Survey Assignment on Rhode

Group 5:
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Background:

Our task group has researched the question of how the public feels about the concept of diversity in the beauty industry and how this affects their buying behavior. We aim at specific pathways by which Rhodes Skincare can raise its profile and create a more diverse customer group. The results of the interviews show that while suburbanites are often likely to use this beauty service, a bigger group was motivated to join because of the good reputation or because the products were affordable. The Qualtrics survey is a result of our previous results, but we now shift gears to the aspects of "clean" ingredients, inclusivity, and the impact of celebrities when people are deciding to purchase a beauty product. This is a good opportunity to gain feedback on Rhode with other popular brands among the demographic, because it helps determine what consumers are favorable to when they decide to purchase these cosmetic brands.

Our research questions were as follows:

1. How do consumers give priority to the value of 'inclusivity' as a brand when compared with the brand values like affordability or product quality?
2. To what extent is the representation of the brand (celebrity/influencer engagement, product variety, etc.) responsible for the determination of the brand's inclusiveness?

Method:

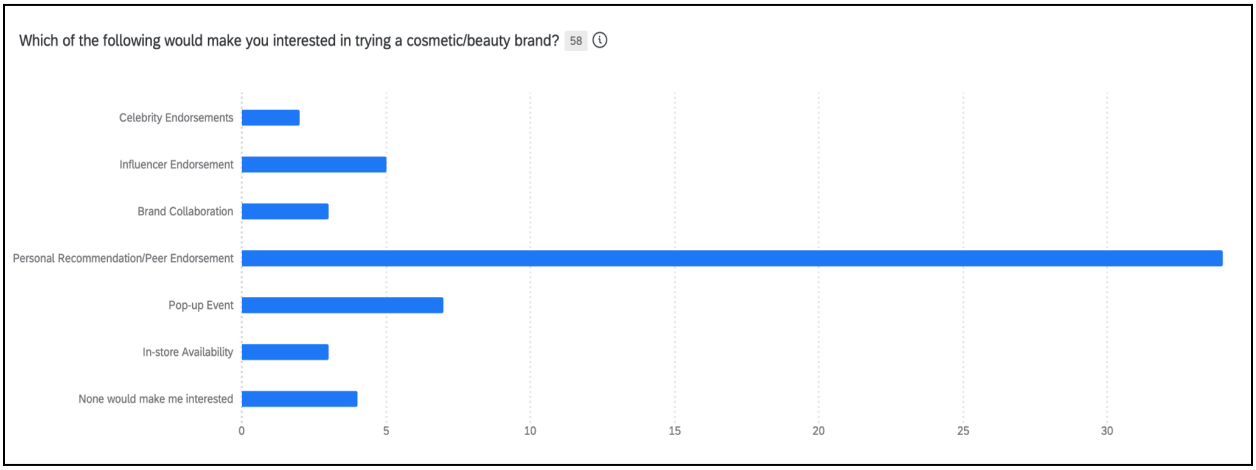
This study intends to examine consumer perceptions (especially those of young adults) about inclusivity in the beauty business. An online survey through Qualtrics was distributed by our group to conduct our research. Our survey was administered in late March of the year 2025 and ran for a week into April. The survey included 12 questions in total, featuring scales, ranking formats, and multiple-choice responses. Getting responses involved sending an invitation to participate in the survey via social media, sorority, and club group chats, and spreading the word through our friends to extend this outreach. Given that college students are a large part of our target market, our effort was put into dealing with that specific population. This survey plays a major role in furthering our research and specifically validating strategies that we have mentioned above. As one of the results of this experiment, we would know whether the consumers are seeking brands that are endorsed by celebrities or champions of clean ingredients, and we found that attempts to portray inclusivity and diversity were the winners.

Until Monday, April 7 at noon, we had accumulated 58 replies altogether. Of these, 53 completed the demographic questions. Most were between the ages of 20–22 years (60.4%), followed by 18–19-year-olds (30.2%) and a smaller number older than 22 (11.3%). The average age was 20.3 (SD = 1.12). Racially and ethnically, 34% were White, 30.2% were Asian, 15.1% were Black or African American, 15.1% were Hispanic or Latino, and a small number of participants were multiracial (3.8%) or declined to say (1.9%). The survey contained a combination of multiple-choice, ranking, and scaled-response questions. For example, we asked

about the importance of values like "affordability," "inclusivity," "clean ingredients," and "celebrity endorsement" in choosing a skincare brand on a 1 (Not Important) to 6 (Very Important) scale. We also asked about individuals' familiarity with Rhode, how inclusive they found certain brands to be, and where they usually seek beauty recommendations. One of our questions tested what would interest people in trying a new brand—options varied from pop-up events to social media influencers to recommendations from peers. We designed this question using both our interview data and secondary research. We finished with standard demographic questions so that we could understand more about our survey participants.

Results:

Our first research question asked how consumers prioritize inclusivity among other brand values when choosing skincare or beauty products. The results show that while inclusivity is appreciated, other characteristics—most prominently peer recommendation, affordability, and clean ingredients—are likely to be prioritized higher. When asked to rate the importance of various values on a scale of 1 to 6 (1 = Not Important, 6 = Very Important), "clean ingredients" and "dermatologist-supported" scored especially high, suggesting that product effectiveness and skin safety are most important. "Celebrity endorsement" scored lowest overall, confirming what



we learned from early interviews: consumers, and college students especially, are skeptical of influencers and prefer substance over marketing.

Our second question tested the effect of brand presence by influencers, celebrities, and other ways on views about inclusivity concerning a brand. Respondents reported that they would most likely be interested in a new cosmetics brand if their friends recommended it (M = 4.08), it was sold in shops (M = 4.04), or it collaborated with brands (M = 3.91), on a scale of 1 to 7. Celebrity (M = 3.66) and influencer endorsement (M = 3.68) had less effect. These results confirm that personal and social credibility surpasses celebrity influence. Surprisingly, the top individual mean was for the response "None of these would make me interested" (M = 4.79), which could imply a high degree of brand independence or even cynicism about marketing efforts as a whole.

When asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Least Inclusive, 5 = Most Inclusive) how inclusive specific popular brands are, e.l.f. Cosmetics (M = 3.20) and Rhode (M = 3.19) were scored the highest with mean scores, beating Fenty and Rare Beauty (both M = 2.94). This was somewhat surprising, considering Fenty is often praised for being inclusive, but probably because they were the first to do it. Tarte Cosmetics scored lowest on perceived inclusivity (M = 2.72).

In terms of whether or not they feel personally represented by cosmetic businesses, responses varied. On a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), the mean response was 3.43 (SD = 0.86), with the most respondents falling in the neutral to agree group. This concurs with our earlier findings that while inclusiveness is desired, it is yet to be prioritized by all consumers. As indicated in the data from our Qualtrics survey, peer credibility remains one of the strongest persuasions when it comes to experimenting with new beauty products.

Discussion:

Our task was to better comprehend the perception of consumers, especially young adults and college students, towards diversity in the beauty industry and how it influences the brands they support. We were looking in particular at Rhode Skincare and wanted to determine the following: how important inclusivity is when individuals are shopping for cosmetic items, and the effect celebrity and influencer roles have on the attention a brand receives. The results of our survey make it evident that while individuals are concerned about inclusivity, it is not their top factor to consider. Values such as clean ingredients, value for money, and word of mouth were more crucial. These findings align with what we've established in our interviews—participants liked inclusive branding but appreciated efficacy and trust when they spent money.

Overall, our Qualtrics survey gave us a better sense of how all these different factors overlap. Rhode scored fairly high on perceived inclusivity, only behind e.l.f., but even Fenty, which is renowned for having an inclusive shade range, did not score as high as we expected. This suggests that perhaps people are considering inclusivity more comprehensively, rather than representation in ads or product offerings. Maybe it's also a matter of how accessible the brand becomes or how genuinely its message resonates with consumers. Our findings do contain inevitable restrictions. The survey was posted among friends and peers, so we only had a small, convenience-based sample, which does not generalize to all cosmetic consumers. We believe that the majority of our questions answered our curiosities, although it would have been nice to have had more follow-up options or open-ended responses to get more insight. Even so, this process gave us a systematic way of gathering and comparing data that was impossible to get from interviews alone, and it helped us see where Rhode is doing it right—and where it can do better.