The Fenty Effect: Engaging with All

An ethnographic study exploring the experiences of Dutch students with Fenty Beauty's platform practices on TikTok and Instagram.

Student Name: Tarifah Regina Sandiputri Adamus

Student Number: 457722

Supervisor: dr. Christian Ritter

Co-reader: dr. Alexandre Diallo

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Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication

Erasmus University Rotterdam

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ABSTRACT

In 2017, world-famous superstar Rihanna launched her own cosmetics brand Fenty Beauty to the world. What separates the Fenty Beauty brand from other make up brands is the awareness of the lack of diversity in the beauty industry. The brand launched with a line of 40 shades of foundation for people whose skin tones range from the lightest to the deepest tones. All over social media, the brand was praised for not only their racial diversity in the advertising but also for being a voice for people of skin tones that other cosmetics brands fail to recognize and cater to. Furthermore, Fenty Beauty is known to have an innovative digital marketing strategy with which they represent people from all over the world, of all different sizes, with different genders and sexualities. This research aims to explore how Fenty Beauty adapts its marketing strategies to online platforms to engage with its audiences and how this possibly influences the way consumers decide to purchase a product. Particularly interesting was to discover how the individuals receive and interpret the company-owned social media accounts which make the research relevant to better understand the relationship between a brand and a consumer. The research question was formulated as follows: *How are the platform practices of Fenty Beauty on Instagram and TikTok experienced by Dutch students between the age of 21 and 25?* The method used for this research was qualitative in-depth interviews with five young students in the Netherlands, along with participant and field observation. After collecting the data, a thematic analysis was conducted to analyze the data and identify themes and patterns that would contribute to answering the research question. Though the brand had a head start with Rihanna as the face of the brand, the brand still had a lot to prove to the world as they launched with their slogan "Beauty for All". The findings indicate that the participants appreciated all efforts made by Fenty Beauty to engage with its followers. A thorough analysis of the brand's digital marketing strategy shows that it makes effective use of all recently added features and affordance of the platforms. The results show that the participants feel heard and represented by the brand through its highly inclusive and representative content, its efforts to interest and attract the Millennial target audience through the use of youthful language, viral trends, and relevant influencers and celebrities.

KEYWORDS: cosmetics industry, diversity, inclusivity, social media engagement, celebrity-owned brands

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PREFACE

Before you lies the thesis "The Fenty Effect: Engaging with All", the basis of which are five in-depth interviews and participant observation among 21 to 25-year-old Dutch students. This thesis has been written to fulfill the graduation requirements of the Master in Media Studies – Media & Creative Industries at the Erasmus University of Rotterdam (ESHCC). I was engaged in researching and writing this thesis from March to June 2022.

My research question was formulated together with my supervisor, dr. Christian Ritter. The research was challenging, but conducting this extensive research has enabled me to answer the question that we identified. I would like to give special thanks to my supervisor dr. Ritter for his excellent guidance and unconditional support. He was always available and willing to answer my questions and take away any of my doubts or insecurities. I would also wish to thank my participants as I would not have been able to conduct the analysis without their input and cooperation.

Furthermore, my parents and close friends deserve a particular note of thanks for their wise counsel and endless support throughout my writing process and degree. Their kind and encouraging words have always motivated me to go the extra mile and give this final project my all.

I hope you enjoy reading my Master's thesis.

Tarifah Adamus

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1 Introduction

Over the past few years, the cosmetics industry has experienced explosive growth (Roberts, 2022). With an annual growth rate of 4.75% worldwide, the cosmetics industry is predicted to exceed a value of $716 billion by 2015. The leading beauty conglomerates in this industry, however, have set beauty standards that display a lack of representation and were predominately geared towards the Eurocentric beauty standards for decades with the availability of products that solely cater to people with light and tan skin tones (Boyd, 2018; Fetto, 2020). Not only did the cosmetics industry diminish racial diversity, but gender diversity and diversity in body types also lacked from the existing industry. Recent social movements such as Black Lives Matter, The Women's March, #MeToo, and so on are a testament to the current sociopolitical climate in which people feel more inclined to voice their opinions and stand up for matters such as social inequality (Nardini et al., 2021). These movements benefit from the support of external institutions such as brands, celebrities, and influencers who have the power and resources to advance their goals and their purpose on a larger scale and bring the issues to the attention of a larger audience.

An example of a celebrity who advocates for social equality is Rihanna. Rihanna is an influential global superstar who launched her own cosmetics brand Fenty Beauty in 2017 (Fetto, 2020; Lang, 2017). The brand came out with a line including the Pro Filt'r Foundation with a range of 40 shades—expanded to 50 since its launch—from fair to deep dark skin tones. The launch focused on skin tones that were hard to match with the existing beauty products on the market and aimed to include women all over the world. Fenty Beauty is active on several social media platforms including Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook on which they widely promote their products, interact with their audiences, and celebrate their achievements (Harker, 2020; Saka, 2021). However, Instagram and TikTok are Fenty Beauty's most successful social media outlets when looking at their likes, comments, views, and followers. Fenty Beauty includes a wide scope of influencers, celebrities, and fans to promote their products both on and offline. These representatives include people of all body shapes, races, genders, and sexualities, confirming their all-embracing motto of "Beauty For All" (Fetto, 2020). With its 11.5 million followers on Instagram and its 1.2 million followers on TikTok, Fenty Beauty has a responsibility of maintaining its following base and engagement levels which in turn lead to successful consumption by its followers. Thus, this research aims to answer the following research question "How are the platform practices of Fenty Beauty on

Instagram and TikTok experienced by Dutch students between the age of 21 and 25?" with help of the following sub-questions:

1. What motivates Dutch students between the age of 21 and 25 to engage with Fenty Beauty on TikTok and Instagram?

2. How does Fenty Beauty engage with its followers on TikTok and Instagram?

Studying how brands adapt their marketing strategies to online platforms to engage with their audiences is important to study because it is a relatively new way of influencing the way individuals decide to purchase a product. It is interesting to study how individuals receive and interpret these company-owned social media accounts and how they navigate through its content and whether it eventually leads to a purchase. Therefore, this study is also relevant to understanding the relationship between a brand and a consumer and how they could possibly implement better strategies. Furthermore, this research aims to contribute to filling the research gap that exists in the effects of company-owned social media engagement on individuals purchasing behavior. The Fenty Beauty campaign has relied heavily on the use of digital marketing and despite Rihanna being the face of the brand, the brand, and the artist have separate business pages which strengthen each other as Rihanna can promote her brand on her personal page as well.

Overnight, Rihanna changed the cosmetics industry with the launch of Fenty Beauty. The brand has been named one of TIME's Best Inventions of 2017 (Lang, 2017), demonstrating the importance of the topic of racial diversity and its developments in the cosmetics industry. Its impact and the buzz around the launch demonstrate how much people were longing for an inclusive brand to exist in the world of cosmetics. Though there are existing brands that have launched a line with a wide range of shades as well, among these products an unequal distribution of light, medium, and dark shades would still exist. To demonstrate the issue with the existing ranges of foundation shades and therefore the societal relevance of addressing the importance of a more inclusive cosmetics industry, figure 1 is presented. The difference in the aforementioned distribution of light, medium, and dark shades becomes evident when comparing an existing brand called Make Up For Ever which also has forty shades, and compare it to the forty shades that Fenty Beauty has come out with in figure 1. Using Photoshop and color codes, the lightness values were plotted onto the graph to visualize whether a line caters to lighter or darker skin tones. This graph shows that Fenty Beauty's Pro Filt'r foundation excels on both the darkest and lightest ends of the skin color spectrum and that the greater part of Make Up For Ever's Ultra HD foundation shades falls

into the 60-90 lightness range indicating they are primarily accommodating those with light and tanned skin tones. The problem with this case is that even those brands that claim to have an inclusive line, still do not adhere to the needs of society. On top of that, many brands feel the need to add shades to their initial lines, but that too seems to suggest people with darker skin colors were thought of later.
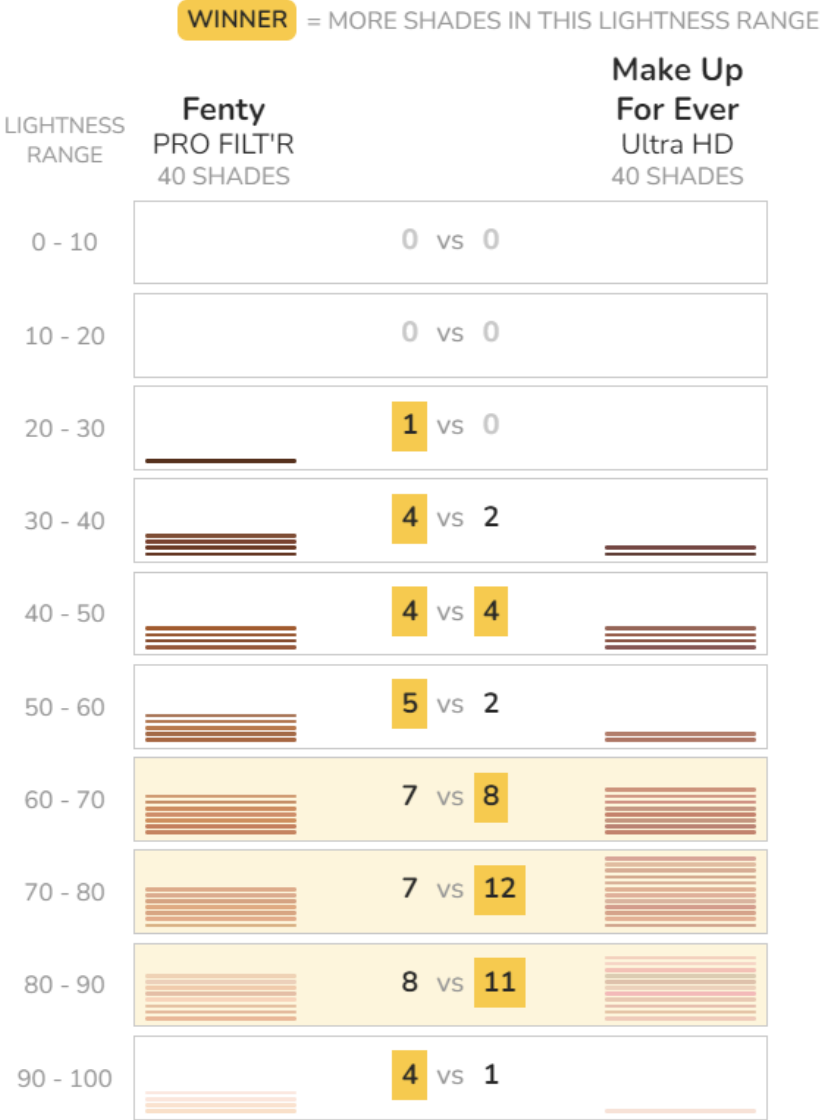
Figure 1. Lightness of foundation shades Fenty Beauty vs. Make Up For Ever (Li, 2018)

Conducting a qualitative analysis based on in-depth interviews and participant observation will help generate insights into how Fenty Beauty's social media strategies are experienced by Dutch students as this thesis seeks to discover to what extent Fenty Beauty is indeed as inclusive and representative as they claim to be and whether this affects students in their purchasing decisions and engaging behavior on the accompanying socials. Finally, this

study is structured as follows. First, a thorough theoretical framework is presented. This chapter reviews the relevant and important concepts from previous studies that are necessary to answer the research question. The next chapter describes the methodology, in which the research design and methods used are discussed along with the sampling strategy, the operationalization of the research question, the data collection and analysis, and the ethics, reliability, and validity. The following chapter presents and discusses the results, categorized into two categories each answering one of the sub-questions. The final chapter includes a conclusion answering the main research question as well as the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

2 Theoretical Framework

This chapter will present the main concepts that are related to the research question. More specifically, the concepts of the global cosmetics industry and social media and influencer marketing are presented along with sub-sections explaining other concepts relevant to this study. This study aims to contribute to existing theories as well as provide further insights on the topic. The theoretical concepts explained in this chapter will put in place the structure of the research.

2.1 The Global Cosmetics Industry

The global cosmetics industry has been growing faster than ever over the past years. Never before were there so many consumers with this high level of education and sophistication as now with the help of a large number of influencers, bloggers, and vloggers who are disseminating information regarding beauty products (Little et al., 2020). People are even looking at videos from overseas to decide what works best for themselves and which products to buy. Cosmetics products have become essential in people's lives as they enable one to enhance, change, and improve one's overall appearance which, in the long or short term, can positively impact someone's personality and self-confidence (Dyhouse, 2011). Cosmetics products are used for different purposes in several industries and cultures. For example, in drag culture, drag queens use make up to exaggerate their looks and facial features (Kornstein, 2019), whereas worldwide dominating Korean make up trends are known for more minimalistic make up looks for people to appear younger and softer (Kwon, 2018).

The cosmetics industry consists of different market shares being hair care, skincare, and make up. Several domestic and international players globally compose the highly fragmented market (Romanowski, 2022). Key companies in this industry, for example, are L'Oréal (France), Unilever (United Kingdom), Procter & Gamble Co. (United States), The Estée Lauder Co. (United States), and Shiseido (Japan). Among others, these companies have paved the way for revolutionary innovations within the industry. However, despite this, efforts to make the industry a more diverse and inclusive one have been missing (Hunter, 2007). For decades, people with lighter complexions have been primarily marketed to, leaving out people of color in their collections as well as their advertising. Therefore, the first sub-section of this chapter will discuss the issue of racial diversity within the cosmetics industry. Cosmetics have become so popular because of their versatility as it gives people the ability to

conceal imperfections and enhance facial features, but it is also a form of creative expression. In the past, make up products were mainly tied to the female gender, however, over the past years, the acceptance of people who identify across various genders on the gender spectrum to wear make up has been rising. The second sub-section of this chapter will, therefore, discuss gender diversity in the make-up industry. The rising influence of social media and the increasing use of the internet makes it essential for the cosmetics industry to initiate digital marketing strategies as well for brands to promote their products on social media as well to foster the e-commerce product demand. Therefore, the third sub-section of this chapter will discuss the effects of social media on the cosmetics industry further.

2.1.1 Racial diversity in the cosmetics industry

Anyone into make-up knows that Fenty Beauty is taking over the market fast (Wilson, 2020). Their launch created a buzz on social media, with their notable range of foundation shades. Most of the darker shades were sold out in stores and online within moments after the launch. The beauty industry has neglected women of color as consumers of make-up products for decades. Rihanna has challenged the notion that the market for deeper shades is not profitable for cosmetics companies. Therefore, it is even more notable that most companies have not tried to offer a wide variety of shades.

Interestingly, the launch of Fenty Beauty was not the first time a beauty line had expansive shades (Wilson, 2020). Other mainstream brands also attempted to the broader market of complexions, but have fallen short as the number of light shades to choose from always outnumbered the very little number of darker shades. When looking at product development, this should also not pose a problem for the creation of darker shades because all foundations have the same base (Guyot-Ferreol, 2019). The only difference between the creation of a lighter shade and a darker shade is the ratio of pigments and all foundations contain the same four pigments: titanium dioxide, iron oxide red, iron oxide yellow, and iron oxide black. So, changing the ratios of the pigments lead to lighter or darker foundation shades. Despite beauty companies trying to make an effort to be more inclusive over the past years, most of them still have not gotten it right. The definition of beauty has been narrowed down by society, companies, and the media for decades (Baird, 2021). As a result, not even the fact that there is a wider variety of women who are willing to buy beauty products that fit themselves are not recognized or listened to out of fear of damaging the brand image.

The beauty industry has a long history of only catering to a very specific type of person (Baird, 2021). In the late 1940s, make up for black women was available, but beauty companies still focused on skin-lightening products for black women. In the 1970s, an attempt to begin to show a wider range of beauty when it comes to make up products. When the cultural movement "Black is Beautiful" began to rise as a celebration of blackness in the African American community. That movement brought a change in the beauty industry too as more products were being created for the black community eventually. The wider range of products for black women came from a lot of black-owned companies themselves. Despite the existing beauty companies' efforts to incorporate people of color in their campaigns, this too has not always been a smooth ride as these companies often face controversy when being accused of whitewashing black people in their campaigns, causing these people to appear to have a lighter skin tone than they do (Boyd, 2018). Another example is where brands launch collections and campaigns that are culturally insensitive and a form of cultural appropriation. This perspective is important to this research because the launch of Fenty Beauty broke the existing boundaries within the cosmetics industry concerning racial inclusivity.

2.1.2 Gender diversity in the cosmetics industry

Not only has the beauty industry been lacking racial diversity, but it has also mainly been focused on the female audience, ignoring all other genders on the gender spectrum who consume cosmetics as well. An area of transformation within the cosmetics industry is that of gender-neutral products. Women have most often been the face of the cosmetics industry in every aspect, from make-up to skincare products (Black, 2004). The media has had a major impact on what is considered feminine or masculine, and on what products are considered appropriate for women or men to use, completely disregarding other genders within the world. Society has concluded that gender is a feeling or an experience that an individual has, and is different from one's sex, which refers to one's biological and physiological characteristics (Steensma et al., 2013). While the stereotypes based on sex have been deep-seated into our society, the beauty industry is carefully making efforts to include all genders. On top of that, queer individuals dominate a large part of the cosmetics industry, starting their careers by sharing make up tutorials on YouTube among other social media platforms (Dommu, 2019). This discourse is important to include in the study as the representation and inclusion of all genders and sexualities are an important characteristic of Fenty Beauty's branding and target audience.

2.1.3 The effect of social media on the cosmetics industry

The issues of racial diversity and gender diversity have been evident for a long time. However, with the rise of social media, people become more vocal about their opinions and there is more room to fill the existing gaps of the lack of diversity by the creation of one's own content and being free in deciding what to post and whom to address and represent while doing so (Jairath & Daima, 2021). This change in communication has led to brands taking on a new, less traditional strategy to reach their audience. There is a large difference between the existing make up brands and newer make up brands that enter the market. Specifically in the way they reach their audience (Khamis et al., 2016). Larger existing brands, such as L'Oréal, make a lot of use of traditional advertising in magazines and billboards, whereas newer brands rely way more on social media rather than traditional advertising. On social media, there are lots of men and women who have many followers who listen to what they say which makes it way more intimate than having, for example, just a celebrity at the front of your campaigns which is often what many of the big companies have done. Despite Fenty Beauty being a celebrity-owned cosmetics brand, it is different from these more traditional ways of advertising make up because Rihanna has committed herself to make her own vision come to life with this brand and remains fully invested in further developing the brand which differs from celebrities who are solely hired to promote the products or diversity but have no involvement in the decision-making process. This discourse is important to include in this study as the digital marketing strategy, in particular the social media strategy plays an important role in Fenty Beauty's success.

2.2 Social media and influencer marketing

Influencer marketing has become a very powerful tool in the world of social media. Influencers can be described as people who built a large network of followers, in one or several niches to promote their products. Research by Appel et al. (2019) and Krywalski Santiago and Moreira Castelo (2020) shows that the majority of marketing managers believe that influencer marketing is currently the best way to acquire online consumers. In one way, it could be said that Rihanna is an influencer herself, as she takes on the celebrity status that has helped create the cosmetics ranges' popularity. This has become a growing trend for celebrities, to no longer just endorse products, but now create their own brands. However,

Rihanna also collaborates with influencers to promote her brand and products. The majority of the Instagram feed is filled with such influencers including models, beauty bloggers, and make up artists. The following sub-sections will present the sub-concepts of influencer marketing, celebrity brands and celebrity endorsements, and Fenty Beauty's digital marketing strategy.

2.2.1 Influencer marketing

Nowadays, when walking in public, looking at others, most people are on their phones constantly using social platforms. Influencers are highly active on these social platforms and have become the easiest way to connect to people considering they are already actively looking at their phones (Leung et al., 2022). Because these people already interact with the influencers they have an existing bias on the marketing tactics that go with these influencers. They, for example, are more tempted to buy products that are promoted by influencers because they have established a sense of trust within the follower (Leung et al., 2022; Lou & Yuan, 2019). There is somewhat of an overlap between celebrity endorsements and influencer marketing, however, the difference is in the trust the followers have established with the influencers. Followers believe that the influencers promote products because these influencers truly use these products and believe they are what someone else needs in their lives as well, completely disregarding the fact that there is a formal agreement in place between a brand and an influencer.

The marketing world is going through a revolutionary shift (Huang & Copeland, 2020). The advertising industry had stayed relatively the same for about fifty years until the internet and social media disrupted it. People nowadays do not very often buy something because they saw it in a newspaper ad or on a billboard, but rather because of what they see on platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook. These platforms are flooded by influencers who share their content. Influencers are people who consistently post online in a niche of their choice. The influencer marketing industry grew from 1.7 billion dollars in 2016 to 13.8 billion dollars in 2021, indicating its steady growth (Santora, 2022). With this growth comes the realization for brands that this is a highly effective way of marketing. Influencers apply to anyone trying to get attention on anything. Over the past years, businesses have virtually transformed, especially in the e-commerce space thanks to influencers. Research by Huang and Copeland (2020) and Chopra et al. (2021) has shown that a high percentage of millennials' purchase decisions are made based on recommendations by their peers, but also

that a high percentage of in-store purchase decisions are influenced by something that someone has seen on a social media post. This relation makes sense when we look at the number of hours millennials spend on social media. As they are spending so much time online, the people they watch become "trusted" people in a sense, to the extent where they trust their opinion. This discourse will be used in an attempt to identify whether or not Rihanna's celebrity status and her personal influence have anything to do with how Fenty Beauty's followers experience the brand.

2.2.2 Celebrity brands vs. Celebrity endorsements

The presence of a celebrity affects a person's consumer behavior (Muda et al., 2014). In the past, celebrity endorsements have been successful for brands to promote their products. However, in today's marketing environment, more and more celebrities are creating products under their own celebrity brand. These brands have proven to be very successful, to the extent that some celebrities are generating most of their income from these external business ventures over their professional careers. Despite the success of both celebrity endorsements and celebrity-owned brands, the celebrity endorsements' authenticity is often questioned because a celebrity can be accused of "selling out" and solely endorsing a brand for the monetary benefits that come from it (Kennedy et al., 2021). Whereas with celebrity-owned brands, people tend to perceive these as more authentic because the celebrities are more invested in the brand and often share their devotion to their brand.

Celebrity endorsements help a brand stay memorable and relevant due to having a well-known figure attached to the brand (Saldanha et al., 2018). Celebrities help to tell a brand's story and keep you engaged. These emotions help marketers connect with their audience and achieve the overall objective of driving buying behavior. According to both older and more recent studies by Goldsmith et al. (2000), and Wang and Scheinbaum (2017), celebrities have perceived expertise and credibility. It is apparent that brands prefer celebrities because consumers are paying attention since they often want to be like them or live a similar lifestyle. Celebrities are able to persuade the masses on any product (Thomson, 2006). However, it can also pose serious challenges like that get faced with legal allegations or charges. Even those that become vocal on certain political policies and platforms, all those instances can pose a threat to the brands they are aligned with. The perception of a brand's owner and their impact on consumer behavior is interesting because, according to Huaman-Ramirez and Merunka (2021), celebrity CEOs' expertise and attractiveness are positively

related to the sensory and visual images of their brand. Therefore, this discourse too will be used to investigate whether Rihanna's celebrity status influences Fenty Beauty's supporters.
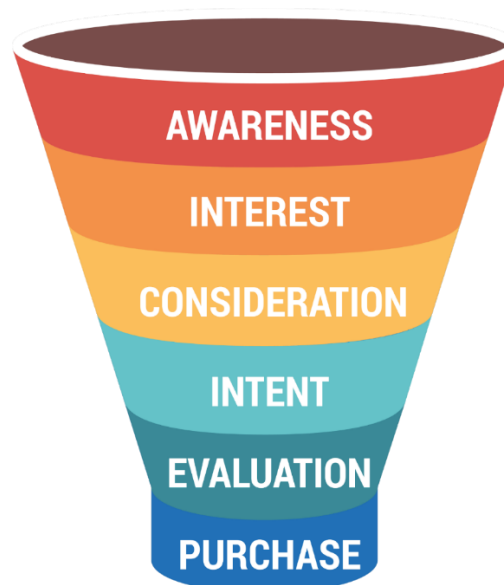
2.2.3 Fenty Beauty's digital marketing strategy

To fully understand the importance of Fenty Beauty's success, it is important to understand exactly what its strategy consists of. This section is dedicated to explaining Fenty's digital marketing strategy. The launch of Fenty Beauty in 2017 turned into one of the most successful launches on social media (Wilson, 2020). Rihanna, the founder of Fenty Beauty created the brand in collaboration with the Kendo brand, which is part of the perfumes and cosmetics division of the world's leading luxury brand group LVMH. With the tagline of their brand being "Beauty For All", they adopted the unique selling point of being a cosmetic line that is available for people of all skin colors and all possible undertones seen around the world. In their promotional video, a very diverse cast of models was included to showcase the make up while displaying its inclusiveness (Cho, 2018; Wilson, 2020). The Fenty Beauty campaign was concentrated heavily on the use of digital marketing, using both the website and social media (Wilson, 2020). This displays how influential these channels can be. Fenty Beauty has over 1600 points of sale in over 17 countries across the globe, and can be shipped to more than 115 countries globally, but can only be purchased in two major warehouses which are Sephora and Harvey Nichols (Fenty Beauty by Rihanna, 2020). This gives the feeling of buying an exclusive luxury product considering you cannot buy it everywhere . One of Fenty Beauty's competitors based on market share is L'Oréal Paris, which is the market leader within the cosmetics industry and has been accounted for a market share of 10.2 % which currently still makes it the most valuable organization in the cosmetics industry (Ismail, 2018). In terms of pricing, Fenty Beauty is reflected as being in the middle of the pricing spectrum on the cosmetics market as they are more expensive than drug store make up brands but still far cheaper than designer make up brands, making them affordable for most people. In terms of business strategy, Kylie Cosmetics by celebrity Kylie Jenner is a competitor based on marketing strategy (Strugatz & Chitrakom, 2019). The reason for this is that this brand is also very attractive to Millennials and incorporate digital marketing in order to promote its product portfolio. Both brands also rely on word-of-mouth advertising which they generate through social media as well. However, the obvious difference between the two is that Kylie Cosmetics fails to address diversity in the same way that Fenty Beauty does. Kylie Cosmetics does very little to allow people of different ethnicities to really feel involved with the brand.

As mentioned before, Fenty Beauty aims to be an all-inclusive brand offering a medium price range of celebrity-endorsed cosmetics. Its key demographic targets all skin types. As studied by Eastman et al. (2019) and Silvia (2019), the majority of Millennials favor brands that have social media presence and communicate about brands using social media within their network. Though Millennials are price-conscious, they claim quality to hold greater importance when it comes to brand loyalty which could reflect the medium to high price strategy. The largest percentage of Instagram users are under the age of 36, which makes it an attractive platform to target Millennials (Statista, 2022). Through Rihanna's personal Instagram account, Fenty Beauty can directly reach her audience whenever she posts something related to the Fenty brand.

Another strategic aspect that was taken into account by Fenty Beauty's marketing strategists is that the way in which consumers purchase products has changed from how it was before. The linear sequence as portrayed in the traditional marketing funnel (see figure 2) has become less relevant as consumers do not have to go through the steps of this funnel to make their purchase (Noble et al., 2010). More important nowadays are the recommendations from acquaintances, influencers, or other trusted people in one's life. Therefore, word-of-mouth has become an essential change in purchasing decisions. A more recent and appropriate model is McKinsey's model for the consumer decision journey (see figure 3). This model describes the consumer journey to make a purchasing decision as a cycle that reflects flexibility more than the traditional funnel.

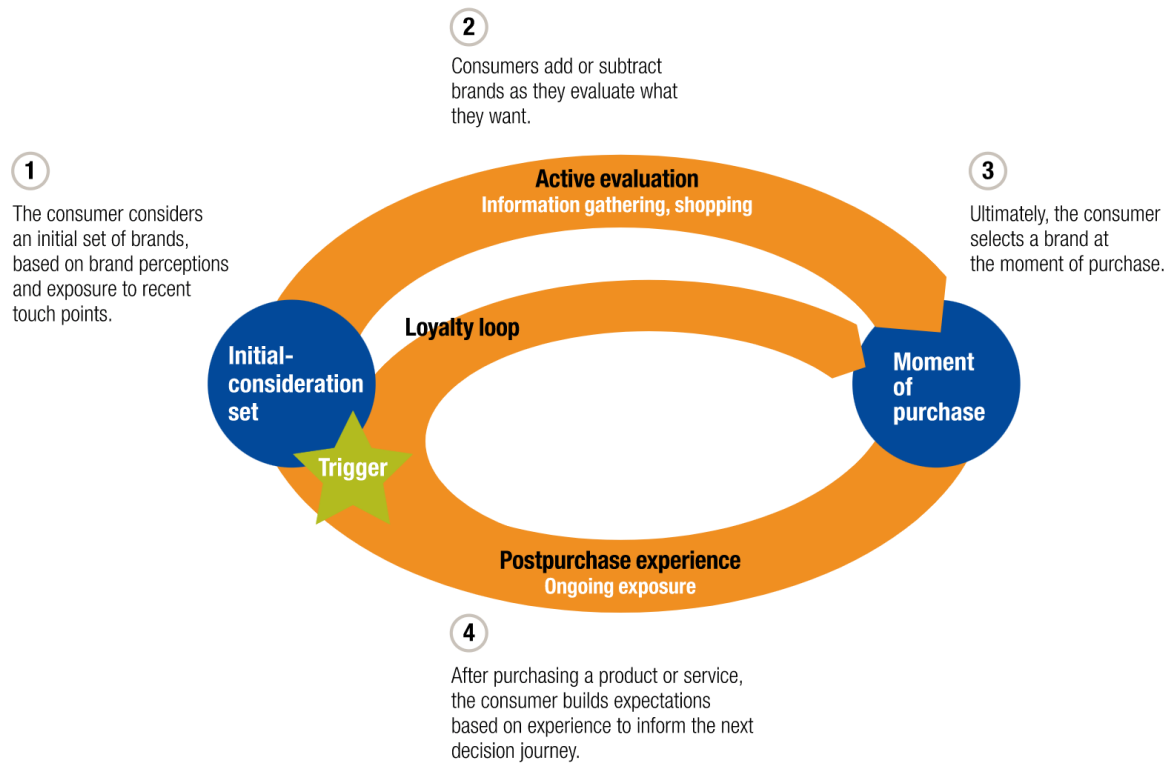*Figure 2*. The traditional marketing funnel (Wijenayake, 2020)

2 Consumers add or subtract brands as they evaluate what they want.

1 The consumer considers an initial set of brands, based on brand perceptions and exposure to recent touch points.

Active evaluation
Information gathering, shopping

3 Ultimately, the consumer selects a brand at the moment of purchase.

Loyalty loop

Initial-consideration set

Moment of purchase

Trigger

Postpurchase experience
Ongoing exposure

4 After purchasing a product or service, the consumer builds expectations based on experience to inform the next decision journey.

Figure 3. McKinsey's model for consumer decision journey (Court et al., 2009)

Fenty Beauty consumers express their views, spread awareness, and raise interest using social media platforms (Islam, 2021). By using the hashtag #FentyBeauty, consumers can access a range of products being trialed by real people across the global social media network. Hashtags in marketing attract a younger target audience as they are more likely to use this form of communication. Word-of-mouth marketing can have a negative effect as people often like to express their negative feelings about something rather than their positive opinion. (Noble et al., 2010). However, because people's social media accounts are often a reflection of themselves, people tend to leave out negative comments as they can reflect on what people think of them.

Looking at Fenty Beauty's digital marketing strategy, its website functions as one of its most important modems as this is where the products are sold and the main aspects of digital marketing are utilized (Ismail, 2018). Interestingly, Instagram is Fenty Beauty's most competitive advantage. There are many ways in which Fenty Beauty uses Instagram to its advantage. Firstly, the packaging of the products was designed to be very nice to look at and creates a coherent whole between the online and offline shopping experience (Wilson, 2020). During the weeks up to the launch date, teasers of the products were posted including exciting and upbeat music to accompany these posts. Rihanna also uses her own personal Instagram.

Through this page, she can drive the consumers to the main Fenty Beauty page. On her personal Instagram page, for example, she always has a link to Fenty Beauty's latest released products in her bio. On top of that, there is further use of her personal page by using her personal account to write back to any critiques from competitors. Another way Fenty Beauty reaches consumers is through the Instagram pages of the retail stores Sephora and Harvey Nichols (Wilson, 2020). A more recent feature of Instagram are "stories" where users can post something which will disappear after 24 hours unless it gets pinned to the "highlights" which makes it accessible to look at any time after the 24 hours have passed. With the success of the introduction of this feature, Fenty Beauty decided to use this feature to post content as well. It uses this feature to post short make up videos and to announce product release dates. Another important way in which Fenty Beauty reaches its target audience is through influencers. Influencers can help enable brands to become more inclusive. This is clearly reflected on the Fenty Beauty page as the featured influencers are from all over the world. All of these influencers have baring followers, from just 1000 up to 100 thousand, therefore reaching a wide range and variety of audiences. However, a study by de Veirman et al. (2017) showed that a higher number of followers may lead to higher perceptions of popularity and, as a result, higher likeability. Exploring the digital marketing strategy by Fenty Beauty is essential to understand the ways in which the participants of this study engage with its social media accounts and the participants' motivations to do so. The next part of this chapter will cover the how social media engagement and the motivations to do so can be interpreted.

2.3 Interpreting social media and motivations

This part of the chapter will cover the sub-topics of Instagram and TikTok as marketing platforms, the elaboration likelihood model, and the uses and gratifications theory. The elaboration likelihood model is covered in this part of the chapter to understand how people's attitudes and beliefs towards, in this case, a brand's social media advertising strategies change based on the circumstances. On top of that, to understand motivations for people to use social media and be engaged with the content, the uses and gratification theory is discussed. These concepts are particularly important because this study aims to understand the participants actions' actions and motivations to engage with Fenty Beauty.

2.3.1 Instagram and TikTok as marketing platforms

Instagram and TikTok are fairly new marketing platforms. Therefore, understanding the engagement that takes place through these platforms is essential as these determine the success of the strategies. As a consumer, there are several levels of engagement (Dolan, 2019). During the first level of engagement, *consumption*, social media users do not at all put in effort into user-generate. Examples of these acts are looking at posts or reading comments. The second level of engagement is *contribution*, where social media users contribute to the social media content through liking or sharing posts and participating in conversations. The highest level of engagement is that of *creation*, where social media users combine the before mentioned actions with co-creation by uploading and creating their own content. Roese (2018) argues that the most common type of engagement in social media users is that of sharing content with users being expected to share content with their close network. However, de Oliveira et al. (2020) in contrast argue that user engagement with brands' social media pages is not improved by users sharing content through word-of-mouth. With this statement, they do not take into account sharing through social media platforms, but only through word-of-mouth. TikTok is the newcomer of the platforms for marketing campaigns. Millennials are classified as the distinct and influential consumers whose behavior is frequently studied, yet not well understood (Gesmundo et al., 2022). This generation is particularly influenced by the emergence of digital media, making them an important demographic for brands' to target through social media. Since its launch in 2016, TikTok has become one of the most popular social media platforms among Millennials, and therefore have become essential for marketers to explore the options of creating brand awareness online. The concept of engagement levels on Instagram and TikTok helps identify the participants' types of engagement with Fenty Beauty's social media platforms. Therefore, this study will incorporate the study by Cuevas-Molano et al. (2021) that developed a model to measure consumer engagement based on likes and comments, graphics, interactive content, questions, and voting options. Exploring Instagram and TikTok as new marketing platforms is essential to this study as these are the platforms on which Fenty Beauty generates most engagement and on which they put out most content.

2.3.2 Elaboration likelihood model

To better understand how Fenty Beauty's followers engage with the content put out on Instagram and TikTok, and how this affects their perception of the brand, this section will discuss the elaboration likelihood model. The elaboration likelihood model of persuasion is

one of the most powerful and sophisticated models of how to change people's attitudes and beliefs under different circumstances (Cho, 1999) . Consumers are often inundated with different attempts to reshape how they feel or how they think about some kind of object or policy or product. All advertising is an example of this, but this takes on different forms. For example, a brand can advertise in a way where you learn nothing new about the brand. Similarly, there might be products where they simply pair a product with a celebrity or some kind of role model, learning very little again about actual features or benefits of the product, but it is placed in a very desirable context. In contrast, there is another style of advertising or persuasion that often applies to other types of products in which a large amount of details are shared as to why this product is better. Through the elaboration likelihood model, we can explain the discrepancy of why a superficial and imagery based ad could be the best way to affect attitude change whereas, in other domains, the best way to affect how people think and feel would be something that provides more details and is very rich in lots of logical well-argued information.

When people absorb information, they can be in one of two different states of mind when considering new incoming information (Zha et al., (2018). One of these is the peripheral route to persuasion, which is a less critical, more distracted way of thinking. In this case, people are not trying really hard to make a high quality decision and are not engaged in a lot of critical thinking. The other state of mind is the central route to persuasion in which people are engaging in a lot of critical thinking and are carefully considering the quality of each argument they are encountering. Another takeaway from this model is that of all of the different things that could affect how you feel about something, some of them are going to be more effective through the central route, these are central cues, and some of them are going to be more effective and have more of an influence on the peripheral route, the peripheral cues. In every case, the model presumes that you start out with a message you are encountering. A person's ability to process the message carefully and a person's motivation to do so determine whether you fall into the central or peripheral route. Within the central route, a person is going to be persuaded by the quality of the arguments being made in an ad which is going to stick with that person and can guide their purchasing behavior in the future. Whereas within the peripheral route, whatever is separate from the actual logical quality of the arguments being made, such as, celebrity endorsements, pretty imagery, cool song playing in the ad, and so on, has a downside for both the person receiving the message as well as the advertiser. If a person is briefly impressed by an ad, that change in the person's feelings is likely to last temporary and could easily be supplanted by seeing another cool ad a week later.

2.3.3 Uses and gratifications theory

The Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) was first introduced in the 1940s as researchers looked into why people choose to consume different types of media. In the 1970s, researchers turned their attention to the outcomes of media use and the social and psychological needs that media gratified (Katz et al., 1973). Today, the theory is often credited to sociologist Elihu Katz' work in 1973. According to UGT, the audience is said to have full control over the effect of media on them as the media can be chosen by the audience themselves. There are five basic areas of human gratifications. First, *affective needs* refer to the emotional satisfaction and pleasure people derive from using media. People identify with the characters in media and empathize with the emotions they display. Second, the *cognitive needs*, where people use media to get information and fulfill their mental and intellectual needs. People utilize both analog and digital media to learn about news and keep up with current events. Third, the *social integrative need* is a person's use of Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and Facebook to mingle and interact with others. People also use media to improve their social relationships by searching subjects to discuss with their contacts. Fourth, *personal integrative needs* refer to how media consumption helps people in the formation and consolidation of their identity. For example, when watching an ad, one might learn about current trends that they adapt to their lifestyle to blend in with others. During media consumption, people also emulate the actions of certain characters that appeal to people as role models. Fifth, *tension-free needs* refer to the tensions that people may have in their lives that they do not want to face to which they turn to media for relief.

A more recent study on UGT by Song et al. (2004), however, found seven gratifications for media use which are different from the traditional five as defined by previous researcher Katz. These seven areas are: *information seeking*, *aesthetic experience*, *monetary compensation*, *diversion*, *personal status*, *relationship maintenance*, and *virtual community*. *Information seeking* refers to getting useful information, getting immediate knowledge of big news or announcements or learning about community events, for example. The *aesthetic experience* relates to seeing attractive graphics, finding new interactive features, experiencing an easily navigable web page, or seeing pages with pleasant color schemes. *Monetary compensation* has to do with, for instance, people getting products for free and finding ways to make more money or save money by finding discounts on products and services. The fourth area of *diversion* is about feeling excited, entertained, relaxed, and having

fun while using online platforms. The gratification of *personal status* relates to finding information that reflects one's personal culture or improving future prospects in their lives. *Relationship maintenance* focuses on getting in touch with people they know or even trying to get in contact with someone who is hard to reach. Lastly, the *virtual community* need is especially interesting because it could be considered a new gratification as it can only be done using relatively new technology and media. This can be recognized by people using media platforms to feel like they belong to a group, get support from others, develop romantic relationships, meeting new friends, or finding more interesting people than in real life. Nowadays, we know because of the emergence of social media and search engines, UGT actually has become even more relevant than before. The study by Molek and Morrissey (2020) provides numerous real-world and current examples of how UGT might be utilized in social media and public relations today. One of the examples provided is about a company that republishes user's photos and tagging them in these posts, through which the company satisfies users' personal integrative needs at the same time as satisfying the audience's tension-free needs by providing exciting content.

The key terms of this theoretical framework consist of the global cosmetics industry, social media and influencer marketing, and the interpretation of social media motivations, each followed by accompanying sub concepts. All three of these key perspectives provide more solid background knowledge on the topic and are relevant to answer the research question. This study can add to the discussion and the existing literature by providing new, useful insights on the topic and can fill the research gap whether the social media strategy of this particular brand has its wished for effect on its audience.

3 Methodology

In this chapter, the methodological decisions to complete the collection of data and the analysis of the data to answer the research question are explained. The first part of this chapter will delve into the reasons for choosing the qualitative research methods of in-depth interviews and participant observation to conduct this study. Next, the sampling procedure is discussed along with a description of the 5 participants who took part in the research. Furthermore, the research question is operationalized to describe how the topic of experiences with social media pages was made observable. Lastly, the measures taken to ensure trustworthy and fruitful findings are described.

3.1 Research design

For this research, a qualitative approach was most plausible because this research aims to explore students' experiences with Fenty Beauty's social media accounts and the consumer behavior that comes forth from it. The study of experiences is the element of the research question which makes a qualitative research approach useful to formulate an answer. A qualitative approach will enable us to get a better understanding of details and patterns within individuals behavior that quantitative research approaches cannot (Boeije, 2012). Qualitative research explores how people create meaning from the messages that are communicated through mass media products (Brennen, 2022). In contrast to quantitative research, qualitative research does not generalize findings on a large population but aims to understand how individual people create meaning from a text or image for example. This type of research enables us to gain insights into how the participants perceive a phenomenon which then leads to a better understanding of the meaning of that phenomenon. Digital ethnography as a data-gathering method particularly enables us to gain practical insights into the participants' usage behavior. In this study, digital ethnography includes participant observation on social media as well as five in-depth interviews. The main reason for choosing digital ethnography in this study, is due to its exploratory nature (Reeves et al., 2013). With digital ethnography as the research approach, the researcher goes into the field to explore certain social interaction and, therefore, facilitates an approach in which thick descriptions of social phenomena lead to the development of answers to the research question. As described by Reeves et al. (2013), online ethnography, or digital ethnography, uses the internet to gather and analyze data while maintaining the traditional approach of ethnography. This makes digital ethnography an

appropriate approach to research the online practices of both Fenty Beauty and the online interactions of the participants of this study. Digital ethnography is particularly useful when trying to describe and explore a new, lesser known phenomenon. Considering the exploration of the use of recent social media marketing tactics on Instagram and TikTok, but also the fairly new development of inclusivity in the cosmetics industry, digital ethnography is a suitable approach.

3.1.1 Participant observation as a research method

Participant observation as a research method is useful to collect data or to recognize effects that occur during research to which ongoing behavior is observed (Kawulich, 2005). This qualitative method studies people in their natural habitat and is useful in the case of identifying a setting, group norms, and patterns, which allows for deeper qualitative research. Furthermore, participant observation can be used to help answer descriptive research questions. In practice, participant observation entails that the researcher gains access to establish social relationships while they listen, watch, and take notes. It also allows for comparison to see if participants are doing something different from what they say they do in, for example, interviews. For this particular research, the participants' activity on the Fenty Beauty TikTok and Instagram pages was observed to find out how the participants interact with the posts and which types of posts they interact with. This research method is applicable and useful to answer the research question as it was interesting to, on the one hand, analyze what the participants say they do during the interviews and how they say they interact with the brand, versus the observation of their actions which I observed.

3.1.2 In-depth interviews as a research method

An individual's experience and behavior is most effectively understood through interviews. Thus, this study used semi-structured interviews as the qualitative data collection method. This method will help the researcher to better understand the participants' experiences with engaging with company owned social media and their opinions on this which are essential to understand their motivations to take the step to actually purchase the promoted products. Semi-structuring the interviews adds to the flow of the conversation because it allows the researcher to prepare the topic list and important questions ahead of the

conversation. Despite this preparation, the participants' responses play a large role in the flow of the conversation, but the topic list will form the common thread throughout the interviews.

This research used semi-structured interviews, meaning all five interviews were conducted using the same interview guide. The interview guide consisted of essential topics and questions. Semi-structured interviews allow for the researcher to prepare the topics and questions ahead of the conversation to support the flow of the interview. Despite the preparations made beforehand, the participants still play a large role in the flow of the conversation. The structure of the interview guide started with some icebreakers and introductory questions to understand the participants background and to get the participants comfortable for the remainder of the interview and to create a trusting atmosphere so that the participants felt at ease (see appendix A for the full interview guide). The next section of the interviews were structured around the participants' social media use to better understand the purposes they use social media for, which social media platforms they use, and how much time they spend on social media. In the following part of the interview, the participants' familiarity with the Fenty Beauty brand was discussed through questions regarding their opinion on the brand, their personal experiences shopping this brand and what stands out to them. Lastly, the interview covered the topic of the participants' engagement with Fenty Beauty's TikTok and Instagram pages, delving into their perception of and their experiences with the platform practices. During this part of the interviews, the participants were, for example, asked to scroll through Fenty Beauty's social media pages and were asked what kind of posts make them want to engage and what grabs their attention and why. Thereafter, one Instagram post and one TikTok video were presented to the participants (see appendix B). The participants were asked about their thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of these posts, including thinking about topics like diversity, inclusivity, innovation, and representation.

Overall, the aim of this interview was to engage with the participants' views on Fenty Beauty brand in general, as well as their thoughts on the cosmetics industry, and the platform practices in exploration of why and how they engage with the brand's social media pages.

3.2 Data sampling

For this research, the sample must meet a number of criteria. The participants were selected through purposive sampling which means they were selected on the researchers own judgment. The pre-existing network of the researcher was used to come in contact with fitting candidates. The researcher reached out to two of her acquaintances through WhatsApp with a

brief message, explaining the study in short and asking a few questions to confirm whether they meet the requirements. The researcher had also posted an Instagram story to find an additional three participants to take part in the research. Many people replied, which gave the researcher the opportunity to carefully select the participants based on the sampling criteria.

An advantage of purposive sampling is that trust is ensured within the participants because they know the researcher personally which enables them to share more accurate information throughout the interviews. All participants had to be between the ages of 21 and 25, studying and living in the Netherlands. To allow for a abundant influx of information related to the activity on and engagement with Fenty Beauty's socials, the participants had to follow Fenty Beauty's pages on these platforms. This thesis analyses user engagement on TikTok and Instagram, therefore, the interviewees had to meet the criteria of having accounts on TikTok and Instagram and be active users of the platforms, using them on a daily basis. Gender was not an important criterion in this sample, because Fenty Beauty is not an exclusively female brand. The research aims to investigate the experiences of students between the age of 21 and 25. The decision for this age group was made because the demographics of the Fenty Beauty consumers are people between the age of 21 and 35.

Participants	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Occupation	Educational level	Date & time
Interviewee 1 Yentl Rooker	24	Female	Dutch	GP assistant	Postgraduate at university	3 May, 2 p.m.
Interviewee 2 Jade Pawiro	24	Female	Javanese/Surinamese	none	Undergraduate at university of applied sciences	5 May, 1 p.m.
Interviewee 3 Chayenne Epskamp	21	Female	Creole/Surinamese	sales representative	Undergraduate at university of applied sciences	7 May, 8 p.m.
Interviewee 4 Lucija Ostojic	22	Female	Dutch/Croatian	marketing coordinator	Undergraduate at university	12 May, 8 p.m.
Interviewee 5: Kane Tran	23	Male	Vietnamese	none	Undergraduate at university	17 May, 5 p.m.

Table 1. Overview of the participants

All five interviews were conducted in person. The five participants were interviewed until saturation was reached, meaning that the interview was stopped when new data did not lead to new findings. Four of the participants were female and 1 participant was male. All participants lived in the Netherlands, but they each have different ethnicities (see table 1 for

the full participant overview). The participants ages ranged from 21 to 25 with the average of the participants being 24 years old. All participants were university or university of applied sciences students in different fields like media and entertainment management, medical studies or tourism studies, some of which were working part time next to their studies as well. All participants were familiar with the Fenty Beauty brand and followed Fenty Beauty on both TikTok and Instagram. Additional background information about the participants revealed their ethnic descent as well. This is relevant because it is an indication of whether the participants have light, tan, or dark skin tones and therefore have experienced struggles with finding the right foundation shade. The demographic location of the participants did not vary a lot despite the purposive selection. All participants were Rotterdam, Amsterdam, and The Hague based which made it a lot easier to conduct the interviews in person. Three of the interviews were conducted in English and two of the interviews were conducted in Dutch. Since I am fluent in Dutch, I was able to understand the answers the participants shared with me. However, considering this study is conducted and written in English, the cited responses have been accurately translated into English.

3.3 Operationalization

Within a research, characteristics of a certain subject must be translated into concrete, measurable terms, this is called operationalization. The interview consisted of an elaborate set of questions based on the theoretical framework. Therefore, the questions were categorized in seven categories, which were each derived from the theoretical framework's topics of social media use, social issues, celebrity-owned brands, and motivations to engage. The interview questions were formulated in such a way that the participant eased into the conversation, sharing their knowledge on the topic and sharing their personal experiences.

3.4 Data collection and analysis

3.4.1 Setting

The semi-structured interviews took place from May 3rd to May 17th, 2022, meeting at times convenient for the participants. The interviews took place in cafés or at university campus facilities with little to no background noise. The researcher proposed to conduct the interviews in person, mostly because it is great have the ability to meet someone in person

after the constraints of the pandemic over the past years. The conversations were consensually voice recorded and the consent forms were either signed in person or online. After the interview was conducted, the interview recording was transcribed non-verbatim, excluding all unnecessary speech which allows for a more readable transcript.

3.4.2 Thematic analysis

The qualitative data collection consisted of in-depth interviews and participant observation. All five interviews were transcribed manually without the use of a software. The participant observation field notes were put into a separate document. The most suitable data analysis method for this qualitative research is thematic analysis. Thematic analysis centers around reading through a data set and identifying patterns across the data from which themes emerge. The three coding steps as explained by Boeije (2012) were followed. The first step in the coding process was open coding which helped segmenting the data. This was done through highlighting sections in the transcripts that were relevant to answer the research question. The second step is axial coding, during which the highlighted phrases are thematically clustered into subcategories. The third and final step is selective coding which formed the coding tree (see appendix C). This coding tree reveals the most relevant topics among the data.

3.5 Ethics, reliability and validity

3.5.1 Ethics

To ensure ethical considerations, a short discussion took place before each interview, after which all participants signed the consent form (see appendix D). Participants were verbally informed and asked to confirm their consent with the form. The consent form clarified the purpose of the research as well as the rights and obligations of both parties. On top of that, confidentiality and privacy were always respected, though all participants felt comfortable enough sharing their identity for the purpose of study. Furthermore, considering the expectation of discussions about racial diversity and racial representation, the researcher ensured to have read into the topic to be conscious and aware of people's thoughts and feelings as this could possibly be a sensitive topic to some participants.

3.5.2 Reliability

Reliability in qualitative research refers to replicability and consistency of certain measurements (Golafshani, 2003). Consistency in qualitative research is quite difficult to measure compared to quantitative research because in interviews, for example, if you interview the same person twice with the same questions, the participant is unlikely to answer these questions exactly the same both times. However, to ensure a certain level of reliability, the participants were asked similar questions during different parts of the interviews to check whether their answers are similar. On top of that, the participant observation part of the research also ensures reliability as the participants were unaware of being observed, which ensures that they do not act any different for the purpose of the study meaning the researcher gathers realistic data.

3.5.3 Validity

Validity refers to whether the measurements in the qualitative research are measuring what it is supposed to measure (Golafshani, 2003). Three types of bias can pose a threat to validity: respondent bias, researcher bias, and reactivity. Respondent bias refers to a situation where the participants are not giving you honest responses for any reason from feeling that the topic is threatening to their self-esteem or feeling that they want to please the researcher by giving answers they think the researcher is looking for. Researcher bias refers to the influence of the researcher's previous knowledge and assumptions on the topic which can potentially be a dangerous and a risk factor in the study. Reactivity refers to the role of myself as a researcher and the influence my physical presence in the research and its possible influence on the data on what the participants say. In order to minimize the potential influence of these three types of bias on the study Neuman and Robson (2014) and Long and Johnson (2000) suggest a couple of strategies to deal with threats to validity. First, prolonged involvement ensures that the researcher is being involved in the research situation in the participants' environment which is likely to result and increase in the level of trust between the researcher and the participants which in turn is likely to reduce the risk of respondent bias and reactivity as the researcher generates a common sense of trust. Respondent bias in this study was reduced through this strategy as the interviewer was in close contact with the participants throughout the course of the study, updating them on what they can expect from the study, the progress of the study, and how their input was going to be incorporated. This way, they did

not feel more involved in the process rather than just for providing the answers to my questions. Second, triangulation refers to many things including translation of data and triangulation of theory where your compare what is emerging from your own data to previous existing theories. In this research, this is simply done by connecting the results to the theoretical framework to see how it differs from or confirms the existing theory which either diminishes or strengthens the argument. Third, peer debriefing refers to input or feedback from other people. The feedback and criticism that you will receive as a researcher helps you become more objective and helps you see and become aware of certain limitations of the study. The researcher asked her peers to proof read sections of the thesis to ensure that researcher's bias was decreased as much as possible. When someone else understands the criteria a thesis has to meet, they can form a critical opinion which will help the researcher further strengthen her arguments and take out the possible biased arguments. Fourth, member checking refers to the practice of seeking clarification with your participants by asking them certain things before you, as a researcher, jump into conclusions and describe your interpretation of that data. This was done by the researcher by asking for clarification after the interview took place when needed during the process of transcribing or coding to get a better understanding of how or why things were said. During the interview itself, follow-up questions were also asked to instantly clarify the answers or deepening the answers that were given by the participants.

4 Results

In this chapter, the results of the qualitative thematic analysis of the interviews and the participant observation will be presented. The chapter is built up as follows: the first part of the chapter aims to answer the first sub-question, the second part of the chapter aims to answer the second sub question, both supported by presenting the findings from interviews and field notes, accompanied by corresponding quotes and images. The sub chapters are based on the themes that emerged from the thematic coding process performed on the participants interview answers and helped discover the deeper meanings behind their answers as well as the field notes that were taken. Through this process, a more accurate reflection on the participants answers emerged.

The first part of the chapter, answering the first sub-question, consists of the following subthemes: the look and feel of the Fenty Beauty brand, inclusivity and representation, entertainment and pleasure, and Fenty Beauty and famous people. The second part of the chapter, answering the second sub-question, consists of the following subthemes: the use of Rihanna's celebrity status, the use of polls and quizzes, the use of Millennial language, the use of viral trends, and the use of celebrities and influencers.

4.1 Motivations for Dutch students to engage with Fenty Beauty

This part of the chapter will present the results that are relevant to answer the first sub question: *What motivates Dutch students between the age of 21 and 25 to engage with Fenty Beauty on TikTok and Instagram?*

4.1.1 The look and feel of the Fenty Beauty brand

A major theme that was identified among the participants responses when discussing their interest in Fenty Beauty represents the look and feel of Fenty Beauty as a brand. Participants instantly associated the brand with a clean look and feel, a coherent whole, and innovation. From her personal experience shopping Fenty Beauty products, Yentl (24, student in medicine of Dutch descent) expressed that her strong feelings about the brand's identity come forth from the coherence in the brand image. She explains that the Fenty Beauty brand is easily recognizable by its soft pink color scheme and its clean look and feel both online and in-stores (see figure 2 and figure 3).
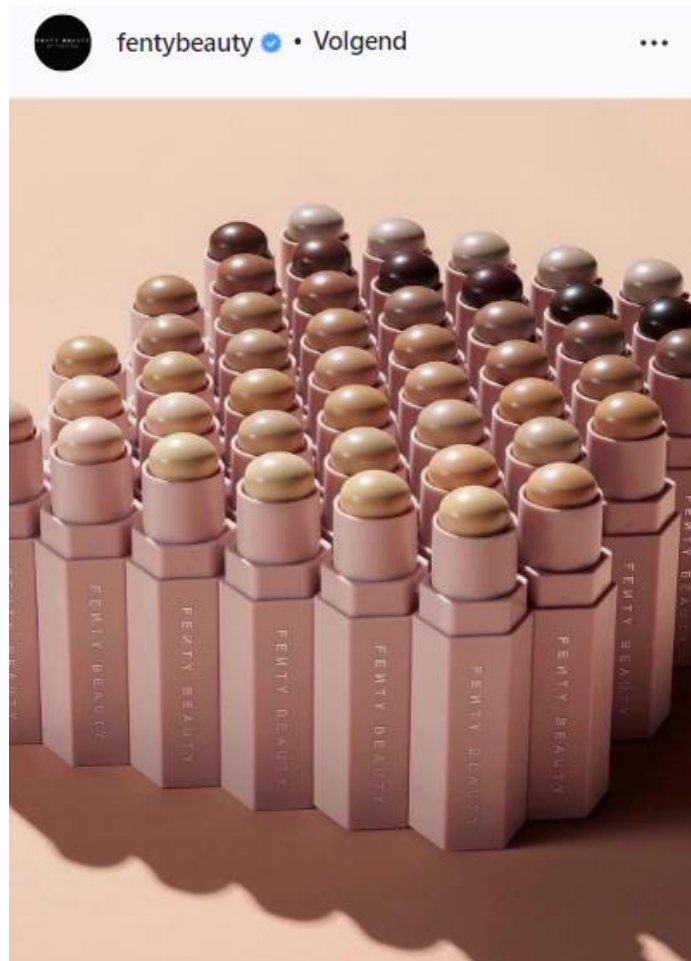
Figure 2. Representative post of product

Figure 3. Example of in-store Fenty Beauty display

Moreover, all participants mentioned that one of their reasons for following Fenty Beauty on Instagram is because they put a lot of effort into making their posts a coherent whole. The participants described that this theme runs throughout the Instagram feed posts, the Instagram stories, the Instagram reels, and the TikTok videos which makes their content easily recognizable and the feed as a whole pleasing to look at. The participants cultivated their impression of the brand's look and feel by observing the social media pages as well as their personal experience shopping the brand online and in stores.

Altogether, there was an observable pattern in the participants' descriptions of Fenty Beauty's look and feel. This pattern supports the aesthetic experience, one of the seven gratifications of the UGT as described by Song et al. (2004). All participants described cases in which the aesthetic experience plays an important role in their interest in Fenty Beauty and in their motivations to follow the brand on several social media platforms.

4.1.2 Inclusivity and representation

The second motivation that emerged from the interview data was that of Fenty Beauty's inclusivity. This theme describes the participants perception of the brands' inclusivity and representation. The participants were asked to briefly scroll through the Fenty Beauty TikTok page and Instagram page and were asked to, in their own words, describe what elements stand out to them (see figure 4 and figure 5). The participants all described the brand with words such as inclusive, diverse, LGBTQ+ friendly, creative and innovative. The participants felt that the brand is aiming for the establishment of a new beauty standard that is more inclusive and representative of the world community. In both figure 4 and figure 5, it is evident that a wide variety of skin colors, genders, and sexualities are represented. This can be clearly understood from Jade (24, student in media and entertainment management of Surinamese/Javanese descent) who stated about Fenty Beauty:

I feel like Fenty Beauty has been doing a lot of research on makeup for people with tinted to dark skin. Personally, I really like this because it has always been difficult to find the right beauty products for people with my skin color. For example, you can do a test on their website where you click on the models whose skin resembles yours. After answering the questions about your skin texture they will show you products that suit your skin best.
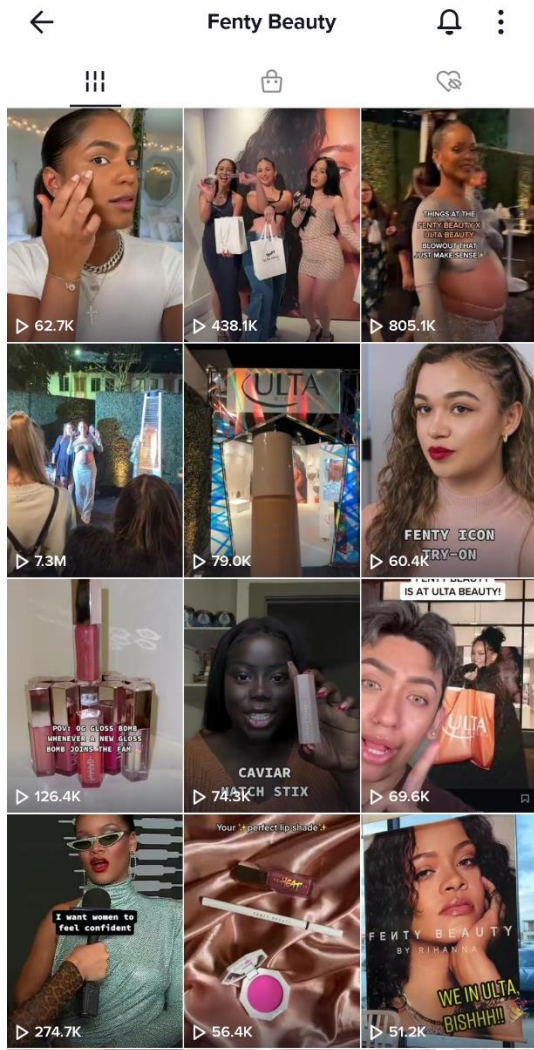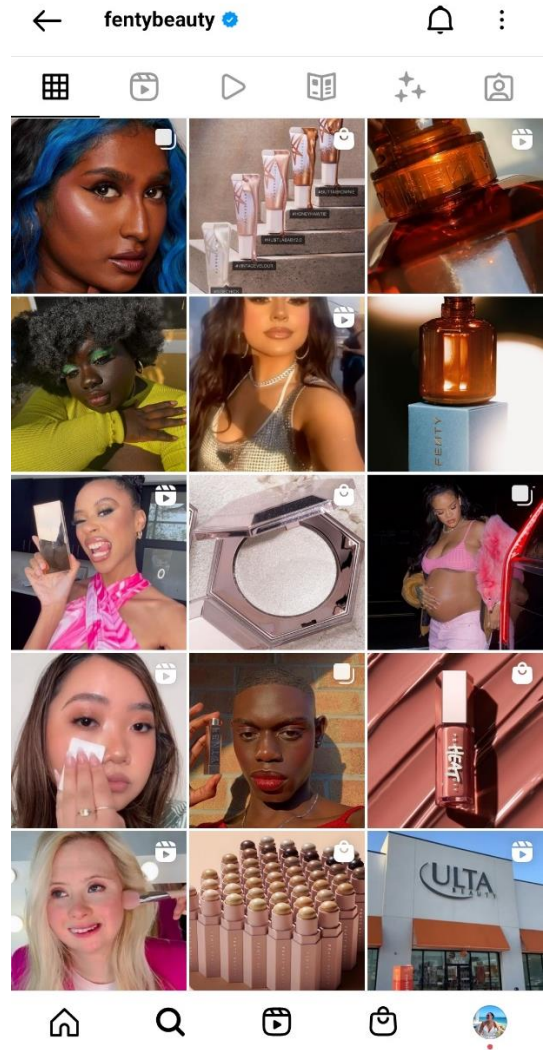
Figure 4. Screenshot of TikTok feed

Figure 5. Screenshot of Instagram feed

With Jade explaining that she personally experienced being able to easily buy a product that fits her skin tone, she confirms the problematic issue with the existing established make up brands of which the shade range is not at all inclusive. The standards set by these established brands impose unrealistic beauty standards that praise people with lighter and tan skin over people with dark skin. Meanwhile, the racial representation of Fenty Beauty was experienced as setting more realistic and representative standards for people of all skin tones. All interviewees confirmed that these established make up brands do not represent a wide range of skin tones, but most of them also confirmed that these brands mainly target women in their campaigns. Though women were traditionally seen as the only gender who uses make up, this time has passed for a while. More and more we see a shift in who wears make up and who does not. Nowadays, we see both men, women, and non-binary people wear and enjoy make up. All interviewees individually mentioned that their inclusivity of all genders and

sexualities is another reason for them to support the brand. For example, Lucija (23, media and communication student of Dutch/Croatian descent) mentioned that representation of the LGBTQ+ community is rarely seen and represented in the traditional established make up brands and Fenty Beauty is therefore "a true embodiment of their motto Beauty For All as they truly support and represent such a wide variety of people" and lead to both men, women, trans people to be "seen and feel more secure and confident in expressing their identity", as she explains.

Even though two out of the five participants have a light skin tone, suggesting they have not experienced struggles finding matching make up for themselves, these interviewees expressed their disagreement with the beauty standard that existing make up brands were setting onto the society for years. Yentl (24, medical student of Dutch descent) showed clear disappointment in the cosmetics industry saying "it's just embarrassing at this point to see brands holding on to their ever so light foundation shades, fully ignoring all other skin tones", hereby showing how she regularly experiences the blunt and sort of care free presentation of brands' light range of foundation shades. In contrast, she says, Fenty Beauty's page represents people of all skin tones "effortlessly" and "with an accurate balance and representation of all skin tones without seeming to try hard". Similarly, Lucija (23, media and communication student of Dutch/Croatian descent) also feels way more comfortable shopping at Fenty Beauty and talking about the brand to her friends of color knowing they can buy from them too without having to think about finding a shade that suits their skin tone or supporting a brand that is unsupportive of people of color.

Besides racial representation and gender representation, the participants also consider the brand to be very body positive. Though make up is mainly applied to the face, established make up brands have lacked representation and inclusivity of people with all body types as well. Again, conforming an unrealistic beauty standard often portraying women to all be skinny, fit, with a small waist. This finding reveals the need for inclusivity in all forms, showing it is not just an issue of racial representation or gender representation, but also an issue of representation of all body types. Chayenne (21, social work student of Creole/Surinamese descent) expressed the negative effect that the lack of representation in body types has, even on make-up pages where it does not seem as relevant at first: "it used to bother me so much that I don't look like the models in the make-up advertisements when I was younger". The introduction of Fenty Beauty with campaigns including men and women of all shapes and sizes led her to "feel beautiful and recognized as being beautiful".

This resonates with the one of the original human gratifications as proposed by Katz (1974). Katz describes the personal integrative needs as being one of the reasons for people to consume different types of media. Together with the later UGT theory gratification of personal status as described by Song et al. (2004), which describes how people can utilize media to find information that reflects their personal culture, the arguments made by the some of the participants about them feeling that their culture, skin tone, body type, and sexuality is represented and included in Fenty Beauty's platform practices.

4.1.3 Entertainment and pleasure

Throughout the interviews, it became evident that almost all participants enjoy following and engaging with Fenty Beauty on Instagram and TikTok because their posts are entertaining and fun to look at. Kane (23, culture studies student of Vietnamese descent), for example, answered the following when asked about the Instagram post during the interview:

Fenty Beauty is so up to date with all relevant trends and trending TikTok sounds which makes their posts so entertaining. I also love the fact that they ask for their followers opinion through polls on Instagram stories and they always add such funny and playful captions within their posts. It just feels so different from traditional make up brands and they really try to entertain us in a way that other brands don't.

Participants Yentl (24, student in medicine of Dutch descent) and Lucija (23, media and communication student of Dutch/Croatian descent) shared similar opinions about how the brand's social posts often do not feel as if they are promoting their products but rather want to provide their followers with fun content which possibly makes them want to buy the product. These findings relate to the affective needs as discussed by Katz (1974) which covers the emotional satisfaction that people get from using media as well as the pleasure people derive from it. The tension-free needs from Katz' gratifications also connect to the arguments made by the participants as they follow the Fenty Beauty pages as an entertaining, relaxing medium that takes away from the seriousness they face elsewhere in their lives.

4.1.4 Fenty Beauty and famous people

Because Fenty Beauty is a celebrity-owned brand, part of the interview consisted of questions regarding the fact that global superstar Rihanna is the owner and face of the brand. When getting asked whether this influences their opinion of the brand or their motivations of liking and following the brand, the participants' responses were not uniform. About half of the participants like the fact that it is Rihanna's brand, but admit that they would still buy from the brand if it was not hers due to their experience with the high quality of these products. The other half of participants had never cared about the brand being Rihanna's and simply buy the products because they like the quality, look and feel, and wide range of variety of the products. All participants admitted to be very skeptical about the quality of the brand mainly because, in the past, they have experienced that other celebrity-owned brands were supported and promoted by many, simply because of the celebrities' name, but in reality, promoted very disappointing and sometimes low quality products. Yentl (24, student in medicine of Dutch descent) described her personal experience shopping from celebrity Kylie Jenner's make up line named Kylie Cosmetics and said the "quality is pretty poor and it was just so overrated only because it had her name on it" and added that "people won't admit it because they want to support her regardless". The participants' skepticism about these celebrity brands is in contrast with the argument by Kennedy et al. (2021) which claims that people tend to perceive celebrity-owned brands as more authentic because of the celebrities' long term involvement in the creation of the brand. However, all participants did admit that Fenty Beauty is an exception of a celebrity-owned brand that did not disappoint and has kept its promises so far.

Another aspect that came to light was the incorporation of influencers and celebrities other than Rihanna. The Fenty Beauty posts include many influencers and celebrities whom use and wear the products which for some of the participants is another reason to engage with their socials. The literature by Muda et al. (2014) suggests that the presence of a celebrity affects people's opinion of a brand positively which, in this case, is true because the participants claim to stay interested and engaged with the brand because of the presence of the familiar faces they see on Fenty Beauty's social pages. These posts do not explicitly say that it is a collaborations between Fenty Beauty and the celebrity or influencer, however, it is generally known amongst the participants that most influencers and celebrities get a PR package with which they can try out the new products and post about them. However, they all mentioned that, because the collaboration is not "overdone or exaggerated" it does not feel as

much as if the celebrities and influencers are selling themselves out as the literature by Kennedy et al. (2021) suggests.

To answer the first sub-question of *What motivates Dutch students between the age of 21 and 25 to engage with Fenty Beauty on TikTok and Instagram?* The research has shown that there are four main reasons for the participants to engage with Fenty Beauty's socials. The first and most-important point mentioned by all participants was the brand identity. All participants mentioned that the brand exhales confidence and strength with a clear message. The consistent theme that runs throughout the shopping experience both on- and offline, together with the product packaging and the online presence of the brand account for one of the reasons why all participants think highly of the brand. The second most-important element of the brand was the inclusivity and representation the brand holds. Most of the participants identified as people of color and have felt underrepresented in the cosmetics industry in their lives. On top of that, all participants claimed to be aware of societal issues concerning inequality based on race, gender, and sexuality and address this as a reason to support Fenty Beauty. The next reason that emerged among the interview data was that of entertainment and pleasure. Because the Fenty Beauty posts on Instagram and TikTok are also entertaining to a certain extent, the participants turn to these posts to unwind from their daily activities and to have a laugh. This was mostly expressed about the content on TikTok though the Instagram stories and reels were also seen as a form of entertainment. Lastly, the incorporation of famous people, being both influencers and celebrities, were a motivation for many of the participants to engage with Fenty Beauty as well. Recognizing familiar faces of people whom they follow, are fans of, or look up to helps building trust in the brand and adds an extra layer of familiarity.

4.2 Fenty Beauty's approaches to engagement

This part of the chapter will present the results that are relevant to answer the second sub question: *How does Fenty Beauty engage with their followers on TikTok and Instagram?*

4.2.1 Use of Rihanna's celebrity status

According to findings from the field notes, the presence of Rihanna in an Instagram or TikTok feed post automatically leads to a higher number of views and a higher number of

likes and comments on the post. Whereas, for example, product posts or posts that contain influencers perform less well and generate less engagement with the followers. This is in line with what most participants claimed about what type of content they prefer. Kane (23, culture studies student of Vietnamese descent) stated the following about why he prefers content that contains Rihanna:

I love seeing posts where Rihanna tries on the make up herself. Knowing the brand is hers it's obviously not an objective opinion, but I just love the feeling of being able to buy something that she uses as well and that sort of makes me look like her in a way too.

This is consistent with what has been found in previous studies by Goldsmith et al. (2000), Muda et al. (2014), Saldanha et al. (2018), and Scheinbaum (2017), claiming that celebrities have perceived expertise and credibility, and that consumers pay more attention to content with celebrities because they often want to be like them or live a similar lifestyle.

4.2.2 Use of polls and quizzes

From both the participant observation and field notes, it became clear that polls and quizzes play a large role in the social media marketing strategy of Fenty Beauty. For the release of each of the new products, many Instagram stories are shared containing polls, answer boxes, quiz questions, and such. It is notable that the use of these particular affordances of Instagram and TikTok are rarely discussed as strategies to engage with followers suggesting that these functions are irrelevant. In contrast, these affordances make it possible to give the followers a feeling of being heard and a feeling of being included in the decision-making processes. Fenty Beauty for example posted an Instagram (see figure 6) with a poll, asking the followers which shade they like most, followed by four answer options. Once the Instagram user has casted his or her vote, percentages show up for each of the answer questions which allows for the user to see which shades are more or less popular amongst other Fenty Beauty users and creates a sort of community feeling. This confirms one of the points of the UGT as described by Song et al. (2004) who stated that a motivation for people to interact or engage with content is to feel a sense of belonging to a community. In another Instagram story post, Fenty Beauty asks their followers what they believe the next product launch is going to be, providing an answer box for people to make their guess, again,

interacting with them and making use of the affordances of Instagram stories as observed in the field observation.
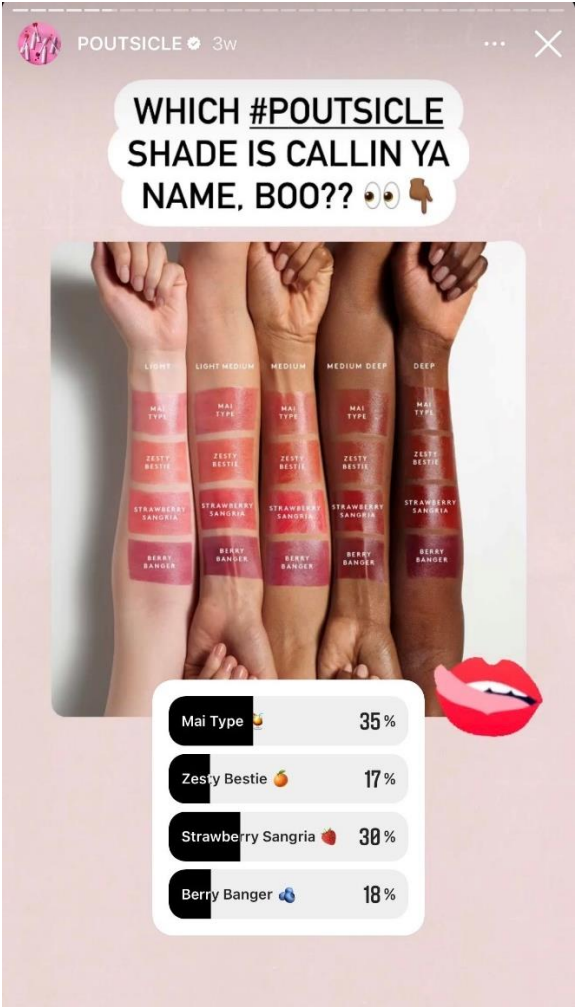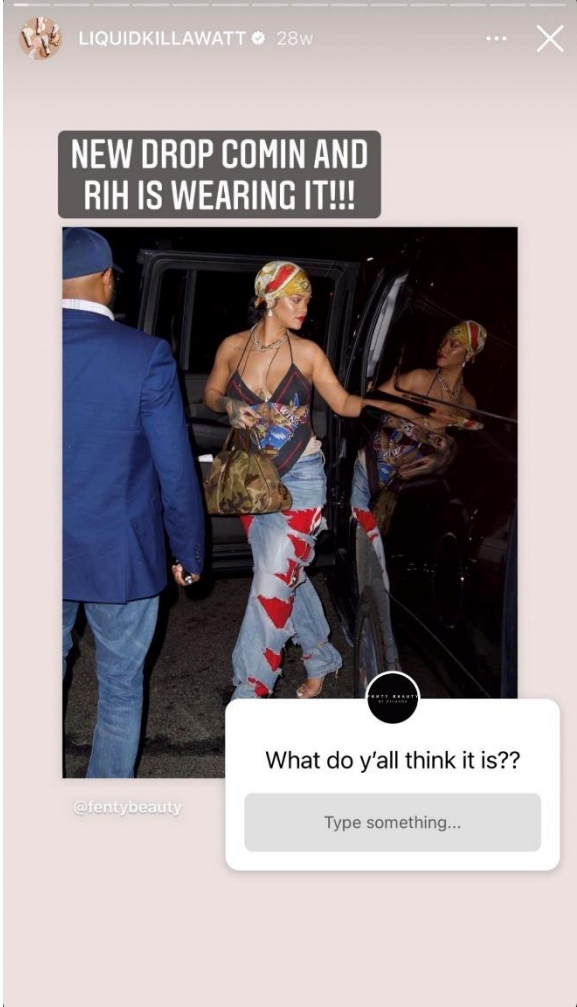

Figure 6: Screenshot of Instagram story

Figure 7: Screenshot of Instagram story

4.2.3 Use of Millennial language

A promising finding that emerged from the field notes is that a lot of the engagement, particularly the placement of comments by Fenty Beauty's followers comes forth from the language that is used in the captions. All captions contain phrases or words that are popular among the younger generation such as "slay", a "flawless beat", "come thru", "we comin' in HAWT', and so on (see figure 8 and figure 9). These types of phrases are made up by and mainly used by Millennials, showing that the social media team puts in a lot of effort to speak to the Millennial target audience and connect with them. Jade stated the following about the

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captions written along Fenty Beauty's posts when she explained why she enjoys interacting with their social media content:

Their captions start off with an exciting, fun and relatable quote in combination with emoji's. Also, this might sound like a minor thing, but with them it 9 out of 10 times does not feel like a promo post if you know what I mean. Their captions are so catchy and funny and then a few lines down they name the actual product and where to buy it like they did in this post.

fentybeauty That golden hour glow hit different! ☀️ 🤩 @hernameisgeorgie's skin lookin hella good with our NEW + LIMITED EDITION #TOASTDSWIRL Bronze Shimmer Powder droppin on 6/17! ✨

Get into our NEW-Limited Edition CHEEK HUGGING BRONZER BRUSH, a super plush brush that makes it easy to bring shimmering warmth to your cheeks and bawdy for an all over bronzed glo! Pairs perfectly with our two silky, butta-like shades, #CHOCOLATESWILLER a champagne bronze shimmer & #PECANSWILLER a gold bronze shimmer. 🙌

Figure 8: Screenshot of Instagram caption

fentybeauty OHKAY 😍 @kyrakillaa BRINGIN THE MF ENERGYYYYY! 👏 Wearin #POUTSICLE in #ZESTYBESTIE ➡️ #BERRYBANGER ➡️ #STRAWBERRYSANGRIA ➡️ #MAITYPE, dip into this awl day, juicy hydration. 💦

This formula features an oil-in-water innovation with squalene, in a range of vibrant shades that pop off on every skin tone! 🙌🙌🙌🙌

Tap into the #AllDayJuicy challenge and show us your best Fenty Girl Summer transformations. Be sure to use this audio on Reels and TikTok, boos! 🔥

Figure 9: Screenshot of Instagram caption

Most of the participants confirmed that their use of language is refreshing and differs a lot from the ways in which the existing beauty brands communicate with their followers. The participants mention they feel heard and recognized, but also that the message comes through to them better. Two of the participants mentioned that they see other brands taking on that same strategy and letting loose of the more "stiff" and "formal" way of communicating, but recognize Fenty Beauty as one of the first, if not the first, brand take on this approach. All participants agreed on this approach ensuring that the posts do not feel very promotional, but rather entertaining. Field observation shows that all of the captions start of with a short funny

or trendy line accompanied by hashtags and emojis, followed by an empty line, followed by a call to action phrase that asks the follower to share the post or buy the product. Participant observation showed that two of the participants placed comments under posts using similar language. With these comments, they mostly expressed their support for the brand or the person in the post, always using phrases similar to the ones stated earlier along with a number of emojis.

4.2.4 Use of viral trends

Another one of Fenty Beauty's strategies to make their content engaging is the implementation of viral trends. This content particularly takes place on TikTok, where the brand posts content using sounds that went viral or creating videos that are trendy at that moment in time. Yentl (24, student in medicine of Dutch descent) stated the following about Fenty Beauty's TikTok strategy when she was asked what type of content she enjoys engaging with:

> *What I really like about the TikTok page of Fenty Beauty is that they engage with the current trends and they use the popular sounds of that moment because on TikTok as most people know, some sounds are very popular to use at a certain point in time and they make use of that by creating videos with that sounds.*

Field notes have revealed that besides the content that contains Rihanna, the most liked and commented on content on TikTok is the videos in which viral sounds are used or viral trends are performed.

4.2.5 Use of celebrities and influencers

The field observation also revealed that the most liked posts on the social media pages were those that contained influencers or celebrities including Rihanna herself. These posts included make up tutorials done by influencers, make up looks on red carpets worn by celebrities, and content of Rihanna wearing the brand herself. The present study partially confirmed both older and more recent theories by Goldsmith et al. (2000), Thomson (2006), and Wang and Scheinbaum (2017) about the use of celebrities. Though the posts with influencers generate a lot likes and comments, this does seem to depend on the person

because interview data has revealed that not all participants were interested in seeing content from influencers, whereas other participants found it an extra motivation to engage with the posts.

To answer the second research question of *How does Fenty Beauty engage with their followers on TikTok and Instagram?* It is evident that use of Rihanna's celebrity status is the brand's main effort to generate engagement. The brand regularly posts content containing Rihanna and her personal Instagram page is closely linked to the brand's social media pages. Second, the brand makes use of the affordances of Instagram and TikTok and do not seize to make use of functions such as polls, question and answer boxes, Instagram reels and stories, and so on. Interview data has revealed that this is actively used by the participants as well and the extra layer of engagement rather than just liking or commenting on a post. Third, the use of language in all of their communication is key in attraction its audience. Both the field and participant observation as well as the interview data has revealed that Fenty Beauty's choice of language is essential in the formation of a bond between the brand and its audience. Fourth, the use of viral trends has shown to be an important strategy of the brand. Taking part in the viral trends ensures that the brand stays up to date and relatable to its target audience. Its target audience is familiar with such content and appreciates the brands efforts to create fun and relevant content. Lastly, The use of celebrities and influencers are an important strategy for Fenty Beauty to generate engagement because incorporating other people with large numbers of followers automatically draws these followers to the brand itself. Also, participant observation and interview data has revealed that the presence of familiar faces ensures trust within the brand.

5   Conclusion

This study was set out to explore how Dutch students between the age of 21 and 25 years old experience the platform practices of Fenty Beauty on both Instagram and TikTok. The main goal of the current study was to determine these experiences through two sub-questions which represented the motivations for the participants to engage with the brand as well as the exploration of what the Fenty Beauty platform practices entail. The study has identified that efforts made Fenty Beauty are clearly recognized by the participants in this study. Much overlap was found in the motivations for the participants to engage with Fenty Beauty and the digital media strategy as performed by Fenty Beauty. With Rihanna being the face of the brand, the brand has had a head start gaining brand awareness. However, the implementation of their social media strategy on Instagram and TikTok certainly have taken the brand's identity to the next level. The results of this investigation show that the platform practices are experienced by the participants as extremely exclusive and representative and are a "breath of fresh air" for the beauty industry. Their unconventional way of using casual language to connect with their followers, together with the wide representation and inclusivity of people from all over the world not only on their social media pages, but in their product lines as well are reasons for the participants to continue following the brand.

The study confirms existing theories of the elaboration likelihood model, as well as the uses and gratifications theory. Most of the motivations for the participants to engage with the Fenty Beauty social media content could be connected to the theories. This indicates that the strategy as set up by Fenty Beauty is well thought through and is taking into account past successful approaches to advertising. However, it is safe to say that they elevated these strategies making use of the current affordances and functionalities of the social media platforms.

A limitation of this study is that, due to the topic not having been researched as much, a lot of the available sources consisted of previous dissertations by other students whom researched the same topic. Though these contain a lot of interesting insights, it is generally not recommended to use previous dissertations as a basis for a theoretical framework. Furthermore, the modernity of TikTok marketing and the addition of newly released Instagram features lead to little to no available research on the effectiveness of these strategies. Personal knowledge on the affordances of these platforms made it easier to write about, however, backing it up with literature was challenging considering the lack of research done on these specific affordances. Another limitation is that the small sample size did not

allow to interview all people who would have been interesting to include in the research. For example, the sample consisted of four women and one man. Among which were different ethnicities and sexualities, however, it would have been interesting to interview a wider variety of Fenty Beauty followers to gain more insight in the topic.

Further research could usefully explore the extent to which people of all skin colors, genders, and sexualities truly feel represented by the Fenty Beauty brand and whether they find this an accurate representation of their community. Future research could also be conducted to determine the effectiveness of the social media strategies in relation to the purchasing decisions. It would be interesting to examine more closely the link between social media engagement and purchasing intent as high engagement on social media does not instantly mean sales go up. Other types of research could include a comparative study between Fenty Beauty and a more traditional make up brand. Another recommendation for a different type of study could be to investigate Fenty Beauty's digital marketing strategy can be improved, for example by implementing a loyalty scheme where people can get rewarded for repeat purchases within their website or by purchasing through the Instagram shop feature, but also by recommending products to a friend through social media.

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Appendix A – Interview guide

Main Topics	Support Questions
Icebreakers / background info	What is your name and age?
	What level of education did you complete?
	What is your ethnicity?
	What is your occupation?
Social media use	What social media platforms do you use?
	How much time do you spend on these platforms?
	What kind of pages do you mostly follow?
	Based on what do you decide to follow these pages?
Familiarity with social issues	Are you aware of the lack of diversity in the cosmetics industry?
	Have you personally experienced struggles whilst shopping for make up?
Familiarity with Fenty Beauty brand	Are you familiar with Fenty Beauty?
	Do you own any Fenty Beauty products?
	What do you find special about the brand?
	Please name a few reasons why you are interested in the brand?
Celebrity-owned brand	Do you think your interest in the brand has to do with Rihanna being the owner?
	Does Rihanna being the face of Fenty Beauty influence the way you feel about the brand?
Familiarity with Fenty Beauty socials	Do you follow Fenty Beauty on social media?
	Why do you follow them on these platforms?
Motivations to engage with Fenty Beauty socials	What motivates you to follow Fenty Beauty's social media accounts?

	Do you engage with their content?
	Please describe how you engage with their content.
	How often do you engage with their content?
	What can they do to further improve their engagement with you as a follower?
Motivations to buy from Fenty Beauty	Do you feel like the way they portray themselves on their social media accounts encourages you to eventually buy their products?
	Is the visual appeal of the Fenty Beauty social media content driving you to buy from them?

Appendix B – Materials used during interview

Example Instagram post https://www.instagram.com/p/CbiWdPDD1Sr/

Example TikTok post

https://www.tiktok.com/@fentybeauty/video/7074682607908441390?is_copy_url=1&is_from_webapp=v1

Appendix C – Coding tree

Main code	Sub code	Example
Motivations to engage with Fenty Beauty	The look and feel of the brand	*"The product design is so refreshing and easily recognizable"* *"Fenty is so on point with their aesthetic branding, the music and visuals used in the campaigns makes you WANT to buy all of their products"*
	Inclusivity and representation	*"I follow Fenty Beauty because the brand makes me feel heard and represented and I know that they do that for many different communities"* *"I struggled finding fitting make up for my skin tone, I always had to mix shades from other brands to find the right color for me and Rihanna completely changed that shopping experience for me"*
	Entertainment and pleasure	*"Their TikTok's are so fun to watch and very compelling in the sense that they make you want to watch more"* *"The little Q&A's they do on the Instagram stories are a cute way to feel involved"*
	Presence of famous people	*"Well, it's Rihanna's brand first of all so I couldn't help but support"*

Fenty Beauty's approaches to engagement	Use of Rihanna's celebrity status	*"I enjoy seeing content with Rihanna in it most"* *[translated from Dutch] "When you see Rihanna personally wearing the products, my trust in the product goes up because if it's good enough for her, I believe the quality is high"*
	Use of polls and quizzes	*"Replying to the things they put in their stories is so easy and even if they don't do anything with my answer it sort of feels satisfying to be able to kinda influence a decision"* *"When they ask us as followers our opinion on a new release or our preference, it makes me feel so involved somehow"*
	Use of Millennial language	*"The fact that their communication is so casual and easy-going is so chill"* *"You know how brands try to be cool by making silly jokes and stuff? Fenty is actually cool hahah, it doesn't feel forced"*
	Use of viral trends	*"I don't know who runs their social media, but these people are on top of their game! Whenever a new trend on TikTok comes up, they are so quick to create that content as well, lifting along on the popularity of that trend"*

Use of celebrities and influencers	*"To be honest, I'm not really drawn to posts that include influencers at all, it's just not for me"*	
	"Seeing a familiar face of some influencer or celeb who I already follow is so nice. Because I follow him/her already because the person fits my interest or is inspiring to me and to see them using a brand I love makes it even more exciting for me"	

Appendix D – Consent form

CONSENT REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATING IN RESEARCH

FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, CONTACT:

Tarifah Adamus, 457722ta@eur.nl

DESCRIPTION

You are invited to participate in a research about the topic of social media engagement. The purpose of the study is to understand how 18-25 year old students in the Netherlands experience the platform practices of Fenty Beauty on TikTok and Instagram.

Your acceptance to participate in this study means that you accept to be interviewed and be observed while you engage with Fenty Beauty's TikTok and Instagram pages.
In general terms,

- My questions will be related to your social media use, your familiarity with the Fenty Beauty brand, and your motivations to engage with Fenty Beauty's social media content on TikTok and Instagram.
- My observations will focus on your likes, comments, and shares on Fenty Beauty's social media content, particularly on TikTok and Instagram.

Unless you prefer that no recordings are made, I will make an audio recording of the interview.

I will use the material from the interviews and my observation exclusively for academic work, such as further research, academic meetings, and publications.

RISKS AND BENEFITS

A. As far as I can tell, there are no risks associated with participating in this research. I will not use your name or other identifying information in the study. To participants in the study will only be referred to with pseudonyms, and in terms of general characteristics such as age and gender, etc.

B. I am aware that the possibility of identifying the people who participate in this study may involve risks for the participant's reputation and social relations. For that reason- unless you prefer to be identified fully (first name, last name, occupation, etc.) – I will not keep any information that may lead to the identification of those involved in the study. I will only use pseudonyms to identify participants.

You are always free not to answer any particular question, and/or stop participating at any point: Every time I want to accompany you in any activity (such as looking at your likes, comments, stories, and shared content on TikTok and Instagram), I will ask you your permission again.

TIME INVOLVEMENT
Your participation in the interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes. Your participation in participant observation will last for approximately one week. You may interrupt your participation at any time.

PAYMENTS
There will be no monetary compensation for your participation.

PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS
If you have decided to accept to participate in this project, please understand your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. If you prefer, your identity will be made known in all written data resulting from the study. Otherwise, your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS
If you have any questions about your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact -anonymously, if you wish- Programme Coordinator Vera Dullemond, ESHCC, dullemond@eshcc.eur.nl

SIGNING THE CONSENT FORM

If you sign this consent form, your signature will be the only documentation of your identity. Thus, you DO NOT NEED to sign this form. In order to minimize risks and protect your identity, you may prefer to consent orally. Your oral consent is sufficient. Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree that you will participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form.

If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.

Name   Signature   Date

Appendix E – Sample Interview Transcript

Interviewer 0:01

Hi! How are you? Thank you so much for participating in my research. I have already briefly explained it before when I invited you for the interview but my research is on how Dutch students between the age of 21 and 25 experience the platform practices of Fenty Beauty on Instagram and TikTok.

Participant 0:22

Hi, I'm doing great. You're most welcome, I'm happy to be a part of it and am so excited to hear what it's all about.

Interviewer 0:30

That's good to hear, thank you. I would love to hear about your personal experiences and views on the topic. So before we start, I want to go over some formal issues with you. You have already signed the consent form but I would like to get verbal consent from you as well. I would like you to know that you can stop the participation at any point and you may always decide to not answer a question if you do not want to. Do you give your full consent that this interview is going to be recorded and that it will only be used for academic purposes?

Participant 1:01

Yes, I give my full consent to be recorded and for the answers to be used in your thesis.

Interviewer 1:08

Okay, also please remember there are no right or wrong answers, we are just interested in your genuine opinion so feel free to share any thoughts. Are you ready?

Participant 1:17

Yes, for sure.

Interviewer 1:19

Okay good, we'll start off the interview with some introductory questions about yourself, followed by questions about your social media use, your familiarity with the Fenty Beauty

brand, and we'll discuss your engagement with the brands social media pages. So, could you please introduce yourself?

Participant 1:38
Yes, my name is Yentl, I am 24 years old and I live in Amsterdam. I'm into shopping, working out, discovering new hot spots and restaurants, especially in Amsterdam. I originally come from The Hague where I grew up with my parents, younger brother, and older sister but I recently moved to Amsterdam for my studies.

Interviewer 2:00
Oh okay, that's cool. So, what level of education did you complete and which study do you follow? Can you explain a bit more?

Participant 2:07
I currently study medicine at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam. I obtained my Bachelor's degree about one and a half year ago and I am currently doing my clinical rotations at several hospitals. That just means that I'm doing the internships at like, all different departments of he hospital. I'm currently in internal medicine but I will go to the surgery department next. And during this summer, I will go to Aruba for a couple of months to work for the hospital over there. So that's something I'm looking forward to right now. I aspire to become a dermatologist at the end, so I have quite a few years of studying ahead before I get there, but I'm very passionate about it and I'm so convinced it'll be fine.

Interviewer 3:02
Oh that's so amazing and I'm really happy to hear that you're doing something you love so much and it's so exciting to know that you're going to Aruba for the summer, that's really nice. So, what is your ethnicity and where were you born and raised?

Participant 3:18
I am fully Dutch, both my parents are Dutch and I was born and raised in The Hague.

Interviewer 3:24
Okay, cool. And, do you work right now? What is your occupation?

Participant 3:29

Well, in all honesty, I have always worked many jobs next to my studies to always further develop my practical knowledge of the field and I enjoy working to enable myself to fund all the shopping I do and all the vacations and trips I go on with friends. But doing the clinical rotations is pretty much a full time job. It's just.. I'm at the hospital like five days a week for entire days with pretty much no compensation. But this also means I barely have time to work during the week. So, I still work in weekends, sometimes one day, sometimes two, both days. So, I'm actually quite busy right now to make all ends meet.

Interviewer 4:19

Yeah, I can imagine that it's insanely hard and extremely exhausting also to just have, you know, your apartment in Amsterdam, your trip to Aruba, and then also a full time job during the week pretty much. So yeah, I respect that and I appreciate that you scheduled some time to participate in my interview.

Participant 4:41

Yeah, it is what it is but all will be good in the end and I'm excited for that.

Interviewer 4:47

For sure. So, moving on to your social media use. Do you make use of any social media platforms? If so, which ones? And what do you use them for?

Participant 5:02

I use quite a bit of different social media platforms. I'm active on Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and TikTok as well. And LinkedIn. I use Instagram mostly to share my activities and personal posts as well as to stay updated with my friends. Same goes for Snapchat and Facebook. And TikTok is really just entertainment. Though lately it has also really been a source of inspiration to find travel recommendations or restaurant recommendations. I just love that content so much. And sometimes I make my own content with my friends, but I will keep that, like, on my private page so no one else can see it.

Interviewer 5:45

Hahaha, that's really funny. So, it's interesting that you mention that you go to TikTok for recommendations and stuff, because that's really a recent development. Many people still

think that TikTok is this app where 13 year old girls do their dancing choreos and stuff, but it has become so much more than that and really has become something that our generation enjoys too.

Participant 6:12
Yes, for sure.

Interviewer 6:13
So, out of the platforms you mentioned, which ones do you use most?

Participant 6:18
I would say Instagram and TikTok

Interviewer 6:19
Alright, and how much time do you spend on Instagram and TikTok on average?

Participant 6:24
I honestly don't want to know, but it depends on whether it's a weekday or not. During weekdays it's probably like 45 minutes each mostly in the evening before bed time and on the weekends somewhere between one and two hours per platform.

Interviewer 6:43
Okay, hahaha. You don't have to feel embarrassed about that, it's average, maybe even below average. But yeah, you reach 45 minutes to an hour pretty quickly once you start scrolling through TikTok so I can imagine that the same goes for you.

Participant 6:57
That's right. I also have like, this time limit. Like a time limit of 15 minutes per day and then the time limit comes up, like you can't go into the app anymore. And I just say ignore time limit over and over again.

Interviewer 7:21

So, even though you're aware of it, like aware of passing the 15 minutes, it doesn't work anymore. It really has to be blocked from your phone for a little bit, hahaha. So, on your socials, what kind of pages do you mostly follow?

Participant 7:42

I mainly follow my family and friends and I don't necessarily any influencers. But I do like to follow like fashion blogs that post outfits or beauty pages. I also follow some brands that I really like such as Fenty Beauty. Oh and when I say I don't follow influencers, that does not include celebrities. I do follow some celebrities but I'm not sure if they're considered influencers. Are they?

Interviewer 8:12

No, not necessarily, I mean, they can be but they don't have to be. There's plenty of celebs who really do not post any promotional stuff but make their page a true blog of themselves for example. So, what makes you want to follow these, for example beauty and fashion accounts?

Participant 8:34

Yeah so family and friends speak for itself I think. Just to keep up with everyone and everything, especially because I'm so busy and I don't always have time to call and text everyone. The fashion blogs are really as a source of inspiration. Celebrities that I'm invested in I like to follow because they tend to share stuff from their private lives that we otherwise don't get to see. And then brands I follow because I like the aesthetic of a brand or want to stay updated with new releases or discounts and special offers. So yeah, that's it.

Interviewer 9:16

Ok, and do you always own products of the brands you follow or can they just be random brands that you happen to like the aesthetic of?

Participant 9:29

I mean, I don't have to own products from that brand but it often is the case. Except for the designer brands, I don't always own their pieces unfortunately. But a girl can dream right.

Interviewer 9:43

Yes of course, you have to have some sort of goals and visualize what you're working towards right? So, the next section is about your familiarity with the Fenty Beauty brand itself. My first question is pretty obvious, but are you familiar with the brand Fenty Beauty?

Participant 10:01

Yes of course, as I said before I'm really obsessed with their beauty products, so, yes.

Interviewer 10:09

That's really great to hear, I'm sure your opinion will be of great value for my thesis. Do you own any Fenty Beauty products?

Participant 10:17

Yes, for sure! I own many of their products actually. I've bought brushes, bronzer, foundation, concealer, lip gloss, lipsticks, powder, and so on. I used to live in the United States, in New York City for a while and they had like a Sephora on every corner so I went all out. Because it was just obviously available at every corner so I really could not compose myself.

Interviewer 10:46

That is my literal dream! I remember when I visited you I spent about 400 dollars on make up as well just because they offer so many things that we don't have in the Netherlands. It's a good thing we can't get it her. If you were to describe the brand in your own words, how would you describe it?

Participant 11:07

It's like, innovative, unique, they have really cute designs, it's refreshing. Yeah, high quality, it's diverse, and definitely very inclusive.

Interviewer 11:21

Those are some strong words you just mentioned! You also mentioned diversity and inclusivity just now and I definitely also believe that those are definitely the strong pillars of the brand. What do you specifically find special about the brand?

Participant 11:38

When I think of when Fenty Beauty was first announced, I remember the world being so shook with the fact that Rihanna came out with a make up line. And that was at a time where celebrities started side businesses such as a clothing line or cosmetics line all the time so I know people were very skeptical about it. But when they launched, the world was immediately sold because it was so innovative and so inclusive and really breaking the beauty standards that had existed in the beauty industry for so long. Coming out with what is it? Like a hundred shades of foundation right from the start is such a strong move. But what I like most about it is that the quality of the products is so high. Very often when a celebrity comes out with a cosmetics line or a whatever product, the quality is pretty poor and its always just so overrated only because it has the celebs name on it. That's the case with like Kylie Cosmetics and Kylie Skin in my opinion. I once bought some products from Kylie Skin and it was like so disappointing. All the products were so disappointing and I even went full out the first time buying it. I regretted it so much.

Interviewer 13:05

Oh my that's such a waste of money!

Participant 13:07

Yeah such a waste of money, I actually threw the products away because they are just so bad for my skin. And as I mentioned before, I want to become a dermatologist and I always want the best products so I'm not putting any trash on my skin.

Interviewer 13:20

And the problem is that they really market it as if it's the best thing for your skin and as if they work with dermatologists. And they probably do, but…

Participant 13:29

Yes! Yes! And the aesthetics of the product its was looking so cute and nice so yeah, unfortunately that was totally disappointing, but with Fenty Beauty it is totally different. The products are of such high quality and I'm very happy with all the products I bought from them. And definitely none of the other celebrities were able to pull that of until now. We don't know for the future, but for now, Rihanna is the only celebrity who made all her products of

such high quality. So yeah, I'm really happy about that and I definitely want to consume more later.

Interviewer 14:18

Yes I completely understand what you're saying and also the comparison you make with other celebrity brands. So you believe that the maintenance of the quality of the products is very special because it is a celebrity brand also and that doesn't happen too often right?

Participant 14:35

Exactly. And to add to that: I know there's so many people who don't care about Rihanna or aren't fans of her like me but still support and love the brand so much and use its products. So that to me shows that its products are just super trust worthy and not just hyped because Rihanna's name is on there.

Interviewer 14:55

Yeah that is really interesting indeed. Can you maybe name a few other reasons why you are interested in this brand?

Participant 15:06

They are just so refreshing in everything. What I mean by that is that they truly offer products you can't find anywhere else. Buying Fenty is just such an experience because of the 5 million shades and colors you can pick from but also just feeling and smelling and trying out the products is so nice. The packaging and branding is done so nicely too.

Interviewer 15:30

Yeah, exactly. So, you already mentioned that you realize that many supporters of the brand are there because it's Rihanna's brand. Do you think your personal interest in the brand has anything to do with the fact that it is Rihanna's brand? Does the fact that she is the face of the brand influence the way you feel about the brand?

Participant 15:54

At first yes. Because it was announced so greatly it just sparked my interest and she had not released any new music in years at that time so to me it was interesting to see what she had been working on. But now, I don't buy any of the products because I want to support her, I

really get them just because I love the products and use them on a daily basis. If her name and face were to be removed from the entire brand I would still buy the products for sure. I do have to admit that I support diversity and racial representation and that doesn't occur too often in the beauty industry unfortunately. So her being the face of the brand is still very cool to me.

Interviewer 16:41
Yeah that is indeed very very unique. So if you're so invested in buying their products, do you also follow their social media pages? If so, on which platforms do you follow them?

Participant 15:56
I only follow them on TikTok and Instagram

Interviewer 17:00
Okay. I'm not sure if you know this but Fenty Beauty is also very active on YouTube and Facebook. Can you maybe explain why you do or do not follow them on these platforms?

Participant 17:15
They don't really show up for me on those platforms at all. I've never seen them on either of these so maybe their content isn't targeted to me. But also, I don't think I would follow them on there either because that's just not what I use those platforms for. Facebook I mainly use just to stay in contact with friends and family and YouTube I only use to see some work out videos or see some new music videos but not really to look for products. Are their posts the same or what does this look like? Because I've honestly never seen it.

Interviewer 18:04
The YouTube page really contains, you know, a lot of longer videos of like full face make up tutorials using Fenty Beauty products, which are like 10 to 15 minute videos which they obviously can't post on Instagram or TikTok because they're just simply too long. And their Facebook content is pretty much in line with that of Instagram, but then indeed targets the Facebook audience.

Participant 18:31

Oh, that actually sounds really good and helpful just to see some extra make up tutorials can never be bad so maybe I will have a look in the future.

Interviewer 18:43

Yeah, so what you see on Isntagram and TikTok are really these short videos and short make up tutorials and short flashes of how to use this or that product but never an elaborate video of how to do a full face of Fenty Beauty products.

Participant 19:02

And is Rihanna herself in those make up tutorials?

Interviewer 19:06

Yeah sometimes she is, but they also make use of other make up influencers or make up artists who work with Rihanna for example but then do make up on someone else in the tutorial. So, that really shows you that professionals also use Fenty Beauty and are able to create amazing looks with it.

Participant 19:24

Okay, I will definitely have a look once this interview is over.

Interviewer 19:32

So we are going to move on to the motivations to engage with Fenty Beauty socials if you do so at all. We'll figure that out now. So, you already mentioned that you do follow Fenty Beauty on TikTok and Instagram. Can you maybe explain what your motivation is to follow their social media accounts? For example, the social aspect that you like to be part of a community, is it boredom that you scroll through their page, is it your personal identity that makes you feel like you identify with people you see on there, or is it pure entertainment, is it inspiration?

Participant 20:09

Good question… I follow them mainly to stay up to date on their product releases but also really because they have such nice content. I always like it when you can tell a brand puts effort into the way their page looks and that they make sure the content they put out is

entertaining for their followers. Fenty does that so well because they make such fun TikTok's and are so on point in terms of relevance and TikTok trends that are going on at the moment you know.

Interviewer 20:00
Yes, they do indeed clearly put a lot of work into it. So, the fact that you notice that already is really good too. Do you find yourself engaging with their content? If so, what does this engagement look like? Think of just watching the content, not liking anything or liking it, sharing it, answering to polls, commenting on posts? Anything you can do with content.

Participant 21:13
I'm not someone to engage with content that much. I love watching their stories on Instagram and do reply to quiz questions or polls and stuff like that just because it's so easy. And I also like their posts, definitely the one where Rihanna is on herself because I love those the most. But I'm not someone who would comment or repost their content. Sometimes when a new product is released, I will tag my friends for them to see "oh look at this new product coming out soon so they are updated as well"

Interviewer 21:48
Yeah. So why is that do you think? Why do you not feel the need to share their posts? And does this go for Instagram or for TikTok as well?

Participant 21:57
For both really. I don't comment on TikTok videos either but I do like them. I'm just really not the type of person to share such content because I feel like it doesn't really interest others except for some of my friends when a new product is released. So, if I share something, that's it, but I don't share just everything they post or make up tutorials. I do send the posts to my friends in private chats or tag them in the comments as I told you earlier but that isn't really interacting with the Fenty page itself.

Interviewer 22:41
No indeed, that's more bringing awareness to your friends. And when you do like their posts or comment or share, how often do you do so? Obviously you don't know that exactly by heart but please estimate.

Participant 22:58

I think I like their posts daily or once every two days. Really depends on the content. And I tag my friends whenever there's a release or announcement of a product I think they are interested in as well. So I guess that monthly? Unless they post something funny which would usually be on TikTok. In that case I also tag my friends to laugh about it.

Interviewer 23:27

Yeah okay, their content on TikTok is indeed more funny rather than… I mean it's not necessarily serious on Instagram but on TikTok there is more room to participate in contests and stuff and challenges on TikTok which makes it different than the Instagram content. So we'll get back to this later also but what elements of their posts make you want to engage with these posts?

Participant 24:02

Really the way it looks. Their posts are so well done, so creative, so bright and dynamic. I don't necessarily like their reposts from influencers who are using the products but rather like the posts they create with their own models or Rihanna for sure. I like that they make use of polls on their stories for their followers to engage so, so this feature is definitely one I make use of. I like the fact that they use flashy images and up tempo music in their short clips as well. It's just really nice, short, and spicy. And they also really like, with mother's day they posted Rihanna pregnant with make up and it just looks so good and nice so they also really look at what special day it is and change their content for that, so I love that too.

Interviewer 25:02

So, do you feel like those things make you want to like their posts more? Because you low key realize they really put thought in this because they know that it's mother's day or they know that it's whatever international women's day. Does that make you want to reply more than, for example, a regular day?

Participant 25:20

Yes definitely.

Interviewer 25:21

Okay, that's good to know. And how do you feel about the frequency of the posts? Do you think they post too often, too little, just enough? And do you feel like it is positive for the brands engagement levels or do you think it will have a negative impact if they post too much or too little?

Participant 25:46

I think their frequency of posting right now is just right. I don't like when brands post too much because I honestly don't follow that many people and if that's the only thing that will pop up on my feed it will get a little annoying but that's not the case with Fenty Beauty right now. So for now it's still good, I've never been annoyed to the point where I'm like "oh is there another post?" or like I'm not ever wondering when the next post comes to be honest. I'm only worried about new releases if it takes long, so that's it.

Interviewer 26:29

Do you feel like the way they portray themselves on their social media accounts encourages you to eventually buy their products?

Participant 26:39

Yeah I actually do. Like I told you before the posts are just so well done and they really make me excited to buy their products because I just want to try them all. And they make videos that make me want to buy it all, so yeah they definitely encourage me to buy all their products.

Interviewer 27:06

And also really, that was the case for me at least, seeing how good a lip gloss looks on Rihanna, I'm like OMG I need that lip gloss because I'll look like her.

Participant 27:17

Yeah, I feel you hahaha.

Interviewer 27:18

And, in your own words, can you describe how you think other people view Fenty Beauty? So aside from your opinion, if you were to ask a random person on the street about Fenty Beauty, how do you think they will talk about the brand?

Participant 27:38

I think like, almost every female from the age between 20 and 30 will know this brand. And I think everyone gets excited from it. Also because it's a really good price range for a beauty brand, so that's positive as well and I didn't mention that before. But, I thin everyone is just really excited because it's just so inclusive and there is a foundation color for literally everyone in this world, so yeah I think everything is really excited about the inclusivity of the product and the quality of the products. In my friend group, everyone knows Fenty Beauty and everyone uses products by Fenty Beauty, so I think, in general, people think very positively about Fenty Beauty.

Interviewer 28:43

Yes, I think so too. I'm not going to show you an example of an in my opinion typical Fenty Beauty Instagram post. So, can you please tell me what stands out to you the most? I'll show you the post right now… This one. You can also take into account the text underneath, the person in it, and stuff. https://www.instagram.com/p/CbiWdPDD1Sr/

Participant 29:19

It stands out to me that, like, the caption is like, they are not talking such formal language. It's really informal. They are using an influencer who is currently very popular. And it's really just a very fun video. For the people who are not seeing the post right now, it is like a male who uses their lipgloss, so that makes them, again, very inclusive as well. They don't seem to be very focused on selling the lipgloss but they seem to just want to make a fun video. In the caption is does say it will be 33% off but that comes at the end, so they just try to make the fun video and mention the discount after. Which is really good for us students, hahaha. So it's a really nice post.

Interviewer 30:39

Yeah, so what you're saying is that it's not that obvious that they are trying to sell the lipgloss also because they focus on the promotional aspect after the fun aspect. Alright, how is that different from how other brands promote their products do you think?

Participant 31:08

When other brands promote their product it is really the product that is really like the central point of attention for the post. So they for example would show you a video of how good the product works with water splashes and great lighting and how it looks so gorgeous on a gorgeous model face that you don't have which distances you from the brand a bit. And that's not the case with Fenty Beauty because it is so inclusive and it includes everyone and it is able for everyone to buy the product.

Interviewer 31:58

So you're saying it's very representative. We're going to scroll through the Fenty Beauty feed now and I would like you to tell me what stands out to you when you scroll through the feed. What is the first thing you notice?

Participant 32:18

The first thing you notice is Rihanna's face, I'm just drawn to it because she's so gorgeous and the make up looks so good on her. There's also a pregnant photo of her here, I just love that I'm so happy she's pregnant. She feels like my girl hahaha, but she doesn't know me. She's so gorgeous. That's what stands out most, and the aesthetics, and the Fenty page is full of different people of all skin colors, males, females, it doesn't matter. It is really representing all of the boys and girls interested in make up.

Interviewer 35:15

Looking at this page, we just scrolled through some pictures together, which of these posts would you like? And which photos would you not like? Which content speaks to you and are you drawn to to like or comment and share over the other? This one for example is the announcement post of the new Fenty perfume which is an announcement post, another one here is a Fenty model wearing Fenty make up, then there's another post of an influencer who is vibing on some music and wearing Fenty, and then there are these product photos.

Participant 36:24

Yeah so Rihanna definitely stands out to me, and also the posts where they film or photograph new products, that's also something that stands out to me because I'm always interested in new stuff. Honestly the videos and the photos with the influencers I don't care so much about. So for me it's mostly the photos or videos with Rihanna and the new products, and I also always like to see all the available colors next to each other. For example all the lip glosses, the highlighters. That's what stands out to me the most.

Interviewer 37:14

And, if we take a look at their TikTok page right here. We're currently scrolling through the TikTok page together, I just paused the audio but we have looked at some TikTok content together. If you could explain to me what type of content stands out to you and what makes you want to engage, meaning like, comment, or share?

Participant 40:45

What I really like about the TikTok page of Fenty Beauty is that they engage with the current trends and they use the popular sounds of that moment because on TikTok as most people know, some sounds are very popular to use at a certain point in time and they make use of that by creating videos with that sounds. Also, I like how they show off their new products with short videos and there are also videos where they ask people what they think of their products and I really like those videos because when I can't try it myself I like seeing other people trying it and giving their honest opinion about it. Those videos also seem very genuine and they really just ask random people on the street who seem to give their genuine opinion about it. I also love the TikTok's with Rihanna on it just like on Instagram. And I love it when they posts short videos of their events, because I would love to attend those events and it's just fun to see what is going on there.

Interviewer 42:13

I have one last question for you. You are familiar with both TikTok and Instagram and it's features. You already mentioned that you like to share posts in private messages and you like to just like the post. What is a feature that you don't like. So, for example, the comment feature are you less likely to use it? Or to save a post? What features of a platform are you less likely to use?

Participant 43:54

Definitely I'm less likely to use the repost feature. I do save posts to get back to it when I want to or when I want to show my friends something. I also like to share things through private messages but I just don't repost things that much, that is just not me and that goes for any brand which doesn't make it Fenty's fault.

Interviewer 44:34

Well, you gave me some very very very interesting insights on how you engage with Fenty Beauty socials and what your opinion is on their socials. I also like that you gave me your honest opinion about not liking everything they post and you gave me very specific directions on what you do like and what attracts you less. So, I'm sure this was so helpful to collect useful data and insights on my thesis topic. I'd like to thank you again so much for participating in my research. I will definitely keep you updated.

Participant 45:58

Definitely send me your final thesis, I'm curious about the other people's opinions also.

Interviewer 46:20

Okay, I will. I'll end the recording right now.

Appendix F – Example of edited field note

Central creators: Tarifah Adamus
Event: Description Instagram affordances
Date & time: May 3rd 2022, 01:03 PM
Location: Den Haag

Subtitles	

Platform interface: A lot of symbolic icons representing interfaces of the app
 	
 - Camera icon: create a post
 - TV icon: function of IGTV (for videos longer than 1 minute)
 - Home icon: symbolizes the main page, the home page
 - Magnifier icon: search function, explore page
 - Movie clapper: symbolizes reels
 - Shopping bag: represents the shopping page
 - Heart: represents the likes
 - Chat bubble: refers to the comment section → view the comments or post a new comment
  o FB sometimes places "comment your favorite shade down below" or "let us know what you think in the comments" encouraging followers to engage
 - Paper plane icon: the send button → use to send a post through private messages or to add a post to your story
 - Bookmark icon: to bookmark or save a post to your collection/saved posts
 - Person icon: represents a tagged person
  o FB always credits the creator of the content or the person starring in a post. For example, influencers who shared make up tutorials using FB on their own page get credited through a tag when they get reposted on the FB page
	Fenty Beauty makes use of most of the affordances → see yellow highlight

- Three-dot icon: represents the various other options
  - o ==When clicking three dot icon, the option to turn on the post notifications pops up. FB often calls to action for followers to do so, so they always get notified when they post new content==
- Plus icon: use to add post → create new post, story
- Profile picture icon: go to your profile
- Bell icon: represents notifications → tap to receive notifications from one's profile

Instagram spatial affordances: the affordances of the functions of the app to create a more fluent and comfortable user experience
- High attention paid to spatial positioning of the pages and its elements
- Browsing feed posts is structured vertically
- Browsing stories is structured horizontally
- Profiles present posts in chronological order
  - o ==Due to the somewhat high frequency of Fenty Beauty's posts, I experienced that once I refreshed, their posts are always at the top==
- The feed reminds the user that they have seen all posts → automatically suggests other posts user may like → OR allows for the user to click a button to view older posts
- Story function is structured horizontally and uses the same format for each post (9:16)
  - o ==Within stories FB adds polls with which percentages are generated once an answer is selected by the follower==
  - o ==Within stories FB adds question boxes to which followers can reply==
  - o ==Within stories FB adds a hyperlinks that directly link to the product page==

- Feed posts are structured horizontally and allow to choose three post sizes (1:1, 3:4, 4:3)
  - ==FB mostly uses 1:1 for feed posts, however, whenever they post a reel on their feed it shows up in 3:4 format, cropping out some of the text. Once you click it, Instagram takes you to the full size video.==
- When a user clicks on stories, several progress bars are arranged horizontally to indicate how many story posts remain
  - ==FB often posts more than one story post, they mostly connect to each other. For example, they announce a product in one story, then ask their followers opinion in the next story, then announce a release date in the next story, and so on==
- When a user switches to the next user's story, the interface acts like a turning cuboid which resembles turning a page in a book
- Avatars or profile pictures are always in the shape of a circle
  - ==The avatar always consists of the FB logo==