

DISSERTATION: ARE ETHICAL IMPACTS REGARDING THE BEAUTY INDUSTRY ALTERING CONSUMERS OPINIONS ON THE PRODUCTS?

Mahatma Gandhi, ‘there is no beauty in the finest cloth if it makes hunger and unhappiness’ (Sumod, Mishra, & Rangnekar, 2018).

ETHICS WITHIN THE INDUSTRY

Ethics can be defined as moral principles or values that affect a persons decision making.

Muhammad Yunus is well known for his social business, he states, ‘Engaging in social business is beneficial to a company because it focusses on business’s ability to address social issues, involves one-time investment with sustainable results, and produces other positive effects such as employee motivation and improved organizational culture’ (Yunus, n.d.).

Unethical behaviour can be driven by the hope to create profit. I believe questions should be asked to avoid animal testing, environment problems and safety issues, such as, How are prices so cheap? Following a social approach will solve these issues.

THE BEAUTY INDUSTRY'S RESPONSIBILITY

Technology is creating a platform for the industry however due to social media, individuals are being exposed to the industry from young ages. Adkins states, ‘Most people ages 15 - 27 are actively engaged in at least one or more forms of social media. In the age of Instagram models, Twitter-famous celebrities, and Tumblr babes, it is no wonder our generation has become so obsessed with the concept of perfection’ (Adkins, 2018).

parents are increasingly worried about the affect that the industry could have on young generations.

MARKET FAILIURES	POSITIVE OUTCOMES OF THE INDUSTRY
--lack of diversity	--economic growth
-animals testing	--increased self esteem
--companies misleading consumers	--gender equality
--child labour	--decreasing discrimination
--unethical materials	---providing a community for a minority
--lack of regulations	--learning new skills through art
--environmental impacts	--technology is teaching consumers to purchase ethical products

- ### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES WITHIN THE RESEARCH
- The aim of this dissertation is to investigate the effects of ethics on consumer attitudes towards the beauty industry.
- The objectives include:
- A review of the literature into my chosen topic;
 - Secondary research to understand the context for the research;
 - Primary research to gain an understanding of the views of consumers;
 - To gain understanding of ethical context for the beauty industry.

METHODOLOGY

I intended to investigate consumers opinions regarding ethics within the beauty industry as I hoped to gather an insight into consumers opinions regarding topics such as transparency, animal testing, mental health and well being regarding procedures, products and tattoos,purchase influence, child labour, trusting brands and product content, brand packaging, enviornmental issues and advertising regarding the industries target audience.

Using an interpretivism approach in the form of interviews and observation along with secondary research is useful as information gathered will show a phenomentological stance illustrtaing how participants feel regarding a subject.

I chose to follow a probability method as I hoped to achieve the most accurate insight to how the population views the beauty industry and the ethics involved and to avoid bias.

The main limitation within my rearch was due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Interviews are usually conducted face to face however due to the pandemic every individual must stay in social isolation meaning that no close communication could be made with anyone other than those whom you live with. To adapt to this situation the interview questions had to be sent to participants using a Gmail account. I then had to ask participants to voice record their answers and send these recordings to myself. This challenge also made it impossible to conduct a Focus group as intended along with my interviews. I adapted to this limitation through only conducting interviews and through conducting them using voice recordings.

Once the qualitative research method was complete, the participants response were transcribed and open coded to categorise specific important themes and topics identified within the results. Each theme then further analysed to gain an in depth understanding of individuals motivations and perceptions,

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings suggest that consumers are increasingly searching for more transparency within the beauty industry as they feel that transparency within the industry is crucial otherwise consumers are unaware of what they are purchasing. I have learnt that ethical issues such as animal testing and child labour affect purchasing hugely as consumers are not willing to buy products that involve these issues anymore. Findings also suggest that the awareness of sustainability is growing rapidly within the beauty industry along with marketing. Companies are continuously looking to attract consumers. However, consumers are now in power therefore companies must provide ethics and sustainability within their products the more consumers demand this.

Although the research suggests that cost is still a large aspect which influences consumers, regardless of their ethical beliefs. The challenge that brands have involves incorporating positive ethical changes whilst providing consumers with the low costs they demand.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE INDUSTRY

- Create more green products
- Reduce plastic packaging
- Reduce pollution within manufacturing.
- Mandatory regulations could be placed by openly communicate with individuals the government to control market failiures such as pollution through a Pigouvian tax
- Social media media platforms could deny unethical companies using their platform
- Companies should avoid new ingredients until theirsafety can be proven using non-animal methods to avoid the use ofanimal testing.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE RESEARCH METHOD

- Plan questions prior to the interview
- Be flexible and open to adapt change
- time manage efficiently
- Conducting more than one research method can add further findings to the study
- If the current COVID-19 pandemic had not occurred I would have conducted a focus group alongside the interviews.

FINDINGS

Transparency- Results demonstrate that participants are seeking transparency.

The eldest interviewee, participant 1 stated, ‘we’ve always known there’s been a lot of cruelty involved when producing beauty products- unless we are made aware of this it will continue’.

Animal testing-All participants disclosed that animal testing affects their purchasing. Participant 5 ‘yes, I couldn’t buy a product which tests on animals’.

Mental health wellbeing cosmetic industry-A theme disclosed a growing concern regarding affects on the younger generation. Participant 4 states, ‘Young girls have issues these days it probably doesn’t help... Young girls feel pressured and this can be damaging’.

Mental health and tattooing- Results demonstrate individuals believe tattoos can create benefits however could also be addictive. Participant 2, ‘It can be addictive but I see it as art work...some cosmetic tattooing also helps cancer victims such as eyebrows can now be micro bladed...so it can help with issues and confidence’.

Purchase influence- Ethics are expected in brands however price is also very important. Participant 2, ‘I expect brands to be ethically produced so other than that it’s how it feels on my face and price’.

Child labour- consumers are against child labour however unsure of what products are affected by the issue. Participant 2 states, 'I had heard but I didn’t know enough about the products its included in. 100% no I wouldn’t purchase a product that exploited children’.

Trusting brands and product contents- there seems to be a lack of trust within consumers. Participant 8 states, ‘I don’t listen to statements on brand packaging’.

Brand packaging influencing purchase- The majority of consumers are unaffected by packaging. Participant 8 states, 'I take it with a big pinch of salt’.

Environmental issues-Consumers want to see more sustainability within their products and would pay for these changes. Participant 4,‘I would pay more and refill like lush products recycle and refill and I do buy those’.

Target audience (advertising)- Many individuals want organisations to reassess who they target.Participant 5 states, ‘the advertising- media campaigns are very wrong to target young age audience’.