coverage of Michelle Obama?” The majority of the magazines took a mainly positive stance on their coverage of Michelle Obama. I discovered only one piece of data that received a Likert score of a 2, for negative. It was found in a letter to the editor in the June 2009 issue of *Vogue*. This piece is discussed on page 42. Every other piece of data collected was rated at least a 3 (neutral) or higher (4 = positive, 5 = extremely positive) on the Likert scale used. These

results seem to support the literature review in saying that, for the most part, people were excited to have a new, stylish First Lady in the White House and were genuinely interested in information regarding Michelle Obama. I determined how the data would be given its Likert score by the adjectives used. Articles that used gushing, over-the-top language in discussing Michelle Obama received a Likert score of 5. Those still using flattering language, but in a less idolized way received a Likert score of 4.

Tomer (2009) writes, “While the clothes told their own captivating story, the intrigue was genuinely the total woman – a First Lady of both great style and substance. Her spirit is summed up by the legendary Diane von Furstenburg: ‘Michelle Obama represents the modern, confident, intelligent woman. Her personality will have a huge effect on fashion’” (p. 147). This quote sums up what many seem to think about Michelle Obama. Not only are people looking up to her for her style and influence, they also have a lot of substance to look up to as well.

When Michelle Obama was mentioned in the magazines I reviewed, she was regarded as being incredibly fashionable and likable across the board. Negative mentions along with magazine features and articles may have appeared during the time period under review; however, they simply were not found and featured in the issues selected for the study. The results of this study paint the First Lady in a positive light and appear to make her seem sought-after and popular in the eyes of the editorial world during the period selected.

All of the magazine’s Likert scores were similar in that they were within the neutral to positive range for their coverage of Michelle Obama. *Vogue*, *Glamour*, and

Time all had Likert scores around 3.5, which indicate a rating of right in between neutral and positive. This means that the majority of their mentions were either neutral in tone or positive in tone. *Vogue* had a Likert score of 3.35 and *Time* had a Likert score of a 3.44. These two scores were the lowest of the six magazines. *Vogue*, with the lowest Likert score, is the magazine with the least positive coverage of Michelle Obama. This being said, however, *Vogue's* Likert score was still above a 3, which indicates a neutral tone. *People* and *OK!* each had Likert scores that were 4.00 or higher, indicating a positive tone. *People* had the highest Likert score with a 4.25, which shows that out of all of the magazines it was the most positive in its publications of Michelle Obama.

Data that received a Likert score of 2 were mainly negative in their stance on Michelle Obama, either in the choice of words used or the use of an unflattering photograph. None of the data collected for this study received a Likert score of 1 for extremely negative. The one piece of data that was rated a 2 was in the June 2009 issue of *Vogue*, as stated earlier. It was a letter to the editor from a reader regarding the cover story *Vogue* did on Michelle Obama in the March 2009 issue. The reader said she was tired of hearing and reading about everyone [the media] constantly praising the First Lady. Data that received a Likert score of 3 were neither positive nor negative in their coverage of Michelle Obama. These pieces merely mentioned that Michelle Obama was sighted somewhere or that she has been seen wearing this particular designer. These pieces rated with a Likert score of 3 are neutral in tone, neither giving large amounts of praise nor large amounts of negativity to Michelle Obama. For example, in the October 2009 issue of *Vogue*, there is a brief mention about what

Michelle Obama wore when she invited some National Design Award winners to the White House for a luncheon. What she wore was briefly mentioned, neither positive nor negative language was used. Author William Norwich simply quotes, “After chatting privately with the winners, Mrs. Obama, in a Michael Kors butter-yellow lacquered bouclé suit and snakeskin kitten heels, was joined by about 160 guests, friends, and family of the honorees, and museum supporters for a luncheon...” (p. 144).

Data that received a Likert score of 4 and 5 were mainly positive and extremely positive in their reportings of Michelle Obama. The majority of the data collected here received a Likert score of 4. This means that they, on the whole, used flattering language when discussing her appearance and clothing choices. Those that received a Likert score of 5 went on and on about how wonderful and fabulous the First Lady was, almost in a gushing way. In other words, they just could not get enough and Michelle Obama could do no wrong in their eyes as portrayed in their reportings. Coverage that received a Likert score of 4 used positive language in their written descriptions of Michelle Obama, using words such as, chic, sophisticated, admirable, and friendly. Coverage that received a Likert score of 5 used extremely positive language in their written descriptions, using words such as iconic, glamorous, and unprecedented. Examples of articles that received a Likert score of 5 are found in the June and December 2009 issues of *Glamour*. The June issue ranks Michelle Obama as number 3 on their “50 Most Glamorous Women of ‘09” list, saying that she’s chic, has amazing physical features (arms), and incredibly stylish (sheath dresses, cardigans, and belts are mentioned specifically).” The magazine also discussed her confidence as a factor of why

she was nominated for this list of women. The December issue of *Glamour* named Michelle Obama, “Woman of the Year.” The difference, for me, in the Likert scores of 4 and 5 is the words used. Those that received a score of 5 were almost raising Michelle Obama on some sort of fashion pedestal and praising her as if she were an idol. Those that received a score of a 4 were still for the most part using flattering language, but in a less idolizing way.

Table 4.3 shown below gives a summary of the results that relate to questions one through five. Due to the fact that *The New Yorker* did not have any helpful or useful mentions of Michelle Obama, its results were not included in the averages shown. Therefore the average Likert score and standard deviation of all the magazines was divided by five, instead of six.

Table 4.3

Tone of All Communication of Michelle Obama, January 2008 to December 2009

Title	Average Likert Score	Standard Deviation	Overall Tone
<i>Vogue</i>	3.47	0.81	Positive
<i>Glamour</i>	3.57	0.76	Positive
<i>Time</i>	3.44	0.73	Positive
<i>The New Yorker</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>People</i>	4.25	0.50	Positive
<i>OK!</i>	4.00	0.00	Positive
Average	3.75	0.56	Positive

Note: The tone of each piece of communication could range from 1, mainly negative, to 5, mainly positive.

Simple descriptive statistics were used to aid in the data analysis and summary.

The Likert scores for each magazine were determined using the average of the scores for each individual piece of data, for that particular magazine. The main descriptive statistic that I used in this study is standard deviation. The standard deviation is a way of describing the dispersion of the data, or the way in which the data is spread around the mean. The standard deviation shows the relationship that a set of data has to the mean of the sample (Trochim, 2006). The higher the standard deviation for a set of data, the more dispersed the data is. Therefore each individual piece of data is not always located close to the mean and they vary widely. The magazine with the highest standard deviation in this study is *Vogue* with a 0.81. The magazine with the second highest standard deviation is *Glamour* with a 0.76. *Time* had the third highest standard deviation with a 0.73. Next was *People* with a standard deviation of 0.50. The magazine with the lowest standard deviation was *OK!* with a standard deviation of 0.00. A

standard deviation of 0.00 means that all of the individual data points for *OK!* magazine were the same as the mean and did not vary. This means that *OK!* was very consistent with its reporting of Michelle Obama. In the grand scheme of statistics all of these standard deviations are very low (all are less than 1.00) and indicate that each individual magazine does not vacillate when reporting on certain topics and that all their reportings are similar in tone and stance.

Question six asked, “Of the coverage given to Michelle Obama, which types of magazines are most likely to comment on her appearance?” This question is similar to question number one, in that it is looking at which magazines have the most to say about Michelle Obama during this time period. The magazines with the most mentions are *Vogue* and *Glamour*, in the fashion genre. *Vogue* had 32 total photographs and *Glamour* had 44, which is by far the most in terms of visual communication of Michelle Obama. *Vogue* also had the highest number of articles, fashion trend reports, notes on social events, and other brief mentions with 20. In *Vogue* there were two full-length feature articles, three notes on social events, four fashion trend reports, and 11 other types of brief mentions. The two full-length feature articles in *Vogue* were found in the January 2009 and March 2009 issues. The January issue discusses Michelle Obama’s ardent support of American designers. The March issue features Michelle Obama on the cover and includes an eight page feature article. The article entitled, “Leading Lady” touched on Michelle Obama’s visions for a more inclusive White House to the way she has fearlessly embraced fashion (Talley, 2009). This feature article also included four full-page pictures of Michelle Obama. This is unique because full-page pictures were

not found often in the research. *Glamour* had the second highest number of mentions with 12. Of those 12, two were full-length feature articles, three were fashion trend reports, and seven were other types of brief mentions. The two full-length feature *Glamour* articles were found in the December 2008 and the December 2009 issues. The December article mainly discussed life on the road and the Obama's family values. No mention of fashion was made. The December 2009 issue of *Glamour* named Michelle Obama "Woman of the Year." The article describes Michelle Obama's style as glamorous. Michelle Obama is quoted in this article as saying, "All we can do as women is make the best decisions for us" (p. 285). She is also on the cover of this month's (December 2009) issue.

In the October 6, 2008 issue of *Time* is an example of the full-length feature category and includes three pictures of Michelle Obama. This article discusses Michelle Obama's practicality when dressing, saying that she is often found wearing sensible shoes, no matter the occasion. The article also talks about how Michelle Obama likes to shop at Target and Gap.

The news genre in particular had several articles about Michelle Obama that were not included in this study because they made no mention to her fashion or clothing choices. Had this study just been about Michelle Obama's media presence during this time period, many more articles and mentions could have been included for analysis. *The New Yorker* and *Time*, in particular, had brief mentions of Michelle in several of the issues I looked through in articles that were about the political race or her husband's policies after the election. Some were even full-length feature articles

devoted solely to Michelle Obama herself, but they made no mention of her fashion choices and were thus excluded from this study. One article in particular that I would have liked to include because of its negative stance on Michelle (because there were so few that I encountered during this time period) was in the June 2, 2008 issue of *Time* entitled, "The War Over Michelle Obama," written by Nancy Gibbs and Jay Newton-Small. This article talked about how Michelle was possibly hindering her husband, Barack's, campaign and how she had become a target for Conservatives. The authors paint her as a cold, stern speechmaker, who, unlike her husband who is "all about the promise," she is "more about the problem" (para. 3). The article goes on to say that Michelle Obama spends more time than her husband discussing America's concern for what does not work and what we cannot change, which is a far cry from Barak Obama's 2008 campaign slogans. Again, this was a full-length feature article about Michelle Obama not included in this study because it did not mention her fashion or clothing choices. Other feature articles about Michelle Obama talked about her role as wife and mother or how she was dealing with life on the campaign trail.

Question seven asked, "How have magazines framed Michelle Obama during the period under review?" The majority of the magazines examined portray Michelle Obama as the First Lady the United States has been waiting years for because she is so unlike other recent former First Ladies. She is known for choosing fun, bright clothes with big, bold accessories, yet practicality is what drives her to get dressed in the morning. The June 1, 2009 issue of *Time* magazine featured Michelle Obama on the cover and included a full-length feature article about how she is changing the White

House and America with an unprecedented amount of attention for the First Lady. The cover story is entitled, “The Meaning of Michelle” written by Nancy Gibbs and Michael Scherer, and discusses the attention given to the First Lady along with the perceived “role” of her position. This article quotes Hillary Clinton in saying that the role has changed over the years to be merely symbolic and that the First Lady is expected to, “represent an ideal concept of American womanhood” (Gibbs & Scherer, 2009).

When asked what his hopes for Michelle Obama in the fashion arena are, Andre Léon Talley editor at large of *Vogue* says, “She’s already achieved it all...She made fashion accessible on all levels-from the high, like the Isabel Toledo lemongrass [she wore to the inauguration], to lower price points, like her J.Crew ensembles. She has a variety, she is flexible, she is America” (Tomer, 2009, p. 212). He goes on to say that she has created something that people can identify with through her practical fashion choices. She is also incredibly relatable as a woman, mother, and wife.

Robin Givhan, fashion editor for the *Washington Post*, also discussed Michelle Obama’s influence on style in Tomer’s 2009 book. She says, “I don’t think that any other First Lady in recent memory has injected that much personality, and personal preference into her clothing. She gives the impression that she’s dressing in a way that pleases her, as opposed to a way that is meant to be in service to the position” (p. 210). Wendy Donahue, fashion writer for the *Chicago Tribune*, described Michelle Obama’s fashion style as, “Friendly, approachable, independent-almost to rebellion...she operates on tastes and instincts, and doesn’t follow the crowd” (Tomer, 2009, p. 207). Examples of this positive perception in the research can be found in the March and April

2008 issues of *Vogue*. The March 2008 issue of *Vogue*, in a brief section entitled, “Life with André,” editor at large, André Leon Talley briefly described Michelle Obama as being confident and sophisticated. In this article, entitled, “A Higher Calling,” Talley discussed Michelle Obama, saying that she never veers off a cliff into “fashionista-land” (p.350). He goes on to say that Michelle Obama is “effortlessly chic”, even if what she is wearing is the last thing that she is thinking about. The April 2008 issue of *Vogue* described Michelle Obama as a fashion force to be reckoned with. Her clothing style was described as “modern femininity” and a likeness to Jacqueline Kennedy was given, saying that Michelle Obama invites a Camelot comparison to another famous, fashion-forward first-mate. *Vogue* editor at large, André Leon Talley, says that, “Mrs. Obama appropriates the Jackie O. look...but in her own way” (Branch, S., 2008). It seems that Michelle Obama is taking some fashion cues from Jacqueline Kennedy but is still paving her own way in the fashion world.

Each of the five magazines with appropriate publications about Michelle Obama’s fashion sense framed her in a positive light as the most stylish First Lady the United States has seen in awhile. The June 2009 issue of *Glamour*, previously mentioned, named Michelle Obama as one of the most glamorous women of the year. They discussed her clothing style (sheath dresses and cardigans), her physical appearance (her arms), and the confidence she exudes in everything she does.

The framing theory discusses the four locations of the communication process. The four locations are: the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture. The communicators in this paper are the particular magazines chosen. The text refers to the

articles found to discuss Michelle Obama's fashion and clothing choices. The receiver is the readers of each individual magazine. The culture is the way in which the majority of the magazine readers perceive what they are reading. Culture is defined as the thinking of most people in a social group or setting (Entman, 1993, p.3).

Question eight asked, "Is the framing of Michelle Obama different in different genres of magazines?" The framing of Michelle Obama remained consistent throughout the various genres selected. She was framed in a positive light in all five magazines that data was collected from. Michelle Obama was framed by all the magazines as being a stylish, chic, well-educated woman of substance.

The category of fashion trend reports was equal to full-length feature articles as being the most featured category in the data collected. Several of the articles in this category discussed Michelle Obama's fashion, jewelry, and accessory choices. Some also discussed her hairstyles, like the article included in the September 7, 2009 issue of *Time*. This article was placed in the fashion trend report category and was the only magazine under review in the study that included cartoons of Michelle Obama. The article entitled, "Why Michelle Obama's Hair Matters," written by Jenee Desmond-Harris, discussed Obama's slightly rebellious attitude pertaining to fashion and her appearance, saying that her hair style is what makes her a symbol in terms of beauty, acceptance, and power. The article mentions an incident in the summer of 2009 where Michelle Obama's hair was pinned up as way of cooling her from the heat. The internet and blogs were suddenly furious with wonder about whether she had received a haircut or not. Desmond-Harris goes on to say that it was not even that Michelle Obama had

changed her hair in a drastic way, but the change still was a catalyst for conversations that began about fashion and quickly transcended into a conversation about appearance in terms of beauty, acceptance, and power. The article gives mention to some of Michelle Obama's fashion choices that have received a great deal of attention and made people take notice, like her sleeveless dresses, shorts, and her preference for stocking-free legs (Desmond-Harris, 2008).

The fashion trend report category articles also discussed up and coming designers who Michelle Obama has been known to wear and support, like Jason Wu for her inauguration gown, as well as Brooke Garber Neldion's jewelry, a dress designed by Sophie Théallot, and Erickson Beamon's brooches (mentioned in the February 2008 issue of *Vogue*, the July 2008 issue of *Vogue*, and the February 2009 issue of *Vogue*, respectively). Michelle Obama is known for supporting young, new designers and was often praised for doing so.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The goal of this research was to examine how frequently six different magazines featured or mentioned Michelle Obama and her fashion and clothing choices during the two year period immediately surrounding the 2008 United States Presidential election. The results were compiled using a content analysis approach. Simple descriptive statistics were used as well to examine and summarize the data collected. Framing theory was also used in this study.

Summary

Question one asks, “What types of magazines have more coverage of Michelle Obama during the period under review?” For question one, this study found that fashion magazines were the genre that had the most coverage of Michelle Obama during the period under review. The second most coverage came from the celebrity entertainment genre. This was to be expected due to the topic at hand, fashion and clothing choices. Therefore it was not unexpected that the majority of my findings came from *Vogue* and *Glamour*.

Question two asks, “What types of magazines have less coverage of Michelle Obama during the period under review?” For question two, the study found that news magazines were the genre that had the least coverage of Michelle Obama during the period under review. Again, this was not unexpected because these magazines do not

focus much of their attention on fashion, clothing choices, or much else in the world of popular culture. However, *The New Yorker* and *Time* do occasionally publish popular culture stories (*Time* much more frequently than *The New Yorker*), these types of stories are not their main focus. Michelle Obama was not mentioned once in *The New Yorker* when her fashion or clothing choices were the topic of discussion, thus no usable information was obtained from this magazine.

Question three asks, “What category (feature, note on social event, fashion trend report, other types of brief mentions) was given the most coverage?” For question three, the category that most often was found to mention Michelle Obama was other types of brief mentions. This category included all the mentions, articles, pictures, etc. that could not be easily categorized into one of the other categories. Almost half (48%) of all the mentions total came from this category. An example of this category can be found in the April 2009 issue of *Vogue* magazine. The brief mention of Michelle Obama was located in a letter to the magazine’s editor where the reader was commenting on a previous article written about Michelle Obama. The category that had the second most mentions of Michelle Obama was both full-length feature articles and fashion trend reports. Each category had nine mentions apiece.

Question four asks, “What category (feature, note on social event, fashion trend report, other types of brief mentions) was given the least coverage?” For question four, the category that was found to mention Michelle Obama least often was notes on social events. There were only four articles that mentioned what Michelle Obama wore to a certain social event. Three of the four mentions for notes on social events were found

in *Vogue* and the fourth was found in *OK!* magazine. Notes on social events accounted for just 10% of the total mentions found.

Question five asks, “What type of tone (mainly positive, mainly negative, or neutral) do the majority of the magazines take in their coverage of Michelle Obama?”

Question five dealt with the tone that each magazine gave in their reporting’s of Michelle Obama. Each magazine individually was found to have a positive tone when writing about Michelle Obama. There was only one piece of data that I came across that received a Likert score of “2” for negative. *People* magazine received the highest Likert score of 4.25 and was the most positive in its reportings on Michelle Obama. *OK!* magazine received the second highest Likert score with a 4.0. *Vogue*, *Glamour*, and *Time* each received a Likert score around 3.5, which indicates a neutral to positive stance on Michelle Obama.

Question six asks, “Of the coverage given to Michelle Obama, which types of magazines are most likely to comment on her appearance?” Question six is very similar to question one, in that it asked which magazine was most likely to comment on Michelle Obama’s appearance. Therefore, the answer is the same as for question one: *Vogue* and *Glamour*. The fashion magazine genre was the one that was most likely to report about Michelle Obama’s fashion and clothing choices, for obvious reasons. *Glamour* also had a few letters to their editor where readers mentioned or inquired about Michelle Obama’s physical appearance, specifically her arms or complexion. More than likely when the First Lady’s fashion or clothing choices were the topic of discussion, the fashion magazine genre was the one with these findings.

Question seven asks, “How have magazines framed Michelle Obama during the period under review?” Question eight asks, “Is the framing of Michelle Obama different in different types of magazines?” These two questions dealt with the way in which the magazines framed Michelle Obama during the two years under review. The media examined for this study framed Michelle Obama as being a style icon. She was described as: chic, sophisticated, independent, bold, edgy (to the point of slight rebellion), colorful, yet casual and comfortable. The list of positive adjectives that the media used to describe Michelle Obama’s fashion sense was almost endless. The five magazines that contributed useful information to this research study framed Michelle Obama in the same way. The magazines portray Michelle Obama as a new style icon, one that the United States has not seen in a First Lady in quite some time. However, even when she is being portrayed as a style icon, Michelle Obama is still seen as approachable and down to earth. Several pieces of data discuss Michelle Obama’s preference for up and coming American designers, as well as established, more affordable brands, like Target, Gap, and H&M. The August 10, 2008 issue of *People* included a picture of Michelle Obama wearing an H&M dress. Also in the September 2008 issue of *Vogue* she was pictured traveling on the campaign trail with her family wearing a dress from Gap. There have been several similarities drawn between Michelle Obama and Jacqueline Kennedy, but one huge difference was Michelle Obama’s preference for mixing high-end pieces with more affordable ones whereas Jacqueline Kennedy was known to purchase custom made designer and ready-to-wear clothes.

A large amount of focus has been placed on Michelle Obama's role as wife and mother. Michelle Obama has even been known to give herself the nickname, "Mom in Chief" (Condon, 2010). Each of the magazines presented Michelle Obama in a positive light and did not change their stance over the two years in which the publications were reviewed. This shows consistency in each magazine's reporting of the First Lady. They remained consistent in their positive reporting of her as style icon before and after her husband became President.

The purpose of this study was to perform a content analysis using selected issues of six different magazines from three different genres to analyze coverage of Michelle Obama during the months of January 2008 to December 2009. The results were compared and contrasted to uncover whether each magazine took an individualized approach to their coverage of Michelle Obama or if each magazine more or less reported on the same issues and topics. It was concluded that each magazine did take an individualized approach in their reportings of Michelle Obama, as not all magazines reported the same stories pertaining to the First Lady. Each magazine represented the First Lady as expected, with fashion magazines having the most to report pertaining to Michelle Obama's fashion and clothing choices and the news magazines having the least to report on this topic. Each magazine was found to be positive in the majority of their coverage of Michelle Obama during the time period under review.

Limitations

There are several limitations that were discovered in the study. A different news magazine, other than *The New Yorker*, could be chosen for an additional study, which

would alter and possibly add to the results of this research project. Since one of the news magazines chosen for the study did not contribute any useful information, it was completely left out of the research findings. Hopefully in the future, if additional information is added to this current study, or others dealing with a similar topic, the magazines chosen will provide more useful information.

Another limitation was that only issues online were reviewed for *OK!* magazine. Most of the magazines reviewed for the study can be found online as well, but the goal of my research was to actually obtain physical copies of each of the magazines in order to review their content. It would be easier to miss important data that could be included when researching magazines online versus looking through printed copies. The British version of *OK!* magazine was used for this research paper instead of the version published in the United States. Had the U.S. version been used, more mentions of Michelle Obama might have been present, since she is the current First Lady.

A wider mix of magazines would have lead to a more diverse study. The research would have been richer if there was more of a difference in the stances taken on Michelle Obama, as I think it would have lead to a more interesting, varied study. Different genres of magazines could have been used, such as those geared towards African-Americans (*Ebony*, *Jet*, *Essence*), or those magazines that were geared toward

A final limitation is that a validity test was not conducted on this research paper. I was responsible for all of the data collection and analysis.

Future Research

There are several ideas for future research that can be completed in addition to this study. First, different magazines can be used for analysis. Fashion magazines, like *Harper's Bazaar* or *W* could be used. *Newsweek* and *U.S. News and World Report* are two other options for the news magazine genre. *Us Weekly* and *Life & Style Weekly* could be used in the celebrity entertainment genre. There are also several additional titles not listed here that could be used in a similar study. More than two magazines for each genre could be chosen. The mix of magazines could increase the variety of the data. Additional magazine genres could be used, like health and fitness magazines and the topic could be broadened to include any information pertaining to Michelle Obama's physical appearance and physique.

Another option would be in either expanding the time period in which the research was taken or to narrow the time period in which the research was conducted. If the time period was expanded it would allow for more magazines to be analyzed over a longer period of time, for example, two years before and after the 2008 election. If the time period was shortened it would bring the focus to just the months immediately surrounding the 2008 election.

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APPENDIX 1

MASTER TABLES

Table 1

Summary of Michelle Obama's coverage in Vogue, January 2008 to December 2009

Issue date	Category	Likert score	Tone	Visuals included	Number of visuals
January 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
February 2008	FTR	3	O	No	0
March 2008	O	4	P	Yes	1
April 2008	O	4	P	Yes	5
May 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
June 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
July 2008	O, FTR	4, 4	P, P	Yes	2
August 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sept 2008	N	4	P	Yes	1
Oct 2008	FTR	3	O	Yes	1
Nov 2008	O	3	O	Yes	1
Dec 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
January 2009	O, O, F	3, 2, 5	P, P, P	No, No, Yes	3
February 2009	FTR	3	O	No	0
March 2009	F, O, O	5, 4, 4	P	Yes, Yes, Yes	12

April 2009	O	4	P	No	0
May 2009	N	4	P	Yes	1
June 2009	O, O	3, 2	P, N	Yes, Yes	3
July 2009	N	3	O	Yes	1
August 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sept 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Oct 2009	O	3	P	Yes	2
Nov 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dec 2009	O	3	O	No	0

Table 2

Summary of Michelle Obama's coverage in Glamour, January 2008 to December 2009

Issue date	Category	Likert score	Tone	Visuals included	Number of visuals
January 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
February 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
March 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
April 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
May 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
June 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
July 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
August 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sept 2008	FTR	3	O	Yes	12
Oct 2008*	F	3	O	Yes	1
Nov 2008	O	4	P	No	0
Dec 2008*	F	4	P	Yes	5
January 2009*	O	4	P	Yes	1
February 2009	FTR	3	O	Yes	2
March 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
April 2009	O, FTR	3, 4	O, P	Yes	5
May 2009	O	3	O	Yes	5
June 2009	O	5	P	Yes	1

July 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
August 2009	O, O	3, 3	O, O	Yes	2
Sept 2009	O	3	O	Yes	1
Oct 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nov 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dec 2009	F	5	P	Yes	9

Table 3

Summary of Michelle Obama's coverage in Time, January 2008 to December 2009

Issue date	Category	Likert score	Tone	Visuals included	Number of visuals
January 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
February 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
March 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
April 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
May 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
June 2008*	O	2	N	Yes	1
July 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
August 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sept 2008*	O	3	O	Yes	1
Oct 2008	F	4	O	Yes	3
Nov 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dec 2008	O	4	P	Yes	1
January 2009*	F	4	P	Yes	1
Feb 2009*	F	3	P	Yes	7
March 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
April 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
May 2009*	F	4	P	Yes	3
June 2009	F	4	P	Yes	11

July 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
August 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sept 2009	FTR	3	O	Yes	2 pics, 6 cartoons
Oct 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nov 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dec 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 4

Summary of Michelle Obama's coverage in The New Yorker, January 2008 to December 2009

Issue date	Category	Likert score	Tone	Visuals included	Number of visuals
January 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
February 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
March 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
April 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
May 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
June 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
July 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
August 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sept 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Oct 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nov 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dec 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
January 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
February 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
March 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
April 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
May 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

June 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
July 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
August 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sept 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Oct 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nov 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dec 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 5

Summary of Michelle Obama's coverage in People, January 2008 to December 2009

Issue date	Category	Likert score	Tone	Visuals included	Number of visuals
January 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
February 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
March 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
April 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
May 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
June 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
July 2008	FTR	4	P	Yes	5
August 2008	F	4	P	Yes	10
Sept 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Oct 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nov 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dec 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
January 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
February 2009	F	5	P	Yes	6
March 2009	O	4	P	Yes	1
April 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
May 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
June 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

July 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
August 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sept 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Oct 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nov 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dec 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 6

Summary of Michelle Obama's coverage in OK!, January 2008 to December 2009

Issue date	Category	Likert score	Tone	Visuals included	Number of visuals
January 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
February 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
March 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
April 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
May 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
June 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
July 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
August 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sept 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Oct 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nov 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dec 2008	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
January 2009	F	4	P	Yes	3
February 2009	O	4	P	Yes	3
March 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
April 2009	N	4	P	Yes	4
May 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
June 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

July 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
August 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sept 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Oct 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nov 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dec 2009	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

APPENDIX 2

Cover of *Glamour* magazine (December 2009)



Cover of *Vogue* magazine (March 2009)



Illustration by Nicole Flineman for *Time* (September 2009)

