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Abstract

Traditionally, women have turned to fashion magazines to know what is trending, how they should dress and what beauty tips they should try. However, in this generation, print magazines as a whole are becoming less relevant due to blogs, YouTube, smartphone apps, social media and other digital sources. "The web has made it possible for ordinary consumers to reach a mass audience" (Mcquarrie, Miller, & Phillips, 2013); thus fashion influence is no longer coming only from advertisers and models with unrealistic features, it reflects the tastes of ordinary people. Through a literature review and content analysis, this research demonstrates how the evolution of fashion journalism from print to online media is creating a more diverse marketplace in which young women are making their fashion choices.

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A MULTIMEDIA ANALYSIS OF THE DIVERSIFICATION
OF FASHION JOURNALISM

By

Kayla C. Boyd

A Senior Thesis Submitted to the

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ABSTRACT

Traditionally, women have turned to fashion magazines to know what is trending, how they should dress and what beauty tips they should try. However, in this generation, print magazines as a whole are becoming less relevant due to blogs, YouTube, smartphone apps, social media and other digital sources. “The web has made it possible for ordinary consumers to reach a mass audience” (Mcquarrie, Miller, & Phillips, 2013); thus fashion influence is no longer coming only from advertisers and models with unrealistic features, it reflects the tastes of ordinary people. Through a literature review and content analysis, this research demonstrates how the evolution of fashion journalism from print to online media is creating a more diverse marketplace in which young women are making their fashion choices.

INTRODUCTION

Fashion magazines have dictated what women perceive as “fashionable” for decades, but as print media become less popular and less abundant, it is being left to digital sources to satisfy this generation’s desire for fashion advice and other topics ranging from skincare, make-up and hair tutorials, to do-it-yourself projects and celebrity gossip. This research will focus on the genre of fashion journalism specifically and how new media such as blogs, social networking sites and video blogs (also referred to as “vlogs”) are affecting young women in today’s culture.

According to Rocamora (2012), the fashion blogosphere, including both independent and corporate sites, has rapidly expanded since a young American woman appropriated the genre in 2003. In addition to this, “Twitter has 500 million registered users” (Rousseau, 2012), whereas Facebook has close to 850 million people using it each month,” (Warren, Sulaiman, & Jaafar, 2014). This means that not only are people communicating their personal style through blogs, but they are also using social networking platforms to express themselves at an even greater volume.

Not only fashion journalism, but journalism as a whole has been adjusting and adapting to these new media platforms.

A result of this evolution in journalism is the concept of “citizen journalists.” It is becoming less clear to the public who is actually a professional journalist and what qualifies someone to be one. “The very status of the journalist as reporter or opinion maker has been put into question as the bar to entry for creating a mass media audience has lowered dramatically- which was first noticed when bloggers of all types rose to prominence” (Hansen, 2012). So what does this mean in terms of fashion journalism? Since fashion advice is not based on fact, but rather a matter of taste and opinion, there is more or less room for conflict (depending on how you look at it) over what constitutes a “credible” source.

According to Hansen (2012), blogs constitute a new platform where non-professional writers are able to reach a larger audience, resulting in an attention space that was previously monopolized by mass media. Fashion magazines, being a part of traditional mass media, are no exception to this: “We can all agree that today’s digital environment has transformed the print-based, one-way nature of journalism” (Bird, 2009). Through blogs and networking, news has become a conversation. The traditional method of purchasing a print magazine or newspaper to gain access to information on the topic of the reader’s interest is becoming obsolete for younger generations who now rely almost solely on receiving data on a real time basis. “In their constant, often daily, updating of sites with new posts, fashion blogs feed into this tyranny of the new, constructing, more than any other media, fashion as transient, passing, already gone,” (Rocamora, 2012). People once communicated by traditional mail, then the telephone and email developed a quicker and cheaper way and now text messaging is common practice. The same evolution has occurred within journalism. Why would readers want to pay for a print magazine

once a month when they can just check their smartphone daily and get trending information for free?

A concern that professionals in the field face in regards to new media is that the vast majority of online news is mainly commentary on stories written by a declining number of professional print journalists (Bird, 2009). When looking at fashion journalism, these same concerns apply. According to research done by Pham (2011), people do not want to wait for the magazines, which is where editors actually fact-check stories. In addition, Pham identifies a concern that these bloggers may not be offering any unique expertise or vantage point that truly adds to the fashion dialogue (2011).

This research will attempt to inform readers about the various effects that new media and citizen journalism now have on this generation of fashion consumers, as well as add to the research previously done involving fashion media. Although there are many male fashion bloggers and consumers, this research will only analyze female-focused fashion blogs, vlogs and other sources. Through literature review, interviews and observation this research will analyze: the effects of the fashion media on young women, some of the global controversies involving fashion media, the evolution and development of new media, the structure of the fashion blogosphere and what the democratizing of fashion means for this generation.

I. The Fashion Media's Effects on Young Women

Davis (2007) found that at that time women read an average of three magazines on a regular basis and spent an average of two hours reading magazines weekly. According to Malachowski and Myers (2013), a common explanation for eating disorders amongst young women is exposure to thinness depicted and promoted in the media. These acts of showcasing

and endorsing slender individuals can result in distorted or negative body image perceptions among female adolescents and college women (Malachowski & Myers, 2013).

An increase in body dissatisfaction can lead to women becoming predisposed to developing an eating disorder. When women are exposed to “idealized images” at a young age, they tend to compare themselves to such images, which leads to decreased satisfaction with their own attractiveness (Rudd & Lennon, 2000). In order to combat the problem of eating disorders in young women as they relate to their perceptions of supermodel portrayals in the media, we need to raise caution to the kinds of body images that we are putting in fashion media in order to influence these young women.

Birkeland, et al. (2005) have written that, “Body image researchers have repeatedly showed that women who view thin ideal images in the lab experience lower body dissatisfaction than women who view neutral images.” Studies have shown a 60% decrease in eating disorder onset symptoms and a decrease in overall body dissatisfaction because of exposure to stylized media images (Stice, Rohde, Shaw, & Marti, 2013).

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“While non-White women weigh more than White women, White women exhibit greater body dissatisfaction, feel more pressure to conform to thin images in media and display greater risk of eating disorder” (Davis, 2007). This is an example of how what is depicted in the fashion media directly affects the women who find the need to live up to those societal expectations.

Davis (2007) also states that ethnicity was found to moderate the effects of internalization, body dissatisfaction and pressure to conform to the images in magazines.

This calls to attention the issue of the lack of non-White models in the fashion media. Research done by Frith, Shaw, & Cheng (2005) found that the general lack of non-White models in U.S. advertisements (91% of the U.S. models were Caucasian) suggests reluctance on the part of U.S. advertisers to depict the full range of beauty types in their ads. Frith et al. (2005) also state that, "Even after 30 years of criticism by feminist scholars, advertisers in the U.S. still seem fixated on whiteness."

According to Englis, Solomon, & Ashmore (1994), cultural representations of beauty often result from the stereotypes held by media "gatekeepers." Such gatekeepers influence the selection of beauty types thought to appeal to a mass audience. Englis, Solomon, & Ashmore (1994) state that:

Although it may have been possible historically to identify a popular figure who personified beauty (e.g., Grace Kelley, Marilyn Monroe), we are now confronted with multiple ideals of beauty reflecting the proliferation of lifestyles, cultures, and ethnic groups that comprise American culture. Reflecting this cultural diversity, media vehicles have become increasingly fragmented.

Audiences turn to magazines for tips, examples and even prototypes of beauty, which they may then use as benchmarks for evaluating themselves. "Fashion magazines are a potent means of socializing young consumers about beauty and fashion and for advertising beauty-and fashion-related products," (Englis, Solomon, & Ashmore, 1994).

II. Fashion Media's Global Controversy

A current discussion that has been raised in the fashion industry is the French Parliament's debate on weight standards for fashion models. The French have been leading the world of fashion for decades and if this legislation is passed in Paris, the fashion capitol of the world, then it could possibly cause a trickle down effect to other major fashion cities such as London, Milan, New York City and Los Angeles. According to *The New York Times*, "The French Parliament is debating legislation that would effectively set minimum weights for women and girls to work as models, a step that supporters of the bill say is necessary to combat the persistence of anorexia" (Rubin, 2015).

If it becomes law, President François Hollande's Socialist government will back it. Modeling agencies and fashion houses that employ models whose body mass index measurements do not meet minimum standards would face criminal penalties such as paying a fine of about \$83,000 and serving as many as six months in prison (Rubin, 2015). The proposed legislation would use internationally accepted body mass index standards to determine whether a model was too thin. The index suggests that a woman who is 5 feet 7 inches tall should weigh at least 120 pounds. However, the French health authorities would determine the final legal standards and they could adjust them for factors such as bone size (Rubin, 2015).

"Israel already bans the use of underweight and underage models, while other countries, including Italy and Spain, have weighed legislation similar to the one under consideration in France, but for now continue to rely on voluntary pacts with the fashion industry," states Rubin (2015). Also according to Rubin's article in *The New York Times*, there is no official database of models' heights and weights. Many in the industry say, however, that a number of the top

models in the United States would likely weigh less than the healthy threshold set by the body mass index of about 18 or 18.5. For example, Rubin (2015) states:

Widely publicized figures for weights of models like Kate Moss at the height of her fashion career indicate she would have had a body mass index of 15 to 16, which was similar to that of Twiggy, a 1960s supermodel. More recent models, such as Naomi Campbell and Gisele Bündchen, are reported to have body mass indexes between 16 and 17.

III. The Evolution of the Media

According to Palfrey and Gasser (2008), when it comes to the transfer of information, this is the most rapid period of technological transformation ever seen. The World Wide Web debuted in 1991, search engines, portals and e-commerce sites appeared in the late 1990s, and by the turn of the millennium, the first social networks and blogs popped up online (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008).

According to Pham (2011), techno-enthusiasts view the widespread access of new technologies as having a democratizing effect, while techno-skeptics perceive the availability of knowledge and communication through these technologies as a danger to the overall quality of public communication. This can be compared to the idea of citizen journalism, where instead of news coming from a trained reporter, it can come from almost anyone with Internet access. “The only credential needed for creating a blog is access to the net” (Hansen, 2012).

Hansen (2012) states that the established media were slow to catch on to the blog format, while others, like academics, low-level journalists and college students, engaged in blogging. The opportunity to upload one’s writing to a potentially international audience revealed the desire to write and be read by hundreds of thousands of users. “The traditional (pre-internet) journalistic institutions, after initially either ignoring or deprecating the blogosphere, then began

trying to incorporate Internet platforms into their standard operating procedures,” (Hansen, 2012). Now, the vast majority of journalistic institutions have web-based publication platforms, either exclusively or as a supplement to their print formats. This makes it possible for media outlets that were originally print-based to produce content within interactive, multi-mediated and hyperstructured presentation forms (Hansen, 2012).

The new media phenomenon has had some negative effects for professional journalists. According to Bird (2009), the rise of the citizen-journalist is accompanied by a decline in jobs for trained journalists, with massive layoffs striking newspapers and TV news organizations. Fashion or other lifestyle topics were sometimes considered less newsworthy by traditional journalism; however, these topics are becoming more and more popular amongst consumers. “Increasingly, it seems, newspapers, magazines, radio, television and the internet are preoccupied with what is generally referred to as ‘soft news,’ rather than the hard, political news which many commentators and scholars would like to see journalists producing” (Folker, 2012). Not only are consumers becoming more interested in softer news stories, but it is also more attractive for advertisers as well. This is especially true in fashion media, where the content of the story or photograph serves as advertising for the brand, commodity or designer. Folker (2012) states that the rise of a consumer culture in the West, in addition to increased amounts of individual leisure time, have led to a demand for information about how to best spend one’s free time. This has allowed news media to attract new markets for audiences and advertisers. Lifestyle journalism benefits from advertisers’ support and eases financial burdens on news outlets, thus rendering this type of journalism more profitable and more easily supportable from a management perspective (Folker, 2012).

According to McQuarrie et al. (2013), the blog posts, reviews and user-generated content of interest are primarily concerned with consumption objects: fashion, food and home decor. Consumer bloggers attract an audience that could only be gained by professionals in the past. “They achieve this audience by means of publicly consuming: choosing, evaluating and engaging with clothing (in our focal example) and posting accounts of this consumption that garner a large audience of strangers” (McQuarrie et al., 2013).

Relating the concept of citizen journalism to fashion journalism can be complicated by the idea that fashion and style is often times not based upon facts, but rather on trends and taste. Although democratizing the news may be threatening to what people currently consider being ‘real’ journalism, democratizing fashion could be very beneficial to its consumers.

IV. The Structure of the Fashion Blogosphere

Social networks and blogs have become a regular way for people to receive information and express themselves by tweeting, posting or Instagramming their day-to-day activities. A blog is like a diary that users may access. The overall theme and aesthetic of an individual’s blog is entirely self-determined and “there is no strict or universally standardized definitions for the varieties of fashion-themed blogs” (Pham, 2011). As of July 2007, over 2 million bloggers were listed by Blogger.com as being “with an industry of fashion” (2007).

Rocamora (2011) states that fashion related blogs could be split into two main categories: “independent blogs” and “corporate blogs.” According to Pham (2011):

Blogs might be personal, informal, public, referential, and participatory (through link trackbacks and reader commentary), or they might be commercial devices of promotion and marketing operating as information clearinghouses that are

restricted to registered users, or they might encompass some combination of these qualities.

Independent blogs are usually run by one individual, and tend to focus on street fashion, celebrities or a particular type of commodity, while corporate blogs are the voice of a magazine, brand or store (Rocamora, 2011). Since their appearance, fashion blogs have become important in the field of fashion, especially personal fashion blogs, in which bloggers post pictures of themselves documenting their style (Rocamora, 2011).

The blogosphere is a “hypertextual” platform. “Hypertextuality has come to commonly refer to the electronic linking of a wide range of written texts and images, brought together in a constantly shifting configuration of networks” (Rocamora, 2012). By using hyperlinks and hash tags, one fashion blog can lead to another, or a social networking site, or an online shop, or to any site the blogger wants to take the reader. A magazine is constrained by its materiality and the limits of its pages, but with fashion blogs a broad range of texts related to a post can be made accessible by the “here and now” of the World Wide Web (Rocamora, 2012). This constant craving for more sources of information can be satisfied, and it only makes sense that electronic media would be appealing in a fast-paced environment such as the fashion industry.

Although the fashion blogosphere is thought of as “democratizing the fashion industry” (Pham, 2011), it can still be thought of as a hierarchy, as well. According to Chittenden (2010), as part of this online community, bloggers form links with other bloggers and acquire followers who subscribe to and comment on their blogs. The word “follower” is meant to signal a certain kind of relationship. “On other social network sites, the term “friend” denotes someone the individual has linked with, and whom they may know offline or only via mediated contact. The term “follower” suggests a hierarchy, almost a religiosity, in the relationship” (Chittenden,

2010). This structure breaks down, due to the fact that many bloggers are themselves followers of other bloggers. However, some bloggers are still considered more “famous” than others (Chittenden, 2010).

“Blogs support a fluid notion of identity, as bloggers experiment with various looks, play with representations of themselves and use various affinities with followers to build social capital” (Chittenden, 2010). Blogs have become an important medium through which teens and young adults, especially young girls, learn about themselves and their relationship to others. Chittenden (2010) also suggests that when teens are reserved or have poor social capital in their offline relationships, the mediation of the blog creates a distanced space where they can build self-confidence by exploring their identity with like-minded others. If a blog focuses on fashion and beauty and uses those key words in its content or hyperlinks, then it attracts other fashion and beauty bloggers, creating an online community that may not have been possible in the past.

Although fashion bloggers may appear as amateurs when compared to *Vogue* and other prominent fashion magazines, they offer fluidity to their consumers. However, fashion magazines are not by any means obsolete in the fashion industry. Consider the many aspects of fashion magazines that are conveyed in successful blogs. One of the biggest examples of this is photography. “Aesthetically pleasing clothes cannot look their best unless effectively photographed,” (McQuarrie et al., 2013). McQuarrie et al. (2013) further state that as soon as the blogger begins to be photographed modeling clothes, he/she must deal with the visual and aesthetic vocabularies already established by the fashion system, in which both bloggers and their followers are culturally situated.

V. The Democratization of Fashion

According to Pham (2011), the blogosphere is much more racially and ethnically diverse than current blog studies have shown, and Pew Research has found that bloggers are less likely to be white than the general Internet population. Any race, ethnicity, gender or body type has access to an online platform, which contrasts with what people see in the majority of fashion magazines. Since there is such a limited cohort of people who are successful in the fashion industry, the Internet has provided a way for anyone with a blog, an Instagram account or a Facebook page to share their own style, photography or designs to a large audience. Fashion and style bloggers, no matter what their style or approach may be, share in the activity and enjoyment of producing, consuming and exchanging the material and immaterial goods of fashion and beauty (Pham, 2011). “Despite the relatively small number of fashion-themed blogs in the blogosphere, their impact on the fashion media complex and the larger fashion world is undeniable” (Pham, 2011).

Fashion companies are increasingly turning to bloggers for advertising, promotion, and trend forecasting. Pham (2011) also asserts that bloggers provide fashion houses and their designers with inexpensive and global public relations and marketing. It has become common for “famous” fashion bloggers and other social media icons to be invited by high-end fashion brands to their shows and events. In addition to attending runway shows and events, fashion bloggers often receive product from brands. These samples include fashion or beauty products that a company wants the blogger to advertise, and it is the blogger’s choice to post comments about the product on their blog or website. There are full websites dedicated to bloggers requesting and receiving samples from brands, such as *etailPR’s Blogger Network*, *The Blogger Programme* and *BrandBacker*. According to McQuarrie et al. (2013), economic rewards for fashion bloggers

include gifts of branded fashion clothing and other merchandise, paid ad placements on the blog and paid sponsorship of blog contests. Other paid assignments can include modeling branded clothing, designing clothes and accessories and guest articles in an actual magazine.

New media fashion gurus have not only become leaders in the fashion industry, but business moguls and role models for their peers. Chiara Ferragni, known for her fashion blog *The Blonde Salad*, has used the fame gained from her blog to publish a book, develop a shoe line, become a Guess model and spokeswoman and appear as a guest judge on *Project Runway* season 13. Publishing books has become a current trend for other bloggers as well, such as Emily Shuman from the blog *Cupcakes and Cashmere*. YouTube fashion and beauty vloggers, Bethany Mota, Zoe Sugg and Michelle Phan are just a few that have gained millions of viewers over the last few years, resulting in several projects contributing to their online fame. Mota has a clothing line at fashion retailer Aéropostale, and appeared in season 19 of *Dancing With The Stars* as a contestant. Phan has published a book titled *Make Up: Your Life Guide to Beauty, Style, and Success--Online and Off* (2014) and has her own makeup line, Em Cosmetics, which is owned by L'Oreal. She is also behind the popular make-up subscription service, Ipsy, which charges \$10 per month for a "Glam Bag" of five personally curated sample-sized beauty products. Zoe Sugg, also known as her YouTube name Zoella, has recently published the fiction novel *Girl Online* (2014). As stated on Sugg's *About Me* section of her blog zoella.co.uk:

I chose to write about the things I liked, the things I'd purchased and other opinions on products in general. Before long, I had a small following of people that enjoyed reading what I'd written, and this was amazing in itself, as really, I'd never expected anyone to enjoy anything I'd written in my own little space on the Internet.

These bloggers and vloggers are just a few examples of how young women have transformed the industry of fashion and fashion media without even planning on having such a significant impact.

METHODOLOGY

In order to better understand the changing field of fashion journalism, this research project analyzed a sample of 40 personal style website blogs and 20 personal style video blogs and compared them with four of the most well-known fashion magazines in the United States.

Table 1. List of Wordpress Blogs Used in Research Sample

BLOG	URL	AUTHOR
Sweet Magnolia Chic	http://sweetmagnoliachic.com/	Marcy B.
Fashion For Lunch	http://fashionforlunch.net/	Fashion For Lunch
A Daydream Love	http://adaydreamlove.com/	Rechael Roe
Say Hello to Gorgeous	https://sayhellotogorgeous.wordpress.com/	Vanessa
Make Me Up Marie	http://makemeupmarie.com/	Marie
Styled By Lauren	https://4everfashion.wordpress.com/	Lauren
Confetti and Curves	https://confettiandcurves.wordpress.com/	Karen
With All My Affection	http://withallmyaffection.com/	Arielle Tan
Sistas From Cali	http://sistasfromcali.com/	Jacki and Leslie
Chic of Everything	https://chicofeverything.wordpress.com/	Casady
Call Me Katie	http://callmekatie.com/	Katie Poole
A Model of Life	https://amodeloflife.wordpress.com/	Jerrica Patton
Style Dash Ish	https://styledashish.wordpress.com/	Kalieha

Pink Ruffles and Polka Dots	https://pinkrufflesandpolkadots.wordpress.com/	Medley
Ruby Madison LLC	https://rubymadisonllc.wordpress.com/	Ruby Madison
My Witchy Closet	https://mywitchycloset.wordpress.com/	Camille
Wanderlustts	http://wanderlustts.me/	Lisa Mao
Chroma Me Silly	http://chromamesilly.com/	Tiny Thalia
Do You Even Style	http://doyouevenstyle.com/	Sheridan Hessing
Laura Ephemera	http://lauraephemera.com/	Laura Ephemera
Chez Bri	http://chezbri.com/	Brianna
EK's Daily Dress	https://eksdailydress.wordpress.com/	Eloise Kendrick
The Sparkle Days	http://thesparkledays.com/	Fiona Pswarayi
Morgan Brittany Marie	http://www.morganbrittanymarie.com/	Morgan Brittany-Marie
Casually Chic	https://candaceskaggs.wordpress.com/	Candace Skaggs
Alice in Liu-Liu-Land	https://aliceinliuliuland.wordpress.com/	Alice
Not Central Fashion	http://notcentralfashion.com/	Sophia
Delightfully Kristi	http://www.delightfullykristi.com/	Kristi Peterson
The Oldest Fad	https://oldestfad.wordpress.com/	Lydia Devereaux
A Red Lip And A Nude Shoe	http://aredlipandanudeshoe.com/	Rosie Rockets
Ello Kelsey	http://ellokelsey.com/	Kelsey Noelle
Chiomastic	https://chiomastic.wordpress.com/	Chioma
Fashion Meets God	http://fashionmeetsgod.com/	Jireh DeJose
What Sass Says	http://whatsasssays.com/	Sarah Bristo
TopKnots and PolkaDots	http://topknotsandpolkadots.com/	Chloe Warren
Vera Dulce	https://veradulce.wordpress.com/	Michelle and Natsumi

Charnelle Geraldine	http://charnellegeraldine.com/	Charnelle Geraldine
Chicly Cute	http://chiclycute.com/	Chiclycute
Unveiled Glamour	http://unveiledglamour.com/	Emily Wells
College Girl Dai	http://collegegirl dai.com/	Daizchane Baker

Table 2. List of Magazines Used in Research Sample

MAGAZINE	PUBLISHER	ISSUE
Seventeen	Hearst	December/January, 2015
Vogue	Condé Nast	January, 2015
Cosmopolitan	Hearst	January, 2015
Elle	Hearst	January, 2015

Table 3. List of YouTube Video Blogs Used in Research Sample

VIDEO BLOG	URL	AUTHOR
Samantha Maria	https://www.youtube.com/user/beautycrush	Samantha Maria
Hey Claire	https://www.youtube.com/user/ohhaiclaire	Claire Marshall
Fleur DeForce	https://www.youtube.com/user/FleurDeForce?spfreload=10	Fleur
Jeanine Amapola	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrcYxVSkBgg9szDSwwZaNwg	Jeanine Amapola
My Life As Eva	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrcYxVSkBgg9szDSwwZaNwg	Eva Gutowski

Meredith Foster	https://www.youtube.com/user/StilaBabe09	Meredith Foster
Delhi Fashion Blogger	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVwHh89WkO83vvgWwPi2FSA	Komal
Clothes Encounters	https://www.youtube.com/user/clothesencounters	Jenn Im
fashionista804	https://www.youtube.com/user/fashionista804	Sophia Chang
Its My Raye Raye	https://www.youtube.com/user/ItsMyRayeRaye	Raytifa Boyce
Alyssa Forever	https://www.youtube.com/user/CurlyByNature21/about	Alyssa
Arianna Jonae	https://www.youtube.com/user/itsaribby	Arianna Hendrson
Katherine Lauren	https://www.youtube.com/user/KatherineLauren/about	Katherine Lauren
MakeupbyMandy24	https://www.youtube.com/user/MakeupbyMandy24	Amanda Steele
Aspyn Ovard	https://www.youtube.com/user/HauteBrilliance	Aspyn Ovard
Sierra Furtado	https://www.youtube.com/user/SierraMarieMakeup/videos?sort=dd&view=0&shelf_id=1	Sierra Furtado
Alisha Marie	https://www.youtube.com/user/macbby11	Alisha Marie
LaurDIY	https://www.youtube.com/user/LaurDIY/about	Lauren Riihimaki
ilikeweylie	https://www.youtube.com/user/ilikeweylie	Weylie Hoang

Thats So Cici Yo	https://www.youtube.com/user/thatsociciyo	Cici Dawn
Claudia Sulewski	https://www.youtube.com/user/BeyondBeautyStar	Claudia Sulewski
Tara Michelle	https://www.youtube.com/user/imtaramichelle	Tara Michelle
MissRemiAshten	https://www.youtube.com/user/MissRemiAshten	Remi Cruz
Niki and Gabi	https://www.youtube.com/user/nikiandgabibeauty	Niki and Gabriella DeMartino
The Style Cocktail	https://www.youtube.com/user/TSCsailypatre/about	Saily Patre
The Snob Journal	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCX_Qcz3B9qsIT1U2upD9btQ	Aasha Shroff
Marissa Rachel	https://www.youtube.com/user/MaryhadaLtmbl23/featured	Marissa Rachel
grav3yardgirl	https://www.youtube.com/user/grav3yardgirl	Bunny Meyer
leighannsays	https://www.youtube.com/user/leighannsays/featured	Leigh Ann
Shaaanxo	https://www.youtube.com/user/shaaanxo	Shannon

In order to determine the sample of personal style blogs, a method similar to Chittenden's (2010) was used. The selection process was not random or determined by a third party, and the researcher does not personally know any of the bloggers. The bloggers were of no specific geographic location and their number of subscribers or followers also varied. All blogs were selected through the hosting site Wordpress. The same criteria was used in the selection of video

bloggers (vloggers). Not all bloggers and vloggers disclose their real name or their full name online; therefore, the authors of the blogs listed in Table 1 and Table 3 are listed under the name that was provided on their blog and/or social media. Some bloggers list a screen name, some list their real name and some go strictly by their blog name. The url's can be used to better identify each individual website or YouTube channel.

For the content analysis of the blogs and vlogs, spreadsheets were developed to organize and compare different aspects of the personal style platforms. Recommendations were followed from one blog to the next to find ones with similar interests of fashion and beauty. All of the bloggers and vloggers selected were focused on the demographic of young adult ranging from age 17 to late 20's. This age group was selected because according to Pham (2011), "Females under the age of twenty-nine are the most prolific bloggers and maintain their blogs for longer periods of time."

All blogs and vlogs selected focused on women's fashion or a combination of lifestyle, beauty and fashion, and had the tendency to post personal style photographs or videos. A personal style shot is considered to be a photo or video of the blogger wearing her own clothes and photographed or recorded in a manner that portrays her actual appearance and fashion sense. The subjects shown in fashion blogs and vlogs are articulated through techniques of the self that they invent and choose. With their phrasing of content, self-stylized poses and individually chosen accessories, each display her individuality by being the agent of her own representation (Pham, 2011). Male fashion bloggers/vloggers were not included. Bloggers/vloggers were excluded from the sample if the website or channel was not originally written in English, if the blogger did not post any personal style photos or videos and/or if the blogger appeared or stated

that she was over the age of 30. The samples included blogs and vlogs from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, India and Australia.

It can also be taken into consideration that 33.33% of the YouTube vloggers also has website platforms in which they blogged about similar topics as their YouTube videos. In this case, their websites were not analyzed in order to keep separation and distinction between the Wordpress blog sample and the YouTube vlog sample.

In this analysis, each individual blog (both website and video based) in the sample was studied and assessed for: (1) the ethnicity of the blogger, (2) the body image of the blogger, (3) the amount of visible advertisements and (4) whether the blogger appeared to be accepting company samples and public relations requests.

The content analysis of the fashion magazines used four of the most recognizable titles written in English and distributed in the United States. All of the magazines have a focus of fashion and lifestyle and appeal to the target market of young adult women. None of the magazines had a specific focus on ethnicity or body type. All issues were from January of 2015 in order to maintain the most consistency in style as possible.

The analysis assessed the magazines for: (1) the ethnicity of the models in the content and advertisements, (2) the body image of the models in the content and advertisements, and (3) the number of advertisements in the magazine. Celebrities were not included, unless they were models in an advertisement. Male models were not counted. A model's ethnicity was only counted if there was a view of her face and at least a portion of her body. Body type was also not counted if the model's photograph was only a headshot. If the same model appeared in a fashion spread or was found in multiple advertisements in the same magazine, then she was only counted

once. There were instances where fashion bloggers were featured in the magazines and in that case, they were accounted for as models in the magazine.

When looking at body type, it is difficult to define an exact size range for what is considered to be a 'plus sized' model. Anthony Higgins, Director of MSA Models, was published in NYCastings stating that, "A plus sized model, in the past, was a size 10-12 – up to a size 18 for fashion. Now, they are calling a size 8 plus sized" (Calabrese, 2014). Because of the lack of an exact definition, I evaluated the models simply based upon if they appeared to be a size 8 or greater or if they were portrayed in the context to be plus sized. The bloggers were evaluated by the same concept, either being considered to have the same body image of the models in the magazines (size 0-4) or if they stated to be or appeared to be of a size 8 or greater.

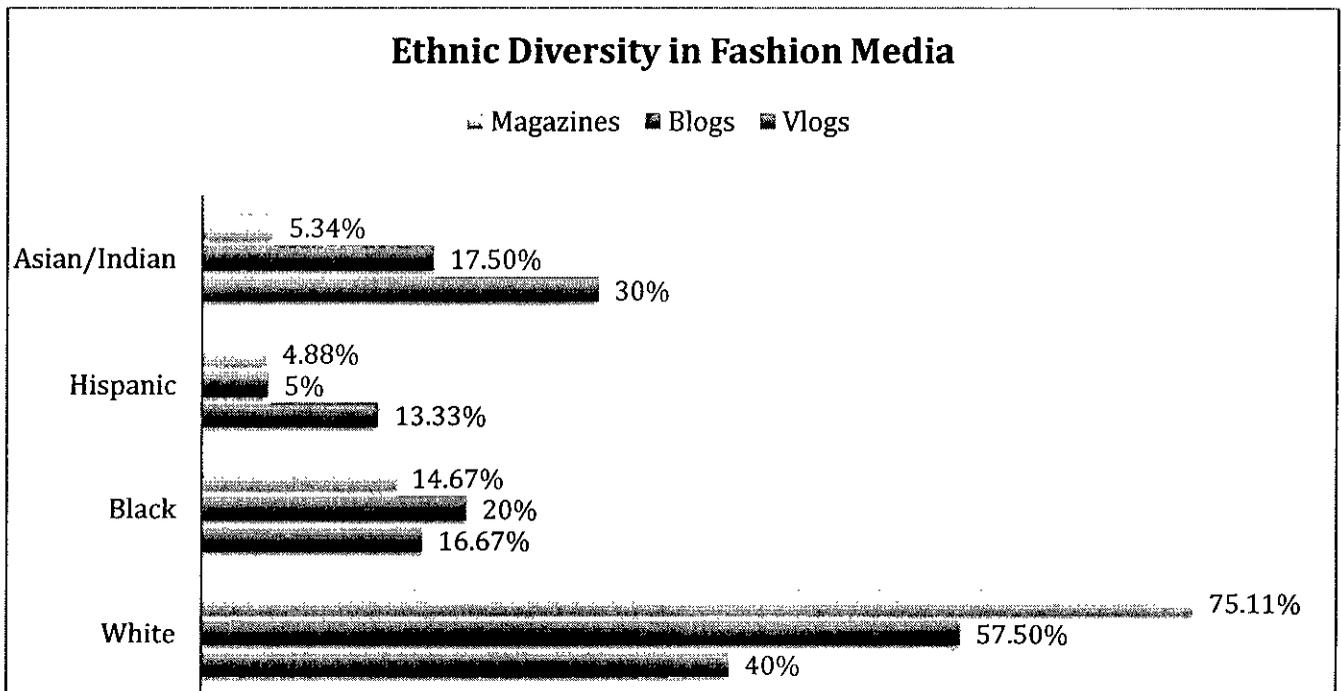
RESULTS

When it comes to body diversity in the magazine analysis, it was found that only one of the magazines, *Seventeen*, offered images of models who were represented as "curvy" or plus-sized with an appearance of a size 8 or greater. The other three magazines had zero. In comparison, the website blog analysis had a representation of 17.5% of the bloggers considered to be "curvy" or plus sized with an appearance of a size 8 or greater. Lastly, the video blog analysis had a representation of 13.33% of the bloggers considered to be "curvy" or plus sized.

When comparing advertising amongst the media platforms, there was an average of 30.5 ads per magazine compared to an average of 0.6 ads per website blog. Out of the sample of Wordpress bloggers, 22.5% of them contained advertisements and 37.5% expressed openness to brand collaborations. The video blogs were a little bit more difficult to compare due to the fact that all of the videos played an advertisement; however that is dependent upon YouTube, not the individual blogger. Many bloggers receive brand promoted products to review, however they do

not often differentiate between a products that a brand or company has given them and which products they have actually purchased.

In regards to ethnic diversity, White women dominated all three samples of magazines, blogs and vlogs; however, the number of White women models in the magazines exceeded the number of White women bloggers and the number of White women vloggers. The greatest amount of Black or African American representation was found in the sample of website blogs. The greatest amount of Hispanic and Asian/Indian representation was found in the sample of video blogs. The exact percentages of racial diversity found in each sample are represented in the following graph:



DISCUSSION

After averaging each category in the analysis of the blogs, vlogs and magazines, the results were as expected. Personal style blogs, both website based and video based, were found

to be more diverse by means of race *and* body type. The blogs and vlogs were less dominated by White women, which allowed for a more prevalent representation of minority women. As demonstrated in the graph, the sample of the personal style blogs and vlogs offered a larger number of Black, Asian/Indian and Hispanic women than the sample of fashion magazines.

The amount of “curvy” or plus sized women in the samples shows a tremendously greater amount of body diversity in the blogosphere. This does not even take into consideration the number of bloggers who had an “average” body image, still greater than those of the fashion models in the magazines. Height was not taken into account either. The greatest body diversity was shown in the sample of website blogs.

After looking at this data and taking into consideration the actions being taking around the world to combat eating disorders, it is clear to say that there is a bias in body image and ethnicity when it comes to fashion media. Whether or not there is even a connection between fashion’s images of women and the continuing phenomenon of tens of thousands of young women in Western developed countries suffering from anorexia is hard to determine and unlikely to be improved upon just by an increase in the weight of models (Rubin, 2015). Many psychiatrists and various people in the fashion industry believe that parents are just looking for something to blame on the growing number of adolescent women with eating disorders.

These are all very valid points, but one of the concerns of this research lies with the fact that there are an extremely significant amount of models with eating disorders and a very large portion of fashion media outlets who show nothing but unnatural depictions of thinness. Of course raising the average weight of models by a few pounds is not going to cure a bunch of young girls who have already developed eating disorders, but the long term goal that can and

should be achieved is trying to change the aspect of Western culture that says the thinner a woman is the more appealing she is, or even the lighter her skin is the more appealing she is.

There is no doubt that one of the purposes of a fashion magazine is to influence its readers; however, it is important to think about how we are influencing them. If fashion magazines are not open to displaying a wider range of body types then we are putting our readers at risk of thinking that they are not living up to this one idealistic expectation of thinness, which is not healthy or even achievable for many, if not most, women. Supermodels have been criticized by some throughout history for being a bad role model for young women because of their unnatural thinness and they have been linked to the increase in eating disorders, such as anorexia and bulimia, in various studies.

Research indicates “college women compare themselves to thin ideal media images just as frequently as they compare themselves to peers” (Fitzsimmons-Craft, 2011). This is a frightening fact when you consider how much pressure young girls already put on themselves. If they don’t reach this social standard of ideal thinness, then they tend to perceive themselves as “abnormal” and may begin to develop the signs of an eating disorder.

When comparing the role of advertisers or media gatekeepers in the three platforms, this research found that the magazines relied much more heavily on the ad revenue in comparison to the website blogs especially. This can relate to the lack of diversity in the magazines because the overall content of these magazines displays what the advertisers feel the public wants to see. By advertisers providing such a lack of diversity, it is contributing to negative effects that the media has on women who do not resemble the model in the magazines.

CONCLUSIONS

In comparison to magazines, website and video bloggers are less concerned with what advertisers think their viewers want to see. Instead, the bloggers are putting themselves out there in the fashion community with little regard to the commonality of white, slender fashion models. Instead, they are focusing on their own personal fashion sense, beauty tips and life experiences. They are displaying fashion, beauty and other lifestyle topics in a way that makes it relatable to any kind of woman. In addition to that, brands are beginning to reach out to these bloggers and vloggers, which provides the ability for products to be displayed on “regular” women.

This research calls to attention an issue that many Americans and people throughout the world are already aware of: the fashion industry displays an overwhelming amount of one type of woman that is unobtainable for the average woman to aspire to look like. Fashion magazines lack a sense of diversity amongst ethnicity and body image. However, there is hope for a more diverse fashion industry when looking at personal style bloggers and vloggers. By opening up the fashion world to anyone who would like to be involved in it, the blogosphere has given average women a platform where they can share their own sense of fashion and find style advice from other women who are more likely to resemble them.

This research hopes to have a positive impact on the way media gatekeepers continue to portray women in advertisements and other aspects of the fashion industry. It is possible that advertisers may become more aware of the growing fashion blogosphere and realize that their own advertisements may be more appealing if they featured a more diverse range of women. If advertisers moved more towards diversity than it could create the possibility for young women to have more positive self esteem, fewer insecurities and a more realistic picture of what a healthy

woman should look like. Some brands, such as Dove skincare for example, have already caught on to this theory.

We should be working harder to make sure that the fashion world is a diverse one and a place of inclusion, not isolation or toxic influence like many people think of it to be. When these young women in particular feel like they could never look as good as the models then they may begin to become uninterested in the magazines, the clothes and the products because they have negative feelings towards them and they feel isolated from the fashion community. On the other hand, there are still the girls who obsess over trying to meet these expectations and those girls are very likely to be the ones who end up disappointed in their appearance, depressed or in danger of an eating disorder.

LIMITATIONS

Limitations in analyzing both the fashion bloggers images and magazine images is that extensive photo editing may have been done to distort the true body image and appearance of the blogger or model. Extensive video editing is also used on video blogs, which could distort the true image of the vlogger to some extent. However, this analysis is still meant to give a generalized understanding of the similarities and differences of the content in fashion-themed blogs, vlogs and magazines. It can also be difficult to distinguish the exact ethnicity of the models in the magazines and the bloggers/vloggers who did not specifically mention their race or ethnicity, so there is room for error in the exact counts. Also, all advertisement and model analyses were averaged across the sample of magazines in order to gain more of a general understanding. The inconsistency in the number of pages of the magazines has an effect on the number of ads and the number of models as well. In order to control the consistency, magazines with a page range of 120-160 were the only ones used.

Time restraints also caused for limitations in the sampling. In further research, the samples of the blogs, vlogs and magazines should be expanded. Website blogs on other platforms, such as Google Blogger, should also be taken into consideration. Many other fashion magazines should be included as well, such as Marie Claire, InStyle and other popular women's interest titles in the United States. Looking at more racially focused magazine titles would also benefit this research. By comparing titles such as Essence Magazine, which is for African American women, and Latina Magazine, which is for Hispanic women, may help reader's understand the differences in approaches to content and images when a fashion media platform is directed to a specific race.

In addition, it would be beneficial to study this from a more global aspect. With the World Wide Web, readers have access to blogs from all different countries. I think that it would make sense to compare magazines from other countries as well. This could help determine if the idealized model portrayals are a bigger issue in the United States than in other countries or if other countries with a large fashion influence, such as various places in Europe, have even greater gaps in ethnic and body diversity.

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