

## **Fashion magazines in the digital era**

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### **Abstract**

Fashion magazines (the *Glossies*) are an important vehicle in fashion communication. After all, they help create the discourse around fashion and make it accessible to consumers. Women's fashion magazines can be seen as *cultural products*, combining symbolic values (they present ideals of beauty and taste, they express the *zeitgeist*, they are built according to a certain editorial taste, etc.) and material ones (they are products by the editorial industry, they are printed on paper, they sell advertising, etc.). Their dual role implies that they have multiple targets: the readers must like them to buy them and fashion producers must consider them an ideal vehicle for advertising.

This traditional framework is now changing as a result of globalisation and digitalisation processes. Indeed, major *Glossies* can no longer survive without internet sites, blogs, social networks, etc. This paper explores what happens to fashion communication in the digital era. It investigates *Vogue's* internet sites in different countries, considering, as it does, the type of communication proposed, the languages in use, the style of the lay-outs, the blogs of the sites, etc.

This contribution also focuses on the change of the professional role of fashion journalists: they should develop new skills, becoming communication experts at a transnational level.

The conclusion of this contribution is that in the digital era, the *Glossies* aspire to become more inclusive and reflect the contradictory needs expressed by today's consumers: participation and prominence.

### **Keywords**

Communication, cultural product, blog, fashion magazine.

### **Research paper**

Viewpoint, Technical paper, Conceptual paper, Case study

Literature review, General review.

## **Purpose**

This paper explores what happens to fashion communication in the digital era. It investigates *Vogue* Facebook posts and tweets in three different countries (Italy, the Netherlands, United Kingdom), considering the type of communication proposed, the languages in use, the frequency of the posts, etc.

## **Design/methodology/approach**

A corpus of 185 Facebook posts and 405 tweets was created. The type of analysis performed on the items is defined as *content analysis*.

## **Findings**

The analysis of 592 Facebook posts and Twitter tweets published by *Vogue IT, NL* and *UK* in one week during the fashion weeks Fall-Winter 2014 proved that the three magazines are very active in these social media. They publish more than 84 posts and tweets per day, correlated by pictures, covering sections such as Fashion, Beauty, Celebrities, etc. They are capable of organising contests and promoting themselves and other products. They generate a response by the readerships that, if moderate, is regularly present.

## **Research limitations/implications**

To obtain a better picture of the type of posts and tweets published by the three magazines, it would be advisable to extend the observed period of analysis.

## **Practical implications**

The creators of Facebook posts and Twitter tweets should be able to provide a less frequent but more skilful communication, more interactive and more respectful of the qualitative standards of the magazines.

## **Originality/value**

This article is inspired by the line of research suggested by Moeran (1996, 2004, 2006a, 2006b) expanding it via the analysis of fashion communication in times of digital publishing and, in particular, analysing Facebook posts and Twitter tweets. It is the first time that a corpus-driven analysis is devoted to the study of this type of digital content.

Fashion magazines (the *Glossies*) are an important vehicle in fashion communication. They help create the discourse around fashion and make it accessible to the consumers, globally. They do this either via international fashion magazines published in local editions that reflect the language and the taste of the individual countries, or with local headings published in a single country. The communications on fashion via magazines seem to typify a character of western civilization that can be found in many countries: *Elle* and *Vogue*, two of the most diffused fashion magazines are present respectively in 45<sup>1</sup> and 17 countries<sup>2</sup>.

In this article, I look at fashion magazines as *cultural products* (Griswold 2008) that combine symbolic values (they present ideals of beauty and taste, they express the *zeitgeist*, they are built according to a certain editorial taste, etc.) and material ones (they are products of the editorial industry, they are printed on paper, they sell advertising, etc.) with the aim of identifying the communication style in use today in their digital expressions.

In particular, I present here the result of a corpus-driven analysis of Facebook posts and Tweets published by *Vogue Italy*, *Vogue Netherland* and *Vogue UK*, for seven days in between two fashion weeks.

The decision to select *Vogue* was driven by the prestige of the magazine that has inspired the film *The devil wears Prada* (Frankel 2006) and the documentary *The September Issue* (Cutler 2007); the decision to concentrate on *Vogue Italy*, *Vogue Netherland* and *Vogue UK*, was based on the author's knowledge of the three considered languages (Dutch, English, Italian) and their diffusion worldwide<sup>3</sup>.

## 2. Literature review and research questions.

The production of goods with a social symbolic function requires an industrial dimension, political rules, technologies, distribution processes and trained professionals, in other words, all the complex aspects that any utilitarian large-scale production demands. But it also requires cognition, knowledge of symbols, connections and taste. Therefore, traditionally trained scholars have focused on three aspects of women's magazines (Gough-Yates 2003). They have studied the textual level of the magazines in order to analyse their language (Barthes 1967, Moeran 2004, Rak & Catricalà 2013) or their ideological content (Friedan 1992 [1963]). Others have explored the ways in which they are

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<sup>1</sup> Argentina, Australia, Belgium/FL, Belgium/FR, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada/ENG, Canada/FR, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Middle East, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, UK, Ukraine, USA, Vietnam. Source <http://www.ellearoundtheworld.com/>.

<sup>2</sup> Australia, Brazil, China, France, Germany, Greece, India, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Taiwan, UK, USA. Source <http://voguehistory.blogspot.be/>

<sup>3</sup> 23 million persons speak Dutch, native and native bilingual speakers are 28 million. 359 million persons speak English, native and native bilingual speakers are 900-1500 million and growing. 64 million persons speak Italian. Native and native bilingual speakers are 85 million. Source Wikipedia.

consumed by the readers (Consterdine 2005), while another group have analysed their condition of production (Barrell and Braithwaite 1988, Ferguson 1983).

Another area of interest explored by academics is the history of fashion magazines (De la Haye 2006, Edwards 2006, McCracken 1993) and their evolution in modern times, with particular attention to the digital phase of fashion communication (Rocamora 2012, 2013).

In recent times, the attention to globalisation processes has been the basis for some studies on the transnational dimension of fashion magazine (Moeran 1996, 2004, 2006a). Moeran observes at the same time the processes that warrant the symbolic meaning of the magazines and the economic targets that they try to reach. He has investigated several issues of *Vogue*, *Elle*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *Marie Claire* in different countries, in order to discover “how women – and issues relating to women – were, or were not, represented differently by these four titles (two American, two French) in various parts of Europe, Asia and the US” (Moeran 2006b: 726). Inspired by the line of research suggested by Moeran this article expands it by analysing fashion communication in times of digital publishing, in particular, and by analysing Facebook posts and Twitter tweets. It is the first time that a corpus-driven analysis is devoted to the study of this type of digital content.

After Facebook was founded on February 4, 2004, the fashion magazines in question were rather slow to realize its potential. *Vogue Italy* started posting on Facebook in February 2010, *Vogue UK* started in March, the same year. *Vogue Netherland* was launched in March 2012, but the subscription to Facebook started even before the opening, in November 2011, suggesting that in the years between 2004 and 2011, Facebook had become an indispensable medium (Hardwick et al. 2014). Besides the slow beginning, once the magazines started using Facebook, the number of news items that they posted yearly became impressive and is still growing. The same observations apply to the posts in Twitter. Twitter is an online social network service that enables users to send and read short messages (140 characters) called *tweets*. It is a form of micro-blogging that allows the subscribers to share comments on what they are following, being it a magazine, sport, a political event. According to Faina “to say that Twitter has experienced an increase in traffic is a gross understatement” (2012: 56). With more than 5 million tweets exchanged in the last three months of 2013 only, Twitter, together with Facebook and Pinterest, is considered one of the three giants of the social media<sup>4</sup>.

The research question which this contribution addresses are the following. What are the characters of the communication proposed by *Vogue Italy*, *Vogue Netherland* and *Vogue UK* in Facebook and Twitter? What are the differences and the similarities? What new skills should be developed by journalists to communicate in this new environment?

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<sup>4</sup> Source : <http://thenextweb.com/facebook/2014/04/21/facebooks-referral-traffic-share-grew-37-q1-2014-pinterest-48-twitter-increased-1/>

### 3. Methodology

In order to answer the research question, a corpus of 185 Facebook posts and 405 tweets was created, published by *Vogue Italy*, *Vogue Netherland* and *Vogue UK* between September 27<sup>th</sup> 2014 and October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2014, i.e. during the Milan and Paris Fashion Weeks. To gain a better idea of the type of posts and tweets published by the three magazines, it would be advisable to extend the observed period of analysis.

The type of analysis performed on the items is something that is widely practised in the social sciences (Holsti 1969, Krippendorff 2012, Neuendorf 2002) and defined as *content analysis*. The advantage of this methodology - descriptive rather than explanatory - is to provide the researcher with a tool to determine the themes present in a given document (Tipaldo 2007: 40). The themes identified in the texts and tagged in the corpus correspond to the traditional sections of the different editions of *Vogue*, with some additions. These themes are: Fashion, Beauty, Fitness, Celebrities, Art and Culture, Horoscope, Parties, Food, Contests. The additions are related to less traditional themes like Blogs (the reference in the posts and the tweets to Vogue blogs), Products (presentation of products), Vogue (posts and the tweets that discuss the magazines) and Menkes (the comments that the famous fashion journalist Suzy Menkes gives on the catwalks).

The pictures present in Facebook and Twitter were also tagged in the corpus, according to the indications offered by the *visual content analysis* (Riff et al. 2014). The images were divided into the following categories: Model, Catwalk, Celebrity, Beauty, Jewel, Food, Street Style, Backstage, Product.

The above-mentioned themes of the texts and the categories of the pictures can be defined as *Units of Observation*, e.g. “specific demarcations of content that serve to further focus our observation on that content of interest” (Riff et al. 2014: 56). These Units of Observation were considered the most relevant to answer the research questions of this study.

In order to identify the reception of the posts and the tweets, they were also tagged according to categories such as *Comments* in Facebook and *Re-tweet* in Tweets. In fact, commenting or re-tweeting are activities that leave visible traces on the social networks and they can be considered the most reliable way to indicate that one has shown interest for the content of the posts and the tweets (Burke et al 2011, Ellison et al. 2014).

The language of the texts was also recorded (Dutch, English, Italian), together with a Yes/No tag indicating the interactivity of the tweets and the posts. This is a basic indicator of interactivity, meant to measure only if the posts or the tweets are linguistically designed as an open question, such as “Is

the low-rise jean back?<sup>5</sup>” or “Who would you like to take the reins at @carven\_paris?<sup>6</sup>”. A more refined indicator of interactivity, as suggested in Canter (2013), will be developed in a further phase of the research.

#### 4. Analysis of the data

The first quantitative data concern the number of posts and tweets produced during the period in exam by the three *Vogue* editions.

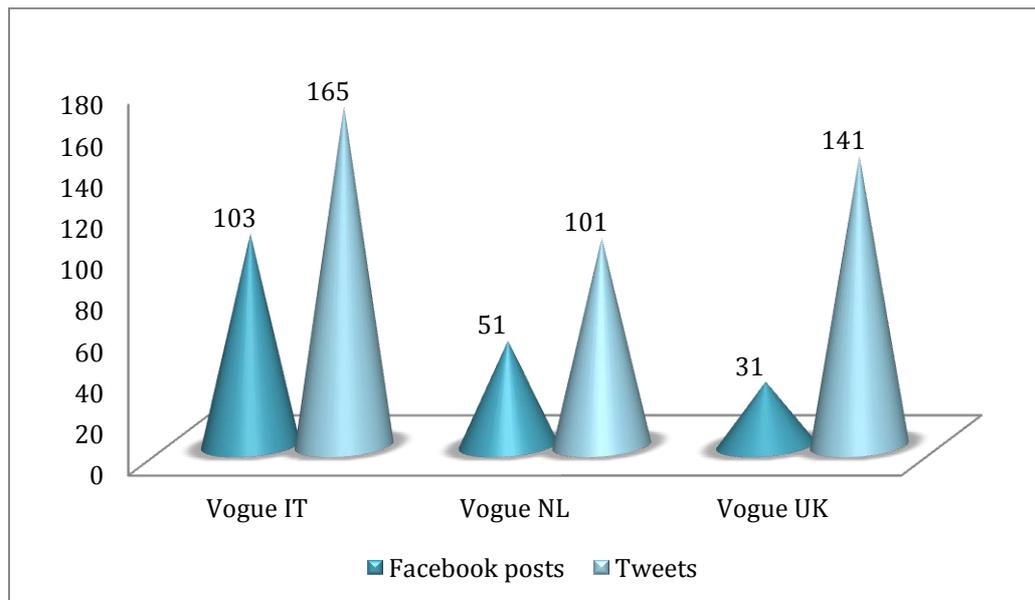


Figure 1: the number of Facebook posts and tweets in *Vogue IT*, *NL* and *UK*.

Figure 1 shows that in the three countries the daily communications favours tweets to Facebook posts. The tweets are more numerous and shorter. *Vogue Italy* produces more tweets and posts than *Vogue NL* and *UK*, even though the British tweets are almost as numerous as the Italian ones, respectively 141 and 165.

According to the data diffused by Condé Nast<sup>7</sup>, *Vogue*'s publishing house, the readership in the countries in September 2014 is as indicated in figure 2. It appears that the number of posts and tweets is not proportionate to the readership. In fact, considering the limited readership of *Vogue NL*, it is remarkable that the number of Tweets diffused is close to that published in the other two countries.

<sup>5</sup> Post Facebook, *Vogue UK*, 27/09/2014.

<sup>6</sup> Tweet, *Vogue UK*, 29/09/2014.

<sup>7</sup> Source : <http://www.condenastinternational.com/media-kits-rate-cards/>

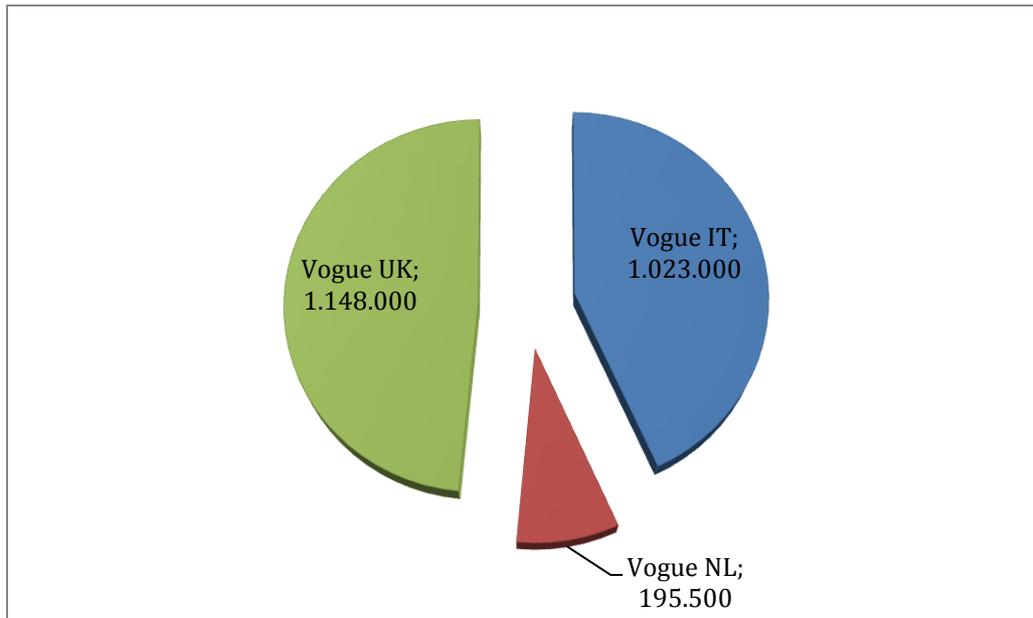


Figure 2: readership of Vogue IT, NL and UK in September 2014.

In this paper, the number of comments in Facebook and re-tweets in Twitter are considered as the most reliable way of demonstrating one's interest in the content of the posts and the tweets (Burke et al 2011, Ellison et al. 2014). Generally speaking, the response to the posts in Facebook is active, but limited in number. In 122 out of 185 cases (66%), the readers comment on the posts, but the number of comments is not elevated. In the Italian Facebook, only 26 posts generated a comment by the public (43%) and only 1 post provoked more than 20 comments, with an average of 2.3 comments per post.

In the Dutch Facebook, 31 posts generated a comment (61%), 1 post yielded 72 comments, with an average of 7.7 comments per post. In the British Facebook, all 31 posts generated a comment (100%), 1 post provoked 1531 comments, with an average of 97 comments per post. This last post congratulates George Clooney and Amal Alamuddin on their wedding. The average comment rate of the analysed posts is 35.

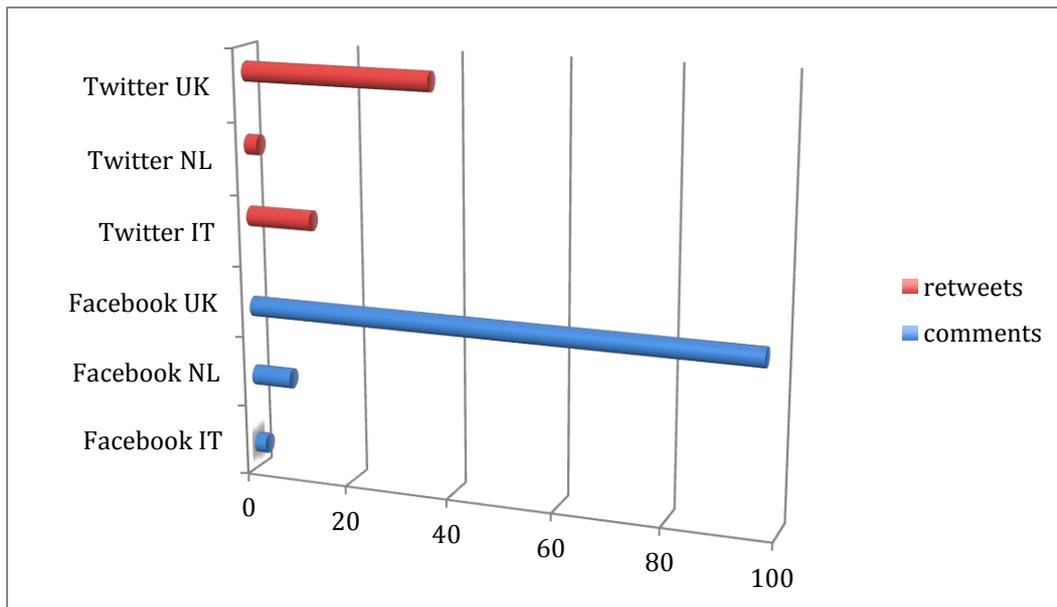


Figure 3: comparison of the number of comments to Facebook posts and the number of re-tweets in the three editions.

99% of the tweets generated by *Vogue IT* were re-tweeted, 1 tweet generated 75 re-tweets, the average response was 12.6 re-tweets per tweet. 66% of the tweets generated by *Vogue NL* were re-tweeted, 1 tweet generated 9 re-tweets, the average response was 2.5 re-tweets per tweet. 99% of the tweets generated by *Vogue UK* were re-tweeted, 1 tweet generated 224 re-tweets (again about George Clooney's and Amal Alamuddin's wedding), the average response was 36 re-tweets per tweet. The average re-tweet rate of the analysed tweets is 17.

The figures illustrated above show that the British readership reacts to Facebook and Twitter messages in a considerably more participative way.

None of the analysed posts and tweets displayed a video.

#### 4.1. The analysis of the texts.

In terms of text analysis, compared to the other two countries, *Vogue Italy* shows a clear preference for Facebook, accompanied by the use of a different number of words.

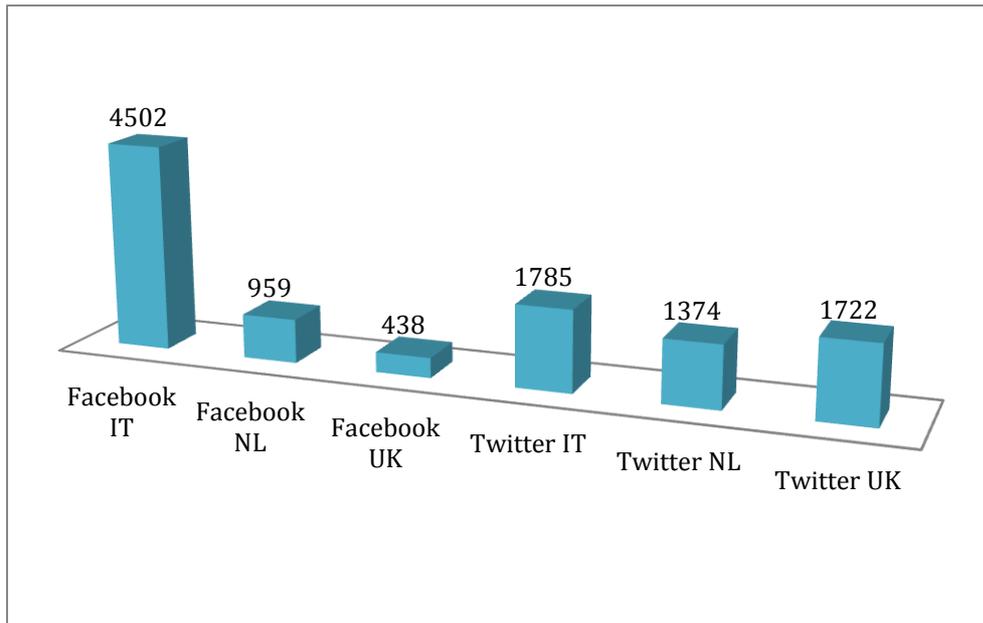


Figure 4: the number of words in use in the posts and the tweets.

The number of words used in *Vogue IT* is 4502, the reason for this elevated number is the habit of repeating the text of the post twice, a habit hard to understand, even if the posts are automatically generated. In fact, UK and NL posts, even though they have the same format, do not repeat the same text twice unnecessarily.

A peculiarity of the Italian texts is their language. Of the 268 Italian posts and tweets, only 68 are written in Italian (25%). 163 texts are in Italian with several English words (61%) and 37 are in English (14%). The same phenomenon does not occur in the texts published by *Vogue NL*, where of the 152 texts, 87 are in Dutch (57%), 2 are in English (1%) and 63 are in Dutch with several English words (41%).

#### 4.2. The themes of the texts

The themes of the texts are: Art and Culture, Beauty, Celebrities, Contests, Fashion, Fitness, Food, Horoscope, Parties, Product, Vogue.

Surprisingly, there are fewer posts and tweets on fashion than on celebrities, with the only exception of *Vogue IT*. This result can be attributed to the fact that posts and tweets about celebrities of the fashion world were tagged as belonging to the Celebrities category and not to the Fashion category.

This is in line with Moeran (2006b: 735), who states that the fashion world spawned celebrities of its own: models, photographers and designers become stars that represent it and therefore are entitled to be recognised in their own right. For the same reason, the Parties theme was isolated from the Celebrities theme. In fact, the list of participants and the pictures of the parties show persons of

interest who can hardly be considered celebrities, but who invariably belong to the fashion world.

<b>FB</b>	<b>Celeb rities</b>	<b>Fashi on</b>	<b>Beau ty</b>	<b>Prod uct</b>	<b>Parti es</b>	<b>Horo scope</b>	<b>Cont ests</b>	<b>Art and Cultu re</b>	<b>Fitne ss</b>	<b>Food</b>	<b>Vogu e</b>
<b>IT</b>	16	32	12	5	5	3	2	1	0	0	0
<b>NL</b>	28	10	1	6	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
<b>UK</b>	15	11	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Table 1: the themes of the posts in Facebook, divided per country.

The number of posts dedicated to a certain theme is considered by the editors as a sign of appreciation and as a token of the cultural relevance of the theme for a certain magazine. As an example, the theme *Beauty* seems to be very relevant for the editors of the Italian Facebook posts, whilst it does almost not show up in the posts published by *Vogue NL* and *UK*. The posts related to the Horoscope were only published by *Vogue IT* and the posts dedicated to the presentation of a product were almost absent from *Vogue UK*. The category Product includes the posts devoted to present products, such as the new *Barbie doll “Karl Lagerfeld”* limited edition<sup>8</sup>. Since there is no indication of the type of commercial relation between *Vogue* and the promoted products, it is impossible to state if these are product placements, sponsored presentation or journalistic choices. The Facebook posts of the three editions allow room for the promotion of products, but not for self-promotion. No posts are dedicated to the launch of the new issue of *Vogue* October. *Vogue IT* and *NL* organize a contest where the readers can win a prize. The Italian contest provokes 1 comment from prospective participants; the Dutch one 10 comments.

<b>Twitt er</b>	<b>Fashi on</b>	<b>Celeb rity</b>	<b>Beau ty</b>	<b>Vogu e</b>	<b>Prod uct</b>	<b>Art and Cultu re</b>	<b>Horo scope</b>	<b>Parti es</b>	<b>Food</b>	<b>Cont ests</b>	<b>Fitne ss</b>
<b>IT</b>	48	27	3	4	9	16	8	5	0	0	3
<b>NL</b>	37	28	1	7	9	3	0	0	1	2	0
<b>UK</b>	51	29	28	14	5	3	0	1	4	1	0
<b>total</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>

Table 2: the themes of the tweets, divided per country.

<sup>8</sup> Post Facebook, *Vogue IT*, 29/09/2014.

The themes of the tweets show a notable difference: fashion is the theme that dominates the communication in the three editions of *Vogue*. The tweets devoted to celebrities are still numerous, as are the tweets devoted to the theme of beauty. The promotion of the new issues of *Vogue* is as strong as the promotion of other products. *Vogue IT* devotes many tweets to cultural events and the horoscope, but ignores the theme of food completely. The contests organised by *Vogue NL* elicit very little reaction (5 re-tweets in total), whilst the British contest generates many re-tweets.

#### **4.1. The analysis of the pictures.**

The pictures are tagged in the categories: Backstage, Beauty, Catwalk, Celebrity, Model, Food, Jewel, Product, Street Style.

The category Backstage includes pictures that show what happens behind the scenes of a fashion show. The difference between the category Model and Catwalk consists in the location: the pictures belonging to the category Model were not taken during a fashion show. The pictures tagged under the category Street Style display people and fashion styles that, allegedly, are not created by professionals, but are taken in spontaneous shots on the streets. This category was created as an indicator of the interest for what happens on the streets in terms of style, interest that seems to be shared by the three *Vogue* editions.

The number of posts and tweets accompanied by an image is 487 out of 592, i.e. 82% of them. The Facebook posts without a picture are 3, the tweets are 98. The 98 tweets without a picture generate less re-tweets than the ones with a picture. In §4, it is stated that the average re-tweet rate of the analysed tweets is 17, whilst the tweets without picture show a re-tweet rate of 4.5. This result is possibly influenced by the fact that tweets without a picture, being less visible, could be perceived as less important than the others.

The number of Facebook comments dedicated to the 3 Facebook posts without an image is rather elevated (223), for an average of 74. One of the posts is devoted to the wedding of George Clooney and Amal Alamuddin, generating 214 comments. It is possible that the topic of the post, that generated so much reaction within the British posts and tweets, makes it hard to evaluate the impact of the presence of an image in the readers' reaction to posts and tweets without pictures.

Table 3 illustrates the categories of the pictures displayed in the three editions of *Vogue*.

<b>FB</b>	<b>Celebri ty</b>	<b>Catwal k</b>	<b>Produc t</b>	<b>Model</b>	<b>Beauty</b>	<b>Street Style</b>	<b>Backst age</b>	<b>Food</b>	<b>Jewel</b>
<b>IT</b>	28	37	13	7	7	2	1	0	0
<b>NL</b>	26	11	7	2	0	1	1	0	0
<b>UK</b>	18	9	0	3	1	1	0	0	0
<b>total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Table 3: the categories of the images in Facebook, divided per country.

The pictures devoted to celebrities dominate the posts in the three countries, a trend that confirms what is already observed in Table 1 concerning the themes of posts. The pictures that show the models wearing the catwalk outfits (57) are clearly more numerous than those of the models photographed in other settings (12). This result can be attributed to seasonal circumstances: the corpus was collected in between two fashion weeks. The images devoted to the promotion of products are various, but they show a predilection for *accessories* such as shoes or bags. Most of the 8 photos devoted to Beauty are directly related to the fashion shows, a consideration that also applies to the back stage images. The 4 pictures that illustrate street styles are also directly related to the fashion weeks.

<b>Twittte r</b>	<b>Catwal k</b>	<b>Celebri ty</b>	<b>Model</b>	<b>Backst age</b>	<b>Produc t</b>	<b>Beauty</b>	<b>Street Style</b>	<b>Food</b>	<b>Jewel</b>
<b>IT</b>	73	29	5	17	1	0	1	0	0
<b>NL</b>	46	36	8	0	14	4	2	1	0
<b>UK</b>	27	40	35	12	13	18	7	4	1
<b>total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>

Table 4: the categories of the images in Twitter, divided per country.

The majority of the analysed tweets display pictures of the catwalks, with the largest number in *Vogue IT* (73). The three editions publish many pictures of celebrities and of models, but *Vogue UK* seems to prefer the publication of pictures of models in situations other than the catwalk. *Vogue IT* very rarely includes pictures of products. *Vogue UK* gives much more prominence to the pictures devoted to beauty and make-up than the other two magazines. Another peculiarity of *Vogue UK* is the fact that 5 tweets present pictures of desserts. Whilst *Vogue NL* publishes a picture of healthy food, *Vogue UK* includes 4 pictures of desserts and hamburgers.

## 5. Discussion.

The three editions of *Vogue* here analysed publish a very large number of posts and tweets on a daily basis, as shown in Figure 5.

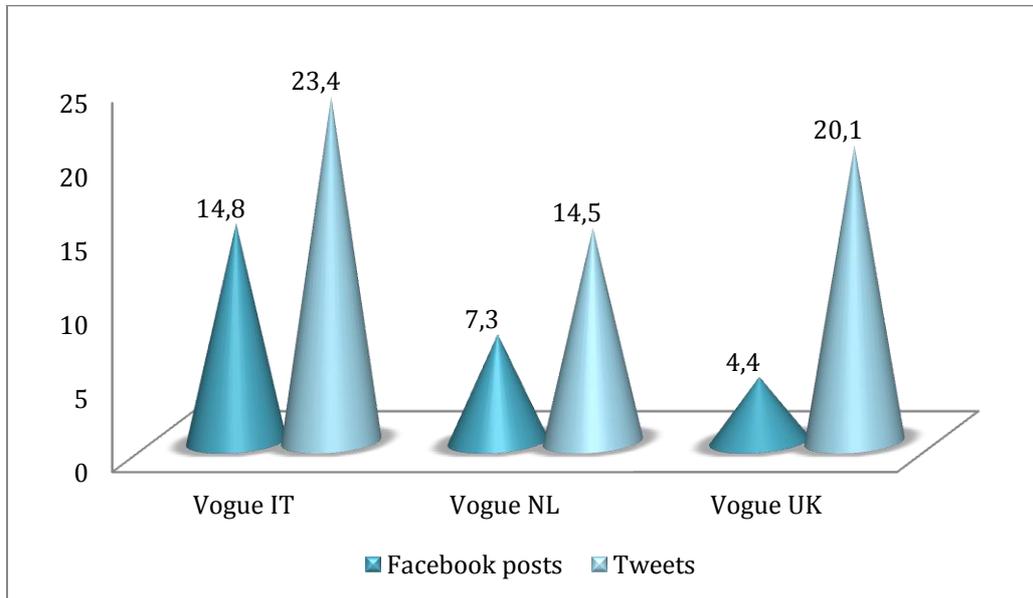


Figure 5: the number of Facebook posts and tweets in *Vogue IT*, *NL* and *UK*, per day.

*Coca Cola* does not publish in Facebook daily, while the top American TV series *Scandal*, known for its success determined by social networks, publishes circa 1 Facebook post per day. *Elle NL* and *IT*, on the other hand, publish circa 14 Facebook posts per day, whilst *Elle UK* does not publish daily.

Further research is needed to investigate when, and how, these trends were established and what the reaction of the readers is to them.

In this paper, we would like to draw a correlation between the number of Facebook posts, their style and their memorability, arguing that a lower number of posts of a better quality would improve the public reaction to them. In fact, if the number of posts that provoke a comment is acceptable, the number of comments per post is very limited. The case of *Vogue UK*, where a post about the wedding of George Clooney and Amal Alamuddin yielded 1531 comments and another post on the same topic 214 posts, is exceptional and limited to this specific topic. If we exclude this post, the average response rate to *Vogue UK* posts is still higher than that of *Vogue IT* and *NL*, but in a much less spectacular way (see Figure 3). In any case, the posts published by *Vogue UK* generate a participation never attained by the *IT* and *NL* posts. The reasons for this discrepancy apparently do not lie in the differentiation of the themes and the pictures of the posts, which are quite comparable, but are more likely in the number of the posts, which is significantly lower [not sure what you mean here]. Other reasons, such as cultural habits, or the demographic of the audience, would need further investigations.

The daily number of tweets published by the three editions is striking , but the type of communication proposed by Twitter, with only 140 characters, is characterised by speed and frequency (Jain et al. 2014). The assumption behind this choice is supposedly the fact that *Vogue* subscribers to Twitter are likely to be more tolerant towards an elevated number of tweets. In fact, frequency seems to be one of the characterising factors of the medium in journalistic communication (Engesser et Humprecht 2014).

The elevated number of posts and tweets does not show an elevated number of themes.

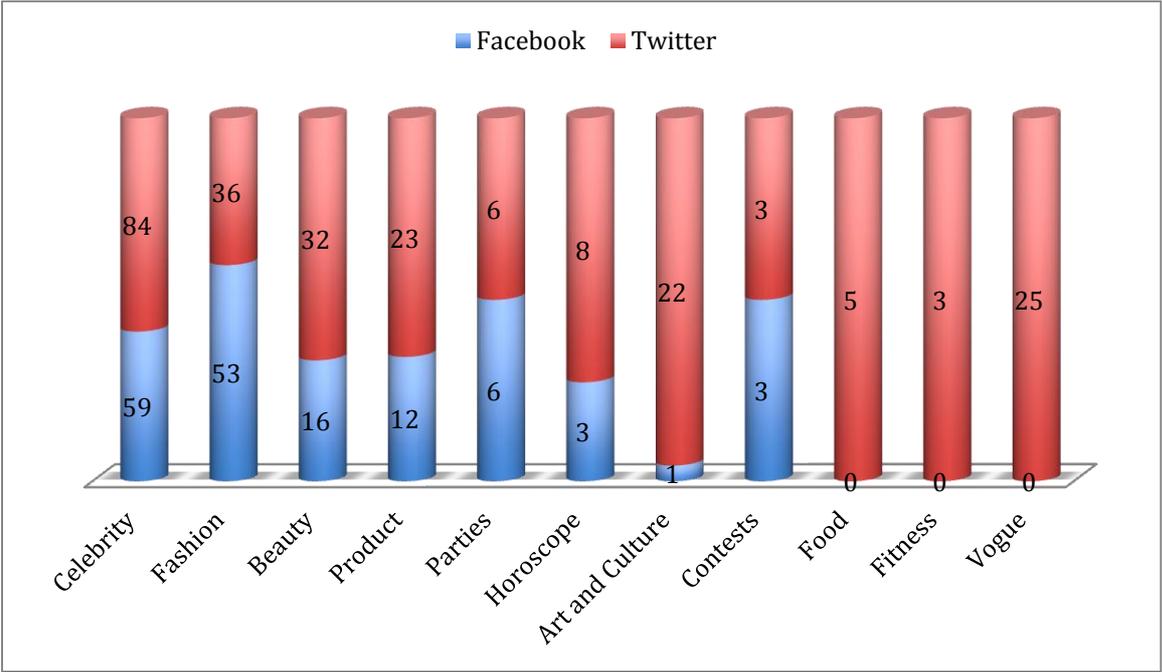


Figure 6: the themes of the posts and tweets in the three editions.

Figure 6 shows that the elevated numbers of posts and tweets published by the three magazines reflect a limited choice of themes.

While these themes correspond to the pivotal interest of the magazines (fashion) and to the traditional organisation of their content, innovation and variation are very limited.

The attention devoted to celebrities by the three editions confirms that this topic is of key interest in the fashion industry. This phenomenon needs to be studied from different angles, in order to understand the mechanisms of its audience consumption in times of digital communication (Graeme’s 2010). What is clear “is the celebrity’s centrality in what can be defined as self-production, the elaborate celebrity gossip can be seen as providing a continuity of discourse around the presentation of the self for public consumption” (Marshall 2012: 37).

The language of the posts and the tweets is mainly English. The posts and tweets published by *Vogue*

UK are all in English, the ones published by *Vogue NL* are mainly in Dutch and the ones published by *Vogue IT* are either in Italian and English, or in English (§4.1). Today, communication in the global village is in English, a language spoken in more parts of the world than any other language and by more people than any other tongue except Chinese (Danesi et Rocci 2009: 2). The language choice of the Italian edition seems to target an international public, together with the Italian readership, as confirmed by *Vogue IT* media kit<sup>9</sup>. Since English is spoken by 80% of the inhabitants in the Netherlands and by 30% of the inhabitants in Italy (Eurobarometer 386), the choice does not seem to be motivated by the fluency of the readership. The choice of the Dutch language operated by *Vogue NL* is likely to be motivated by the necessity to build up a national character for the magazine, launched only in 2012.

46 posts and tweets out of 592 (8%) can be considered interactive, according to the criteria listed in §3, i.e. posts and tweets linguistically designed as open questions. 6 of them were published by *Vogue IT*, 7 by *Vogue NL* and 33 by *Vogue UK*. These tweets generated 1184 re-tweets (average 45.6). The posts generated 256 comments (average 43). Both the posts and the re-tweets generated a reply superior to the average of *Vogue UK* and sensibly superior to the average reply of *Vogue IT* and *NL*.

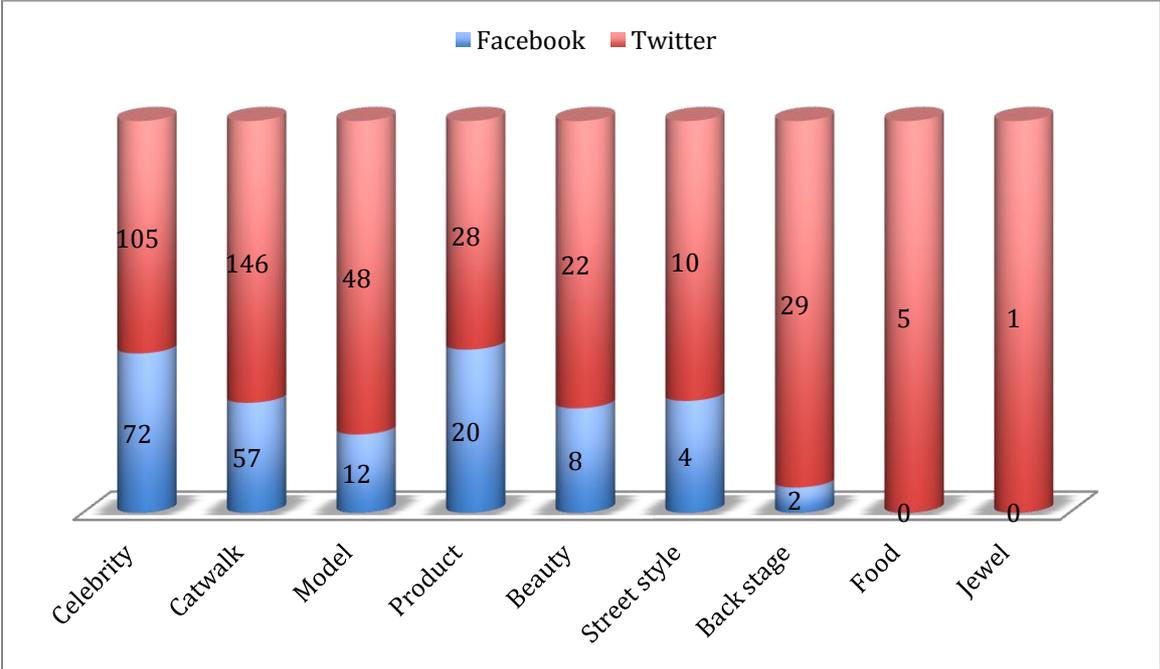


Figure 7: the categories of the pictures in posts and tweets of the three editions.

As to the displayed pictures, they also belong to a limited number of categories. The pictures of the catwalk dominate the tweets, normally displaying the frontal view of a model, alone on the catwalk. A different trend appears in *Vogue UK*, where the tweets presenting pictures of models in location

<sup>9</sup> Source : <http://www.condenastinternational.com/media-kits-rate-cards/>

bypass the ones of the catwalks. Not many products or beauty pictures were included. The majority of the 14 posts and tweets illustrated by street style pictures belong to *Vogue UK*.

## **6. Conclusion.**

The analysis of 592 Facebook posts and Twitter tweets published by *Vogue IT, NL* and *UK* in one week during the fashion weeks Fall-Winter 2014, proved that the three magazines are very active in these social media. They publish more than 84 posts and tweets per day, correlated by pictures, covering themes such as Fashion, Beauty, Celebrities, etc. They are capable of organising contests and promoting themselves and other products. They generate a response by the readerships that, if moderate, is regularly present.

The topics and pictures of the posts and tweets seem to reflect the traditional organization of the content of fashion magazines. Given that the international fame of *Vogue* derives from the unique look of the magazines, created by famous models and photographers that make it unique, it would be advisable to reach this level of advanced creativity in the text and pictures diffused by tweets and posts, too. None of the texts or pictures of the posts and tweets refer to these famous artists and the majority of the pictures display a model alone on the catwalk.

As already observed in §4, none of the analysed posts directly include a video, even though many of them offer links to video published on websites. What changes in this type of offer is the level of immediacy and interaction. Facebook and Twitter have become regular means to diffuse personal videos and the fact that *Vogue IT, NL* and *UK* do not exploit this possibility appears to be a limitation. The level of interactivity of the posts and tweets could also be improved by addressing the readership in a more direct way, using the communication of the social media as a tool for an open dialogue with the public. Fashion magazines provide a pathway to a wider and connected culture that has connections with the entertainment industry and its celebrities.

The creators of *Vogue* Facebook posts and Twitter tweets should be able to provide a less frequent, but more skilful, communication, more interactive and more respectful of the qualitative standards of the magazines. More variation in the themes and in the type of pictures could help reach this goal.

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