
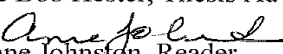
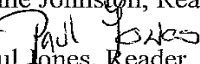


The Rise of Fashion Blogs:
A Content Analysis of Fashion Blogs as an Advertising Tool

By
Emily Leidolf

Senior Honors Thesis
School of Journalism and Mass Communication
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
April 2015

Approved:


Joe Bob Hester, Thesis Advisor

Anne Johnston, Reader

Paul Jones, Reader

Abstract

The fashion industry is constantly evolving and changing to keep up with the latest trends. Fashion blogs are the perfect social media platform for the industry because they can quickly react to the ever-changing fashion trends. Additionally, blogs open up the channels of information; they are able to create two-way conversations between consumers and companies. Fashion bloggers are being used as a new way to advertise products and create brand awareness. The research puts emphasis on how effective fashion bloggers are in expanding brand reach, popularity, and advertising new products.

The purpose of this research is to analyze fashion blogs as an advertising tool. Through a qualitative and quantitative content analysis of 1,200 blog posts, this research identifies how fashion bloggers have become an effective advertising tool. Additionally, this research includes a series of recommendations for fashion bloggers and for companies who wish to utilize them.

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank my committee members for their assistance and support during this research process, including Anne M. Johnston, Joe Bob Hester and Paul Jones. Without their support and wisdom I would have never been able to complete this project.

A special thanks to my chair, Joe Bob Hester, whose knowledge of content analysis and advertising refined and amplified my research.

I also would like to thank Meghan Sobel for being my writing coach throughout this process. Many thanks to my second coder Emily Mann. Also, thank you to my teammates and coaches for supporting me in writing this thesis.

Finally, thank you to my parents for always supporting me and encouraging me to push myself to my fullest potential.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction and Literature Review.....	5
Introduction.....	5
Literature Review.....	6
Fashion Industry and Social Media.....	7
Fashion and Fashion Marketing	8
Social Media.....	9
Fashion Public Relations and its Use of Social Media.....	10
Social Media and Marketing.....	12
Blogs.....	13
Blogs and Marketing.....	14
Affiliate Marketing.....	15
Fashion Blogs.....	17
Endorsements.....	18
Justification.....	19
Research Questions.....	20
Chapter 2: Methods	22
Overview.....	22
Research Design.....	23
Sample.....	23
Coding Instrument and Data Collection.....	26
Intercoder Reliability.....	31
Chapter 3: Analysis.....	33
Findings.....	34
Chapter 4: Discussion and Conclusion.....	47
Discussion.....	48
Limitations of the Study	50
Future Research	51
Recommendations	52
References.....	57
Appendix A.....	63
Tables	64

Chapter 1: Introduction and Literature Review

Introduction

A fashion blogger from Salt Lake City, Utah named Rachel Parcell makes \$1 million a year. Pink Peonies is the name of her blog, and to a lot of people she is virtually unknown. However, she is projected to make \$960,000 this year from affiliate links alone. The secret to her success is a highly engaged audience who actually buys the things she wears or suggests on her blog. (Marinelli, 2014). Pink Peonies has over 2 million views each month (Hollman, 2014). Today fashion blogging is a full on career that is based on bloggers' popularity with readers, customers, and fans (Marinelli, 2014). Brands have started to realize that it is "everyday 'just like me' personalities" that are driving fashion sales (Marinelli, 2014, p.1). Fashion bloggers command a large readership and in some ways are seen as celebrities: publishing books, starring in ads, and collaborating on collections (Phelan, 2013). Bloggers can make a considerable amount of money off the products and brands they recommend on their websites. The way in which they do this is through affiliate link programs. When one clicks on an affiliate link, the program will put a cookie on your computer. If you purchase anything off that site, the blogger will then make a commission off of it. RewardStyle is an example of an affiliate link company, and in some ways is seen as the premier fashion blogging affiliate link company to use (Phelan, 2013). RewardStyle has partnered with a lot of the major retailers and works with 10,000 publishers globally (Phelan, 2013). RewardStyle even has an Instagram tool, so fashion bloggers who Instagram an outfit can make a commission off your click. There is usually a small paragraph listed on the homepage of a fashion blog that states the blog is apart of an affiliate link program (Phelan, 2013). For

example, below is the fine print from a fashion blog based in New York City *With Love*

From Kat (Tanita, 2014):

“With Love From Kat is part of several affiliate advertising programs. This means that if you click and/or make a purchase through certain links on this site or any related social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest and Instagram), I may make a commission from that click and/or purchase. All opinions are my own. Read my site Privacy Policy and Terms and Conditions [here](#). © Copyright Katelyn Tanita, Inc. 2011-2014”

Affiliate links are not the only way bloggers are making a living. They make money off of brand partnerships, event hosting, and collaborations. Bloggers are making a large sum of money off of appearances. To schedule a top blogger for a store opening or brand event it can cost anywhere up to \$40,000 (Marinelli, 2014). Companies will collaborate with fashion bloggers to design a line of jewelry or a handbag. But the original source of income for the bloggers is advertising. Companies will pay bloggers to advertise on their sites. Anywhere from a banner advertisement to a full post sponsoring a new product (Phelan, 2013).

Fashion blogs are changing the fashion industry. In my study I hope to find how many blog posts are actually sponsored. Which companies are sponsoring posts, and how successful are these posts in getting consumers? How exactly are fashion bloggers changing the ways in which companies are designing their advertising and marketing campaigns? The significance in the study lies in understanding how fashion blogs are changing traditional advertising and marketing campaigns. Social media has dominated our current society, rapidly changing advertising, public relations, and marketing campaigns; and fashion blogs are just another way it is changing the game.

Literature Review

Given that fashion blogs are a relatively new topic, there is yet to be a great deal of research focusing specifically on fashion blogs. Therefore, to better understand fashion blogs I think it is important to take a step back and look at social media and blogs specifically and analyze what the advantages are of blogs and social media, specifically when it comes to marketing. But first, it is important to consider the relationship between the fashion industry and social media. By showing the need for social media and fashion blogs within the industry, specifically when it comes to marketing and public relations campaigns, one can better understand why fashion blogs are an important social media tool for the fashion industry.

Fashion Industry and Social Media.

Fashion is considered a social feature that reflects trends and developments among contemporary society. Easey (2002) claims that the rise of the Internet has made the fashion industry global, direct, and interactive. With the rise in global interconnectedness and interactivity, comes the need for fashion marketers to utilize this increased communication with their customers to identify their needs and preferences. However, despite the fact that social media allows for two-way communication, the fashion industry still seems hesitant to completely integrate social media into a instrument of publicity (Easey, 2002; Fionda, 2009). Fashion blogs would be a good example of social media that could be useful for publicity. They are an effective way for the fashion companies to get their messages out. The fashion industry is currently facing several issues where the integration of blogs could be useful. It has become a global business; some companies have offices all over the world, and with the removal of trade

barriers and the growth of the Internet this is possible. The fashion industry needs to adapt itself global business (Sedeke, 2012). Despite the rapid global development of fashion blogs, there is no research that profoundly explores this new phenomenon, which makes it hard for the fashion industry to fully embrace (Sedeke, 2012).

Fashion and fashion marketing.

Fashion is an ever-evolving industry that thrives on creative design and identification with customers. Design skills are a matter of talent, while identification with customers is a matter of marketing. Fashion marketing is different than marketing in other industries, because change is crucial in fashion. Trends are outdated within a matter of months (Easey, 2002). Finonda and Moore (2008) developed Easey's theory further and claim that marketing fashion products is more complex because of the immensity and quick pace of the fashion industry. Every season fashion brands come out with new collections that are shipped worldwide.

Strong brand image is an essential component to any major company, but especially to fashion companies. Image is a whole concept that contains symbolic meaning, ideas and attitudes towards brands. Image is not necessarily just a logo, name, slogan or design (Sedeke, 2012). Ireland and Hoskisson (2009) claim that the main task of fashion marketers is to differentiate their brands from their direct competitors. Differentiation is based on the overall image of the brand, which can be heightened by the blogs.

Fashion marketing is about identifying and satisfying customers' needs and building a strong brand image in the market. In order to reach those goals, fashion marketing uses advertising, market research, forecasting, branding, and product

development (Easey, 2002). However, blogs should be included in this list as a primary tool for fashion marketers (Sedeke, 2012). Blogs help open up communication channels that can be helpful in brand management because they allow for two-way communication.

Social media.

The key concept behind social media is that it allows people to create content and use communication channels (Agresta & Bough, 2011). Kaplan and Haelin (2010) define social media as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of [Web 2.0](#), and that allow the creation and exchange of [user-generated content](#)” (Sedeke, 2012, p.3). Social media is a revolutionary trend that has changed the way in which we communicate. It has removed communication barriers and allowed a single person to have conversations with thousands of people all over the world (Agresta & Bough, 2011). According to the Pew Research Group (2014), as of January 2014, 74% of Internet users use social networking sites. The number of people using social networking sites has doubled since 2008. The use of the Internet and social media sites has expanded social networks drastically (Hampton et al., 2014). Companies are aware of the innovative trend that is dominating American society. Although companies are aware of social media, many are not comfortable with social media because it creates an environment in which consumers can communicate with each other freely about products; but the company itself has no control over what is being said about those products (Kaplan & Haelin, 2010).

Mangold and Faulds (2009) agree that the opportunity for consumers to communicate with thousands of people about products and services can be threatening.

However, they argue that social media should be seen as an advantage. Social media enables companies to more efficiently connect and build relationships with consumers. Even though, “the content, timing, and frequency of social media conversations are outside managers’ control, they must learn how to shape consumers discussions in a manner that is consistent with the organization’s mission and performance goals,” claims Mangold and Faulds (2009, pg.357). Social media is doing what direct mail, telephone, radio and print advertising did up until this point, but more effectively (Safko, 2010). Because social media opens up the lines of communication between companies and consumers, it allows for two-way-communication.

Fashion public relations and its use of social media.

According to the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA, 2014), the goal of public relations is to build a mutually beneficial relationship between organizations and their publics. Public relations is about forming and influencing the opinions, attitudes, and behaviors of companies (Sedeke, 2012). According to Sedke (2012), “The founder of modern PR, Edward L. Bernays (2004), claims that public relations is not just publicity, press agency, promotion or advertising but a continuing process of social integration, and adjustment of private and public interest. Fashion PR is no different from other types of PR” (p. 14). Jackson and Shaw (2006) state that the lines of fashion marketing and fashion PR are often blurred.

Sedeke (2012) cites Brown who simply states, “The main goal of fashion PR is to build and further maintain a favorable public image through positive publicity, which is usually managed by an active communication with the public and a good relationship with key fashion journalists and style editors” (14). Fashion marketing can be explained

as a management process that is concerned with identifying and anticipating consumer needs in order to build a strong brand image in the fashion market (Sedeke, 2012).

The rise of the Internet caused marketing, business communication, and public relations to become more personal and direct because companies were able to interact with customers through their messages. Diga and Kelleher (2009) claim that the information PR practitioners gain from social media sites should be used to build social capital by having virtual relationships with consumers. Social media belongs in the modern practices of public relations because of its easy use, efficiency, and ability to promote online interactivity (Sedeke, 2012). It has been argued that PR practitioners should incorporate blogging into their every-day tasks because it connects directly to the public.

Despite the revolutionary emergence of social media, the fashion industry still seems to be resistant when it comes to using social media platforms for public relations. The fashion industry uses the Internet as a distribution channel more so than a place to communicate with consumers (Sedeke, 2012). Fashion marketers and PR executives are more concerned about the corporate websites than social media platforms (Hines & Bruce, 2007). They view the corporate websites as where the actual online shopping is taking place (Hines & Bruce, 2007). The fashion industry views social media devices as more of a tool to promote the official websites and brand image. The industry is not taking advantage of two-way communication channels.

The fashion industry has changed over the years and become more active. Consumers have become a central part of the brand image; they want to be heard by companies. Conversely, companies need to hear what consumers are saying about their

brands. Blogs are a way in which the fashion industry is starting to utilize social media. There are several advantages to utilizing blogs, especially fashion blogs.

Social media and marketing.

Social media has drastically changed general marketing strategies because it has shifted the strategies from centering on impressions to building connections (Agresta & Bough, 2011). The reason why social media is more effective than traditional marketing is that it is centered on two-way communication. Safko (2010) refers to this marketing change as “a fundamental shift in power” (p. 5). It is a shift in which companies no longer control corporate messages, and consumers no longer trust corporate messages. Studies have found that consumers trust user-generated messages on social media more than the traditional mass media messages (Chung & Austria, 2010). Consumers want their information from people they identify and share a bond with. They want to hear their product reviews and get their news from people they trust and can build relationships with (Safko, 2010).

According to Safko (2010), using social media to sell a product will not work; in fact the new way to sell a product is not to sell a product at all. Social media marketing according to him is about listening first, understanding the conversation, and then speaking and marketing (Safko, 2010). In order to be successful in social media, marketing companies have to understand what consumers want and how they get information about products.

This social media shift is a powerful new way to approach marketing; social media allow consumers to have conversations, and media create new channels for those conversations. The core of marketing is connecting with the consumer and developing

products they need and want. Companies are now trying to place themselves in front of potential and current customers in the most relevant ways possible, which is through social media (Agresta & Bough, 2011).

The previous section explains the current atmosphere and the importance of social media when it comes to marketing. Moreover, since social media is constantly reinventing itself, social media can become outdated very quickly. That is why there is a need to keep researching social media and its trends in the marketplace.

Blogs.

According to Safko (2010), blogs provide a convenient tool for writing about one's individual thoughts and activities. There are 50 million blogs on the Internet that bring people their news on a daily basis. The blog is the easiest and most effective way to provide a channel for information. A blog is a website that is maintained by an individual with regular posts or entries that include commentary, thoughts, ideas, photos, graphics, audio or video. Blogs can be personal or business related. Some blogs operate as personal journals, while most of the blogs on the Internet provide news and content on specific subjects. One of the most important features of a blog is the reader's ability to interact with the author through comments. Business blogs can be used for internal communication. The blogosphere is the sum of all of the blogs on the Internet (Safko, 2010).

Internet users are facing a decrease in the amount of free time that they have because there is so much more information to assess. Therefore, the simplicity and efficiency of a blog is very appealing. Blogs allow people to broadcast their ideas to a wide range of people via their blogs or they can read blogs to get an array of information.

Blogs are a decentralized marketplace of ideas with no barriers preventing participation because there is no extra cost or special training required (McCillan, 2006). Anyone these days can be considered a blogger (McCillan, 2006).

Nardi et al. (2004) conducted a study in which researchers found the five major reasons people blog: expressing deeply felt emotions, forming community forums, providing commentary and opinions, articulating ideas, and documenting one's life. Furthermore, Boram, Sookyoung, and Haejung (2010) found that the initial reason people start blogging comes from their own needs for self-reflection, self-actualization, and self-satisfaction.

The most popular search site for blogs in 2014 is a site known as Technorati, which provides lists of the most popular searches and tags used in blog posts. A high rating on Technorati can greatly enhance a blog's popularity. The site was originally founded to help bloggers succeed by collecting, distributing, and highlighting information about online conversations around the globe. Technorati introduces millions of readers to blog and social media content, and indexes more than 1.5 million new blog posts in real time everyday (Safko, 2010).

Blogs and marketing.

Blogging can be one of the most important ways for marketers to communicate in today's Internet driven world because blogs open up the channels of communication. Blogs are able to create two-way conversations between consumers and companies; blogs give consumers the opportunity to comment on blog posts. Top web marketers understand that blogging is a large part of the social media movement. Blogs have

completely transformed the publishing industry because bloggers are now considered the major content providers on the Internet (Agresta & Bough, 2011).

Marketers for major companies can use blogs to demonstrate expertise and transparency around what they do (Agresta & Bough, 2011). Blogs open up the line of communication and create dialogues around specific topics, for example, how a product is being utilized, if there are any glitches, the social effects of the product, and how the product can be improved. That can be seen as a big advantage for companies that want to know how customers are receiving their brands and products. By having two-way communication on blogs, social media can help marketers shape the readers' perceptions so that readers find the information credible. Marketers can help bloggers by providing them with relevant insight and information (Agresta & Bough, 2011). Blogging gives the ability to companies and individuals to communicate stories that might not have been told in an authentic, personal voice. Unfortunately, there still is not enough information about what helps customers fully engage with a blogging campaign, but companies are starting to see the value in a fashion blogging campaign as a way to advertise their products. A tool that fashion blogs use to market products for companies is affiliate link programs.

Affiliate marketing.

Affiliate marketing is a type of online marketing that is taking over the Internet and e-commerce businesses. Affiliate marketing is where a company signs an agreement with a firm (a publisher or affiliate) to feature a link on its website. The main goal of affiliate marketing is to promote and sell products through different distribution outlets (Goff, 2006).

Fashion blogs utilize affiliate marketing. As seen in the introduction, bloggers can make a considerable amount of money off of affiliate link programs. One of the top affiliate link programs for fashion blogs is RewardStyle.

There are several affiliate models to choose from. The first is a pay-per-sale program, where the payment conditions are based on the number of purchases generated by affiliates; this is the type that RewardStyle uses. Second, the pay-per-lead, advertisers award the affiliates for the new customers they acquire. Third, pay-per-click, which requires flat fees that were pre-determined between the advertiser and affiliate. A tracking technology known as a cookie is used to monitor users' path and the amount of transaction generated by the affiliates (Goldschmidt et al., 2003; Helmstetter & Metivier, 2000).

Affiliate link partnerships can be seen as a very beneficial relationship for all parties involved. The partnerships promote long-term cooperation and exchange of information. This can benefit the companies utilizing the affiliate links because they can help give insight into new product development, successful expansion of the business and product improvement (Mariussen & Bowie, 2010). Successful marketing lies in the construction of a mutually beneficial relationship between the advertiser and the affiliate (Duffy, 2005). Affiliate marketing is just another way to open up the lines of communication between companies and their customers (O'Neill, 2005). On the other hand, affiliate marketing also has a poor reputation due to inconsistent branding through numerous affiliates. Some consumers distrust the affiliate link websites, while other consumers claim that affiliate link marketing is intrusive mass advertising (Howell 2007).

Affiliate marketing is still considered a fairly new strategy. Duffy (2005) argues that as many as 33% of marketers who are involved in e-commerce are poorly informed about the concept. Duffy projects that in the future affiliate marketing will become the principal marketing strategy for e-commerce businesses. Fashion bloggers have taken notes of affiliate marketing, and this new strategy is a very important aspect of their blogs.

Fashion blogs.

Increasing wealth in America encourages men, women, and even children to be fashionable, which requires keeping up with the latest trends, brands, and designers. The fashion industry is constantly changing and evolving from one season to the next (Sedeke, 2012). That is why blogs are the perfect social media platform for the fashion industry, because blogs can quickly react to the ever-changing fashion trends.

Current fashion can be seen as a space where designers and models are on one side, while the new phenomenon of fashion blogs are on the other. Fashion is a culture that cannot be understood only by looking at images, runway presentations, and advertisements (Sedeke, 2012). With the rise of social media in the 2000s, a new way of staging and communicating the culture of fashion was introduced (Engholm, 2014). The fashion blog is a new way to communicate fashion to the everyday reader. The fashion bloggers put together outfits for the everyday girl, instead of the high fashion model. Some readers feel that fashion bloggers make the outfits more accessible (Engholm, 2014). This makes the fashion industry more accessible. Companies have taken an interest in fashion bloggers because companies understand their power (Engholm, 2014). Personal fashion blogs, in particular, have become very important players in the field of fashion since their appearance in the beginning of the millennium (Rocamora, 2011).

These blogs are where bloggers post pictures of themselves in certain outfits with links to where a reader can get the outfits. These fashion blogs can serve as a mirror into what women want to look like and how they perceive themselves (Rocamora, 2011). Fashion blogs can serve as a way to self-reflect on one's personal style and degree of femininity (Rocamora, 2011). Part of the allure of fashion blogs is that they are a popular form of user-generated content, and the fashion industry has taken a great interest in fashion blog marketing these past couple of years. Fashion blogs create a place for consumer-to-consumer electronic word of mouth conversations to take place. Fashion bloggers are able to acquire an audience by means of consuming fashion: choosing, evaluating, and modeling clothing. The audience they acquire is interested in the clothes they buy and wear. An ethnography of online users in Finland studied six popular fashion blogs to determine what makes fashion blog marketing successful (Kumala, 2013). The study found that in order for a blog to market successfully and be credible, the fashion items being marketed need to fit the bloggers' personal style. This research has helped companies decide which fashion blogs to use to market their products (Kumala, 2013). Furthermore, social media play a very dominant role in contemporary fashion marketing because it links fashion bloggers directly to their readers. Most of the time if a fashion blog endorses a product, consumers are more willing to buy it (Kumala, 2013). Fashion blogs are considered social media, so it is important to understand social media and its advantages when researching fashion blogs.

Endorsements.

One of the functions of the Federal Trade Commission is to regulate product endorsements. The FTC requires the disclosure of material connections between

advertisers and endorsers. In 2009 the FTC revised their guideline to extend the disclosure requirements to bloggers and other social media (Middleton & Lee, 2014). This is the reason why bloggers have the small paragraphs at the end of a post stating whether or not the post was sponsored, because the FTC legally requires them to do so. Bloggers are required by the FTC to disclose payments or products they receive in exchange for writing a review on their blog. It can be hard for reasonable consumers to distinguish independent product evaluations from paid advertisements. The new guidelines in 2009 were the result of the increased consumer spending on blogs. The FTC realized that companies would send bloggers their products for free in exchange for a sponsored post to generate buzz and thought that this should be regulated. (Middleton & Lee, 2014). Clearly, the FTC took note of the growing trend of sponsored blog posts.

Justification

The importance of my research is that it explores the world of fashion blogging as a means of advertising and marketing. Fashion blogging is a career that is centered on advertising and marketing for companies. There is not a lot of research that specifically looks at this issue. Therefore, my research will be somewhat exploratory in that regard.

My project is worth completing to show the potential impact that fashion blogs can have on consumers, as well as to demonstrate to companies that fashion bloggers are changing the fashion industry. Many companies have already realized the power of a fashion blogger, but some companies are still hesitant.

There is still a lot of research to be done in this area. The tricky thing about social media is that it is constantly evolving and changing. It is hard to keep up with, and fashion blogs are no exception. Even the growth of fashion blogs that I have witnessed in

the year since I started to avidly read them is astounding. Now most of the bloggers are sponsored or team up for collaborations.

I would like to study just how many posts are sponsored. Specifically, which companies are sponsoring the most posts? I would also just like to put my research out there so people can understand this phenomenon. Companies will be able to see the importance of incorporating fashion bloggers into their marketing and advertising campaigns. My study will help people better understand fashion bloggers and their power in the advertising world. This study can serve as another example of how social media is changing the traditional ways in which companies advertise and market.

My goal is to be able to discuss the trend of fashion bloggers as advertisers. I am going to complete a content analysis on 10 fashion blogs over the course of three years. A content analysis is perfect for my research because it provides measureable data from which qualitative data can be drawn.

Research Questions

My research question for my study is the following: How have fashion bloggers changed the ways in which companies are designing their advertising and marketing campaigns in order to include the use of sponsored blog posts? This study will focus specifically on blogs with large readerships and use affiliate links. The study will aim to find out how many companies bloggers are working with, and are the companies that fashion bloggers are working with remaining the same across the time frame.

Additionally, do the same bloggers work consistently with the same companies? Are the companies fashion bloggers are working with remaining the same? My research is

exploratory, as I am not looking to prove or disprove a hypothesis; rather I have a goal of exploring this uncharted territory of fashion blogs.

Chapter 2: Methods

The objective of my research project was to conduct a content analysis in order to understand the use of fashion blogs as an advertising tool. This project was used to provide insight and make recommendations for fashion bloggers and companies who wish to utilize them.

Overview

This study is a quantitative content analysis on sponsored fashion blog posts. Ten fashion blogs were used to determine how prevalent this new advertising tool is in the blogosphere. The sponsored posts rely on pictures of the fashion bloggers either wearing various clothes or using a product. However, this content analysis focused specifically on the text of the sponsored blog posts. The time frame that was used for the study is three years because from personally being a reader of fashion blogs, there was a shift in fashion blogs in 2012 that I noticed. It appears that the vast increase in sponsored blog posts has taken place over the past two years. However, it was important to include three years to see how this change has occurred. Furthermore, to identify which companies bloggers are primarily working with when it comes to sponsored blog posts. A content analysis was an effective way to meet the purpose of the study because it is a way to quantitatively measure the blog posts. Clearly there are significant amounts of fashion blogs in the world, and the ones that I chose to use to sample can't be generalized to the entire fashion blogosphere; however, the sample used will serve as an excellent precursor to further research on fashion blogs.

Research Design

The data selected for this study was based on popularity of the fashion blogs as well as the prevalence of sponsored blog posts. Creating data refers to converting the blog posts into statistically measurable variables based on the categories outlined on the coding sheet, specifically, the blog posts that are sponsored on the fashion blogs because that is what was being coded for (Hanson, 2014). Being able to convert the data collected into numerical values allows the data to be analyzed in a measurable way.

Sample

The content used in this study was from fashion blog posts on personal fashion blogs over a three year time period January 2012-January 2015. The fashion blog posts are the unit of analysis. For this content analysis, I only coded the years January 2012-December 2012 and January 2014-December 2014, and then compared the two years. By comparing 2012, technically the first year of the time frame, and then 2014, the last year of the time frame, I was able to compare the two years. This allowed me to see just how much the posts have grown. Additionally, I was able to see how the blogs themselves have changed during that time period.

Sampling is a very important aspect of a content analysis. Daniel Riffe posed the question, “how much data would be needed to test the hypothesis?” in his explanation of content analysis (Riffe, Fico, Lacy, 2005, pg. 95). Content from all of the fashion blogs were selected based on the popularity of the blogs and lists.

The sample for this content analysis was created by comparing lists of top fashion bloggers from several different websites including The Huffington Post, Who What Wear, Fashionista, Refinery 9, Cosmopolitan Magazine, Lucky Magazine, and Signature

9. The ten fashion blogs that were selected off the lists had the most readers and showed up on at least three of the above lists that were compared.

The first fashion blog that will be used for the content analysis is Happily Grey. Mary Seng started this blog in 2012. She is based in Nashville, and quit her job as a full time nurse to start her blog as a creative outlet to share her creative platform with others. Her blog has upwards of 5,000 views a day. Mary has established collaborations with top fashion brands, and is considered one of the most influential fashion bloggers in Nashville (White, 2014).

Cupcakes and Cashmere is the second blog that will be analyzed. Emily Schuman is the Los Angeles based author of the blog. The blog is a mix of fashion and food, but predominantly fashion. She founded the blog in 2008 and in 2012 she published a book based off the content of the blog. Emily recently collaborated with the designer Coach to design a bag (Lurie, 2012). Emily has claimed that she “excels” at affiliate marketing because she now makes more than she ever did in her previous career in advertising (Lurie, 2012).

Blair Eadie is the author of Atlantic Pacific blog. She has a background in fashion having been a former buyer for Gap and Old Navy. She is based out of New York City, and her blog brings in 1.8 million page views a month. Her blog is strictly fashion based only featuring outfit posts (Sherman, 2013).

Sincerely Jules is the fourth fashion blog that will be used in the sample. Julie Sarinana is the author of the blog and based in Los Angeles. She founded her blog in 2011 as a creative outlet when she was a student at Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising (Lewis, 2013).

In April 2011, Wendy Nguyen launched Wendy's Lookbook. She features a lot of YouTube tutorials on her blog, for example, "25 Ways to Tie a Scarf." Her blog is very popular within the fashion blogosphere (Sherman, 2013).

Courtney Kerr is the author of What Courtney Wore. She launched her blog in 2011, after quitting her job as a retail shopgirl. Courtney is very well known for her show on Bravo "Courtney Loves Dallas," that premiered in December 2013. Her show was about juggling it all from her newfound career in fashion blogging to her mother's battle with cancer. Additionally, Courtney is talk show host in her hometown of Dallas where is she also based (Kerr, 2014).

In 2008 Jessica Quirk launched her blog What I Wore, but before she started her blog she worked as a fashion designer in New York City and Hong Kong. She has a number of successful partnerships including Coach and DKNY. Jessica is also an author a book that is based off her fashion blog (Quirk, 2008).

Gal Meet Glam is a fashion blog based in San Francisco. Julia Engel is the author of the very popular blog. Her blog incorporates post ranging from fashion and beauty to home décor and travel. She makes up close to seven figures a year based off affiliate link marketing. She had never read or followed a blog before she started hers in 2011 (Clark, 2014).

Pink Peonies is written by Rachel Parcell, who is based in Salt Lake City, Utah. She has around 2 million page views a month. Her blog focuses primarily on fashion and beauty. Rachel is projected to make \$960,000 this year alone based off affiliate links. Her blog was started in 2011 is now one of the top five grossing blogs in the largest blogger affiliate network (Hollman, 2014).

The final blog that will be used for the sample is With Love From Kat. Kat Tanita started her career in fashion PR, but in 2013 she quit her full-time job to focus on her blog and start her own social media consulting company. Her blog is where she talks about her love for fashion, food, décor, and travel. Kat is based in New York City, and was recently featured in a *Wall Street Journal* article about fashion bloggers (Holmes, 2015).

I coded by hand 60 blog posts per year per fashion blog. So, every blog was coded for 120 blog posts. With the ten fashion blogs that means 1,200 blog posts were coded for this content analysis.

Coding Instrument and Data Collection

The goal of the content analysis was to understand sponsored fashion blog posts and about the design of the blog posts. To accomplish this I established a coding sheet that allowed my coder to code for nine different items on a particular blog post. I created the coding instrument using excel and refined it several times after preliminary coding efforts and studying more blog posts. I coded all of the blog posts by hand and then entered the data into excel.

The categories I coded for were based on common factors or themes that emerged from the blog posts themselves. The nine categories of information that I coded for included: number of affiliate links, number of other photos used, number of collage photos used, number of photos of a product, number of photos of a blogger wearing an outfit, word count on the blog post, category of the content of the post, the terminology used to describe sponsorship, and finally the number of comments on the blog post. All of the fashion blogs were coded for what terminology they use to describe their

sponsorship: for example, this post was brought to you by, thanks to company x for this post, thanks, sponsoring.

The first category of information included in the coding sheet that my coder looked for within in the blog post was the number of affiliate links. This was important because affiliate links are a large part of how fashion bloggers make their income. They are linked through an affiliate link program, so fashion bloggers get a portion of the commission. Most of the bloggers have affiliate links highlighted in different color font so they stand out and grab the reader's eye.

The next four categories of the coding sheet referred to the photographs that the bloggers used in their posts. Collage photos, product posts, photos of the blogger wearing an outfit, and finally a category of other. This was important because the photographs on the blog are what really bring the readers in. Through photographs the bloggers are able to sell the products or clothes and draw readers in. The blog post below is an example of a collage photograph, where the blogger has made a collage of her favorite items from a sale. This is a very popular post and photograph that a lot of fashion bloggers utilize.

Figure 1. Collage photograph example.



Dress // Sandals // Bracelet // Sunglasses
Ring // Purse // Hat // Pants (as seen here)

It's time to do a little spring cleaning and make room for new pieces in your closet! Take advantage of [Shopbop's tiered sale event](#) this week (spend \$250, save 15%) and get spring items like this [flowy dress](#), these [gold sandals](#), and this [panama hat](#). This [neutral bag](#) is a wardrobe staple – and I love that it comes with a strap so it can be worn cross body. You can't go wrong with [mirrored Ray Bans](#) and a great pair of trousers (see how I styled mine [here](#).) Shop more of my spring must haves (including this [light blue dress](#) and [these heels](#)) below.



35 COMMENTS

Word count was the next category I coded for. This category was important because bloggers usually include a small paragraph of text in their blog posts to update their readers, explain the outfit choice, or sell a product they are being paid to sponsor. I was interested to see if the word count has changed over time, or if blog posts that are sponsored have a larger word count.

The category of the content of the post is very important. Fashion bloggers mainly blog about fashion, but a lot of them also consider themselves lifestyle bloggers. That is why it was important to include sub categories for each post. The seven sub categories are: fashion, food, beauty, home décor, inspiration, travel and other. These seven categories were decided on after a preliminary look at the ten blogs used in the sample, to make sure that every blog post had a category. This category was very important because I wanted to see if the sponsored posts were only for the fashion category and what other categories sponsored posts fall under.

The next category was the most important for the content analysis. This category was terminology used to describe sponsorship. In this category we coded for whether the blog post was sponsored or not, and how the blogger described the sponsorship.

The final category was the number of comments on the blog post. This is how we establish how readers are interacting with the bloggers. Additionally, how the readers are engaging with sponsored blog posts versus non-sponsored blog posts. The number of comments speaks to how large of a readership the bloggers have.

Figure 2. Blog picture examples.



...

One of my favorite shoe silhouettes is the classic pointed toe pump. It's a favorite because they can be worn all year round and can be styled dressy or with just jeans and a tee shirt. With all the warm weather and sunshine we've been experiencing here in Utah, it has me in the mood for bold bright colors! Below are some of my favorite pumps from *Nordstrom* that are bright and colorful, and add the perfect punch to any look as we make the transition from winter to spring!

Happy Thursday and thanks for stopping by!



Brought to you by Nordstrom.

The blog post above is from Pink Peonies; this particular blog was referenced in my introduction to the literature review. Rachel Parcell, the author, is considered one of the top fashion bloggers. This particular blog post serves as an excellent example of the categories on my coding sheet. The pink words that are highlighted are the affiliate links. The small paragraph of text is where I will code for the word count. The category of this post is clearly fashion because it talks about shoes and her outfit. This blog post had five more pictures of her wearing this outfit but for purpose of space I only included the one picture to use as an example. All of the pictures featured in this blog post had Rachel wearing that outfit. Nordstrom sponsored the post, which is visible with the sentence at the end of the post. The final category is comments and for this post all 116 comments followed right after the sponsorship sentence, the number is very visible. If you would like to reference this blog post as an example the link is www.pinkpeonies.com.

A multicas e coding sheet was used for this study as opposed to a single case-coding sheet. This allowed me to put more than one case, or blog, on the page. Each row on the grid for the coding sheet contains data for a specific blog and the columns hold the numbers for the variables that are listed (Riffe, Lacy, Fico, 2014, pg. 104).

Intercoder Reliability

In order to perform this content analysis, I recruited and trained a second coder. The second coder was an undergraduate student who was also doing a content analysis for her Honors Thesis. To measure and establish intercoder reliability, I trained my second coder on my coding sheet and fashion blogs in general. Then we coded a couple of sample blog posts together. After that, we coded the same set of 30 blog posts, from five different fashion blogs. It was important to have five blogs because every fashion

blog is laid out and designed differently. This was also all done by hand, and then entered into excel.

We each coded the same set of 30 blogs with 9 categories per blog. For ratio variables, such as the affiliate links used and the number of photographs, we used Pearsons r. Inter coder reliability ranged from .99-1.0 per variable. The variable with the highest intercoder reliability score, 1.0, was XX. The variable with the lowest reliability, .99, was comments on a blog post. For nominal variables we used simple agreement, which was 100%.

Chapter 3: Analysis

Sponsored fashion blog posts are becoming a more common and effective way to advertise products. Additionally, they are seen as a very successful tool to increase consumer interaction with a brand. Blogging as a social media platform provides companies and brands with a stage to connect with their consumers and communicate to a mass audience. By investing in social media and creating a new way for businesses to interact with their consumers, companies stand to gain a range of benefits including enhanced brand perceptions, more engagement with consumers, and a richer experience for users (Postman, 2009). Through studying fashion blogs, we can begin to understand why companies are utilizing blogs as an effective marketing and advertising tool.

This chapter will provide a very detailed description of the research findings from a content analysis conducted on more than 1,200 blog posts. This section will provide descriptive statistics of the data as a way to address the research questions, which aim to investigate how companies are incorporating fashion blogs into their marketing and advertising campaigns. In order to better understand fashion blogs, the first research question asks:

RQ1: How many companies are fashion bloggers working with?

Sponsored Blog Posts

In 2012, across all ten blogs that I analyzed, there were only ten sponsored blog posts out of 600. Conversely, in 2014 there were 113 sponsored blog posts across all ten blogs from the sample. Over the course of those two years there was a dramatic increase in sponsored blog posts, as Table 1 shows below.

Table 1. Sponsored Blog Posts across sample.

Blog	2012	2014
Pink Peonies	3	28
Wendy's Lookbook	0	0
With Love From Kat	0	27
Gal Meets Glam	3	23
What I Wore	4	5
Sincerely Jules	0	1
What Courtney Wore	0	7
Happily Grey	0	15
Cupcakes & Cashmere	0	0
Atlantic Pacific	0	7

Two out of the ten blogs from the sample did not have sponsored blog posts in either year. Those blogs were Wendy's Lookbook and Cupcakes and Cashmere; I found this very interesting, because neither of those blogs have a caveat on their blogs that says they do not allow sponsored posts. Every blogger is different, so I do not know why they don't allow sponsored posts. I only coded 120 blog posts from each blog, so there could have been a sponsored post I did not pick up, but that is unlikely.

Of the eight blogs that did have sponsored posts, the number of sponsored posts increased exponentially from 2012 to 2014. Only three blogs- Gal Meet Glam, Pink Peonies, and What I Wore- had sponsored posts in 2012. The data suggest that the trend in sponsored blog posts started in 2012 and has only increased since then. The results suggest that companies started to realize the advantages of sponsored blog posts.

Companies That Are Sponsoring Posts

In order to look into the sponsored blog posts, one of the first steps in my analysis was to look at which companies were sponsoring posts. Overall, there were 53 different companies that sponsored posts on the ten fashion blogs. The companies ranged from Ace Hardware to high fashion designers like Gucci and Marc Jacobs. Old Navy, a company that prides itself on affordable clothing, and Kate Spade, a top fashion designer, both sponsored posts on the same blog. Even furniture companies like Pottery Barn and West Elm sponsored posts. Target had sponsored a post, as well as Diet Coke who sponsored multiple posts. Table 2 below lists the top 15 companies who sponsored blog posts. The fact that 53 different companies sponsored 123 posts speaks to how popular this trend of sponsoring fashion blog posts has become. There are unlikely companies, Ace Hardware for example, that are taking advantage of the voice and reach these fashion bloggers have. Food, make-up, hair, shoe, fashion, furniture, handbag, and nail polish companies all had sponsored posts.

Pink Peonies had the largest array of companies sponsor her blog posts. In 2014 she had the highest number of sponsored blog posts with 28. She had companies from Ace Hardware to Blue Apron (a food company) to high-end designers like 7 for All Mankind

Table 2. Top 15 companies who sponsored posts across sample.

Top 15 Companies	Number of Posts
Nordstrom	60
Sole Society	7
Piperlime	6
Sosie	5
TopShop	4
Ann Taylor	4
ChicWish	4
Old Navy	3
Kate Spade	3
Diet Coke	3
Nine West	2
Marc Jacobs	2
Ted Baker	2
Bloomingdales	2
Pottery Barn	2

Nordstrom

There were 123 sponsored blog posts from my sample of ten fashion blogs. Nordstrom's and its sister companies, HauteLook and Nordstrom Rack, accounted for 60 (48.78%) of the 123 sponsored blog posts. Only eight of the fashion blogs from my sample had sponsored posts, and Nordstrom had posts sponsored on all eight of those blogs. Additionally, Nordstrom is very consistent with their sponsorships; on seven of the eight blogs Nordstrom sponsored, they sponsored more than one post. On With Love From Kat, they sponsored 11 (40.74%) of her 27 sponsored blog posts for 2014. Furthermore, Nordstrom was on the cusp of the sponsored blog post trend. They were only six other companies sponsoring blog posts in 2012; Nordstrom sponsored a blog post on Gal Meets Glam in 2012.

With Nordstrom being the top company for sponsored blog posts, meaning they sponsor blog posts more commonly than any other company, I wanted to research into their social media department. Their director of social media, Bryan Galipeau, is a big fan of fashion bloggers. He was interviewed for a *Wall Street Journal* article about fashion week (Holmes, 2015). Nordstrom has an affiliate program that is run by a team of four full-time employees who work with thousands of social media personalities and bloggers.

Nordstrom is clearly a key player in sponsored blog posts, but they are not the only one. As this research demonstrated, 53 companies sponsored blog posts across my sample. Results from research question one, the number of companies that sponsor blog posts, provides the foundation for research question two and three which aim to explore the relationship the fashion bloggers have with these companies.

RQ2: Are the companies that fashion bloggers are working with remaining the same from 2012-2014?

RQ3: Do a certain number of bloggers work consistently with the same companies?

Only three blogs had sponsored blog posts in 2012. Of those three blogs, only two- Gal Meet Glam and Pink Peonies- had sponsored posts from the same companies in both 2012 and 2014. Gal Meets Glam had sponsored blog posts from Nordstrom both in 2012 and 2014. Pink Peonies had sponsored blog posts from Ann Taylor in 2012 and 2014. These two companies were the only consistent ones across the time frame that I coded for.

Bloggers do work consistently with the same companies. As it was previously stated, Nordstrom sponsored more than one post on all but one blog. Each blogger has her own niche of companies that their blog would appeal to, when you compare the companies sponsoring posts; no two bloggers have the exact same list. These bloggers have carved out their own niche of fashion and they utilize companies that speak to that niche.

After Nordstrom, Sole Society is the most consistent company to sponsor posts on blogs. They sponsored posts on five out of the eight blogs that had sponsored posts. After Sole Society, Piperlime is the third most consistent company to sponsor posts; they sponsored posts on four out of the eight blogs.

Affiliate Links

The number of affiliate links increased across all of the blogs in my sample, except for one, from 2012 to 2014. The creation of affiliate link programs like RewardStyle, which was explained in my literature review, helped facilitate the increase in the number of affiliate links used. Affiliate link programs allow the bloggers to make a commission of the links, meaning that they receive a portion of the profit if a reader buys the item from the affiliate link. This gives fashion bloggers an incentive to post more affiliate links, so in return they make more money. Table 3 below, lists the number of affiliate links the ten bloggers used. I compared the number used in 2012 to the number of affiliate links the bloggers used in 2014.

Table 3. Affiliate Links on blogs posts across sample.

Blog	2012	2014	Percent Change
Pink Peonies	6.81	9.26	35.98%
Wendy's Lookbook	8.03	8.48	5.60%
With Love From Kat	2.77	14.45	421.66%
Gal Meets Glam	5.2	10.4	100.00%
What I Wore	3.3	5.32	61.21%
Sincerely Jules	4.33	7.02	62.12%
What Courtney Wore	7.58	15.37	102.77%
Happily Grey	10.68	9.87	-7.58%
Cupcakes & Cashmere	3.25	4.32	32.92%
Atlantic Pacific	6.37	8.33	30.77%

The table above summarizes how the number of affiliate links used increased in all but one blog from 2012 to 2014. This increase in use of affiliate links further demonstrates how fashion bloggers are making a career out of fashion blogging. However, the ability for fashion blogging to be a fulltime career did not happen overnight; the phenomenon of fashion blogging has evolved over the past three years. The next section speaks to how comments on fashion blogs changed over the years.

Comments

The number of comments on fashion blog posts led to some very interesting data. One blog did not have comments or a place for readers to comment. Three blogs had a decrease in comments from 2012 to 2014. The other six blogs all had an increase in comments on their blog posts from 2012 to 2014. Table 4 below summarizes the research found from my content analysis regarding how the number of comments on each blog evolved throughout the two years analyzed.

Table 4. Trends in Comments on blog posts from sample.

Blog	2012	2014
Pink Peonies	43.3	86.25
Wendy's Lookbook	192.73	125.08
With Love From Kat	8.13	52.37
Gal Meets Glam	64.35	85.57
What I Wore	0	0
Sincerely Jules	111.83	123.25
What Courtney Wore	15.72	39.98
Happily Grey	27.1	34.35
Cupcakes & Cashmere	244.4	123.97
Atlantic Pacific	290.48	150.75

The content analysis showed that comments did not decrease on sponsored blog posts specifically. I find this is also true because the majority of blogs had increased comments from 2012 to 2014, which during that time period there was a surge in sponsored blog posts. Comments are a way to engage with readers, as well as being indicative of the readership and followers that bloggers have. Bloggers and organizations are able to increase consumer engagement through comments, which can be measured in terms of the number comments left on the blog (Ahuja & Medury, 2010).

Categories of Blog Posts

For my content analysis I coded for seven different categories of what the particular blog post was filed. The categories included: fashion, food, beauty, home décor, inspiration, travel, and other. Many of the bloggers I chose for my sample consider themselves lifestyle bloggers more than fashion bloggers. Cupcakes and Cashmere had the largest spread across all of the categories, but fashion posts held the largest percentage of her posts. All of the bloggers in my sample had fashion posts as the largest

percentage of their posts. This was also interesting because companies that are not fashion, for example West Elm, sponsored posts on these predominately fashion geared blogs. This speaks to the breadth, reach, and success that fashion blogs have as a means of an advertising tool. Companies that are specifically fashion oriented would not be sponsoring posts on fashion blogs if they did not think that these bloggers had a voice. In my opinion they probably noticed how successful companies were at using bloggers as an advertising tool and took notice of this success. Of the 1,200-blog posts coded, 1,063 (88.58%) were under the fashion category. Wendy's Lookbook and Atlantic Pacific, for example, only had fashion posts. In table 5, you can see how the categories of blog posts changed from 2012 to 2014.

Table 5. Categories of Blog posts across sample.

Category	2012	2014	Percent Change
Fashion	976	1063	8.91%
Food	15	18	20.00%
Beauty	10	32	220.00%
Home Décor	25	53	112.00%
Inspiration	97	16	-83.51%
Travel	34	14	-58.82%
Other	43	4	-90.70%

Blogging as a Business

Every blogger from my sample started their fashion blog as a creative outlet. None of the fashion bloggers in my sample necessarily started out with the intention of making a full time career out of it. In all of their biographies on their blogs, they talk about how they could never dream of having a career out of it. Their blogs were more of a way to showcase their outfits and serve as a creative outlet. As the blogs became more popular, the layout/technical aspects of the blogs changed. There is a stark difference in the way the blogs look from 2012 to 2014. After 2012, almost all the blogs underwent a facelift. The designs, formats, and texts all changed. The layouts became more sophisticated.

I coded for the word count on each of the blog posts. All but two blogs had an increase in word count from 2012 to 2014. With sponsored blog posts, bloggers might feel the need to go in depth into the description of the products. Although I did not code for the content in the paragraphs featured on the blog posts, the content did lead to some interesting observations. In 2012 the paragraphs in the blog posts would talk a lot about the bloggers daily life. The content of the posts detailed very personal information about what they did that weekend or that particular day. The blog posts in 2014 still share personal information but not nearly as much. The bloggers use other social media platforms, like Instagram, to share more about their personal life. The blog posts in 2014 focused more on the clothes and products.

Additionally, something that I observed that was not coded for was the difference in the quality of photographs used in the blog posts from 2012 to 2014. For outfit posts, now a large number of the bloggers from my sample use professional photographers who

they thank at the end of their posts. They also use an affiliate to link to their photographers home website. None of the fashion bloggers from my sample used professional photographers in 2012.

In 2012 only a couple blogs used advertisements. This was not coded for, but was observed. Advertisements were not coded for because the banner ads stay the same on every page of the blog, no matter the date, until the ads are updated throughout the blog. There was no way of telling what advertisements were used in 2012, or even three months ago. This would have made coding for advertisements very difficult. Now almost all of the blog have banner advertisements featured on their blogs. This is just another way for the bloggers to take advantage of the voice they have and make money off of it.

Given that many aspects of fashion blogs have evolved over time, the next research question is about how fashion bloggers are changing the way in which companies are designing their advertising and marketing campaigns in order to include fashion bloggers. Fashion bloggers have an audience, and companies have taken note of that.

RQ4: How have fashion bloggers changed the way in which companies are designing their advertising and marketing campaigns in order to include sponsored blog posts?

I think the fact that fashion blogging is now a full time career is indicative of how popular fashion blogs are. Companies recognize the advantage of fashion bloggers. That

is why Nordstrom has a full department with four full time employees dedicated to affiliate links and working with bloggers (Holmes, 2015).

In order to fully understand how companies design their campaigns to include sponsored blog posts, the following paragraphs provide qualitative examples of how companies are utilizing XX. These examples are designed to add support to my content analysis findings. They go into detail about major themes that I have observed during my content analysis. All of the themes presented support the research question as to why companies are including fashion blog posts in their campaigns. Furthermore, the following paragraphs highlight the success of fashion bloggers.

Affiliate links funnel blog readers to retail sites. An example of the success of affiliate links would be a \$40 trench coat Kat Tanita, from With Love From Kat, posted last fall that completely sold out. Affiliate links bring readers directly to the merchandise, as opposed to a magazine or print advertisement (Holmes, 2015). Bloggers provide brands with access to readers who they might not usually be able to target. Fashion bloggers write books, design jewelry lines, and collaborate with designers. Bloggers have a place in the fashion industry, and are looked to for inspiration; as a result companies have taken note of this advantage. Not only fashion, but travel, home décor, food, beauty. Companies from all of those categories are represented in the list of the 53 companies that sponsored posts on blogs.

The fact that blogs themselves changed so much is another example that supports this shift. Companies want to advertise on the blogs, through sponsored posts and banner advertisements. Fashion blogs underwent an enormous change from 2012 to 2014 to become more sophisticated and able to accommodate advertisements.

Companies will design a line with a blogger to market their products, or invite them to a store opening to get more people to come. They recognize the importance of fashion bloggers within the industry. In a way, fashion bloggers are perceived as celebrities but more accessible, people listen to their advice. For example, after reading seven fashion blogs, I realized that Bare Minerals recently came out with a line product line, and they sent a product kit to seven fashion bloggers. The seven bloggers were With Love From Kat, Dallas Wardrobe, Sequins and Stripes, Krystal Schlegel, A Piece of Toast, Girl Loves Glam, and A Pinch of Lovely. Those seven bloggers were just the ones that I noticed and they all advertised this new product on their sites via a sponsored blog posts. That was a specific marketing tool; the bloggers have an audience that these companies are trying to reach.

Additionally, there was a dramatic change in 2012 to 2014 on almost all of the blogs when it came to the products that bloggers promoted. This was not coded for, but an observation that I made throughout the coding process. The designers and brands that the fashion bloggers were wearing in 2012 were very affordable and in 2014 the fashion bloggers were wearing expensive designer clothing. There was definitely a noticeable change in resources. A lot of the fashion bloggers went from wearing Steve Madden heels to Christian Louboutins. For example Pink Peonies wore Steve Madden heels in her 2012 posts, but in 2014 she is featured wearing high in shoe brands like Valentino, Stuart Weitzman, and Christian Louboutin. The shift speaks to the fact that fashion bloggers now have a full time career out of blogging and they are making a lot of money off of this business.

Summary

The results of this content analysis convey that fashion bloggers have a voice when it comes to fashion; they are able to shape fashion trends and even influence how companies market products. Companies are taking advantage of their voice. Additionally, the results demonstrate how fashion blogging is a full time career. This is demonstrated by the amount of time they put into their blogs, the use of affiliate links, and the use of sponsored blog posts, which gives them a livable salary. There was a clear surge in sponsored blog posts from 2012 to 2014. During that same time period fashion bloggers quit their jobs and focused primarily on fashion blogging, as was stated in their biographies and about sections on their fashion blogs (Kerr, 2014). Furthermore, this was stated in a lot of interviews they have done (Hollman, 2014; Holmes, 2015; Lewis, 2013; Lurie, 2012; White, 2014). Their blogs underwent substantial changes to become more sophisticated. With the rise of fashion blogs being seen as an effective advertising and marketing tool, the blogs themselves needed to adjust to represent this trend. The content analysis highlighted their effectiveness as an advertising and marketing tool.

The following chapter will discuss the implications of the content analysis for fashion blogs. I will then conclude by making recommendations for fashion bloggers and the future companies that will sponsor posts.

Chapter 4: Discussion and Conclusion

This study examined ten fashion blogs' use of sponsored blog posts, categories, word count, affiliate links, pictures, and comments. The content analysis of these fashion blogs revealed how widespread fashion blogs have become. They are seen as a new platform for companies to advertise and promote their products.

This chapter connects the findings of the qualitative reading of the blogs and quantitative content analyses in Chapter 3 to the research questions that were formulated in Chapter 1. I discuss the question of how fashion bloggers influence brand marketing and advertising strategies based on their sponsored blog posts. After the discussion of the findings and the limitations of the research project, I offer recommendations for companies who wish to utilize fashion bloggers, and recommendations for fashion bloggers themselves.

Discussion

In chapter 3, I reported the findings from my content analysis of ten fashion blogs that revealed very interesting data and implications across all of the categories that I coded for. Within these finding I discovered several important trends on how fashion blogging is being used to advertise and market products.

First, I noticed that several types of companies, fashion and not, have sponsored blog posts on fashion blogs. Fifty-three different companies to be exact sponsored posts on fashion blogs, which demonstrates that these brands have taken note of the reach fashion bloggers have. For example, Ace Hardware sponsored a post on Pink Peonies advertising paint. Fashion bloggers and bloggers in general are seen as having an

unedited perspective (Holmes, 2015). They are seen as having an unedited perspective because they are not working for a specific company. Fashion bloggers are contacted a lot about sponsored post, and most of the bloggers decline them. Bloggers sponsor posts of companies they like and companies that are in line with their aesthetic (Schlegel, 2015). Blogs are perceived as an effective outlet to raise brand awareness or advertise products. A trench coat that Kat Tanita posted on her blog, with an affiliate link, sold out completely last fall (Holmes, 2015). Her readers trusted her perspective and fashion sense enough to buy the coat. The increase in sponsored blog posts from 2012 to 2014, as well as the amount of companies sponsoring posts, speaks to the perceived effectiveness that sponsored blog posts have.

Bloggers have a large following of readers. Not only on their blogs, but also on their various other social media platforms. Blair Eadie of Atlantic Pacific has almost 600,000 followers on Instagram. Additionally, these bloggers have a lot of other lucrative deals. Emily Schuman of Cupcakes and Cashmere has written a book and designed a line of bags for Coach. Kat Tanita recently came out with a line of travel accessories in collaboration with Gigi New York. The research that I conducted before the content analysis demonstrated the vast number of readers these bloggers have. They have a strong voice that people listen to.

There was a dramatic shift from 2012 to 2014 with fashion blogs. In the big picture this means that fashion blogs have become very popular and have an important place in the fashion industry. This could also be indicative of new shopping habits of consumers, online shopping has become very popular and now with the use of affiliate

links consumers can be funneled right to the merchandise. There is a big shift in social media use and I think fashion blogs parallel this shift.

Readers really listen the advice of fashion bloggers and respond. Kat's selling out of a trench coat she featured on her blog is an example of this. As an avid fashion blogger reader myself, I have bought plenty of clothes featured on fashion blogs. Blog readers understand how affiliate marketing works and don't seem to be bothered by it (Holmes, 2015). Julia Engel of Gal Meets Glam was recently interviewed about affiliate links. "People are always going to ask me where something is from, and I'm always going to answer," says Ms. Engel. "So if I can be credited for that purchase, it's a win-win situation" (Holmes, 2015, paragraph 9).

Furthermore, blogs are being used in addition to print advertisements and magazines. Advantages of fashion blogs are that they allow readers to click directly to the merchandise (Holmes, 2015). A blogger on average posts about five pictures of themselves wearing an outfit. In a magazine or print advertisement, a reader only sees that one picture of the product or outfit being featured. Having five pictures of the product or outfit gives potential consumers more information and a different perspective of the product. It is a digital age that we are living in, there is a shift going on in the market place, and fashion blogs are, as a result, seen as a very effective advertising tool.

Limitations of the Study

While this study was the first of its kind to look in depth into a sample of fashion blogs, there are notable limitations to the study as a whole and to the content analysis that are worth discussing.

First, it should be noted that only including 60 posts per year from each fashion blog limits the conclusions that can be drawn about sponsored blog posts in general. We calculated the appropriate sample size for a 95% confidence level and plus/minus 5 percentage point confidence interval. For future studies to be more representative of fashion blog posts as a whole, researchers should include a larger sample size per year for each blog. In regard to the sample and procedure, it should be noted that despite the measures taken to ensure a representative sample there are no known universal techniques that exist for sampling fashion blogs or social media in general. An unbiased list of the top 10 fashion bloggers on the Internet does not exist. By comparing lists, and cross-referencing them, I am confident in the sample I collected. However, future studies need to be conducted to develop an industry-wide standard for sampling fashion blogs.

Second, throughout the coding process, I realized that fashion bloggers' personal lives do sometimes interfere with the content they post. One blogger from my sample was on maternity leave for part of the year, which affected the content on her fashion blog. A second blogger started her fashion blog in 2012, but only blogged for five months out of that year. Bloggers are people too, so it is hard to predict what is going to happen in their personal lives that will affect the content coded.

A large part of my content analysis was subjective, and some blog posts forced coders to make assumptions that could not be verified. Blog posts leave a lot of room for subjective interpretations. For example, a blog post could include a blogger wearing an outfit but also feature the blogger cooking, leaving room for interpretation about the category of the post. Though we trained together and had a very strong intercoder reliability going into the coding process, it is inevitable that I would interpret a blog post

differently, than my second coder, no matter how thorough the training was. The limitations discussed above do not undermine the importance of my study; rather they are outlined to give ideas for future research.

Future Research

For future research this content analysis could be used for blogs other than fashion blogs. For example gaming blogs, or food blogs. The blogosphere is full of different categories of blogs. Blogs are utilized to increase two-way communication; they are a very popular form of social media and are used to communicate. Social media is constantly evolving and changing, so it would be interesting to compare how blogs have even changed from 2013 to 2014.

For future research on fashion blogs, it would be interesting to see how much they grow throughout 2015. I think that my research is just on the cusp of this trend of fashion blogging, and in my opinion fashion blogs are going to grow even more. It would be interesting to look into what makes fashion bloggers so personal. Why do people connect with them and look to them for fashion advice? There is a lot of research that can be done with fashion blogs.

Conclusion

As a result of my research, I have made several recommendations for companies who want to utilize fashion bloggers as an advertising tool and then for fashion bloggers in general.

Specific Recommendations for companies who wish to utilize fashion bloggers.

These following recommendations are based of the findings of the content analysis performed from 2012-2014.

- My recommendation is that companies try to utilize fashion bloggers; they have a voice and a large following of very loyal readers. The fashion industry can seem closed off, but fashion bloggers make it more accessible and relatable.
- Nordstrom is a huge department store with a whole department basically devoted to affiliate links and interacting with fashion bloggers. I would recommend that companies try to recreate this to an extent. Companies don't have to have a department of four full time employees, but maybe have someone in their social media department work with fashion bloggers and affiliate links, even if they only check in with them every couple of days. Build relationships with fashion bloggers and utilize them to increase brand awareness.
- Even if a company is not a clothing or cosmetic company, it does not mean that they are unable to sponsor posts of fashion blogs. My content analysis found 53 different companies that sponsored posts. Ace Hardware sponsored a post, as well as Diet Coke. Any type of company can sponsor

a post on a fashion blog. Fashion bloggers are not just utilized for fashion-targeted posts.

- Every fashion blogger is different; they have their own niche carved out in the fashion blogging world. I would recommend that each company who wishes to have a sponsored post finds a blogger who is aligned with their company's foundations and values. Someone who they want to advertise their brand and products. My recommendation to companies is to find the right blogger for them. If you are a small business owner in Dallas, Texas, there are several fashion bloggers in Dallas, Texas who would fit their niche. Every fashion blogger is different; my content analysis proved that because no two bloggers had the exact same list of sponsored posts.
- Be specific about what you want from the sponsored post, but let the blogger put his or her own twist on the sponsored post. What draws readers into fashion bloggers is that they are authentic and can be seen as unbiased (Holmes, 2015). Talk to the blogger about what type of pictures the company would prefer, but let the blogger decide the content of the pictures. For example, a company sponsors a post about a dress; let the blogger decide the accessories and location of the photo shoot.
- A blogger can become a brand ambassador for a company. Celebrities are brand ambassadors all the time, but a fashion blogger can be more relatable. They can sit front row at the company's fashion shows, design a line of accessories, or be in advertisements. A fashion blogger would not only be more relatable, but also a lot cheaper.

General recommendations for fashion bloggers

In addition to considering the recommendations for companies above who wish to utilize fashion bloggers, I have outlined recommendations for fashion bloggers based on the research conducted in my content analysis.

- Your blog should have a personality. Share your personality with your readers; let that shine through your blog. Readers are looking to connect with the fashion bloggers. I personally really enjoy bloggers who are candid and share personal stories with their readers. For example, Pink Peonies' Rachel Parcell had a post where she asked her readers for suggestions of baby names because she can't think of one. Readers connect with that; it's a way to increase two-way communication. This is important so you know what your readers like and dislike when it comes to fashion and other content featured on the blogs. Therefore, bloggers keep their readers engaged and happy.
- Take advantage of other social media platforms. From Instagram to Twitter to Facebook. It is another outlet that can be used to connect with and interact with your readers. A lot of fashion bloggers are now using SnapChat to showcase their daily lives. These other social media platforms are another way to show off products and outfits as well.
- Make your blog easy to navigate and very forward, the less clutter the better. Some bloggers have really confusing blogs to navigate and as a reader that immediately turns me away from the blog. The more simple

and straightforward a blog is the more appealing it is, at least in my opinion.

- Take advantage of sponsored blog posts if they are offered and aligned with your personal fashion. Because fashion bloggers are seen as having an unbiased voice, readers look to them for advice about a product. They are not being paid to represent just one brand. Fashion bloggers are able to pick the companies they want to have sponsored posts on their blogs.
- Comments are a good thing. The blogger from my sample who does not have them on her blog is missing out. It is a way to engage with your readers and allows two-way communication. Additionally, I would recommend responding to comments. A couple bloggers do, but it's great a way for the readers to feel like they are being heard.
- Use affiliate links. People are naturally curious, so knowing exactly where everything in a blog posts is coming from is a good thing. Most bloggers include every piece of makeup and jewelry. I think it is a very important thing to do. By including everything in your outfit for the day, readers are able to see how you put the outfit together using different brands. What makeup brands you use as opposed to others.
- Use pictures with your blog posts. Blogs are being used in addition to print advertisements and magazines. A benefit of a fashion blog is that a reader does not just get one snapshot of an outfit; they get several different photographs of the outfit. For example, in order to better showcase your

outfits, you can use an up close shot, a far a way shot or a shot of the product being used.

References

- Agresta, S., & Bough, B. B. (2011). *Perspectives on Social Media Marketing the Agency Perspective/The Brand Perspective*. Boston, MA: Course Technology.
- Boram, P., Sookyoung, A., & HaeJung, K., (2010). Blogging: Meditated impacts of flow on motivational behavior. *Journal of research and interactive marketing*, 4(1), 6-29
- Chung, C., & Austria, K. (2010). Social Media Gratification and Attitude toward Social Media Marketing Messages: A Study of the Effect of Social Media Marketing Messages on Online Shopping Value. *Proceedings Of The Northeast Business & Economics Association*, 581-586.
- Clark, J. (2014, July 7). Behind the Blog with Gal Meets Glam. *Stylemepretty.com*. Retrieved November 17, 2014, from <http://www.stylemepretty.com/living/2014/07/07/behind-the-blog-with-gal-meets-glam/>
- Diga, M., & Kelleher, T. (2009). Social media use, perceptions of decision-making power, and public relations roles. *Public Relations Review*, 35(4), 440-442.
doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2009.07.003
- Duffy, D. L. (2005). Affiliate marketing and its impact on e-commerce. *Journal Of Consumer Marketing*, 22(3), 161-163. doi:10.1108/07363760510595986

Easey, M. (2009). *Fashion marketing* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Engholm, I., & Hansen-Hansen, E. (2014). The fashion blog as genre—between user-driven bricolage design and the reproduction of established fashion system. *Digital Creativity*, 25(2), 140-154. doi:10.1080/14626268.2013.814148

Fionda, A. M., & Moore, C. M. (2009). The anatomy of the luxury fashion brand. *Journal Of Brand Management*, 16(5/6), 347-363. doi:10.1057/bm.2008.45

Goff, C. (2006, January 26). Affiliate marketing [Electronic version]. *New Media Age*, 11.

Goldschmidt, S., Junghagen, S., & Harris, U. (2003). *Strategic affiliate marketing*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Hampton, K., & Goulet, L.S., & Raine, L., & Purcell, K. (2014). *Social Networking Sites and Our Lives*. Pew Research Center. Washington DC. Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/2011/06/16/social-networking-sites-and-our-lives/>

Hanson, Paige (2014). *Taking it all off: a content analysis study of ESPN's body issue, 2009-2013*. (Undergrad Thesis). Retrieved from Park Library

Helmstetter, G., & Metivier, P. (2000). *Affiliate selling. Building revenue on the web*. Canada: John Wiley and Sons.

Hines, T. and Bruce, M. (2007). *Fashion Marketing, Contemporary Issues* (Second Ed.), Oxford: Elsevier Ltd.

Hitt A.M., Ireland R.D., Hoskisson R.E., (2009) *Strategic management: competitiveness and globalization: concept and cases*, eighth edition, Cengage Learning Inc., Canada

Hollman, A. (2014, March 24). Passion for fashion turns into a career - UVU Review. *Uvureivew.com*. Retrieved November 13, 2014, from <http://www.uvureview.com/2014/03/24/passion-fashion-turns-career/>

Holmes, E. (2015, February 11). How Style Bloggers Earn Sales Commissions, One Click at a Time. *Wsj.com*. Retrieved March 16, 2015, from <http://www.wsj.com/articles/how-style-bloggers-earn-sales-commissions-one-click-at-a-time-1423693911>

Jackson, T. and Bruce, M. (2007). *The fashion handbook*. Oxon: Routledge.

Howell, N. (2007a, October 18). Actions not clicks are the way forward [Electronic version]. *New Media Age*, 16.

Kaplan A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business Horizons*, 53(1), 59-68.
doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003

- Kerr, C. (2011, January 1). About Courtney. *Thecourtneykerr.com*. Retrieved March 16, 2015, from <http://thecourtneykerr.com/about-courtney/>
- Kulmala, M., Mesiranta, N., & Tuominen, P. (2013). Organic and amplified eWOM in consumer fashion blogs. *Journal Of Fashion Marketing & Management*, 17(1), 20-37.
doi:10.1108/13612021311305119
- Lewis, C. (2013, May 1). Blogger of the moment: sincerely jules. *Teenvogue.com*. Retrieved March 16, 2015, from <http://www.teenvogue.com/careers/fashion-careers/2011-12/sincerely-jules/?slide=12>
- Mangold, W., & Faulds, D. J. (2009). Social media: The new hybrid element of the promotion mix. *Business Horizons*, 52(4), 357-365. doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2009.03.002
- Marinelli, G. (2014, June 12). These bloggers are making millions, but have you heard of them? *Refinery29.com*. Retrieved November 13, 2014, from <http://www.refinery29.com/2014/06/69454/bloggers-salary-millionaires>
- McMillan, S. (2006). Exploring Models of Interactivity from Multiple Research Traditions: Users, Documents and Systems in Lievrouw, L. & Livingstone, S. (Eds.) (2006). *Handbook of new media. Social shaping and social consequences of ICTs*. Updated Student Edition. London: Sage Publications , 205-230

Middleton, K., & Lee, W. (2014). *The law of public communication* (9th ed., p. 347). Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Education

Nardi, B. A., Schiano, D. J., Gumbrecht, M., & Swartz, L. (2004). WHY WE Blog. *Communications Of The ACM*, 47(12), 41-46.

O'Neill, J.W. (2005, Winter). A strategy for estimating identified intangible asset value: Hotel affiliation contribution. *The Appraisal Journal*, 73, 78–86.

Phelan, H. (2013, August 20). How personal style bloggers are raking in millions. *Fashionista.com*. Retrieved November 13, 2014, from <http://fashionista.com/2013/08/how-personal-style-bloggers-are-raking-in-millions#1>

Postman, J. (2009). *SocialCorp: Social media goes corporate*. Berkeley, C.A: New Riders.

Quirk, J. (2008.). About what I wore. *Whatiwore.tumblr.com*. Retrieved November 17, 2014, from http://whatiwore.tumblr.com/private/65957858026/tumblr_mvppvz5ipiw1qz9o5z

Riffe, D., Fico, F., & Lacy, S. (2005). *Analyzing Media Messages Using Content Analysis in Research* (2nd ed.). Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum.

- Riffe, D., Lacy, S., & Fico, F. (2014). *Analyzing Media Messages Using Quantitative Content Analysis in Research* (3rd ed.). New York City: Routledge.
- Rocamora, A. (2011). Personal Fashion Blogs: Screens and Mirrors in Digital Self-portraits. *Fashion Theory: The Journal Of Dress, Body & Culture*, 15(4), 407-424.
doi:10.2752/175174111X13115179149794
- Safko, L. (2010). *The Social Media Bible Tactics, Tools, & Strategies for Business Success, Third Edition* (2 rd). Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons.
- Schlegel, K.(2015, March 28). 5 tips for growing your blog. *Krystalschlegel.com*. Retrieved from <http://krystalschlegel.com>
- Sedeke, K. (2012). *Effective fashion blogs and their impact on the current fashion industry* (Master's Thesis). Retrieved from thesis.eur.nl/pub/12317/Sedeke.pdf
- Sherman, L. (2013, January 23). The most influential personal style bloggers right now. *Fashionista.com*. Retrieved November 17, 2014, from <http://fashionista.com/2013/01/influential-fashion-style-bloggers-2013#1>
- White, A. (2014, March 13). Mary Seng. *Nashvillescene.com*. Retrieved March 16, 2015, from <http://www.nashvillescene.com/nashville/mary-seng/Content?oid=4>

Appendix A: Coding Sheet

Blog	
Date of Blog Post	

Content of Blog Posts:	
Number of affiliate links	
Number of other photos used	
Number of collage photos	
Number of photos of a product post	
Number of photos of blogger wearing an outfit	
Word count on blog post	
Category of Post	
Terminology used to describe sponsorship	

Categories	Fashion Food Beauty Home Décor Inspiration Travel Other
------------	---

Comments on blog post:	
Number of comments on blog post	

Table 1. Summary of Pink Peonies

Summary 2012	
Average number of affiliate links	6.81
Average number of other photos used	1.35
Average number of collage photos used	0.13
Average number of photos of a product post	0.16
Average number of photos of a blogger wearing an outfit	3.85
Average number of word count on a blog post	71.46
Mode of categories of post	1.00
How many sponsored posts	3.00
Average number of comments	43.30
Summary 2014	
Average number of affiliate links	9.26
Average number of other photos used	0.02
Average number of collage photos used	0.13
Average number of photos of a product post	0.60
Average number of photos of a blogger wearing an outfit	5.30
Average number of word count on a blog post	105.68
Mode of categories of post	1.00
How many sponsored posts	28.00
Average number of comments	86.25

Table 2. Summary of Wendy's Lookbook

Summary 2012	
Average number of affiliate links	8.03
Average number of other photos used	0.07
Average number of collage photos used	0.03
Average number of photos of a product post	0.00
Average number of photos of a blogger wearing an outfit	6.78
Average number of word count on a blog post	124.80
Mode of categories of post	1.00
How many sponsored posts	0.00
Average number of comments	192.73
Summary 2014	
Average number of affiliate links	8.48
Average number of other photos used	0.00
Average number of collage photos used	0.00
Average number of photos of a product post	0.00
Average number of photos of a blogger wearing an outfit	6.97
Average number of word count on a blog post	99.47
Mode of categories of post	1.00
How many sponsored posts	0.00
Average number of comments	125.08

Table 3. Summary of With Love From Kat

Summary 2012	
Average number of affiliate links	2.77
Average number of other photos used	1.40
Average number of collage photos used	0.18
Average number of photos of a product post	0.00
Average number of photos of a blogger wearing an outfit	0.90
Average number of word count on a blog post	56.58
Mode of categories of post	1.00
How many sponsored posts	0.00
Average number of comments	8.13

Summary 2014	
Average number of affiliate links	14.45
Average number of other photos used	0.57
Average number of collage photos used	0.18
Average number of photos of a product post	0.27
Average number of photos of a blogger wearing an outfit	5.12
Average number of word count on a blog post	92.58
Mode of categories of post	1.00
How many sponsored posts	27.00
Average number of comments	52.37

Table 4. Summary of Gal Meets Glam

Summary 2012	
Average number of affiliate links	5.20
Average number of other photos used	0.07
Average number of collage photos used	0.02
Average number of photos of a product post	0.05
Average number of photos of a blogger wearing an outfit	3.63
Average number of word count on a blog post	81.53
Mode of categories of post	1.00
How many sponsored posts	3.00
Average number of comments	64.35
Summary 2014	
Average number of affiliate links	10.40
Average number of other photos used	0.12
Average number of collage photos used	0.20
Average number of photos of a product post	0.78
Average number of photos of a blogger wearing an outfit	14.15
Average number of word count on a blog post	137.52
Mode of categories of post	1.00
How many sponsored posts	23.00
Average number of comments	85.57

Table 5. Summary of What I Wore

Summary 2012

Average number of affiliate links	3.30
Average number of other photos used	0.87
Average number of collage photos used	0.10
Average number of photos of a product post	0.02
Average number of photos of a blogger wearing an outfit	7.18
Average number of word count on a blog post	133.12
Mode of categories of post	1.00
How many sponsored posts	4.00
Average number of comments	

Summary 2014

Average number of affiliate links	5.32
Average number of other photos used	0.33
Average number of collage photos used	0.12
Average number of photos of a product post	0.02
Average number of photos of a blogger wearing an outfit	4.53
Average number of word count on a blog post	204.80
Mode of categories of post	1.00
How many sponsored posts	5.00
Average number of comments	0.00

Table 6. Summary of Sincerely Jules

Summary 2012	
Average number of affiliate links	4.33
Average number of other photos used	0.37
Average number of collage photos used	0.08
Average number of photos of a product post	0.45
Average number of photos of a blogger wearing an outfit	6.83
Average number of word count on a blog post	118.70
Mode of categories of post	1.00
How many sponsored posts	0.00
Average number of comments	111.83
Summary 2014	
Average number of affiliate links	7.02
Average number of other photos used	1.80
Average number of collage photos used	0.17
Average number of photos of a product post	0.37
Average number of photos of a blogger wearing an outfit	6.20
Average number of word count on a blog post	155.05
Mode of categories of post	1.00
How many sponsored posts	1.00
Average number of comments	123.25

Table 7. Summary of What Courtney Wore

Summary 2012	
Average number of affiliate links	7.58
Average number of other photos used	0.00
Average number of collage photos used	0.40
Average number of photos of a product post	0.13
Average number of photos of a blogger wearing an outfit	1.95
Average number of word count on a blog post	179.05
Mode of categories of post	1.00
How many sponsored posts	0.00
Average number of comments	15.72
Summary 2014	
Average number of affiliate links	15.37
Average number of other photos used	0.00
Average number of collage photos used	0.02
Average number of photos of a product post	0.13
Average number of photos of a blogger wearing an outfit	4.43
Average number of word count on a blog post	182.72
Mode of categories of post	1.00
How many sponsored posts	7.00
Average number of comments	39.98

Table 8. Summary of Happily Grey

Summary 2012

Average number of affiliate links	10.68
Average number of other photos used	0.19
Average number of collage photos used	0.68
Average number of photos of a product post	0.00
Average number of photos of a blogger wearing an outfit	4.29
Average number of word count on a blog post	107.61
Mode of categories of post	1.00
How many sponsored posts	0.00
Average number of comments	27.10

Summary 2014

Average number of affiliate links	9.87
Average number of other photos used	0.03
Average number of collage photos used	0.08
Average number of photos of a product post	0.10
Average number of photos of a blogger wearing an outfit	6.32
Average number of word count on a blog post	100.33
Mode of categories of post	1.00
How many sponsored posts	15.00
Average number of comments	34.35

Table 9. Cupcakes and Cashmere

Summary 2012

Average number of affiliate links	3.25
Average number of other photos used	1.93
Average number of collage photos used	0.22
Average number of photos of a product post	0.03
Average number of photos of a blogger wearing an outfit	2.42
Average number of word count on a blog post	96.00
Mode of categories of post	1.00
How many sponsored posts	0.00
Average number of comments	244.40

Summary 2014

Average number of affiliate links	4.32
Average number of other photos used	1.78
Average number of collage photos used	1.12
Average number of photos of a product post	0.20
Average number of photos of a blogger wearing an outfit	2.10
Average number of word count on a blog post	211.67
Mode of categories of post	1.00
How many sponsored posts	0.00
Average number of comments	123.97

Table 10. Summary of Atlantic Pacific

Summary 2012

Average number of affiliate links	6.37
Average number of other photos used	0.03
Average number of collage photos used	0.00
Average number of photos of a product post	0.02
Average number of photos of a blogger wearing an outfit	3.37
Average number of word count on a blog post	2.13
Mode of categories of post	1.00
How many sponsored posts	0.00
Average number of comments	290.48

Summary 2014

Average number of affiliate links	8.33
Average number of other photos used	0.02
Average number of collage photos used	0.00
Average number of photos of a product post	0.00
Average number of photos of a blogger wearing an outfit	4.35
Average number of word count on a blog post	0.57
Mode of categories of post	1.00
How many sponsored posts	7.00
Average number of comments	150.75