

TWITTER AND FASHION: A QUANTITATIVE INVESTIGATION OF THE USE OF  
TWITTER AS AN INTERACTIVE TOOL BY LUXURY FASHION BRANDS

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **TWITTER AND FASHION: A QUANTITATIVE INVESTIGATION OF THE USE OF TWITTER AS AN INTERACTIVE TOOL BY LUXURY FASHION BRANDS**

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**SUPERVISING PROFESSOR: CINDY ROYAL**

The current study investigated the use of Twitter by luxury fashion brands to interact and engage with consumers. Fashion is a fast-paced, highly visual industry where social media are rapidly growing in popularity. Although there is existing research on marketing and communications in the fashion industry and social media use in various different industries, there is a gap in the literature related to the use of social media, specifically Twitter, in the fashion industry. The researcher used a convenience sample of nine luxury fashion brands randomly selected from the list of nominees for the 2012 Fashion 2.0 Awards. The period of data collection was Dec. 1-31, 2012. The researcher clipped all tweets posted by the brands during this period. Tweets were then coded into one of three mutually exclusive categories: “Non-Interactive,” “Brand Initiated” or

“Brand Responsive.” The researcher conducted mathematical calculations to develop sample profiles and ran a chi-square test of independence, a one-way ANOVA and correlation tests to address the following research questions: Do luxury fashion brands utilize Twitter as an avenue for communicating with current and potential consumers; how often do luxury fashion brands use Twitter as a form of communication; does each luxury fashion brand have a unique strategy for tweeting; and do the Twitter feeds of luxury fashion brands show the characteristics of establishing a dialogue with the public?

Based on the data, the researcher concluded that the sampled luxury fashion brands tweeted independently from each other because there was a significant difference in the level of interactivity and content of the tweets for each brand. This supported the conclusion that each brand had its own strategy for using Twitter as a communication tool. The researcher found a positive significant correlation between the number of tweets and the level of interactivity, but there was not a significant correlation between the number of tweets and the number of followers.

These findings could be used by communication professionals in the fashion industry to determine the amount of time and effort the company puts into the use of social media for communicating with consumers. The current study contributes to the body of academic research on social media, Twitter and communication strategies in the fashion industry.

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Fashion is a constantly evolving industry with new collections coming out every few months. Of course, there are the basic fall/winter and spring/summer collections, but many designers also put out pre-fall, resort, swim and bridal lines. Public relations departments for fashion houses have to be ahead of the curve to get coverage and placement for their brand. This natural tendency to always be looking ahead to the newest trends and trying to imagine in the spring what people will want to be wearing in the fall requires an innovative mind. This is perhaps why fashion and social media have become so intertwined with one another. Both are changing at such a rapid pace that they are like a match made in heaven, like the perfect shoes for the perfect dress. Women's Wear Daily aptly described the relationship between fashion and social media as "an all-consuming love affair" (Benet Stephenson & Strugatz, 2010).

There are numerous social media platforms growing in popularity in the fashion industry because they provide the ability to post pictures and videos and establish two-way communication, which allows the consumer to have a more personal experience with a brand (Orcutt, 2012). Fashion blogs have become such a major trend in recent years that fashion designers frequently team with major bloggers for promotional events and invite them to fashion shows that were once exclusively for members of the press.

This helps humanize the brand because consumers see fashion bloggers, who are typically non-celebrity, non-journalist people, given access into the previously secret world of fashion. It is no longer necessary to be a high-profile editor from a famous publication to get invitations to runway shows and fashion shoots. This strategy of teaming with fashion bloggers works to bring the brand closer to the everyday person. Pinterest is a highly visual social media platform that is revolutionizing the way people shop online (Orcutt, 2012). It allows people to “pin” images from websites and post them on a specific board on the platform, while at the same time sharing the image with people who follow them. Pinterest has the ability to affect online shopping because when someone pins a photo from a website, it automatically links the picture to the original site address. Given that Pinterest is based on sharing visually appealing photos that are linked to the original website, it is easy to see how it is becoming a social media tool of choice in the fashion industry.

Facebook is a popular platform in fashion because it allows brands to post a variety of content that can be seen without clicking a link to another page. For example, if a brand posts a video on Facebook, their fans can play the video right there in the timeline without having to click a link and load a whole other webpage. The same is true for photos; a fan can click on a photo and have an enlarged lightbox version pop up over their timeline. When the fan is done looking at the photo, they can just click exit and return to exactly where they were in their timeline, which could increase the likelihood of a fan clicking something a brand posted. The comments and likes collect directly below the post, which makes it easy for a brand to monitor comments and interact with fans.

Another trendy social media platform for fashion is Instagram, which allows users to post pictures using a variety of filters. The photos are posted to a person's profile and can be seen by their followers on a timeline similar to most social media platforms. One of the keys to gaining followers, and in turn likes and comments, is by including a hashtag (#) with a word or phrase that describes what the picture is about (ex: #NYC for a picture of New York City). If it is a popular hashtag that is being used, searched and monitored by a lot of people, a photo will likely receive more views, likes and comments than if it had not included the hashtag. This is similar to Twitter where a person can search for a hashtag and see a timeline of all the tweets that feature that word or phrase. When viewed on a computer screen, the Twitter timeline has a widget that features trending topics, which includes the most used hashtag words or phrases at any given moment.

It has been said that Twitter has become an integral part of making luxury fashion brands more accessible, personal and engaging (Orcutt, 2012). The interesting aspect of Twitter's growth in popularity in the fashion industry is that it is not as visually appealing as other platforms like Pinterest and Instagram. When someone opens their Twitter timeline, all they see is a bunch of words and links posted by the people they follow. The only images are the tiny avatars users upload to make their handles more personal and recognizable. Some types of photos can be viewed in a drop-down within the timeline, but others, like Facebook-owned Instagram, require the user to click a link that directs them to another webpage. There are some videos, like the Twitter-owned Vine videos, that can be viewed in a drop-down within the timeline, while others require clicking a link. Even with these media that can be viewed within a Twitter timeline, the user has to

actively open the drop-down in order to view it; otherwise, the tweet is just words posted by someone they follow that contains a link to something visual. Seeing as how fashion is a highly visual industry, it is intriguing that a platform like Twitter could gain popularity with brands and designers. Perhaps the key to the fashion industry's admiration of Twitter is how it brings a company closer to the consumer. When a person scrolls through their Twitter timeline, they see various conversations unfold in front of them, and they have the opportunity to chime in. When a fashion brand actively engages in conversations with consumers, bloggers and editors, the brand is humanizing itself in the eyes of its followers, which has been found to lead to increased brand loyalty (Orcutt, 2012). Although Twitter does not have the visual appeal of Pinterest, Facebook and Instagram, it provides a more comfortable environment for consumers to engage in conversation directly with a brand.

Social media have been investigated from numerous perspectives, including some related to fashion, but there is a lack of extensive literature when it comes to the use of social media in the fashion industry. There are countless platforms on the Internet, but the current study will focus on Twitter because it has exploded in popularity in the fashion industry as a way to publicize products and personally interact with consumers. Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams and Biz Stone created Twitter in 2006 as a way to send short status updates using text messages. They had worked for a podcasting service called Odeo but were having a hard time getting excited about the company, which is why they started brainstorming new ideas. Once this brainstorming began, Dorsey and Stone developed a prototype of Twitter in a matter of two weeks (Miller, 2010). Twitter received an enormous surge in popularity during the 2007 South by Southwest Interactive

conference in Austin, Texas, where it experienced a jump from 20,000 messages per day to 60,000 per day (Douglas, 2007). By its sixth birthday in March 2012, the platform was seeing 340 million tweets a day (Twitter, 2012). In July 2012, the platform surpassed 500 million registered users; 140 million of those users were located in the United States; and the top three tweeting cities at the time were Jakarta, Tokyo and London, according to the analyst group Semiocast (Lunden, 2012). Twitter surpassed 200 million monthly active users in December 2012, which was more than LinkedIn and Google+, at the time (Fiegerman, 2012).

Twitter is a free social media platform where people can follow others without being followed back, which sets it apart from Facebook. A status that is posted on Twitter is called a “tweet,” and they are automatically public unless the user sets up a private account. This open flow of communication is meant to inspire interaction and conversation. Given that tweets were originally posted via text messages that limited the number of characters, tweets can be no more than 140 characters in length. A Twitter handle begins with an @ sign so that other people can direct comments and responses “at” a specific person. If a person wants to establish a conversation with someone, they will mention them by putting an @ in front of that person’s username or “handle;” this is called an “@mention.” If a person is replying to someone who has mentioned them, they will still put an @ in front of that person’s name, but it is now considered an “@reply.” This is because they are replying to someone who started a conversation with them. There is, of course, always the option of sending out a tweet that contains neither an @mention nor an @reply; this is the most basic form of a tweet and is considered in this study to be the least interactive type of tweet because it is not engaging anyone else.

The current study investigated the use of Twitter by communication professionals in the fashion industry through a quantitative content analysis of tweets. Specifically, the researcher looked at how nine luxury fashion brands used Twitter to communicate and engage with the public in an interactive way. The author then compared the results of the brands to determine how the frequency of use and level of interactivity varied among the sample. This helped the researcher understand how each brand used the platform in a different way to communicate with consumers. This study contributed to the growing body of research on Twitter and other social media platforms, as well as research on communication in the fashion industry.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Numerous studies have defined the process of branding and helped us understand how it can influence consumer decisions (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Kotler & Keller, 2007; Lis & Berz, 2011; Peter & Olson, 2008; Rubinstein & Griffiths, 2001; Wirtz, 2006). The American Marketing Association defined a brand in 2010 as a “name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller’s good or service as distinct from those of other sellers.” Kotler and Keller (2007) defined the act of branding as “endowing products and services with the power of a brand” (p. 136). Reichel (1994) notes that branding is highly important in the fashion industry. The author framed it from the perspective of retailers, saying that through managing brand loyalty, retailers may achieve a large increase in sales (Reichel, 1994). Based on previous research, it is evident that it is critical for companies to brand themselves to stand out against the competition. In terms of fashion, this branding helps consumers become familiar with the offerings of a certain label, which could lead to repeat business. Newman and Patel (2004) found that “branding messages are reinforced through the promotional activities and advertising in particular” (p. 774). Although Newman and Patel wrote this article in 2004 after the popularization of the Internet and the creation of Facebook, it is clear that researchers

were still not aware of the necessity to investigate how communication professionals used online media to reinforce their brand. It is this lack of extant research in the area of new and social media that makes the current study critical to the progression of mass communication research.

In recent years, there has been an abundance of research on the multitude of ways fashion houses brand and market themselves (Auty & Elliott, 1998; Carroll, 2009; Evans, 1989; Lea-Greenwood, 1994). Carroll (2009) researched the benefits of using celebrity endorsements in advertisements to increase visual cues and found that “the reliance on visual images renders the meaning of the celebrity in the context of the brand more ambiguous” (p. 155). Moore, Doherty and Doyle (2010) investigated the use of flagship stores as a strategy for market entry for luxury fashion brands. There has also been a significant amount of research conducted on issues related to location, global branding and luxury brand management (Ferne, Moore, & Lawrie, 1998; Fernie, Moore, Lawrie & Hallsworth, 1997; Moore & Birtwistle, 2004; Moore & Birtwistle, 2005).

By some estimates, fashion is ranked as the fourth largest industry in the global economy (Helmore 2010; Yoganarasimhan, 2012). A study conducted by Bellaiche, Meipochtler and Hanisch (2010) reported that fashion is a \$300 billion industry. It is evident that fashion is a major economic player, making it an important factor when studying the effectiveness of marketing and public relations activities. It is vital to the advancement of the study of communication to investigate how such a major industry uses modern technology to engage with consumers, which is why this study is focused on the fashion industry’s use of Twitter.

In its relatively short life, social media have been defined and redefined by

numerous experts, researchers and everyday users (Ancu & Cozma, 2009; boyd & Ellison, 2007; Kushin & Yamamoto, 2010). Social media in terms of branding a company are perhaps best defined by Rubinstein and Griffiths (2001): "...social media help build a brand personality and make the brand more approachable for customers" (p. 401). Social media have helped fashion labels, as well as other brands, establish a form of communication that allows for free-flowing interaction. Perhaps it is this more open type of communication that has led to a dramatic increase in the popularity of using social media platforms for public relations and marketing purposes. Outlets like Facebook and Twitter allow brands to communicate with the masses while also being able to talk with individual consumers. Herr, Kardes and Kim (1991) found that information exchanged through interpersonal communication is more influential to consumer purchasing habits than advertising.

Modern social media have been investigated by researchers in a variety of contexts, including the use of Twitter by Fortune 500 companies (Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010), the roles of social and digital media in journalism (Ahmad, 2010; Blasingame 2011; Farhi, 2009; Hermida, 2010a; Lasorsa, Lewis & Holton, 2011), and the influence of social media in political elections (Hanson, Haridakis, Wagstaff Cunningham, Sharma, & Ponder, 2010; Kushin & Yamamoto, 2010; Metzgar & Maruggi, 2009). Rybalko and Seltzer (2010) found that companies typically utilized Twitter to conserve visitors, which is one of the principles in the dialogic communication theory. Essentially, this means the companies interacted with people on Twitter in such a way that there was a strong possibility that people would continue to follow them; therefore, there was a higher chance that these attentive followers would be exposed to information about the

company. In this example, it is clear that establishing an interactive dialogue on Twitter can be pivotal in retaining the attention of followers.

In their article entitled *Normalizing Twitter*, Lasorsa, Lewis and Holton (2011) found that journalists from national newspapers, national television news stations and cable news networks were less likely than journalists from smaller outlets to divulge information about their jobs, engage in discussions with other tweeters or link to external websites. This is an interesting finding in that many national news organizations could be, yet are not, utilizing Twitter to humanize their organizations, which is one of the major benefits of using a social media platform. One of the aims of the current study is to understand how luxury fashion brands use Twitter to humanize their brand by establishing an interactive dialogue with consumers. Metzgar and Maruggi (2009) found that the use of social media in political elections "...was useful not just for its facility in distributing a campaign message, but also for its utility in offering a mechanism for ongoing engagement on the part of those moved by the message" (p. 160). This shows that social media outlets can help political candidates extend the reach of their campaign messaging by adding an element of continual engagement that cannot be established via traditional media. Similarly, the current study investigated how luxury fashion labels used Twitter to establish and maintain interactive communication that cannot be obtained through traditional media outlets.

Blasingame (2011) investigated how Twitter was being used as a "gatejumping" tool for breaking news. The immediacy of Twitter allows news reporters to share what is happening as it occurs instead of waiting until the 5 pm news where there is a set amount of time that can only fit a certain number of stories. Blasingame (2011) notes, "Twitter

allows for news to jump the traditional flow of gates and reach the audience. When Twitter is used in its most efficient and effective manner, it is possible for a newsroom employee who is traditionally only involved in the earliest of gatekeeping decisions to now have a direct relationship with the audience” (p. 7). The author investigated how Twitter has changed gatekeeping levels, allowing non-anchor newsroom employees to become gatejumpers; the author also looked at the main functions of Twitter accounts in TV newsrooms. The methodology included a qualitative case study of a day with major breaking news in San Antonio, Texas. The purpose of the qualitative case study was to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of Twitter in reporting breaking news. The author also conducted a quantitative analysis of tweets from all known working journalists in the San Antonio market to determine the main functions of Twitter in television newsrooms. Blasingame (2011) concluded that Twitter has the potential to completely change the way news is delivered. “It has put the power of news delivery in the hands of many different newsroom employees, thus altering the flow of information and gatekeeping procedures” (Blasingame, 2011, p. 24). Similar to this research, the current study conducted a quantitative analysis of tweets from luxury fashion brands to determine how they are using Twitter to engage and interact with consumers in a way that was not possible through traditional media outlets.

Salesforce, the customer relationship management software, published a social media data report called “Facebook and Twitter Guide for the Fashion Industry” that provided tips and tricks for fashion brands looking to use social media as interactive tools (2012). The study looked at 90 Facebook pages and 54 Twitter handles of the “world’s largest fashion brands over the course of three months in 2012” (Salesforce, 2012, p. 4).

In the introduction to the study, Salesforce (2012) notes, “As a highly visual and expressive industry with an engaged consumer base, the increased exposure and interactivity provided by social media lends itself particularly well to brands in the fashion space” (p. 3). This supports the claim made by Benet Stephenson and Strugatz (2010) that fashion and social media are in an all-consuming love affair, as quoted in the introduction to this study. Fashion is a highly visual industry, and social media platforms allow brands to easily share videos and images with consumers in an effort to bring them closer to the product. Salesforce (2012) found that fan interaction rates on Facebook for the fashion industry were 36% higher than the average rates across all other industries, while the interaction rates on Twitter were 3.6% higher for the fashion industry than the average. The results of this study support the claim that the fashion industry uses social media to engage and interact with fans and consumers. The current study contributes to this research by examining the level of interactivity of luxury fashion brands on Twitter by determining whether the content serves the purpose of simply posting a message or if it establishes and maintains conversation.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Theory

The researcher based the current study on the dialogic communication theory. Kent and Taylor (1998) defined dialogic communication as “any negotiated exchange of ideas and opinions” (p. 325). Kent and Taylor conducted another study in 2002 where they determined that public relations practitioners could establish and facilitate a dialogue through specific procedures and channels, concluding that online communication was the ideal platform for fostering dialogue. Kent and Taylor (1998) established five useful principles a public relations professional could use for establishing dialogic communication. Rybalko and Seltzer (2010) summarized the five principles in the following manner:

- (a) *ease of interface* – users should be able to easily navigate the site, (b) *conservation of visitors* – users should be encouraged to stay on the site,
- (c) *generation of return visits* – users should have an incentive for returning to the site for multiple visits over time, (d) *providing useful information to a variety of publics* – users should find information that is specifically tailored to their needs, and (e) *maintaining a dialogic loop* –

providing users opportunities to ask questions and provide feedback. (p. 337)

The study by Kent and Taylor (1998) was based on the use of dialogic communication on websites, but Rybalko and Seltzer (2010) found that some of these principles could be difficult to apply to social media outlets, like Twitter. The authors concluded "...that the dialogic principles as originally conceived by Kent and Taylor (1998) and used prominently throughout studies investigating the dialogic capacity of online communication tools may not be adequate for evaluating the features that are indicative of a dialogic orientation in Twitter, other social networking sites, or future online communication tools which are sure to be promoted as the next 'killer app' to be adopted by practitioners" (Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010, p. 340).

Rybalko and Seltzer (2010) utilized the five principles of dialogic communication to investigate how Fortune 500 companies used Twitter to engage their stakeholders and found that conservation of visitors was the most telling sign that a company possessed dialogic orientation on Twitter. They found that "...the features underlying that principle served mostly to encourage ongoing opportunities for dialogic engagement in a multitude of organizational dialogic spaces" (p. 340). Given the success of Rybalko and Seltzer (2010) in using the conservation of visitors principle of the dialogic theory to investigate Twitter interaction, the current study used this principle to examine how luxury fashion brands utilized Twitter to establish and maintain a dialogue with their followers.

Rybalko and Seltzer (2010) investigated two units of analysis: 93 Twitter profiles and 10 posts from the first page of tweets for each company. The researchers determined from their content analysis that Twitter was best served as a tool for conserving visitors

for the Fortune 500 companies in the sample. They also found that the other four principles of dialogic communication were inappropriate for determining the level of interactivity of company on Twitter Rybalko and Seltzer (2010).

The researcher of the current study used similar content analysis techniques to investigate whether the sample of luxury fashion brands utilized Twitter to establish dialogic, interactive communication and conserve visitors. The content analysis consisted of looking at tweets from each brand over a 31-day period from December 1-31, 2012, to find evidence of the conservation of visitors principle. Most people visit their main timeline on Twitter that contains tweets from all the handles they follow, instead of visiting a particular person or company's timeline. For this reason, the researcher of the current study considered the conservation of visitors as the act of posting tweets that were meant to establish or maintain conversation, which would be those tweets coded as "Brand Initiated" and "Brand Responsive." The category "Non-Interactive" was defined by the researcher as tweets containing no @mentions or @replies and therefore, not interactive messages. Hashtags, links and @mentions of the brand itself were not considered interactive elements; if a tweet contained only words and one of these three additional elements, it was still considered to be "Non-Interactive." The category "Brand Initiated" was defined by the researcher as tweets that contained instances where the brand @mentioned or @replied to someone without being addressed; a tweet in this category was considered to be interactive. Finally, the researcher defined the category "Brand Responsive" as tweets where the brand @replied to someone who had @mentioned them first; a tweet in this category was also considered to be interactive. "Brand Initiated" and "Brand Responsive" tweets could be formatted in a reply manner

that created a conversation stream, a retweet and comment manner where there was a RT after the brand's response, in a quoted tweet manner where the brand wrote their response and then quoted the original tweet, or in a traditional retweet manner where the brand reposted an exact tweet someone else posted. The key difference in how the tweet was coded was whether the brand was responding to someone who mentioned them.

The coding of tweets into mutually exclusive categories was partially derived from Blasingame (2011) who coded tweets of reporters at four San Antonio TV news stations into five categories (Breaking News, Promotion, Daily Chatter, Viewer Participation and Non-breaking news) based on the type of content in the tweets. Blasingame's categories were a slightly modified version of guidelines outlined by Lasorsa (2010). Similar to Blasingame (2011), the researcher of the current study developed three mutually exclusive categories to code the tweets of luxury fashion brands based on the content and interactivity of the tweets.

The researcher conducted an intercoder reliability test to confirm that these definitions were reliable for coding the collected data. The person selected to test the categories was an active Twitter user and was familiar with the different types of tweets that could fall into the three categories created by the researcher. The coder followed instructions developed by the researcher to code a sample of 162 tweets (approximately 10% of the total) that were randomly selected by the author using *random.org*. The coder correctly categorized 145 of the tweets, making these coding categories 90% reliable. Refer to Appendix C for the intercoder reliability instructions.

The researcher analyzed the tweets posted by the sampled luxury fashion brands in an effort to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: Do luxury fashion brands utilize Twitter as an avenue for communicating with current and potential consumers?

RQ2: How often do luxury fashion brands use Twitter as a form of communication?

RQ3: Does each luxury fashion brand have a unique strategy for tweeting?

RQ4: Do the Twitter feeds of luxury fashion brands show the characteristics of establishing a dialogue with the public?

### **Sample**

The population of the study was luxury fashion brands that used Twitter to promote their labels. The sample was derived from a list of nominees for the 2012 Fashion 2.0 Awards, which is a ceremony hosted every year by the Style Coalition (Canon, 2012). A total of 41 nominees were chosen by the public for nine different categories of awards. In an effort to get nine different brands for the sample, the researcher eliminated all duplicates and was left with 31 brands. These companies were listed in alphabetical order, and the researcher used the online random number generator *random.org* to choose nine brands for the sample. The random sample included: Alice + Olivia, Coach, Dior, DKNY, Gucci, Marc Jacobs, Oscar de la Renta, Ralph Lauren and Tory Burch.

### **Data Collection**

The researcher clipped every tweet posted by the brands in the sample for all 31 days of December 2012. All of the brands, except for Alice + Olivia, had verified accounts. Brands, as well as celebrities, can obtain verified accounts in an effort to assure audience members the account is authentic. An account that is verified through Twitter has a blue checkmark next to their handle so it is easy for people to see that it is the real brand or person instead of some unaffiliated person. Essentially, the blue checkmark reassures followers that the tweets posted on the account are actually coming from the brand or person and not from an imposter. Timelines of verified accounts feature the option to choose “All,” which allows people to view both conversations and original tweets, or “No replies” for viewing only original tweets. Given that the current research investigated the level of interactivity displayed by the sampled fashion brands, the researcher chose the “All” setting on every account that had the option.

The tweets were clipped on the afternoon following the date they were posted, so that the image would have the exact date to ensure there was no overlapping of clipped tweets. When a tweet is posted, it displays a timeframe in the lower right-hand corner that denotes how long it has been since it was tweeted. It displays in seconds and minutes up to 59, hours up to the 23, and switches to the date at the 24<sup>th</sup> hour. The researcher collected the following afternoon to ensure that all tweets from the previous day had the actual date on them. The Grab tool on the researcher’s personal MacBook Pro was used to clip all the tweets; the researcher then saved them as .tiff files on her computer.

The researcher started clipping tweets at the top of the section with the desired date; in other words, she started clipping the most recent and finished the collection

process with the first tweet of the given day. Once she reached the first tweet of the day she was collecting, the researcher then went in reverse order capturing images of the conversation streams the brands engaged in throughout the day. Twitter has the option to click “View conversation,” so that the audience can view the exchange of tweets within a conversation. The researcher clipped entire conversation streams to determine whether the initial tweet was in response to someone mentioning the brand or if the brand had initiated the conversation with someone who had not mentioned them, which helped determine the how to code the tweet. This option to “View conversation” is not available for instances where the brand quotes the tweet they are responding to or when they use the retweet response with the letters RT. The conversation stream is only captured when someone clicks “Reply” and responds without referencing the original tweet. A brand was also considered to be @replying to someone if they retweeted an exact tweet that mentioned the brand; this shows up on the brand’s timeline as coming from the person who posted the tweet. For a better understanding, refer to Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4. All four instances were considered to be engaging in some sort of conversation, whether they were “Brand Initiated” or “Brand Responsive.”

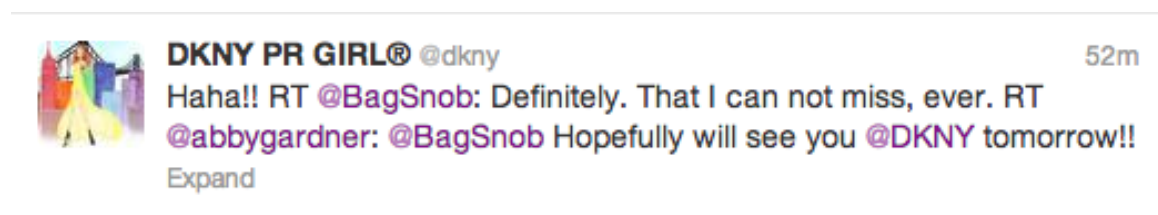


Figure 1

*Example of response with RT for “retweet”*

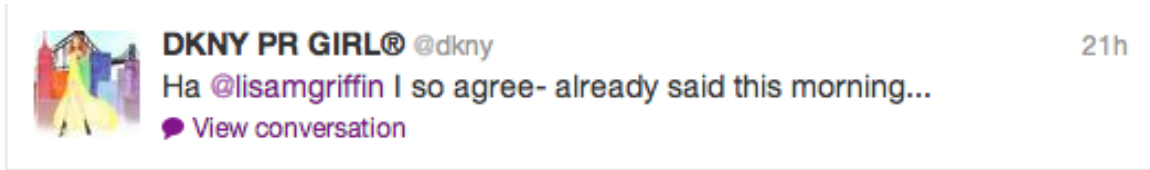


Figure 2

*Example of response using “Reply” button that creates conversation stream*



Figure 3

*Example of response by quoting tweet*



Figure 4

*Example of response as retweet of exact tweet*

### **Data Coding**

Once the data collection was complete, the researcher moved on to individually coding each tweet that was collected. The data were placed into one of three mutually exclusive categories: “Non-Interactive,” “Brand Initiated” or “Brand Responsive.” A

tweet was put into the “Non-Interactive” category if it did not include an @mention or @reply (refer to Chapter 1 for explanations of the various components of Twitter). A tweet in the “Non-Interactive” category was coded as 1. A tweet was put into the “Brand Initiated” category if it contained an @mention or @reply that was not in response to anyone contacting the brand first. In other words, the sampled brand was initiating the conversation. These could show up in the brand’s Twitter feed as a conversation, depending on whether the brand used the “Reply” option, which is why the researcher clipped entire streams of conversation in the data collection process. She was able to determine if the message was in response to another tweet that mentioned the brand or if the brand initiated the conversation. Tweets that fell into the “Brand Initiated” category were coded as 2. Finally, a tweet was put into the “Brand Responsive” category if it contained an @reply that was in response to someone who had @mentioned the brand. These “Brand Responsive” tweets were coded as 3.

### **Sample Profiles and Statistical Testing**

After all the data were coded, the researcher began running mathematical tests in Microsoft Excel to develop profiles of the sample and compare the Twitter presence of all nine brands against each other. The first test the researcher conducted was summation: the total number of tweets in each category, as well as the total number of tweets altogether. These summations were made for each brand individually and then in combination. The summations allowed the researcher to determine the volume of tweets and the most popular category for individual brands and the sample as a whole. As another level of determining which category of tweets was the most prominent with each

brand, the researcher calculated percentages for each category. From these data sets, the researcher was able to examine which brands tweeted the most and the purpose behind those tweets, whether they were general statements, initiated conversations or responses to someone.

Next, the researcher used IBM SPSS software to run a chi-square test of independence measured by the Pearson to determine that the brands' tweets occurred independently from each other. A significance level of  $p < .05$  was used as the threshold to determine if the results were significant. The researcher also conducted a one-way ANOVA test measured by the Bonferroni to support the chi-square test and determine how significantly different each brand's tweets were from the others. An alpha of .05 was used to determine the level of significance with all values above the alpha considered insignificant and all values below considered significant. Finally, the researcher conducted 2-tailed correlation tests with a significance level of  $p < .01$  to determine if there was any connection between the number of tweets collected and the final number of followers, as well as the connection between the number of tweets collected and the level of interactivity as measured by "Brand Initiated" and "Brand Responsive" tweets. The following chapter will discuss the results of these tests.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### Sample Profiles

A total of 1,588 tweets were collected during December 1-31, 2012 from the nine brands in the sample. There were a total of 641 tweets coded as “Non-Interactive,” 316 coded as “Brand Initiated” and 631 coded as “Brand Responsive.” Refer to Table 1 and Figure 5 for further detail. The data in the table and figure help compare the frequency of tweeting among the brands in the sample. The current study looked at how luxury fashion brands used Twitter to interact with consumers, and these totals paint a picture of how often each company used the platform to communicate and the level of interactivity of their content, at least within the month of December 2012. It can be assumed that the more a company uses Twitter, the more likely they are to establish conversation and respond to those who start conversations with the brand. This assumption was generally supported by the data, as shown in Table 2 and Figure 5. All of the brands with tweet totals below 110 had their highest number of tweets in the “Non-Interactive” category. It must be noted that some of the brands with totals above 100 also had the highest number in the “Non-Interactive” category, but the tweets were much more evenly dispersed. For example, Alice + Olivia had 152 tweets coded as “Non-Interactive,” but it also had 111 coded as “Brand Initiated” and 100 coded as “Brand Responsive.” Although this could be

attributed to simply having a higher number of tweets, it should be noted that each company had the opportunity to tweet whenever they felt necessary. It is evident that the brands with the higher totals of tweets decided, based on their own communication and social media strategies, to put a significant effort into Twitter; therefore, they had a higher number of tweets and, in turn, a higher number that fell into the two interactive categories of “Brand Initiated” and “Brand Responsive.” The significance of these results is brands that used Twitter more frequently tended to post more interactive content by establishing and maintaining conversations as opposed to simply posting promotional messages.

Next, the researcher calculated the percentage of tweets coded into the categories for each brand, as well as the entire sample. This provided another way of examining which brands were the most interactive on Twitter during the month of December 2012. Based on the data in Table 1, most of the tweets from all the brands together fell into either “Non-Interactive” or “Brand Initiated” with 40.37% and 39.74%, respectively. Slightly more than half of the tweets, 59.64%, were coded in the interactive categories “Brand Initiated” and “Brand Responsive.”

Table 1

*Percentages by Category for Entire Sample*

Category	Tweets	% of Total
Non-Interactive	641	40.37
Brand Initiated	316	19.90
Brand Responsive	631	39.74

The following breaks down the totals and percentages by brand.

### **Alice + Olivia**

The first brand the researcher investigated using mathematical calculations was Alice + Olivia. This brand posted a total of 363 tweets during the month of December 2012, with 152 coded as “Non-Interactive,” 111 as “Brand Initiated” and 100 as “Brand Responsive” (Table 2 and Figure 5). The researcher calculated percentages of the total for each category to determine that the brand’s tweets consisted of 41.87% “Non-Interactive,” 30.58% “Brand Initiated” and 27.55% “Brand Responsive” (Table 2). Based on the sums and percentages, it can be concluded that Alice + Olivia’s tweets were divided pretty evenly among the three categories with the highest number of tweets coded as “Non-Interactive” and the least coded as “Brand Responsive.”

### **Coach**

Coach tweeted a total of 115 times during the month of December 2012 with 62 coded as “Non-Interactive,” 11 tweets coded as “Brand Initiated” and 42 as “Brand Responsive” (Table 2 and Figure 5). Out of the total 115 tweets, 53.91% were “Non-Interactive,” 9.57% were “Brand Initiated” and 36.52% were “Brand Responsive” (Table 2). The majority of Coach’s tweets were “Non-Interactive” and about a third of the tweets were “Brand Responsive.”

### **Dior**

Dior tweeted 16 times during the month of December 2012, and all of those tweets were coded as “Non-Interactive” (Table 2 and Figure 5). In terms of percentages of the total number, 100% of the tweets were “Non-Interactive” (Table 2). It was evident from these calculations that Dior did not post any interactive tweets during the 31-day period of data collection.

## **DKNY**

DKNY tweeted a total of 590 times during the month of December 2012, by far the most of all the brands in the sample. As shown in Table 2 and Figure 5, this total was composed of 169 “Non-Interactive,” 77 “Brand Initiated” and 344 “Brand Responsive” tweets. Examined through percentages, the tweets categorized as “Non-Interactive” were 28.64% of DKNY’s total, “Brand Initiated” was 13.05%, and “Brand Responsive” was 58.31% of the tweets (Table 2). Based on these mathematical calculations, it is evident that more than half of DKNY’s tweets fell into the “Brand Responsive” category.

## **Gucci**

Gucci tweeted a total of 31 times during the month of December 2012 with 26 coded as “Non-Interactive,” 3 coded as “Brand Initiated” and 2 coded as “Brand Responsive” (Table 2 and Figure 5). When calculated as percentages, 83.87% of Gucci’s tweets were “Non-Interactive,” 9.68% were “Brand Initiated” and 6.45% were “Brand Responsive” (Table 2). It is obvious from these calculations that most of Gucci’s tweets were “Non-Interactive.”

## **Marc Jacobs**

Marc Jacobs tweeted a total of 160 times during the month of December 2012 with 53 of the tweets coded as “Non-Interactive,” 60 as “Brand Initiated” and 47 as “Brand Responsive” (Table 2 and Figure 5). Those tweets categorized as “Non-Interactive” made up 33.13% of the total tweets; “Brand Initiated” made up 37.50% of the total; and “Brand Responsive” was 29.38% of the total (Table 2). Marc Jacobs’ tweets were pretty evenly distributed among the three categories with the highest number coded as “Brand Initiated.”

### **Oscar de la Renta**

Oscar de la Renta tweeted a total of 194 during the month of December 2012 with 81 coded as “Non-Interactive,” 30 as “Brand Initiated” and 83 as “Brand Responsive” (Table 2 and Figure 5). The percentages of the total for each category were as follows: 41.75% “Non-Interactive,” 15.46% “Brand Initiated” and 42.78% “Brand Responsive” (Table 2). Based on these calculations, it is apparent that Oscar de la Renta’s tweets were mostly “Non-Interactive” or “Brand Responsive” with just slightly more falling into the latter.

### **Ralph Lauren**

Ralph Lauren tweeted a total of 72 times during the month of December 2012 with 63 tweets coded as “Non-Interactive,” 8 coded as “Brand Initiated” and 1 coded as “Brand Responsive” (Table 2 and Figure 5). The category of “Non-Interactive” made up 87.50% of the brand’s total tweets; 11.11% were “Brand Initiated;” and 1.39% were “Brand Responsive” (Table 2). Based on the calculations, it is obvious that the large majority of the tweets by Ralph Lauren fell into the “Non-Interactive” category.

### **Tory Burch**

Tory Burch tweeted a total of 47 tweets during the month of December 2012 with 19 coded as “Non-Interactive,” 16 coded as “Brand Initiated” and 12 coded as “Brand Responsive” (Table 2 and Figure 5). When examined as percentages, the tweets coded as “Non-Interactive” were 40.43% of the total tweets, “Brand Initiated” were 34.04% and “Brand Responsive were 25.53% (Table 2). Tory Burch’s tweets were pretty evenly distributed among the three categories with the highest number falling into the “Non-Interactive” category.

Table 2

*Number of Tweets and Percentages by Brand and Category*

Brand	NI	% NI	BI	% BI	BR	%BR	Total
Alice + Olivia	152	41.87	111	30.58	100	27.55	363
Coach	62	53.91	11	9.57	42	36.52	115
Dior	16	100	0	0	0	0	16
DKNY	169	28.64	77	13.05	344	58.31	590
Gucci	26	83.87	3	9.68	2	6.45	31
Marc Jacobs	53	33.13	60	37.5	47	29.38	160
Oscar de la Renta	81	41.75	30	15.46	83	42.78	194
Ralph Lauren	63	87.5	8	11.11	1	1.39	72
Tory Burch	19	40.43	16	34.04	12	25.53	47

*Notes:* NI stands for Non-Interactive, BI stands for Brand Initiated and BR stands for Brand Responsive.

Total NI = 641, Total BI = 316, Total BR = 631 and Total Tweets = 1,588

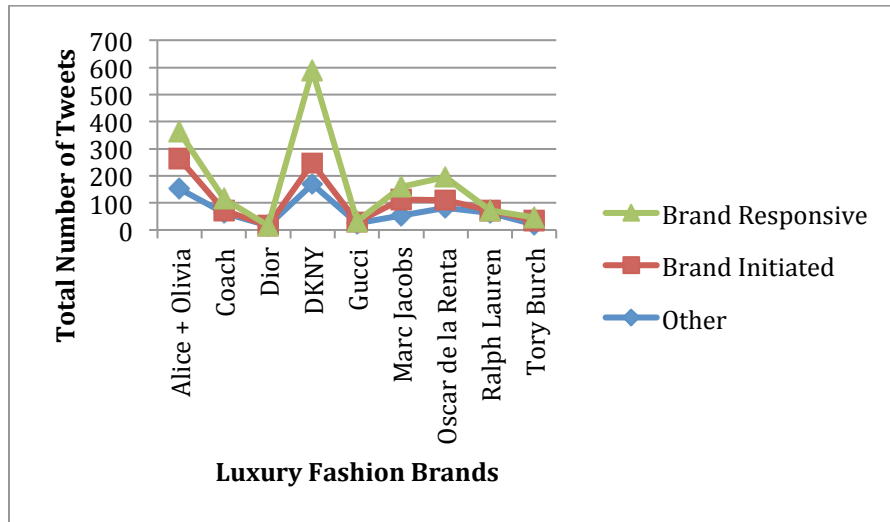


Figure 5

*Total Tweets by Brand and Category*

As shown in Table 3 and Figures 6 and 7, brands like Dior and Gucci had higher total numbers of followers than Alice + Olivia and DKNY, but they did not post nearly as many tweets during the month of December 2012. Alice + Olivia, who tweeted 363 times in December 2012, initially had 53,415 followers and increased to 58,440 followers by the end of February 2013; that was an increase of about 5,000 followers over a three-month period. DKNY, who tweeted 590 times during the 31-day data collection period, started out with 423,629 followers and ended in February 2013 with 433,320 followers; this was an increase of about 10,000 followers over a three-month period. Conversely, Dior started out with 1,450,615 followers and ended with 1,751,167, which was an increase of about 300,000 followers. However, Dior only tweeted 16 times during the month of December 2012. Similarly, Gucci started out with 553,604 followers and ended in February 2013 with 666,281 followers, which was an increase of about 110,000 followers in a three-month period; Gucci only tweeted 31 times during the month of December 2012.

The two brands with the highest level of tweeting during the month of data collection had much lower total numbers of followers than the two brands that tweeted the least during the collection period. Dior and Gucci were also the two brands with the lowest number of “Brand Initiated” and “Brand Responsive” tweets, while Alice + Olivia and DKNY had the highest numbers in these categories. It is also interesting to note that Alice + Olivia posted about twice as many tweets as Marc Jacobs and Oscar de la Renta during the month of December 2012, and yet the brand’s initial and final numbers of tweets was lower than both Marc Jacobs and Oscar de la Renta. This could be due to the length of time each brand has been on Twitter; perhaps Alice + Olivia has not been on

Twitter for as long as the other two brands. It should also be noted that December is a holiday season, and this could have caused Marc Jacobs and Oscar de la Renta to tweet less and Alice + Olivia to tweet more. These speculations of causes in the difference in tweet totals are further discussed in the Findings, Limitations and Recommendations chapter of this study.

Table 3

*Total Number of Tweets and Followers: Beginning and End of Data Collection*

Company	Initial # Followers	Final # Followers	Initial # Tweets	Final # Tweets
Alice & Olivia	53,415	58,440	6,556	7,693
Coach	349,380	369,587	2,923	3,318
Dior	1,450,615	1,751,167	362	460
DKNY	423,629	433,320	44,687	47,383
Gucci	553,604	666,281	1,856	1,968
Marc Jacobs	810,881	916,265	10,423	10,940
Oscar de la Renta	165,703	187,955	10,957	11,539
Ralph Lauren	243,936	321,744	438	641
Tory Burch	191,950	210,073	3,083	3,243

*Note:* Final number of tweets and followers were collected on February 28, 2013, not December 31, 2012.



Figure 6

*Chart of Initial and Final Number of Followers*



Figure 7

*Chart of Initial and Final Number of Tweets*

### **Statistical Calculations**

After developing profiles of the sample brands based on the data, the researcher used SPSS software to run a chi-square test of independence to determine the level of independence among the independent variables. The researcher also ran a one-way ANOVA test measured by the Bonferroni to support the chi-square results and to determine the proportion of variability attributed to each brand in the sample. In other words, the ANOVA compared the means among the entire sample to see how different the brands were from one another. In the current study, the nine luxury fashion brands represented the independent variables, and the categories of “Non-Interactive,” “Brand Initiated” and “Brand Responsive,” as well as the number of tweets and followers, represented the dependent variables. The chi-square test of independence and the one-way ANOVA helped the researcher confirm that the brands were tweeting independently of each other. Additionally, the researcher ran two 2-tailed correlation tests to find relationships among the variables.

The researcher conducted a chi-square test of independence to compare the nine brands and their respective tweets. No significant relationship was found ( $\chi^2(1) = 1.479$ ,  $p > .05$ ), meaning each of the sampled brands appeared to have been tweeting independently from each other. Table 4 contains the results from this test. The chi-square test of independence confirms that each brand had its own strategy for tweeting because they each had different amounts of tweets falling into the three categories. The brands posted diverse of content at varying frequencies and with different levels of interactivity, which supports the claim that they were tweeting based on different communication strategies.

Table 4

*Chi-Square Test*

Test Type	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	289.860 <sup>a</sup>	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	301.691	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.479	1	.224
N of Valid Cases	1588		

*Note:* Findings approach statistical significance at the  $p < 0.05$  level.

Table 5

*One-Way ANOVA*

Category	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	152.029	8	19.004	26.794	.000
Within Groups	1119.908	1579	0.709		
Total	1271.937	1587			

*Note:* Findings approach statistical significance at the  $p < 0.05$  level.

The one-way ANOVA measured by the Bonferroni found a significant difference among the nine brands in the sample ( $F(8,1579) = 26.794, p < .05$ ). As shown in Table 5, the level of interactivity varied across the sample. This test also measured the variance between each brand. The one-way ANOVA measured by the Bonferroni shows that DKNY was significantly more interactive on Twitter than all of the other eight brands in the sample, meaning DKNY was the most interactive brand in the sample. Alice + Olivia and DKNY had the highest number of total tweets out of the sample, but the ANOVA found that Alice + Olivia was significantly less interactive than DKNY ( $M = -.44, p < .005$ ), as seen by the negative mean difference. Coach, Marc Jacobs and Oscar de la Renta were medium frequency tweeters with total numbers in the hundreds for December

2012. The one-way ANOVA found that the interactivity levels of these three brands were not significantly different from each other. However, it must be noted that Coach was less interactive than Marc Jacobs ( $M = -.14, p > .05$ ) and Oscar de la Renta ( $M = -.18, p > .05$ ), though not significantly as seen in the  $p$  values that were greater than .05. Marc Jacobs was less interactive than Oscar de la Renta ( $M = -.05, p > .05$ ), but not at a significant level. This means that out of the three brands with a moderate number of total tweets, Oscar de la Renta was the most interactive. Dior, Gucci, Ralph Lauren and Tory Burch were the four brands in the sample that tweeted the least during December 2012. Dior was the least interactive of the four, although not significantly less so than Gucci ( $M = -.23, p > .05$ ) or Ralph Lauren ( $M = -.14, p > .05$ ). This finding is supported in Dior's sample profile, which shows no "Brand Initiated" or "Brand Responsive" tweets during the period of data collection. Ralph Lauren was more interactive than Gucci ( $M = -.09, p > .05$ ), though not at a significant level. Finally, Tory Burch, who only had 47 tweets during the month of December 2012, was significantly more interactive than Dior ( $M = .85, p < .05$ ), Gucci ( $M = .63, p < .05$ ) and Ralph Lauren ( $M = .71, p < .05$ ). This means that out of the four brands with the smallest total number of tweets, Tory Burch was the most interactive. Refer to Tables 5 and 6 in Appendix A for the one-way ANOVA results.

This one-way ANOVA analysis showed that most brands' tweeting patterns greatly varied because they each had different strategies for using the platform. It is evident that DKNY was by far the most interactive brand of the sample during the month of December 2012. With that said, the data showed that Dior, Gucci and Ralph Lauren had similar tweeting patterns in that all three were far less interactive than the other six

brands, though these similarities were not significant. However, Table 5 shows that there was a significant difference in interactivity when looking at the sample as a whole, meaning all of the brands are significantly different from each other. Given the results of the SPSS tests and sample profiles, the researcher can confidently conclude that each brand discussed different topics on Twitter, meaning they were using the platform to communicate with consumers in different ways.

Finally, the researcher conducted two 2-tailed correlation tests with a significance level of  $< .01$ . The Pearson correlation was calculated examining the relationship between the brands' total number of tweets collected and final number of followers. A weak negative correlation that was not significant was found ( $r(7) = -.360, p < .01$ ). This means that a brand's number of followers was not related to the number of tweets it posted. A second Pearson correlation was calculated examining the relationship between the total number of tweets collected and the level of interactivity. A strong positive correlation was found ( $r(7) = .993, p < .01$ ), indicating a significant linear relationship. The means the more tweets a brand posts on Twitter, the more interactive they tend to be. The results of these correlation tests can be found in Tables 7 and 8 in Appendix A.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **FINDINGS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Findings**

Based on the results of the sample profiles and statistical calculations, it is evident that these nine brands tweeted independently from each other. This most simply could be seen in the total number of tweets from each brand over the 31-day period. DKNY far surpassed all the other brands in volume with 590 tweets. The second highest tweeter, Alice + Olivia, had 363 tweets in December 2012, which is 38.4% less than DKNY. Even Alice + Olivia could be considered somewhat of an outlier given that the third highest number of tweets came from Oscar de la Renta with 194 tweets, almost half of Alice + Olivia's 363 tweets. The total number of tweets could be divided into sections of high, medium and low: high would be DKNY (590) and Alice + Olivia (363); medium would be Coach (115), Marc Jacobs (160) and Oscar de la Renta (194); and low would be Dior (16), Gucci (31), Ralph Lauren (72) and Tory Burch (47). Based on these totals, it is clear that each brand had its own strategy for tweeting.

However, these totals do not say anything about the content of the tweets. For that, the researcher examined the sums and percentages of the three different categories of tweets: "Non-Interactive" (coded as 1), "Brand Initiated" (coded as 2), and "Brand Responsive" (coded as 3). By looking at these types of mathematical calculations from

the perspective of the frequency a certain code occurred for any given brand, the researcher was able to determine the type of content each brand was tweeting. These codes were also developed so the researcher could discern which brands used Twitter for interactive purposes.

Given that each brand had a distinct number of tweets, percentages allowed the researcher to examine tweets based on a percentage of the total, which made it easier to compare brands with each other. The brand with the highest percent of tweets coded as “Non-Interactive” was Dior with 100% of their 16 tweets falling into this category. The second highest was Gucci with 83.87% of their 31 tweets coded as “Non-Interactive.” These percentages revealed two important trends. First, all of Dior’s and the majority of Gucci’s tweets were not interactive, meaning the brands’ content contained little to no @mentions or @replies during the month of data collection. They were clearly not using Twitter as a platform for engaging with consumers. The second trend revealed by these percentages was that the two brands with the lowest total number of tweets had the highest percentage of “Non-Interactive” tweets. Although these were only two brands out of a small sample of nine luxury fashion brands, it could be assumed that the less a brand tweets, the less likely they are to interact with followers or people they follow. In other words, the frequency of tweeting could be related to the level of interactivity. However, there was one brand in the sample that went against this conclusion. Tory Burch had a total of only 47 tweets during the month of December 2012, and while most of the tweets (40.43%) were coded as “Non-Interactive,” more than half the total was contributed to “Brand Initiated” and “Brand Responsive” tweets. When compared to Ralph Lauren with 72 total tweets, 87.5% of which were “Non-Interactive,” it could be said that the level of

interactivity does not necessarily depend on the frequency of tweeting, at least when examining Tory Burch. Despite this outlier, there was a positive significant correlation found between the number of tweets and the level of interactivity.

The brand with the highest number of tweets (DKNY) had a fairly low percentage coded as “Non-Interactive.” Of DKNY’s 590 tweets, 58.31% of them were “Brand Responsive.” This means that more than half of this brand’s tweets served the purpose of responding, using some version of @reply, to someone who had tweeted at the handle. Another 13.05% of DKNY’s tweets were “Brand Initiated” by @mentioning or @replying to another Twitter handle without being prompted, meaning the brand was actually initiating the conversation. These two codes (“Brand Responsive” and “Brand Initiated”) were used to measure interactivity in this study, and nearly 75% of DKNY’s tweets fell into one of these two categories making it the most interactive brand in the sample. Alice + Olivia had the second highest number of tweets (363) in the sample. While most of the brand’s tweets were coded as “Non-Interactive” (41.87%), more than half were “Brand Initiated” and “Brand Responsive” at a combined percentage of 58.13%. While this supports the correlation between number of tweets and level of interactivity, Alice + Olivia fell a bit short when compared to two other brands in the sample that had half the number of tweets. Marc Jacobs had a total of 160 tweets in December 2012, which were spread pretty evenly among the three categories with the highest percentage (37.5%) falling under “Brand Initiated.” When combining the “Brand Initiated” and “Brand Responsive” categories, 66.88% of Marc Jacobs’ tweets were considered to be interactive in nature; this is nearly 10% more than Alice + Olivia, which had more than double the number of total tweets. Oscar de la Renta had about half the

number tweets as Alice + Olivia with a total of 194 tweets in December 2012. However, these two brands had approximately the same percentage of “Brand Initiated” and “Brand Responsive” tweets, with Oscar de la Renta at 58.25% and Alice + Olivia at 58.13%. These small variances can be seen in the results with the correlation at .993, just shy of the measurement of 1.0 that represents the highest level of correlation. The researcher also determined there was not significant correlation between the number of tweets and the number of followers. This means that a brand will not necessarily gain a large number of followers from frequent tweeting.

The researcher used a one-way ANOVA measured by the Bonferroni to statistically support the chi-square test and the conclusion that most of the brands in the sample had significantly different levels of interactivity on Twitter during the month of December 2012, although there were some brands (Dior, Gucci and Ralph Lauren) that had similarly low levels of interactivity. The test also supported the conclusion that DKNY was by far the most interactive brand in the sample during the 31-day period. The researcher used a chi-square test of independence to statistically support the assumption that the brands had different strategies for tweeting, and therefore, they tweeted independently from one another. The categories of “Non-Interactive,” “Brand Initiated” and “Brand Responsive” were developed to help the researcher determine the type of content each brand was posting on Twitter. For example, the majority of Gucci’s tweets fell into the “Non-Interactive” category, meaning most of the content of this brand’s tweets did not attempt to interact with others by using @mentions or @replies. Figure 8 shows a sample of these non-interactive tweets from Gucci. Tweets coded as “Non-Interactive” typically focused on the brand and did not actively establish conversation.

These types of tweets were usually promoting the brand in some way, as seen in Figure 8, or they were used to make general statements that had nothing to do with the brand or anyone else, as seen by a “Non-Interactive” tweet from Oscar de la Renta in Figure 9.

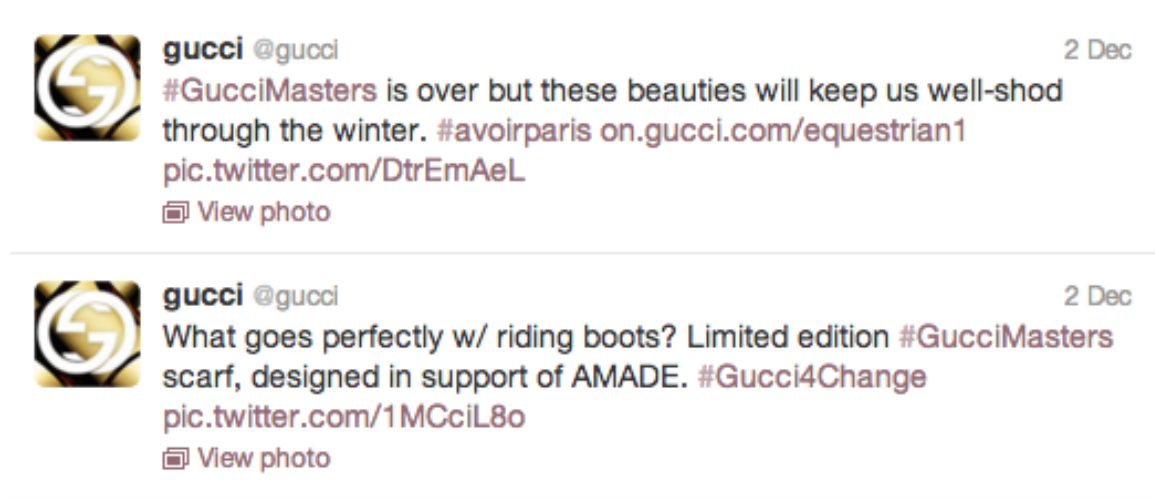


Figure 8

*A Sample of Tweets from Gucci*



Figure 9

*“Non-Interactive” Tweet from Oscar de la Renta*

The brand with the highest level of “Brand Initiated” tweets was Alice + Olivia. As defined in the Methodology chapter, tweets are considered to be “Brand Initiated” when the brand @mentions or @replies to someone who did not mention the brand first.

This means that the brand initiated the conversation by either replying to a tweet they thought was interesting (but that did not mention the brand) or established a new conversation with someone. Figure 10 contains “Brand Initiated” tweets from Alice + Olivia that show the brand initiating a conversation with an @mention. The type of content found in the tweets in Figure 10 were brand-serving, meaning Alice + Olivia @mentioned these different handles in an effort to promote the brand’s activities. Figure 11 shows a “Brand Initiated” tweet from Alice + Olivia where the brand was mentioning someone to simply give them a compliment; the tweet had nothing to do with promoting the brand or continuing a conversation initiated by the person the brand @mentioned.

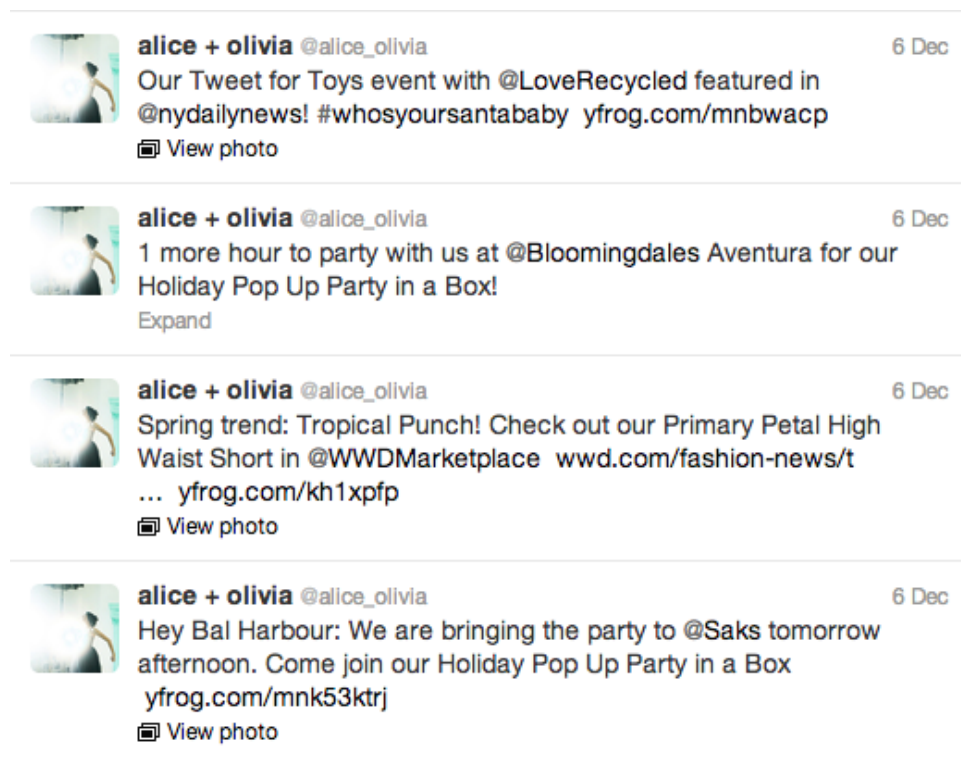


Figure 10

*Brand Initiated tweets from Alice + Olivia*



Figure 11

*Brand Initiated/Non-Brand Related Tweet from Alice + Olivia*

DKNY had the most “Brand Responsive” tweets, meaning the brand responded to more people than anyone else in the sample. As mentioned in the Methodology chapter, a “Brand Responsive” tweet occurred when the brand responded to someone who mentioned them. Tweets that fell into this category were interactive because the brand was continuing a conversation that was initiated by another person. The content was typically a response to a question or comment posed by the handle that initiated the discussion. Figure 12 contains examples of these responsive tweets from DKNY. Traditional retweets were also included in this category, which means the content could also be the brand essentially reposting the exact tweet from the person who @mentioned the brand. An example of this type of “Brand Responsive” content from DKNY is shown in Figure 13.



Figure 12

*Brand Responsive @reply from DKNY*



Figure 13

*Brand Responsive Retweet from DKNY*

The two most significant categories in the current study were “Brand Initiated” and “Brand Responsive” because the content of the tweets that fell into these categories were either establishing or maintaining a conversation. This means that the brands with more “Brand Initiated” and “Brand Responsive” tweets were using Twitter in an interactive way, and those brands with more “Non-Interactive” tweets were not being as interactive on Twitter. The purpose of this study was to determine how luxury fashion brands used Twitter to engage and interact with consumers. The results of this study are

significant in that they show the various levels of interactivity and engagement from each of the nine brands in the sample. Each brand had very different content, which could be seen in the total number of tweets, as well as the number of tweets that fell into each of the three categories. The results contribute to the idea that Twitter is an open platform that anyone can use in any way they please. These brands clearly had different strategies for the platform. Those with a high number of “Non-Interactive” tweets were mostly using Twitter to promote their brand and products, while those with higher levels of “Brand Initiated” and “Brand Responsive” tweets were using the platform to interact with consumers, in addition to promoting their brand and products. It is important to note that every single brand had tweets that fell into the “Non-Interactive” category, meaning every single company posted non-interactive tweets at some point during the 31-day period of data collection. This supports the idea that the brands used Twitter as both an interactive tool and a platform for promoting their products.

The trends and insights that surfaced during the data collection and analysis helped the researcher answer the research questions posed at the beginning of this study. *RQ1: Do luxury fashion brands utilize Twitter as an avenue for communicating with current and potential consumers?* Every single brand in the sample had an active Twitter account and posted tweets during the 31-day period of data collection; therefore, it can be said that the sampled luxury fashion brands used Twitter as a communication tool. *RQ2 asked: How often do luxury fashion brands use Twitter as a form of communication?* This can be answered by simply looking at the total number of tweets posted by each brand during the month of December 2012. As mentioned earlier, the nine brands could be divided into high, medium and low categories of tweet frequency, with Alice + Olivia

and DKNY categorized as high, Coach, Marc Jacobs and Oscar de la Renta as medium, and Dior, Gucci, Ralph Lauren and Tory Burch as low frequency tweeters. This data also helps answer RQ3, which asked: *Does each luxury fashion brand have a unique strategy for tweeting?* Based on the wide variation of frequency and interactivity among the sample, it can be concluded that each brand had a very different strategy for when and what they tweeted. This conclusion was supported by the results from the one-way ANOVA in Table 5 that show a significant difference in interactivity among the sample. For example, it is clear that the two high frequency handles, Alice + Olivia and DKNY, used Twitter to communicate a variety of things because they had numerous tweets in all three categories. However, just over 40% of Alice + Olivia's tweets were coded as "Non-Interactive," whereas only about 29% of DKNY's tweets were coded as "Non-Interactive." Simply put, despite the fact that both brands were interactive Twitter users, DKNY used Twitter in a more interactive manner than Alice + Olivia. Therefore, it could be assumed that DKNY's strategy for Twitter was focused more heavily on engagement than Alice + Olivia's strategy. This could be said for all the other brands in the sample when compared to DKNY. This is supported by the results from the one-way ANOVA that compares each brand against each other, as seen in Table 6 in Appendix A. The results of the chi-square test of independence also support the assumption that each brand's tweets occurred independently of each other, meaning every brand had its own strategy. The test found that there was not a significant relationship among the brands and their respective tweets, meaning the tweets were in no way related to each other because they were posted by different brands for different reasons.

Finally, RQ4 asked: *Do the Twitter feeds of luxury fashion brands show the*

*characteristics of establishing a dialogue with the public?* When the content of the tweets was examined through the three categories of “Non-Interactive,” “Brand Initiated” and “Brand Responsive,” it was evident that each brand used Twitter in a very different way. For example, nearly 60% of DKNY’s tweets were coded as “Brand Responsive,” whereas 100% of Dior’s tweets were coded as “Non-Interactive.” This extreme difference in content shows that some brands used Twitter as a way of interacting and engaging with consumers, while other brands used it for one-sided communication. There was, of course, a varying level of interactivity for each brand because they all clearly had their own unique strategies.

This leads directly into a discussion on how this study relates to the conservation of visitors principle of the dialogic communication theory. Rybalko and Seltzer (2010) found that of the five principles in the theory, this one was the most applicable when examining Twitter use. In order to conserve visitors, users should be encouraged to remain on the site, or in this case, actively read the brand’s tweets and possibly establish a conversation. This is a slightly different concept of conservation of visitors than Rybalko and Seltzer (2010) used, although they were also examining interactivity on Twitter. The current study considers the conservation of visitors to be the use of “Brand Initiated” or “Brand Responsive” tweets, which were the tweets containing interactive and engaging content. When examining the nine brands in the sample, it is evident that some handles attempted to engage people in an effort to maintain their attention, as well as the attention of other people following the handle. The purpose of engaging with people on Twitter is to not only capture the attention of the person who is @mentioned or @replied to, but it is also to show all the other followers that the brand actively engages

with their consumers. By establishing this dialogic communication, the brand is humanized, in a way. It lets followers know that a human, and not some sort of application, posted the tweets. The brand that succeeded the most in establishing dialogic communication in an effort to conserve visitors was DKNY. As previously mentioned, nearly 75% of the brand's tweets were coded as either "Brand Initiated" or "Brand Responsive," meaning there was a high level of effort put into establishing or maintaining communication with followers. The brand that put in the least amount of effort to establish dialogic communication was Dior with none of their tweets coded as "Brand Initiated" or "Brand Responsive." However, as of February 2013, DKNY had about 430,000 Twitter followers, up from about 423,000 in December 2012, while Dior had more than 1.7 million people following them on Twitter, which was up from 1.4 million at the beginning of December 2012. Obviously, Dior's lack of dialogic communication did not prevent them from conserving visitors, but it could be assumed that Dior has a much less personal relationship with its followers. DKNY may have 1 million less followers than Dior, but the brand is likely doing a better job of developing loyal brand evangelists because of the way it engages with followers.

### **Limitations**

Although these results are useful for examining how luxury fashion brands use Twitter to interactive with consumers, this study has limitations. The sample size of nine brands is far too small to generalize the results to the entire population of luxury fashion brands on Twitter. The data was gathered over 31-day period in December 2012, meaning the results are not representative of the brands' activity over an extended period

of time. This study only looks at activity from a single month in 2012, meaning the other months and years of tweets were not examined. It could be possible that some of the brands with a low number of tweets or a low level of interactivity have recently joined Twitter, and they are still in the process of determining how they can best use the platform. It is also possible that some of the brands with low interactivity during December 2012 were highly interactive at other times in the year or in previous years. Perhaps a brand with low interactivity in this study experienced a change in staff and someone new is now managing the handle. This could lead to a change in strategy and voice, which could mean a decrease – or an increase – in interactivity.

It is also possible that some of the brands in the sample tweeted more or less because of the holiday season, which could have affected their level of interactivity. Many companies give their employees extended time off from work during the December holiday season, and if the person managing the handle does not tweet outside of work, then the number of tweets would decrease. Given that the number of tweets would decrease in this scenario, it could be assumed that the level of interactivity would decrease, as well, because the person managing the handle is not tweeting nearly as much, if at all. Most of the brands were American labels that are headquartered in the United States. However, there were some international brands in the sample, including Dior and Gucci. The researcher is unsure of location of the person managing the American Twitter handle for these international companies, but if they are located in a foreign country, they could have different vacation times than Americans, meaning their tweeting patterns may be different than the American brands. It should be noted that Dior and Gucci had the lowest total number of tweets in the sample.

The researcher only looked at how luxury fashion brands used Twitter to communicate with consumers. The results of the current study do not show how the entire population of fashion brands, regardless of pricing, utilizes Twitter as a communication tool. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized to the entire population of fashion brands on Twitter.

The sample was chosen out of convenience from a list of nominees for the 2012 Fashion 2.0 Awards. This means that the researcher did not look at the entire population of luxury fashion brands on Twitter to select her sample. However, once the researcher settled on the population of Fashion 2.0 Awards nominees, she then randomly selected the sample of nine brands using a random number generator, meaning every brand within that sample population had an equal chance of being selected. It must also be noted that by using the Fashion 2.0 Awards nominees, the researcher was examining the brands that the general public viewed as the “best” at social media, which helped eliminate some researcher bias.

Finally, a limitation can be seen in the coding process. Although the researcher derived the idea of mutually exclusive categories for coding tweets based on the type of content from Blasingame (2011), the categories of “Non-Interactive,” “Brand Initiated” and “Brand Responsive” were not tested or validated by another researcher. She developed the categories based on the intent of the study to determine how interactive luxury fashion brands were on Twitter. This supports argument that the coding of the tweets could have been influenced by researcher bias; however, the researcher conducted an intercoder reliability test, and the categories were 90% reliable when used by another coder.

### **Recommendations**

The author believes this study contributes to the growing body of research on Twitter as a viable communications tool. She recommends further research into how fashion brands use Twitter to communicate with consumers because social media seem to be pervasive in the fashion industry. The author suggests investigating how fashion brands are using other social media platforms, as well. It would be interesting to see how the level of interactivity of a brand varies from one platform to another. For example, DKNY had the highest level of interactivity on Twitter, but they may not have the highest level on Facebook or Pinterest. Another possible area of investigation could be comparing the social media “footprint” of each brand to see which one is active on the most platforms. It is suggested that future research investigates interactivity from the perspective of followers by measuring the number of favorites, retweets and comments a brand gets for each tweet they post. This research could also be done on other platforms, such as the measurement of likes, shares and comments on Facebook or Pinterest. Finally, it would be beneficial to extend the research of the current study to develop a validated scale for coding interactive tweets. These are just a few suggestions for further research into how fashion brands use Twitter and social media to engage with consumers. The author suggests much more extensive and longitudinal research into the fashion industry’s use of social media as avenues for interactive communication.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **CONCLUSION**

The results of this study showed that the level of interactivity of luxury fashion labels on Twitter varied greatly among most brands, although there were a few brands that had similar levels of low interactivity. The research also determined that each brand tweeted independently from the others, meaning the brands had different strategies for using the platform to communicate with consumers.

The researcher had the opportunity to conduct phone interviews with the women who manage the Coach and DKNY Twitter accounts. Based on these interviews, it was evident that the two companies had very different strategies for using Twitter to promote their brand and communicate with consumers. Coach joined Twitter in 2008 and DKNY joined in the spring of 2009. While the communication and marketing team at Coach planned and strategized on how to develop a voice on Twitter before they actually joined, the DKNY team had a meeting about it and then immediately created an account (L. Cross of Coach, personal communication, November 15, 2013; A. Licht of DKNY, personal communication, November 16, 2012). When asked who tweets for the Coach handle, Cross said: “I have a team. I head up social media, and then I have a team that works with me...I have three people that help with social” (personal communication,

November 15, 2013). Licht had a very different response to DKNY's Twitter account management: "No one has ever tweeted for me" (personal communication, November 16, 2012). It has been found that having a single person, whether it is the designer or a communication professional, manage the Twitter account can increase brand loyalty. In an article for the School of Information Studies at Syracuse University entitled "Social media: The fashion industry's hottest trend," Chelsea Orcutt wrote, "...brands that have a single, recognizable point person handling their social media presence often see higher brand loyalty among customers" (2012). This is important to note because a difference in strategy, such as having a team tweet on a handle instead of a single person, could lead to decreased brand loyalty. Orcutt (2012) emphasized that high fashion brands often become more personal and accessible on Twitter by having a single person manage the account.

In the researcher's interviews with Coach and DKNY, Cross and Licht also expressed a clear difference in the type of content posted on Twitter and the amount of planning that goes into each tweet. Cross said the Coach team has a detailed editorial calendar for each social media platform, including Twitter. On the other hand, Licht of DKNY said that she does not schedule any tweets. While Cross and her Coach team are very strategic and precise with what they tweet on the brand's handle, Licht said she does not strategize at all: "I listen. I follow the conversation. I respond to what I want to and then as far as when I initiate something, it's all completely stream of consciousness as far as what I'm doing or thinking in that exact moment" (A. Licht of DKNY, personal communication, November 16, 2012). These two phone conversations support the researcher's findings that every brand had their own strategy for using Twitter.

Fashion brands, as well as other companies, have the opportunity to use Twitter as a way of establishing and maintaining conversations directly with their consumers. It is a powerful tool that can help gauge a company's strengths and weaknesses in the eyes of the consumer. When used interactively, Twitter can humanize a brand by giving it a voice and a personality. Luxury fashion brands, which are often viewed as unattainable and elite, can use this platform to shatter misconceptions by connecting directly with potential buyers. Where high-end fashion used to be an industry enjoyed only by elite editors, famous celebrities and wealthy aristocrats, it is now for the people. As Licht of DKNY aptly noted during her phone interview with the researcher, the fashion industry's use of social media is helping people realize that they do in fact wear clothes every day. Clothing is an extension and expression of one's personality, and social media are helping designers convey that message better than they ever have before. The conversations initiated on Twitter, Facebook and other platforms bring the everyday person into "the know." Someone who works as an electrical engineer can now be just as in-tune with the latest fashion as an editor from Women's Wear Daily because social media do not discriminate. It makes news immediately available to everyone, regardless of who they are or whether they are invited to a runway show.

A fashion brand must be aware of the visibility of social media like Twitter. If someone tweets a complaint about how the handle broke on the purse they bought last week, every single person who follows the complainer is able to see that tweet. This is where a social-savvy brand would join the conversation to do everything they can to make that customer happy. This action develops brand loyalty not only with the disappointed customer but also with everyone who sees the brand jump to action to help

resolve the situation. At the same time, if a brand does not respond to the complaint, they are developing an image of disinterest or apathy in the eyes of the consumer.

The main takeaway from the current study is that Twitter, and social media in general, can be used to establish and maintain conversations with consumers, which helps luxury fashion brands seem more attainable and personal. Although a high level of interactivity on Twitter does not necessarily lead to a high number of followers or an increase in purchases, it does contribute to brand loyalty, which could eventually lead to a purchase. Companies need to look at social media as ways to humanize their brand and connect with consumers as opposed to tools for increasing the bottom line. It can be difficult to measure the impact of being interactive on social media, but this study shows that actively communicating with consumers leads to even more engagement, which can help the brand appear more likeable and approachable.

This study contributes to the new and growing body of research on Twitter. The current study shows how the platform is used as a communication and engagement tool from the perspective of luxury fashion brands, meaning it also contributes to research on marketing and communication tactics in the fashion industry. Although there are limitations to the current study, it serves as a starting point for future studies on the use of Twitter in the fashion industry.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **TABLES USED IN THIS STUDY**

The tables shown on the following pages were either used or referred to in the study to explain data from the mathematical and statistical testing.

Table 1

*Percentages by Category for Entire Sample*

Category	Tweets	% of Total
Non-Interactive	641	40.37
Brand Initiated	316	19.90
Brand Responsive	631	39.74

The following breaks down the totals and percentages by brand.

Table 2

*Number of Tweets and Percentages by Brand and Category*

Brand	NI	% NI	BI	% BI	BR	%BR	Total
Alice + Olivia	152	41.87	111	30.58	100	27.55	363
Coach	62	53.91	11	9.57	42	36.52	115
Dior	16	100	0	0	0	0	16
DKNY	169	28.64	77	13.05	344	58.31	590
Gucci	26	83.87	3	9.68	2	6.45	31
Marc Jacobs	53	33.13	60	37.5	47	29.38	160
Oscar de la Renta	81	41.75	30	15.46	83	42.78	194
Ralph Lauren	63	87.5	8	11.11	1	1.39	72
Tory Burch	19	40.43	16	34.04	12	25.53	47

*Notes:* NI stands for Non-Interactive, BI stands for Brand Initiated and BR stands for Brand Responsive.

Total NI = 641, Total BI = 316, Total BR = 631 and Total Tweets = 1,588

Table 3

*Total Number of Tweets and Followers: Beginning and End of Data Collection*

Company	Initial # Followers	Final # Followers	Initial # Tweets	Final # Tweets
Alice & Olivia	53,415	58,440	6,556	7,693
Coach	349,380	369,587	2,923	3,318
Dior	1,450,615	1,751,167	362	460
DKNY	423,629	433,320	44,687	47,383
Gucci	553,604	666,281	1,856	1,968
Marc Jacobs	810,881	916,265	10,423	10,940
Oscar de la Renta	165,703	187,955	10,957	11,539
Ralph Lauren	243,936	321,744	438	641
Tory Burch	191,950	210,073	3,083	3,243

*Note:* Final number of tweets and followers were collected on February 28, 2013, not December 31, 2012.

Table 4

*Chi-Square Test*

Test Type	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	289.860 <sup>a</sup>	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	301.691	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.479	1	.224
N of Valid Cases	1588		

*Note:* Findings approach statistical significance at the  $p < 0.05$  level.

Table 5

*One-Way ANOVA*

Category	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	152.029	8	19.004	26.794	.000
Within Groups	1119.908	1579	0.709		
Total	1271.937	1587			

*Note:* Findings approach statistical significance at the  $p < 0.05$  level.

Table 6

*Post Hoc Tests, Multiple Comparisons, Dependent Variable: Category Bonferroni*

(I) Brand name	(J) Brand name	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Alice + Olivia	Coach	0.03066	0.09012	1	-0.258	0.3193
	Dior	.85675*	0.21513	0.003	0.1678	1.5457
	DKNY	-.43986*	0.05618	0	-0.6198	-0.2599
	Gucci	.63094*	0.15758	0.002	0.1263	1.1356
	Marc Jacobs	-0.10575	0.07992	1	-0.3617	0.1502
	Oscar de la Renta	-0.15356	0.0749	1	-0.3934	0.0863
	Ralph Lauren	.71786*	0.10865	0	0.3699	1.0658
	Tory Burch	0.00569	0.13055	1	-0.4124	0.4238
Coach	Alice + Olivia	-0.03066	0.09012	1	-0.3193	0.258
	Dior	.82609*	0.22471	0.009	0.1064	1.5458
	DKNY	-.47052*	0.08585	0	-0.7455	-0.1956
	Gucci	.60028*	0.17043	0.016	0.0545	1.1461
	Marc Jacobs	-0.13641	0.10296	1	-0.4661	0.1933
	Oscar de la Renta	-0.18422	0.09911	1	-0.5016	0.1332
	Ralph Lauren	.68720*	0.12656	0	0.2819	1.0925
	Tory Burch	-0.02498	0.1458	1	-0.4919	0.442
Dior	Alice + Olivia	-.85675*	0.21513	0.003	-1.5457	-0.1678
	Coach	-.82609*	0.22471	0.009	-1.5458	-0.1064
	DKNY	-1.29661*	0.21338	0	-1.98	-0.6132
	Gucci	-0.22581	0.25924	1	-1.0561	0.6045
	Marc Jacobs	-.96250*	0.22082	0.001	-1.6697	-0.2553

Table 6-Continued

DKNY	Oscar de la Renta	-1.01031*	0.21905	0	-1.7119	-0.3088
	Ralph Lauren	-0.13889	0.23276	1	-0.8843	0.6066
	Tory Burch	-.85106*	0.24376	0.018	-1.6317	-0.0704
	Alice + Olivia	.43986*	0.05618	0	0.2599	0.6198
	Coach	.47052*	0.08585	0	0.1956	0.7455
	Dior	1.29661*	0.21338	0	0.6132	1.98
	Gucci	1.07080*	0.15518	0	0.5738	1.5678
	Marc Jacobs	.33411*	0.07507	0	0.0937	0.5745
	Oscar de la Renta	.28630*	0.0697	0.002	0.0631	0.5095
Gucci	Ralph Lauren	1.15772*	0.10513	0	0.821	1.4944
	Tory Burch	.44555*	0.12764	0.018	0.0368	0.8543
	Alice + Olivia	-.63094*	0.15758	0.002	-1.1356	-0.1263
	Coach	-.60028*	0.17043	0.016	-1.1461	-0.0545
	Dior	0.22581	0.25924	1	-0.6045	1.0561
	DKNY	-1.07080*	0.15518	0	-1.5678	-0.5738
	Marc Jacobs	-.73669*	0.16526	0	-1.266	-0.2074
	Oscar de la Renta	-.78450*	0.1629	0	-1.3062	-0.2628
	Ralph Lauren	0.08692	0.18091	1	-0.4925	0.6663
Marc Jacobs	Tory Burch	-0.62526	0.19486	0.049	-1.2493	-0.0012
	Alice + Olivia	.10575*	0.07992	1	-0.1502	0.3617
	Coach	.13641*	0.10296	1	-0.1933	0.4661
	Dior	.96250*	0.22082	0.001	0.2553	1.6697
	DKNY	-0.33411	0.07507	0	-0.5745	-0.0937
	Gucci	0.73669	0.16526	0	0.2074	1.266
	Oscar de la Renta	-.04781*	0.08994	1	-0.3358	0.2402

Table 6-Continued

Oscar de la Renta	Ralph Lauren	0.82361	0.11951	0	0.4409	1.2064
	Tory Burch	0.11144	0.13973	1	-0.3361	0.5589
	Alice + Olivia	.15356*	0.0749	1	-0.0863	0.3934
	Coach	.18422*	0.09911	1	-0.1332	0.5016
	Dior	1.01031*	0.21905	0	0.3088	1.7119
	DKNY	-0.2863	0.0697	0.002	-0.5095	-0.0631
	Gucci	0.7845	0.1629	0	0.2628	1.3062
	Marc Jacobs	.04781*	0.08994	1	-0.2402	0.3358
	Ralph Lauren	0.87142	0.11622	0	0.4992	1.2436
Ralph Lauren	Tory Burch	.15925*	0.13692	1	-0.2793	0.5977
	Alice + Olivia	-.71786*	0.10865	0	-1.0658	-0.3699
	Coach	-.68720*	0.12656	0	-1.0925	-0.2819
	Dior	0.13889	0.23276	1	-0.6066	0.8843
	DKNY	-1.15772*	0.10513	0	-1.4944	-0.821
	Gucci	-.08692*	0.18091	1	-0.6663	0.4925
	Marc Jacobs	-0.82361	0.11951	0	-1.2064	-0.4409
	Oscar de la Renta	-.87142*	0.11622	0	-1.2436	-0.4992
	Tory Burch	-.71217*	0.15793	0	-1.218	-0.2064
Tory Burch	Alice + Olivia	-.00569*	0.13055	1	-0.4238	0.4124
	Coach	.02498*	0.1458	1	-0.442	0.4919
	Dior	.85106*	0.24376	0.018	0.0704	1.6317
	DKNY	-.44555*	0.12764	0.018	-0.8543	-0.0368
	Gucci	.62526*	0.19486	0.049	0.0012	1.2493
	Marc Jacobs	-.11144*	0.13973	1	-0.5589	0.3361
	Oscar de la Renta	-.15925*	0.13692	1	-0.5977	0.2793
	Ralph Lauren	.71217*	0.15793	0	0.2064	1.218

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Table 6-Continued

*Note:* The mean difference is significant at the  $p < 0.05$  level.

Table 7

*Correlation Between Total Number of Tweets Collected and Final Number of Followers*

		Total # of Tweets	Final # of followers
Total # of Tweets	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.36
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.342
	N	9	9
Final # of followers	Pearson Correlation	0	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	
	N	9	9

*Notes:* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The total number of tweets was collected during the 31 days in December 2012.

Final number of followers was collected for each brand on February 28, 2013.

Table 8

*Correlation between Total Number of Tweets Collected and Level of Interactivity*

		Total # of Tweets	Interactivity
Total # of Tweets	Pearson Correlation	1	0.993
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0
	N	9	9
Interactivity	Pearson Correlation	0.993	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	
	N	9	9

*Notes:* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The total number of tweets was collected during the 31 days in December 2012.

Final number of followers was collected for each brand on February 28, 2013.

Interactivity was based on each brand's combined number of "Brand Initiated" and "Brand Responsive" tweets.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **FIGURES USED IN THIS STUDY**

The figures shown on the following pages were used in the study to help explain and define the different types of tweets investigated for this research.

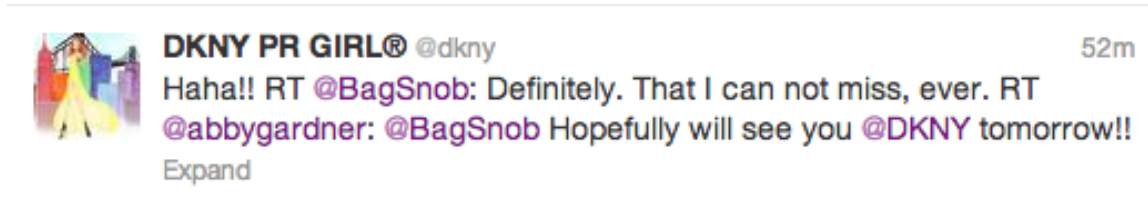


Figure 1

*Example of response with RT for “retweet”*

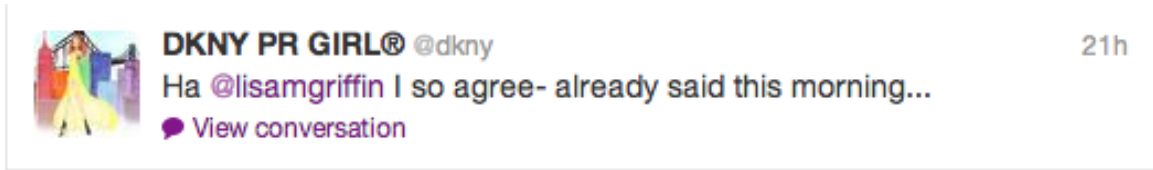


Figure 2

*Example of response using “Reply” button that creates conversation stream*



Figure 3

*Example of response by quoting tweet*



Figure 4

*Example of response as retweet of exact tweet*

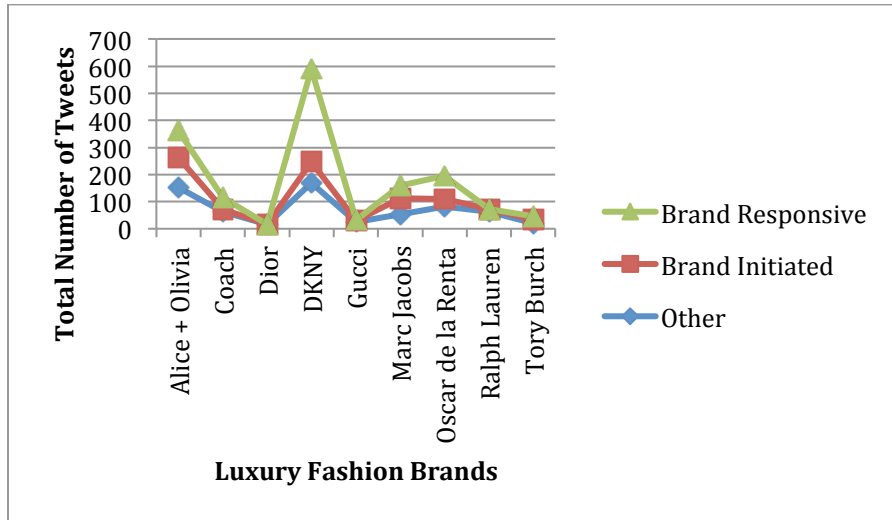


Figure 5

*Total Tweets by Brand and Category*



Figure 6

*Chart of Initial and Final Number of Followers*



Figure 7

*Chart of Initial and Final Number of Tweets*

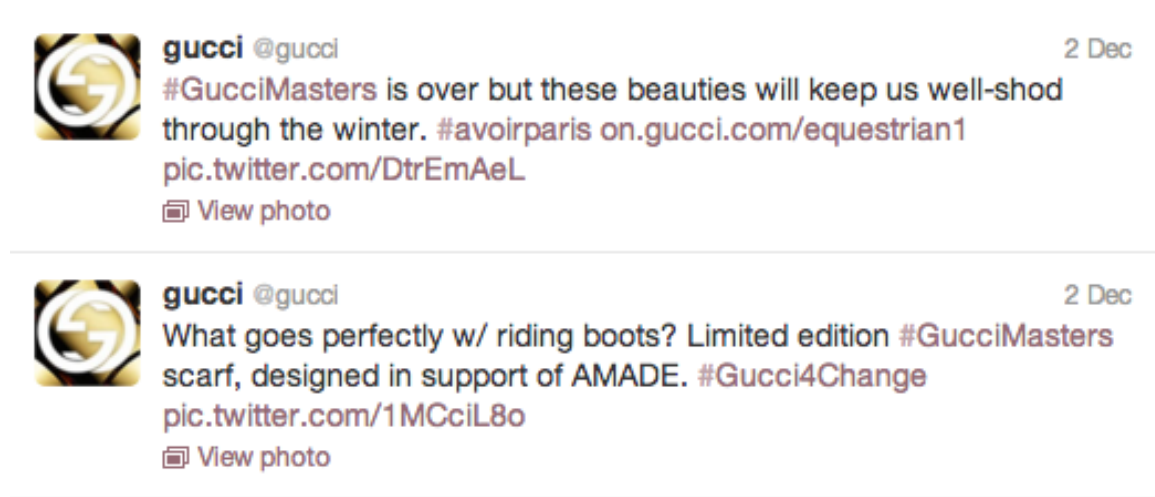


Figure 8

*A Sample of Tweets from Gucci*



Figure 9

*"Non-Interactive" Tweet from Oscar de la Renta*

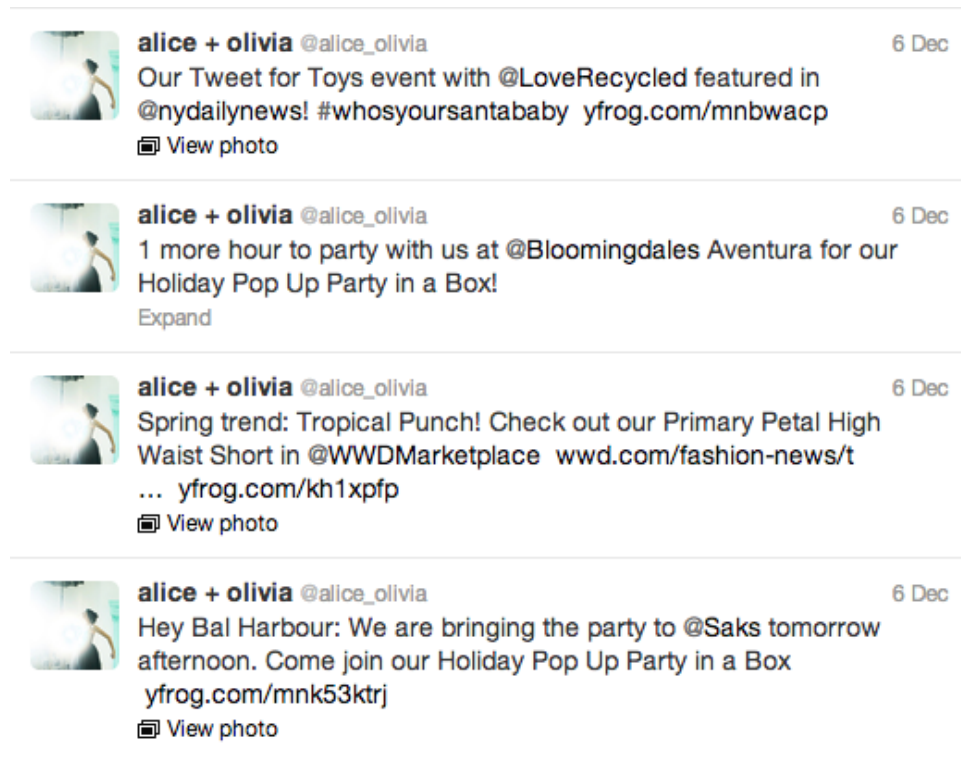


Figure 10

*Brand Initiated tweets from Alice + Olivia*



Figure 11

*Brand Initiated/Non-Brand Related Tweet from Alice + Olivia*



Figure 12

*Brand Responsive @reply from DKNY*



Figure 13

*Brand Responsive Retweet from DKNY*

## **APPENDIX C**

### **INTERCODER RELIABILITY INSTRUCTIONS**

The following pages contain the instructions used by the coder for intercoder reliability. These instructions were written by the researcher of the current study.

# **TWITTER AND FASHION: A QUANTITATIVE INVESTIGATION OF THE USE OF TWITTER AS AN INTERACTIVE TOOL BY LUXURY FASHION BRANDS**

## **INTERCODER RELIABILITY INSTRUCTIONS**

The purpose of the current study is to investigate how luxury fashion brands use Twitter as an interactive tool. The following 160 sample tweets were selected at random from the total number of 1588 tweets analyzed in the study. Please carefully review each of the tweets and code them into one of three categories: Non-Interactive, Brand Initiated or Brand Responsive. These categories are mutually exclusive, meaning a tweet can only be coded into one of them. Code a tweet as (1) for “Non-Interactive,” (2) for “Brand Initiated” and (3) for “Brand Responsive.” Use the following definitions of the categories to code the tweets:

1. “Non-Interactive” is defined by the researcher as a tweet containing no @mentions or @replies. Hashtags, links and @mentions of the brand itself are not considered interactive elements; if a tweet contains only words and one of these three additional elements, it is still considered to be “Non-Interactive.”
2. “Brand Initiated” is defined as a tweet that contained instances where the brand @mentions or @replies to someone without being addressed.
3. “Brand Responsive” is defined by the researcher as a tweets where the brand @replies to someone who had @mentions them first.

“Brand Initiated” and “Brand Responsive” tweets could be formatted in a reply manner that creates a conversation stream, a retweet and comment manner where there is a RT after the brand’s response, in a quoted tweet manner where the brand writes their response and then quotes the original tweet, or in a traditional retweet manner where the brand reposts an exact tweet someone else posted. The key difference in how the tweet is coded is whether the brand is responding to someone who mentioned them. Here are examples of each category:

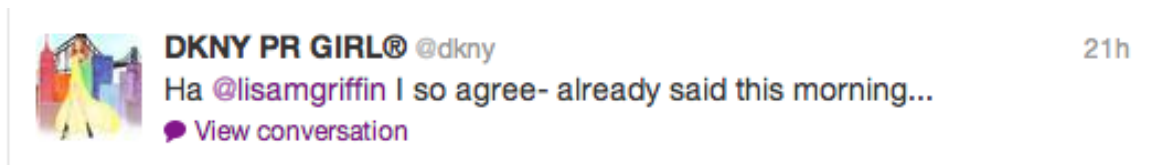
#### Non-Interactive Tweet



#### Brand Initiated Tweet



#### Brand Responsive Tweets



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