Consumer Attitudes Towards Brands Addressing the Phenomenon of Diversity And Inclusivity in the Fashion and Beauty Industry

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Contract number: 10825

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Pages: 120

Taps: 276491

ABSTRACT

The aim of this research paper is to investigate how consumer's perception of diversity and inclusivity as a cultural phenomenon has an impact on their attitude towards brands.

This research views diversity and inclusivity as a phenomenon that is viewed on a societal level and is showing to be highly relevant for different industries and organizations to consider. Although, this research have chosen to address the topic of study by investigating the area of research based on the fashion and beauty industry and from the perspective of female millennial consumers belonging to a minority that is usually not represented in fashion and beauty brands promotion activities and product offerings.

To investigate the topic at hand, this research holds an assumption that personal and emotional aspects related to self-representation and aspects regarding the surrounding culture's influence on people, affects consumer's attitudes towards brands in regards to how and whether they are diverse and inclusive. Based on this, this research has adopted different theoretical perspectives regarding personal- and cultural aspects, which have been assembled in a theoretical framework. The framework had the purpose of working as a tool guided the analysis.

Investigating the topic at hand is based on the application of a qualitative research approach for data collection, which consists of three individual in-depth interviews and a focus group.

The findings in this research have showed that personal aspects and cultural aspects connected to consumer's perception of diverse and inclusive does have an impact on shaping their attitude towards brands. The findings have showed that brands, which the consumers perceived as genuinely diverse addressing diversity and inclusivity, resulted in a positive brand attitude.

By investigating this we hope to create new knowledge on the area of brands addressing d&i in a way that resonates with consumers, and as part of this, also be able to provide guidelines at the end of this paper, that works as a help to brands wishing to address d&i, these will be applicable and relevant for B2B companies and FMCG companies.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Phenomenon of Diversity and Inclusivity

Over the past few years, society has undergone unprecedented cultural shifts, from increased globalisation and multiculturalism. We see an increase in minority- and female representation in media, new notions of beauty standards, and in general, showing a more diversified picture of people in societies. With these inherent changes, topics such as diversity and inclusivity (d&i)[1] seem more relevant than ever, as these cultural shifts seem to have demanded a change in the status quo of society. In general, d&i have become topics that span across all areas of society and thus are impacting different industries and organizations, trying to follow these societal changes. D&I is impacting a lot of brand's marketing campaigns today across different industries, and more and more brands are taking a stand for diversity and inclusion, as it has shown that consumers today are increasingly demanding to see a more diversified picture of people in society, as reflected in brands promotion activities and product offerings.

It is this brand-consumer exchange in relation to addressing d&i, which will be the focus of research in this paper.

1.2 Point of departure

We have observed the above-mentioned cultural change through many advertisements, where brands use d&i to position themselves favourably in the minds of consumers. We argue that this change seems to be a result of the change of power dynamics between brands and consumers. Due to the emergence of new technology such as social media, consumers have gained a louder voice, and brands have had to engage in conversation with consumers around shared values (Scheybani, 2015). This societal change has had a significant impact on marketers and advertisers, who have to navigate this power shift (Ibid.). Consumers now expect more than just a product: They want the brand from which they're buying to reflect the culture in which they live, the diverse people that surround them, and their values (Chadha, 2017). We argue that this change of brands addressing d&i is also apparent in the critique certain brands receive when they lack representation of certain groups of society in their promotion (Tewson, 2017). Based on the high media coverage and attention given to d&i, we have observed that d&i is a cultural phenomenon that brands might have

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[1] The terms 'diversity and inclusivity' and also 'diverse and inclusive' will throughout the rest of the paper be addressed as d&i.

to take into consideration in regards to promotion and product offerings. We, therefore, seek to provide a solid base of understanding about from the perspective of consumers in addressing the phenomena of d&i.

1.3 Delimitations

D&i is being addressed in the media as a phenomenon that is relevant across different industries, but in order to investigate this phenomenon in depth, we have chosen to address the topic based on the fashion and beauty industry and from the perspective of female millennial consumers belonging to a minority that is usually not represented in fashion and beauty brands promotion activities. We perceive this particular industry as highly connected to d&i as the industry for a very long time have been known for mostly showing an ideal representation of women through the models chosen to promote the products, and also, not showing d&i in term of products (Thiruchelvam, 2017). Our choice of taking a consumer perspective is due to our perception of the phenomenon of d&i as a phenomenon that touches consumers deeply. We therefore believe that a consumer perspective contribute most to an understanding of how to address d&i.

1.4 Diversity and Inclusivity in the Fashion and Beauty Industry

Beauty and fashion related companies are to a higher degree embracing the idea of d&i. This means a broadening of traditional definitions of what it means to achieve your ideal self and spreading imagery beyond those of culturally accepted beauty standards to also include those who weren't previously a part of the catered to consumer pool (Rick, 2017). Basically, we see a focus on many different categories in regards to inclusive representations of women, but we have chosen three specific categories that we find as mostly referred to in the media, and that we find as having been very much underrepresented in this particular industry. We take notice of that these are referred to based on the types of female models brands mainly choose for their promotion, but also in regards to product offerings, these are (Rick, 2017):

- *The inclusion of women of darker skin colours*, in regards to brand promotion and the availability of makeup products for different skin colours.
- *The inclusion of women of different body types* and bigger curves, in regards to promotion and the availability of clothes that fit women of larger sizes.

- *The inclusion of religious minorities*, this is about the inclusion of Muslim women who have more constrained ways of dressing due to their religious beliefs, which encompass the wearing of modest covering clothes, but also the hijab, which is a headscarf that covers the hair.

Here are some examples of breakthrough trends and events of the 21st century, which has changed the face of fashion and beauty:

Skin-Tone Inclusiveness

The beauty industry has been known for falling short on the representation front, as makeup is generally available in far more shades for light skin and often only a few hues of brown (Moore-Karim, 2016). In 2017, but a shift began to occur —with the singer Rihanna launching her diverse makeup line 'Fenty Beauty'— with a wide range of skin tones on offer, and racial diversity in the marketing campaigns (Hubbard, 2018).

Embracing plus-sized models

The past decade has been more inclusive of plus-sized models everywhere from cover photos to calendars. The inclusion of plus-size models into the modelling industry and fashion labels became a growing trend in 2015 after Ashley Graham became the first plus-size model to grace the cover of Sports Illustrated's Swimsuit Issue in a two-piece bikini. Graham's major magazine cover began to disprove the stereotypes that women who were size 10 and over could not wear luxurious mainstream fashion labels or grace major magazine covers (Rantao, 2018).

Embracing religious minorities

There are a growing tendency and awareness of religious or cultural garments that are finding its way into mainstream fashion. In May 2018, 20-year-old model Halima Aden became the first hijab-wearing model to appear on the cover of British *Vogue* ever since the magazine was first founded in 1916 (Barr, 2018). Also, in 2016 the rapper Kanye West chose to cast Halima Aden in his New York Fashion Week show (Day, 2016).

1.5 Justification of research

So far, this introductory chapter has provided insight into the observed phenomenon of d&i, based on the case of the fashion and beauty brands. As mentioned, we have observed this change

ourselves via how brands promote, and also the increased attention this phenomenon has received in the media. We personally find this topic of research interesting, as we hold an interest in fashion and beauty, and are passionate about seeing d&i in brands. When researching literature on this topic, we were not able to find adequate research on the influence d&i have on consumers brand perception, as we have argue that brands are doing this to please consumers. We observe that this change towards d&i will only increase in the future, as brands have to keep up with society in order to stay relevant. We have decided to explore consumers' perspective on this, as their attitude towards brands is what, we argue, is most important. And we believe that we can create valuable insight by investigating consumer's perception of d&i, and hence, create new knowledge about the topic, which brands and others interested in the topic can benefit from.

1.6 The purpose
The purpose of this paper is to provide an understanding of d&i as a cultural phenomenon that is showing to have a widespread importance in the fashion and beauty industry. We want to investigate how d&i has an impact on consumers' attitude towards brands, these consumers we will investigate, relates to the described categories in part 1.4 in terms of being underrepresented in fashion and beauty brand's promotion and products. By investigating this we hope to create new knowledge on the area of brands addressing d&i in a way that resonates with consumers, and as part of this, also be able to provide guidelines at the end of this paper, that works as a help to brands wishing to address d&i, these will be applicable and relevant for B2B companies and FMCG companies.

1.7 Problem statement
Considering that d&i relates to the representation of different people in society who might not have been represented before, we assume that personal and emotional aspects related to self-representation and aspects regarding the surrounding culture's influence on people, affects consumer's attitudes towards brands in regards to d&i. We will investigate these aspects based on the following problem statement:

 How do consumers perceptions of fashion and beauty brands as being diverse and inclusive influence their attitude towards brands?

1.8 Concepts for analysis

Consumer perceptions: This concept refers to consumer's impression, awareness and/or consciousness about a company and its offerings. In this thesis, consumer perceptions are viewed as influenced by:

1. **Promotion** – This is based on advertising and social media. The campaigns your company runs offer implied perceptions about your products. What you say about your brand/company and the messages you deliver help others form opinions.

2. **Influencers** – The people that surround an individual have a massive impact on their decisions. Whether they be in person or via social media, human nature is such that individuals listen to the opinions and thoughts of those around them.

3. **Personal experience** – If someone has experienced firsthand the quality of a product or service or the responsiveness of a consumer service channel, it will positively or negatively impact their perception (Bailey, 2018).

Brand attitude: The brand attitude will tell what people think about a product or service, whether the product answers a consumer need, and just how much the consumer wants the product. Brand attitude could be influenced by associations people have of the brand (allBusiness, 2018).

Inclusion and Diversity: Inclusion is viewed as the inclusion of people of all races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, social classes, economic classes etc. Looking through a brand lens, inclusivity in branding allows for all customers to see themselves in that brand. Inclusion and diversity go hand in hand. In this thesis, the concept 'diversity' and hence being a diverse brand is viewed as having a commitment to recognizing and appreciating the variety of characteristics that makes people unique and different from each other (utk.edu, n.d.).

Glossary list

Plus size: In the fashion industry, "plus-size" is a term for models who are size 8 and up. But in the real world, most plus-size clothing doesn't even start until a size 16 (Beck, 2014).

Hijab and Hijabi: A 'hijab' is a headscarf that covers all the hair, Muslim women use this as part of their religious belief, and these women are referred to as 'hijabis'.

D&I: This is short for 'diversity and inclusivity' and will be used throughout the rest of the paper.

1.9 Brands addressing diversity and inclusivity

We have chosen to concrete size the research by analysing consumers' attitude towards brands, we have chosen to use the brands mentioned by the interviewees:

Fenty Beauty: A cosmetic brands founded in 2017 by the music and fashion icon Rihanna, the brand was created to be for women of all shades, as is especially known for its launch of 40 shades of foundations and an ad campaign featuring a diverse array of models (Lang, 2017).

L'Oreal: The world leader in beauty, L'Oreal is present in 130 countries on five continents. The group's mission is to provide the best in cosmetics innovation to women and men around the world with respect for their diversity ("Group - L'Oreal Group", 2018)

ZARA: A Spanish clothing retailer, and one of the biggest international fashion companies for women, men, teenagers and children (BOF, n.d).

H&M: A Swedish clothing retailer, and one of the biggest international fashion companies for women, men, teenagers, and children (H&M, n.d).

Savage X Fenty: A lingerie brand founded in 2018, also by Rihanna who was inspired to create a line of intimates that celebrates and speaks to all shades and shapes (Savage X, 2018).

Victoria's Secret: An iconic lingerie brand featuring celebrated supermodels and a world-famous runway show, is the leading specialty retailer of women's lingerie, fragrance, body care, accessories and athletic and loungewear (L Brands, n.d.).

Nike: An American sportswear company who obsess the needs of the world's best athletes, using their insights to create products that are beautiful and useful for everybody (Nike, n.d.).

VOGUE: The world's number one fashion magazine, its first issue came out over 120 years ago. Vogue is often called "the fashion Bible." (Nast, n.d.)

1.10 Structure

Chapter 1. Introduction: Describes the topic of study, its point of departure, limitations, justification, purpose, problem statement and concepts for analysis.

Chapter 2. Methodology: Describe the research philosophy, research approach, purpose, design, data collection, analysis approach, and validity and reliability.

Chapter 3. Literature acknowledgement: Include additional literature on consumer culture and brand management perspectives.

Chapter 4. Theoretical framework: Contain description, argumentation and relevance of our used theoretical perspectives and an assembled theoretical framework.

Chapter 5. Empirical findings: Contain the findings of the individual interviews

Chapter 6. Analysis and discussion: of findings from the individual interviews

Chapter 7. Empirical findings: Contain the findings of the focus group

Chapter 8. Analysis and discussion: of findings from the focus group

Chapter 9. Guidelines: Provides guidelines for brands wishing to address d&i.

Chapter 10. Future perspectives: Provide future perspectives on the topic of study.

Chapter 11. Conclusion: Concludes on the findings according to the purpose and aims.

Referencing: Throughout the paper, appendixes will be referred to as 'A' with an attached number, e.g. the transcription of Mishal's interview will be referred to as: (A.2). When referencing a direct quote in the analysis we will refer to both the empirical chapter and the transcription appendix, e.g.: (5.1, A.2 l: 2-5).

CHAPTER 2. METHODOLOGY

This chapter introduces the methodological aspects and considerations employed in this thesis. The chapter will first present the employed research philosophy and approaches, the purpose and research design will be presented next, followed by our methodological choices, the data collection techniques and finally the analysis procedure.

2.1 Research Philosophy

The research philosophy contain important assumptions about our way of viewing the world that guides the research strategy and the methods chosen as part of the strategy (Saunders, 2009). The choice of philosophy depends on how well a certain philosophy relates to the problem statement we are seeking to answer, compared to alternative philosophies.

There are two aspects in the way of thinking about the research philosophy, these are ontology and epistemology and has an influence on the way in which we approach the study (Saunders, 2009). *Ontology* is about the perceived nature of reality, and has two aspects; *objectivism*, which entails that reality creation exist external to social actors, and *subjectivism*, which entails that reality is

created dependent on the perceptions and actions of these social actors, and is in a constant movement due to social interaction. *Epistemology* is what constitutes knowledge that is acceptable, depending on the purpose of the field of study. We emphasis collecting knowledge that is based on feelings and attitudes created through social interactions (Ibid.).

The *ontological* view adopted is based on *subjectivism*, as the purpose is to gain an understanding of consumers perceptions and attitudes shaped by the social phenomenon of d&i. What is important when adopting the subjectivist view is to follow the *interpretivist* philosophy, which entails exploring the subjective meanings that motivates the actions of the social actors. The *interpretivist* philosophy is actively adopted through our choice of conducting semi-structured interviews. Through *interpretivism*, we take an empathetic stance as we choose to understand the world from the view of our research subjects (Saunders, 2009). In relation to *epistemology*,the *interpretivist* philosophy, is connected to *social constructivism*, which adopts the view on knowledge creation of *epistemology* (Ibid.). Social constructivism will be explained in the next part.

2.1.1 Social Constructivism

Social constructivism is the scientific understanding, that all human recognition is socially constructed (Nygaard, 2012), and seek to describes how "truths" are socially constructed, as our research philosophy embodies a focus on understanding, rather than one of explaining (Costantione, 2008). By taking point of reference in social constructivism, the research paper will be able to examine the problem statement as a constructed paradigm. Relating this research philosophy to it's ontological and epistemological views, collecting knowledge based on the existence of external objective realities independent of social actors, is disallowed, as social constructivism describes the bodies of knowledge developed as social constructs that are based on interactions between human beings and their world. This relates to our problem statement, as the purpose of this research is to understand how consumers perception of d&i as a cultural phenomenon can influence their attitude towards brands, we thereby "aim to understand a phenomenon from the perspective of those experiencing it" (Ibid.). As we adopt this research philosophy, instead of searching for truth claims, the thesis will seek to gain an understanding of the reality constructed by consumers regarding their perception of d&i and how it affects their attitude towards fashion and beauty brands. By using this philosophy, we place an importance on exploring the subjective meanings and perceptions that guides the actions of individuals through interpretation of roles and social interaction (Ibid.).

Female consumers of fashion and beauty brands may have individual interpretations of how the cultural phenomenon of d&i has an affect on their attitude towards brands. Their perception of when and how brands are d&i vary depending on their own way of viewing the world and creating meaning, which are constructed through social interactions, which in turn, influence their attitude towards brands that may or may not be d&i (Saunders, 2009).

2.1.2 The role of the researcher

It is important to highlight our role as researchers in the collection of empirical data. We are aware that our choice of data collection techniques is a reflection of our values (Saunders, 2009.), e.g., our choice of data collection through interviews, suggest that we value personal interactions more highly than we would value opinions expressed through anonymous surveys. Also, our philosophical choice shows that we view the world subjectively rather than objectively. This has an influence on how knowledge for this research is developed, and how we interpret the collected empirical data (Ibid.)

2.2 Research Approach

In this research, we are moving within the realms of consumer culture theory and branding theories. How theory is used depends on whether the research calls for an *inductive* or *deductive* approach. A purely inductive approach is a research that starts without theories, instead, data is collected and based on data, theory is created, this approach can be relevant for interpretivism (Saunders, 2009). A deductive approach is where the starting point is the theory, and the theory is then tested based on the data, this approach is used in the positivism paradigm (Ibid.). We use the *interpretivist* philosophy, however we do not work completely inductively, rather we combine both research approaches. Our starting point was inductive, as we saw a new societal phenomenon about how brands are focusing their branding in using d&i, which is investigated based on consumer's brand attitudes. However, we also found theory, that we us as a tool to investigate our topic. We use the freedom provided to us via the inductive approach by analysing and interpreting our data, as we find appropriate, however we have used the theory as a guide when formulating our research objectives. A critique of the deductive approach is that the researcher works within a limited theory frame (Ibid.), however the theory does not limit us, as we have created our own theoretical framework. Deduction is also seen in the way we amended our theoretical model, which was made based on theory, and amended based on empirical data.

2.3 Research Purpose and Research Design

Before being able to answer our problem statement, we need to consider the purpose of research. Saunders (2009) distinguishes between three purposes for why a research project is undertaken; exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. Our purpose is *exploratory*, Saunders et al., (2009) defines an exploratory study as: "a valuable means of finding out 'what is happening: to seek new insights; to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light'". This purpose is chosen as we are seeking to explore and understand the feelings, and attitudes of consumers in relation to the phenomenon of d&i in brands, in order to create new knowledge. We use all three ways of conducting exploratory research (Saunders et al., 2009): as we started with searching existing branding and consumer literature, which we used to create our own framework. We have interviewed 'experts' in the form of consumers, as we argue that they are the experts of their own lives. Besides doing in depth interviews, we have also used a focus group interview, to explore our research topic.

2.4 Methodological Choices

The empirical data for this research is collected via in depth interviews and a focus group, this way of collecting data is a *qualitative* method. We could also have applied a *quantitative* method, which is based on statistical data, however, using this method, would not suffice for our research, as we are investigating some feeling and attitudes and these can not be measured through numbers (Saunders et al., 2009.). This is why we have chosen the qualitative method, as it allows us to investigate the subjective realities of our informants.

2.5 Data Collection Technique

To answer the problem statement, we makes use of secondary data and primary data. However, primary data has been collected as the main source of data.

2.5.1 Secondary data collection

Secondary data is data that have already been collected for other purposes than the purpose of this research paper (Saunders, 2009). This kind of data have contributed to the formulation of the problem statement, and for gaining a sound understanding of how d&i in general is being addressed and talked about in the fashion and beauty industry in relation to its significance for brands and consumers. Internet articles and own observations on social media have been used as the main

source gains an understanding. This data collection has contributed to narrowing down the topic and provides a focus, which has helped making primary data collection more specific.

2.5.2 Primary data collection

The purpose of this study is based on an understanding of the subjective reality of female consumers, and seeing the world through their lenses. Considering this research purpose, the primary data have been collected through in-depth semi-structured one-to-one interviews and a focus group; the main reason for adopting these is due to the interpretivist philosophy.

For both the individual interviews and the focus group, we developed themes that follow our objectives and theoretical tools supporting the research. Based on the themes, we asked open-ended questions that allowed the interviewees to express their opinions in depth. Also, the order of the questions was varied depending on the answers from the respondents, which also led to additional topics that were considered interesting. The data collected through the semi-structured interviews was used to reveal and understand the 'what' and 'how' in terms the awareness of the phenomenon of d&i, but also in terms of consumption behaviour. Based on the 'what' and 'how', we were able to answer the 'why' in term of why consumers are influenced by this. (Saunders et al., 2009). As we use both and inductive and deductive approach, the themes, were both guided by theory while allowing us to move outside the theoretical constraints. The themes covered in the individual interviews and the focus group interviews are seen below:

Individual interviews

Research objective	Interview themes
Insight into consumers' criteria for choice of fashion and beauty brands	Consumption of fashion and beauty brands
Which changes do consumers see in fashion and beauty brands	Uncovering new tendencies in fashion & beauty industry
Do consumers feel represented in brands promotion activities?	Representation of consumers in ads
What does inclusivity and diversity in brands mean to the consumers, and how do they see this reflected in advertisement	Advertising diversity & inclusivity

The full interview guide for the individual interviews is found in appendix A.5.

Focus group interview

Research objective	Interview themes
How do consumers relate to D&I as a cultural phenomenon	What D&I means to the respondents
How is it important for consumers to be reflected in both promotion and products	Relationship between product attributes and promotion activities
Do consumers have certain associations of what the brand stands for that impacts their perception of the brand being diverse	Brand associations affecting attempts at being D&I
What aspects related to brands determines if the attempt to address D&I is genuine	Genuine or in-genuine attempt at D&I
How do consumers want to see themselves represented in brands through D&I	Being represented in brands promotion
How do consumers want to see themselves represented through people with an attachment to the brand	Representation of self through influencers

The full interview guide for the focus group is found in appendix A.6.

2.5.3 Information supply to the informants

Before the interviews the interviewees were sent a letter presenting the research topic, and ourselves. The interviewees agreed to being recorded for transcribing purposes. However, the letters differed, and so did the information supply during the interviews. For the individual interviews we decided not to disclose our main research objective, as we argue that if the interviewees beforehand knew that we wanted their insights about d&i, they might just tell us what we want to hear, or feel compelled to say that they base their brand choice on whether a brand is d&i, as caring about inclusivity and diversity might be "right" attitude. so we only disclosed that we wanted to talk to them about their insights in regards to fashion and beauty brands. e.g. we asked the consumers questions such as what are your favourite fashion and beauty brands, and why? We did not disclose the real purpose until theme 4, another reason for doing this, was that we wanted to explore what matters to consumers in brands, and what makes them relate to a brand, this was also a way for us to test whether our assumption as this being something consumers are aware and care about is true. The conversation in the individual interviews was very much based on the brands they themselves mentioned. On the other hand, our focus group was told from the beginning that the topic is about d&i as the objective of the focus group was different than the objective of the individual interviews.

2.5.4 Individual in depth interviews

For the individual interviews, the objective was to exploring the personal feelings and meanings in regards to fashion and beauty brands. We aimed at understanding what the interviewees know about the topic of d&i, and also understand the meanings behind their experiences. We interviewed three individual females in depth, and each interview lasted approx. an hour. We found it necessary to do individual in depth interviews, as our purpose was to gain insights to the feelings and attitudes of the consumers, and as we found through the interviews, which will be presented in chapter 5 and 6, the interviewees did indeed talk about personal feelings, such as how the lack of representation made one interviewee want to lose weight. We did not deem a focus group an appropriate method to uncover these personal feelings, as the respondents might feel uncomfortable talking about personal matters in a group of people.

2.5.5 Focus group interview

In the focus group the topic was defined clearly. The aim was to encourage and enable constructive discussion and interactions, without any pressure to reach a consensus, while closely controlled to maintain the focus (Saunders et al., 2009). The focus group interview lasted approx. 2.5 hours, and consisted of 6 female participants, all belonging to a minority in terms of representation in the fashion and beauty industry. We uncovered themes from the individual interviews that showed a pattern, which we wanted to confirm alongside new themes, via the focus group.

The most important aspect we wanted to uncover, was what it is that makes people perceive some brands as more diverse than others, and what brands need to consider when addressing d&i. We did this by asking general questions, and mostly by showing the group different brand advertisement. The group was shown both video, and photo advertisement of the following brands: L'Oreal, Fenty Beauty, ZARA, H&M, Vogue, Nike and Victoria's Secret. The videos and advertisements are described in the tabel:

Brand name	Video description	Link
Fenty Beauty	This is the promo video of Fenty Beauty's cosmetics. The ad shows a diverse set of female models. The video shows models that are different in terms of skin colour and ethnicity, the ad also include a model wearing the hijab.	URL
H&M	The ad shows different men, women and children who are look different in terms of skin colour, body type, and age and clothing style. The video sends a message that everyone should dress and look the way they desire, as there are no rules in fashion. The video also address the freedom of lifestyle.	URL
H&M	The ad is called "she is a lady" and shows a lot of female models that look different in terms of size, skin colour, age and religion, but also how women are different in terms of lifestyle.	URL
Nike	The ad promotes Nike's sports collection for women wearing the hijab, and it is a controversial commercial directed at Muslim women, that sends a message that this hijab collection enables Muslim women to do sports	URL
Victoria's Secret – Ashley Graham	The video is about plus size model Ashley Graham who talks about wanting to be the first plus size model walking in Victoria's Secret fashion show. The video also talks about celebrating all sizes and that VS must portray that	URL

2.5.6 Advantages, disadvantages and ethical issues of interviews

Individual interviews

The main advantage of conducting individual interviews, is that the method allows to uncover deep personal insights, which is important considering that we aim at uncovering emotional aspects that we could not have gathered through e.g. surveys that do not allow for personal interaction. Though, the disadvantages are that the interviewees may easily fall off the relevant focus areas, and also in relation to *generalisability,* which is due to concerns in regards to the use of a small and unrepresentative number of respondents that can lead to generalisability of findings (Saunders et al., 2009).

Focus group interview

The main advantages of conducting a focus group, is related to the group dynamics, a focus group can help obtain different perspectives, providing the data collection with an authentic representation of the overall audience (Saunders et al., 2009). Although, the disadvantage is that certain participants may try to dominate the interview, which may result in some participants publically agreeing with the views of others, whilst privately disagreeing. We saw this in our focus group interview, where certain people seemed very dominating, we tried counter that by asking specific people who were quiet, however due to the sensitive nature of the topic, we had to be very careful.

Ethical issues of interviews: one of the ethical considerations is duty to represent data honestly, as these also extends to the analysis and conclusions of the research (Saunders, 2009. Ethical considerations have also been made is relation to confidentiality and anonymity of the participants of the interviews (Ibid.). We received consent to record the data with no confidentiality requests. As we were exploring some personal opinions and feelings regarding d&i, we had to ensure that we did not subject our interviewees to embarrassment (Ibid.), or feeling uncomfortable. In our individual interviews we did this by allowing the interviewee to take control of what they shared, by asking open questions, which they could specify to the extent they felt comfortable. In the focus group, we purposely used media in the shape of advertisements, pictures, and quotes, we did this so the interviewees could talk about matters that they cared about, but by projecting it to what they saw in the ads.

2.6 Approach to analysis

As previously mentioned, we have created our own theoretical framework based on existing theory, which guided our analysis of findings in both the individual- and the focus group interviews. To guide especially the focus group discussion, visuals in shape of video and photos from brands promotion were used, this was also done to contretise the topic of d&i in brands, which otherwise is very broad. All findings mentioned in the analysis can be found in the empirical chapters (5,7)

2.6.1 Recruitment of Informants

We found it crucial to choose informants who has certain criteria that makes them part of a minority that is usually not represented in brands promotion activities and product offerings, as these kind of informants have had experiences that allows them to have deep thoughts and opinions that shape their attitude towards brands. The first requirement was that they are females belonging to a minority in typical brand promotion in terms of body type, skin tone, and religion, in Denmark. Second, that they are consumers of fashion and beauty brands, and thus have basic knowledge about these kind of brands. Third, that they are millennial, as we believe that they are often interested and up to date on what is happening in this industry, especially through social media, which we will verify is a platform that our respondents talk about in relation to the topic. As our research is of a rather personal nature, for the in depth interviews we decided to interview people we know personally, to allow them to feel comfortable and openly talk about the subject. We also personally knew the focus group participants, but they did not know each other, so we initiated small talk

before the session, to make them comfortable around each other. Below is a table of the participants for the individual interviews and the focus group, we also found it necessary to describe the respondent physically, stating their ethnicity, and religious background, to support that they fit into our d&i categories (1.4). The interviewees provided us with description of themselves as illustrated in the below tables.

Individual interviews:

NAME, AGE	OCCUPATION	ETHNICITY	RELIGION	Physical features
Mishal Qayyum, 29	Lawyer	Pakistani	Muslim	Describes herself as having gained weight after child birth. Uses larger clothing sizes. Medium-dark coloured skin. Dresses modestly
Yusra Iqbal, 22	Sales assistent	Danish and Morroccan	Muslim – wears hijab	Has very light skin. Uses a size S-M in clothes. Dresses modestly
Sibel Yildiz, 24	Studies Human Resources	Turkish	Muslim	Has light to medium skin. Is considered thin, and uses a size small in clothes. Dresses modestly

Focus group interview:

Name, age	Occupation	Ethnicity	Religion	Physical features
Sara Nielsen, 26	Pharmacist	Half Palestinian half Danish	Muslim – wears hijab	Has light skin. Uses small sized clothes. Dresses modestly
Humera Akhtar, 27	IT Consultant	Pakistani	Muslim	Has medium-dark coloured skin. Uses medium sized clothes and dresses modestly
Hawra Ali, 26	Junior Strategic planner	Iraqi	Muslim – wears hijab	Has medium coloured skin. She is very skinny and dresses modestly
Mahnoor Saddique, 23	Studies communication	Pakistani	Muslim	Has medium coloured skin, and she is very skinny
Amaya Hussain, 29	Nurse	Pakistani	Muslim	Has medium-dark coloured skin. Uses large sized clothing and dress modestly
Pakiza Atif, 20	Taking sabbatical year after high school	Pakistani	Muslim	Has dark coloured skin. Uses large sized clothing

2.6.2 Interview preparation and conducting the interviews

As part of preparing for the interviews we familiarised ourselves with the literature on our research topic, by reading relevant theory, articles, and observing the phenomenon via advertisement. Being well-prepared was essential, as the quality of the knowledge produced from the interviews will rely highly on our knowledge of the subject matter, alongside sensitivity towards interviewees. Part of this preparation was the creation of an interview guide for both our data collections (A.5, A.6). The

interview guides contained an overview of our themes, and questions and worked as a guidance and support for the interviews (Kvale, 2008). The interview questions in both the focus group and the individual interviews were structured to make the participants feel at ease and slowly getting to the core of our research. In both cases we started with more broad questions, gaining a general insight into the opinions of the respondents, and thereafter specifying our questions. In the individual interviews we started by asking about the general consumption behaviour (A.5), and in the focus group we started out by asking what d&i meant to the respondents (A.6). In general, both of our interview types were divided into the following sections: 1. Introduction of ourselves and the topic, stating purpose of interview, setting expectations, making sure that the respondents knew that we wanted to gain insight into their lives and experiences, and hence there were no wrong answers, as we wanted their subjective meanings 2. We got to know the interviewees, and made them feel relaxed via small talk. 3. We conducted the actual interviews. 4. Wrapped up and thanked them for their participation

2.6.3 Appropriateness of Location

The location of the interviews was also considered, as it was of utmost importance that the interviewees felt comfortable, and felt that they could talk openly with us. We therefore chose to interview the individual interviewees in their own homes as they would be on home ground and in a known setting to talk about sensitive things. The focus group interview was also conducted in a cosy setting, which was the house of one of the researchers as this sets the scene for more relaxed discussion and talk.

2.6.4 Approach to data collection

For both kind of data collection, we recorded the interviews as recordings enabled us to carefully listen to the interviews after they have been conducted, and transcribe the data in order to interpret it.

2.7 Reliability and Validity

Reliability

As we have used a qualitative method there might be a concern about reliability, due to the lack of standardisation (Saunder et al., 2009). Our non-standardised methods, might not be repeatable by other researchers in the same way, as they reflect a subjective reality of our interviewees. However we argue that this is not a weakness, as the value provided through our method is that it allows us to explore the complexity and layers of our topic. As mentioned throughout this chapter, we are not looking to find one universal truth about d&i, however as we will demonstrate in our analysis, our qualitative approach has still allowed us find certain patterns that others can benefit from. In this type of research, we also have to consider issues relating to bias (Ibid.). One is *interviewer bias,* this relates to the role of the researcher in the collection of data, in the way that we through our tone of voice, comments, and body language, might influence the way the interviewee answers questions. E.g. by imposing our own beliefs onto the interviewee through our way of asking questions. Interviewer bias also seen in the way we interpret responses. To counter this bias we refer to the 'role of researcher' part of this chapter, as we recognise that we as researchers have a subjective view of the world, which makes us a part of this research, and hence the way we interpret the data, is never fully objective, as we do so based on our own understanding. However, in the interview situation we tried avoiding bias by not asking loaded questions, where this factor was taken into consideration. Secondly, as mentioned in the individual interviews we did not disclose our research objective until very late in the research, to avoid influencing them. A third factor was our behaviour (Ibid.), we made sure to keep eye contact with the interviewee, nod consistently when they spoke, we avoided showing enthusiasm or negative sentiments, we tried being perceived as friendly and interested throughout the interviews and focus group. The *interviewee bias*, might be caused by certain perceptions of the interviewer as mentioned above, but it might also happen during in-depth interviews, as they can be perceived as an intrusive process (Ibid.). The interviewee might be sensitive to the exploration of certain themes, especially those of a personal nature, and might consciously hold back on sharing their experiences, attitudes and meanings. This is something we had to consider when collection our data, as we indeed were probing into some personal feelings, to avoid this bias, we tried to let the interviewees talk about their feelings freely, and by being sensitive so that we did not push them to talk about matters which could be uncomfortable.

Validity

Validity is about whether the research findings provides answers to what the research is actually about (Saunders, 2009). There are two aspects in regards to validity, the first is about if the research results are generalisable, which concerns if the findings can be equally applied to other research settings (Ibid.). This research paper uses ontological and epistemological views that are argued to be suitable for the purpose and objectives of the research, although, one could argue that these views could lead to different approaches to solving the research question (Ibid.) This means that the research findings might not necessarily be applicable to other settings, however, there could be different angels to approach the research area and topic than the ones chosen for this research paper, and this could lead to slightly different solutions (Ibid.) Also, it is argued that qualitative research using semi-structured interviews cannot be used to make statistical generalisations (Ibid.), meaning that our research cannot make generalisations about the entire population in regards to how they perceive d&i and how it affect their attitude towards brands, having in mind that we have collected data from a small sample of female consumers from a minority in Denmark. The second aspect of validity refers to the extent that we have access to the knowledge and experiences of our interview participants, and whether we are able to infer a meaning that the participants intended from the way they spoke. The high level of validity that is possible in relation to the qualitative semi-structured data that are carefully collected for this research is due to clear and very open-ended questions that allow the respondents to express themselves, and meaning of answers interpreted, and the discussion of interview themes from different variety of angels.

CHAPTER 3. LITTERATURE ACKNOWLEGEMENT

Here, a short literature acknowledgement will be presented, as our choice of theories are found within brand management and consumer culture theory (CCT).

Consumer Culture Theory

The CCT provides a basic understanding of the whole subject of consumer behaviour, as it is a family of theoretical perspectives that address the dynamic relationships between consumer actions, the marketplace, and cultural meanings. One aspect of CCT is consumer identity projects, which is the co-constitutive, co-productive ways in which consumers, working with marketer-generated

materials, forge a coherent if diversified and often fragmented sense of self (Arnould et al., 2005). In relation to the research, we relate this view on identity to how consumers use brands that are d&i in their identity projects. And the marketer-generated materials we relate to the brand promotion activities, which our interviewees talk about. In CCT there is focus on the symbolic meaning and how consumers actively transform this meaning, which is encoded in branding activities, to further their identity (Ibid.), and this meaning will be investigated through our proposed framework

Brand Management Approaches

Within brand management, there are many different perspectives on how a brand should and can be managed, as the field of brand management encompass several different approaches, referring to the seven brand management approaches, proposed by Heding et al., (2016). Each approach provides valuable insight into how a brand is managed. Our choice of theoretical perspectives is based on personal- and cultural aspects related to our topic of study, as we have chosen to investigate consumers' attitudes towards brands, from the perspective of the brand management approaches: The *Personality approach,* which view the brand as a human-like character, and the *Cultural approach*, which view the brand as part of the broader cultural fabric. These approaches will be addressed as part of the personal- and cultural perspective in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Before presenting the theoretical framework, we will remind the reader of the problem statement and the purpose, as these anchors the entire study and forms the basis from which the theoretical framework is constructed.

Problem statement: How do consumers' perceptions of fashion and beauty brands as being diverse and inclusive influence their attitude towards brands?

The purpose of proposing this specific problem statement, is that we want to investigate how consumers' perception of brands being d&i has an impact on their attitude towards fashion and beauty brands. By investigating this, we aim at contributing with new knowledge on the area and provide guidelines about addressing d&i. This chapter presents and examines different theoretical perspectives. Even though this research builds on qualitative data from consumers we find it

important to attach our empirical findings to theoretical perspectives that contribute to explaining and interpreting the findings. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, we assume that personal emotional aspects related to self-representation and aspects regarding the surrounding culture's influence, affects consumer's attitudes towards brands in regards to d&i. Based on this, we have chosen theories that can explain this cultural phenomenon of in regards to how cultural and personal aspects has an influence on consumers, the theories thereby work as a support for our analysis. These theories will be described through a *personal perspective* and a *cultural perspective*, explained and discussed, and finally, the theories will be summarized in a theoretical framework that aim at drawing a connection between the cultural and the personal aspects, as we assume that these aspects cannot stand alone in relation to understanding and addressing d&i, as we are trying to understand a cultural phenomenon based on the level of the individual.

4.1 Introduction to the perspectives

We will now go on to present the relevant theories within the two perspectives, followed by arguments regarding how the specific theories within the two perspectives relates to our topic. We will start by presenting the personal perspective as we will start on a micro level, seeking to understand the consumer feelings, perceptions and attitudes regarding d&i in fashion and beauty brands on a personal level. Taking the meaning from only an individual level, could be efficient, however we argue that this meaning about d&i is something that consumers take from a societal and cultural level, hence the second part of the theory will contain a cultural perspective, where theories will be included that aid an understanding on a macro level. Referring back to the problem statement, using both perspectives makes sense, as we are investigating consumers' perceptions, which is something that is created on a personal level, at the same time we are investigating their attitudes about something which we see as being relevant on a societal level, hence both perspectives go hand in hand. We argue that there is a mirroring of something that is happening on a cultural level - being an inclination towards d&i and this meaning is taken in an interpreted by consumers on a personal level. The essence here is to understand that the individual consumer experience, described as encompassing feelings, perceptions and attitudes, is reflected in societal cultural changes. Hence, both perspectives are highly relevant for the topic at hand, this will be elaborated on in the following part.

4.1.1 The advantages of applying the two perspectives

The personal perspective serves an understanding of the individual consumer, and how the consumer creates meaning through consumption of brands. It is about understanding the emotional aspects that affects the way consumers shape their attitudes towards brands, and the emotional brand attachment they feel with brands in terms of d&i. By understanding how consumers think and feel about different alternatives when it comes to brands and products, and how consumers reason and select between these in term of their sense of self and their identity, you gain an understanding of what aspects affect the consumer and how the consumer create meaning about the brand in relation to themselves. This thesis aims to produce insight and knowledge about how consumers' attitudes towards brand are influenced by the phenomenon of d&i, therefore, understanding how the individual consumer views brands and create meaning, can serve as a way to properly target the consumer by endowing the brand with the relevant meaning. Although, understanding the individual consumer is valuable, we argue that consumer behavior and the insights gained about the personal aspects of the individual in the personal perspective, is affected by a more broad societal level, being the cultural perspective. Therefore, the cultural perspective serves as a way to understand d&i as a cultural phenomenon, and how the personal consumer thoughts and feelings are mirrored in societal changes and macro trends. The essence here is to understand how consumers attribute cultural aspects to their perception of d&i and the impact this has on their attitude towards brands. As this thesis has a purpose of working as guidance into how to address the phenomenon, besides providing an understanding of how societal changes impacts consumer behavior, the cultural perspective also provides insight into how brands can adapt to the societal changes and resonate with consumers' identity projects.

4.2 The Personal perspective

The theories that will be discussed in the personal perspective are the Personality approach of brand management (Heding et al., 2016), and theory by Russell W. Belk (1988) who's research is also used in the personality approach, alongside other theoretical perspectives. The following parts will first introduce and describe the theories, thereafter; we will present our argumentation for how the theories support our topic of study.

4.2.1 The Personality approach

The personality approach is part of the paradigm shift within branding, which took place between 1993-1999, from a positivistic to an interpretive paradigm with a human/receiver focus (Heding et

al., 2016). Within this paradigm shift the attention was placed on the receiver of the brand communication, and knowledge from different areas of human psychology was incorporated into brand management theory (Ibid.). In the personality approach introduced in 1997 (Ibid.), the brand is perceived as a human-like character, the 'human' brand perspective and the symbol-consuming consumer are in focus in this approach. The approach is rooted in human personality psychology, and is based on the premise that consumers have a tendency to endow brands with human-like personalities, and use these personalities in a dialogue based exchange of symbolic value for their individual identity construction and expression. Managerially this approach is about creating a favourable persona for your brand, which creates an emotional bond between the consumer and brand (Ibid.).

The assumptions of this approach are that consumer's need for identity and expression of self drives their brand attitudes, choice, and consumption, there is differentiation between brands as they have different characteristics/personalities (Ibid.). Consumers are assumed to relate to brands with characteristic they believe to possess themselves (Ibid).

The strength of the brand is based on how strongly the consumer relates to and likes the brand personality. This approach assumes a high homogeneity of consumers perception of brand personality (Heding et al., 2016).

Brand personality is made up of three key theories which will be presented below. The concept of personality from human psychology, the concept of consumer self, and the matching between brand personality and the self, called brand-self congruity (Ibid.). The brand personality is two-sided, as it refers to both the personality endowed into the brand by the brand itself, and also the brand personality perceived by the consumer: so there can be a difference between how the company want consumers to feel about a brand, and what consumers actually perceive the brand as being (Ibid.). It is worth noting that consumers might not perceive brands in accordance with how the brand wants to be perceived.

Personality

As mentioned above in the introduction to the personality approach, knowledge from human psychology has been applied in this approach. Human psychology places focus on developing

frameworks for categorizing people according to their personality (Heding et al.m 2016). "It assumes that personality traits describe internal characteristics of human beings from which their behaviour in different situations can be predicted and explained" (Ibid). These traits can be described through adjectives. An important theorist within the personality approach is Jennifer Aaker (1997), she probes further into the symbolic dimensions of brands by focusing on the brand personality - the set of human characteristics consumers associate with brands as the result of advertising associations. Aaker (1997) developed an instrument for measuring the scope and depth of brand personality. Her research into the symbolic meaning of brands for consumers derives to some extent from McCracken's account (1986) of advertising as a mechanism for transferring meaning from culture to goods and brands. In her research, Aaker came to the conclusion that it is indeed possible to transfer "the idea of personality dimensions from human personality to brands and brand management" (Heding et al., 2016). Aaker describes five major groups of personalities that consumers associate with brands, and just like with persons brands are seen as having unique personalities (Ibid.)

Consumer self

In his research 'Possessions and the Extended Self, Journal Of Consumer Research' (Belk 1988), Belk states that we cannot hope to understand consumer behavior without first gaining some understanding of the meanings that consumers attach to possessions. A key to understanding what possessions mean is recognising that, knowingly or unknowingly, intentionally or unintentionally, we regard our possesions as parts of ourselves (Ibid). The purpose of Belk's article was to examine the relationship between possessions and sense of self. It is based not only on the premise that this relationship is of importance to understanding consumer behavior, but also on the premise that understanding the extended self will help us learn how consumer behavior contributes to our broader existence as human beings (Ibid.).

According to Belk (1988) objects in our possession literally can extend self, as when a tool or weapon allows us to do things of which we would otherwise be incapable (Belk, 1988). Possessions can also symbolically extend self, as when a uniform or trophy allows us to convince ourselves (and perhaps others) that we can be a different person than we would be without them (Ibid).

Belk presents a view that the only reason we want to have something is to enlarge our sense of self and that the only way we can know who we are is by observing what we have. In other words, having and being are distinct but inseparable (Ibid). When an object becomes a possession, is it

merged with the self (Belk, 1988). Thus, possessions are essential to knowing who we are. People seek, express, confirm, and ascertain a sense of being through what they have (Ibid).

The possessions incorporated in the extended self can serve as an objective manifestation of the self. By considering the role Belk gives to consumption, as a way of providing meaning in life , one may develop a stronger understanding of the deeper laying meanings associated with consumption.

The above explanation of Belk's research provided a broad consumer culture related perspective on the self, now we personality approach will help us concretise his theory in relation to branding. , as described in the above paragraph about Belk's research, he defines the self as "*The total sum of all that he can call his, not only his body or psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and his children, his ancestors and friends[...]*" (Heding et al, 2016), and material object are an extension of the self. This is of particular interest as it states that brands or objects that are consumed to not only stand for what they are in their physical form, but they have a deeper meaning to them, they can help a consumer in defining themselves, enhance sense of self, help belong to groups, define themselves to others, or tell a story about who they are.
Consumers use brands to express their own attributes, such as being someone who appreciates family values, or simply to express that one is rich, and also to play out personal narratives, which are linked to key events in their lives structured as stories (Heding et al., 2016). These attributes helps consumers express themselves to other people, culture, groups, and society (Ibid.). This view of the consumer self and how objects are used in the self construct, are essential to the personality approach as they help understand the interplay between how consumers use brand personalities in the creation and expression of attributes and narratives of their life (Ibid.).

Sirgy describes the self-concept in a marketing and advertising context, as pertaining of two branches, an individual and an interdependent one (Heding et al., 2016).

The individual aspect is about consuming objects because they carry a symbolic meaning for the consumer on an individual level (Ibid.). The individual level is further divided into actual and ideal self, where the former refers to the objective and authentic representation of the self, and the latter refers to a representation of the self based on someone the self dreams/aspires to become (Ibid.). "Hence, the consumption of brands and consumers' emotional attachment and formation of

attitudes towards brands partly stems from consumers' need to create and maintain self at an individual level" (Ibid. p 129).

The social self, is where brand are either consumers to demonstrate belonging to a certain group, or to show distance from another group (ibid.).

Brands contribute to the construction of the self in many ways, be it by aiding consumers in reaching goals motivated by the ideal self, meet social or individual needs for self expression, or they can be a symbol of personal achievement (Ibid.)

Self-congruity

Self-congruity is about the process consumers go through when identifying brands, which are congruent with their own self-images (Heding et al., 2016). This process can be described in three steps:

1. Consumers form associations about a brand that can be associated to their own self, often in the shape of personality traits.
2. The representation of consumer self is activated, either actual or ideal self.
3. Consumers go through a matching process between their perceptions of associations derived from the brand and their representation of self, which help them determine the match between brand personality and consumer self.

The brand self-congruity construct posits that consumer behaviour is influenced by consumers' comparison of own self, and the personality of the brand, this congruence is either related to the ideal or actual self.

4.2.2 Relevance of theories in relation to theoretical framework

In relation to the topic at hand, which is about d&i, we believe that the personality approach supports the assumption that personal aspects related to the self affect consumers' attitude towards brands in regards to d&i. As consumers use brands in their self-construct, we assume that it is important that brand's have a brand personality that is congruent with the self of the consumer.

In relation to our research, we believe that the view of the brand as being "human" in the personality approach, in the sense that the marketers endow the brand with a personality, and that

the receiving consumers also view the brand as having a personality, is of great importance. The importance is due to the contribution to the consumers construct of or enhancement of own self by consuming a brand with a personality that they like. This approach supports our assumption that brands have a great meaning for the consumers, that they do not only consume products and brands for the sake of it, but actually do so based on the personalities they like, and further that consumers need for identity and expression of the self drives brand attitudes, choice and consumption (Heding et al, 2016). In the personality approach the "Big Five' (Heding et al., 2016) is mentioned, although we adopt the premise that brands are endowed with personalities, we will not be applying the five suggested personalities when analysing consumer's perception of brands. This approach also shed light on why people care about brands being d&i or not, when looking at the theorist who have inspired the personality approach, it is evident that within the approach a brand and its product hold a great importance in how people define themselves, and that they do not view brands as "things" rather they see them as personalities, and expect that these personalities act in a way, which they find appropriate and proportionate to their expectations. According to the personality approach brands are consumed not only because of their physical and functional characteristic, but also due to the symbolic value they provide (Heding et al., 2016). We view this symbolic value as relevant for constructing our theoretical framework, as it shapes consumers' attitudes towards brands, andt affects how consumers read the brand personalities, if they feel they can relate to them, and how and if they use them in their construction of self: "The brand personalities are activated in a continuous reciprocal, dialogue-based exchange between brand and consumer" (Ibid.). As we intent to examine how d&i affects consumers' attitude towards brands, we adopt this dialogue-based exchange in gaining an understanding of consumers' perception of brands communication in terms of d&i. Applying this approach, we assume that there is an emotional bond between brands and consumers, which is strengthened if the brand is endowed with a personality that is attractive to consumers (Heding et al., 2016), which in the case of this thesis, is based on personalities that reflects d&i. In relation to the topic, it is argued to be necessary to use brand personalities in the research, investigating the premise that consumers imbue brands with human like personalities, and argue that for consumers to be able to relate to the brand personality, they must be able to see themselves reflected in it.

We also apply the premise that consumers categorise and evaluate brands the same way as they would with human beings as proposed by the personality approach, which allows to investigate how consumers feel and talk about brands which in their opinion are d&i or not.

Regarding consumer self, Belk, as described, states that we regard our possessions as part of the self (1988). We have decided to adopt this definitions of the self as it stresses the importance which is placed on possessions, using the argument that if possessions are part of the self, then they must hold a great significance, and we further argue that in the case of diversity and inclusivity, then for possessions to represent the self, the consumer might have a stronger bond to their possessions if they feel that the brand has included them in their products and advertisement. Further, the view that possessions include other people is also interesting to include in the framework, as the researchers argue that if construction of identity is also linked to viewing other people as part of the self, then this could also mean how brands use certain type of people in their advertisement, such as hijabis, or different skin tones, body types etc. If brands do this then people might be able to use them in their construction of personality better. Further Belk (1988), also says that people are the mirror from which consumers see themselves, this also stresses the importance of being able to see oneself reflected in brand advertising, and further perhaps also stress the importance how influenced consumers are by others in their choice of brands and products.

Various levels of group affiliations are also part of the self, and items that are part of these group identities also become part of the extended self (Belk, 1988), here it could also be argued that by following influencers, which the consumers feel they can relate too on social media, the consumers are part of a group consisting of the followers of the influencer, and hence by consuming the products recommended by the influencer, they become part of the group identity, and so also use the influencer and the brands that the influencer uses as part of their identity construction.

A part of the consumer self, is also the layers of consumer self, which as described consist of an independent and social self. In our research we find it relevant to focus on the independent self, as we will not investigate the social self, rather it is relevant to look into whether consumers feel if a brand appeals to their ideal or actual self, and how they use brand in terms of their self constructs and enhancements. According to Mäler et al (as qtd. in Heding et al., 2016), the more a brand appeals to the actual self, through actual self congruence with the brand, the stronger the emotional brand attachment will be, as compared to ideal self congruence.

Here, we will also be examining brand-self-congruence, investigating if the consumers will have a stronger relationship with the brand if they see themselves reflected in it. Recent research suggests that the actual self congruence is becoming more important for consumers emotional brand attachment, referred to as authentic branding (Heding et al., 2016). This will be tested in the analysis as well, as we will investigate whether the consumers indeed feel that brands in order to be inclusive have to appeal to their actual self, or if an ideal self is sufficient, via aspirational branding. This is an important to investigate as the process of self congruity has great significance for consumers' formation of attitude, emotional attachment, brand, choice and loyalty (Heding et al., 2016). Hence, brands can have different functions in relation to how they activate the consumer's self - for either the construction or expression of self, consumers are proposed to use brand personalities in relation to self in two ways, on an individual level: "1. they either try to preserve their own self-concept by consuming brands with personalities congruent with their actual self, or 2. they use the symbolic consumption of brands with a certain personality to enhance their self concept, by consuming brands with a personality that is congruent with their ideal self" (Heding et al.,2016)

4.3 The Cultural Perspective

The theories that will be discussed in the cultural perspective are 'Culture and consumption 'by Grant McCracken (1986), and 'Cultural branding' by Douglas Holt (2004). The following parts will first introduce and describe the theories, thereafter, the similarities and differences between the theories will be discussed, and lastly, we will present argumentation for how the theories support our topic of study.

4.3.1 'Culture and Consumption' by Grant McCracken, 1986

We view d&i as a cultural phenomenon that has an impact on the way consumers shape their attitudes towards brands. The influence culture has on consumer behavior, is explained by anthropologist Grant McCracken (1986) in his theory about cultural consumption, which is about the basic way of thinking about consumption in a cultural context. Pivotal in the theory of cultural consumption is the notion of culture and consumption operating as a system, as McCracken views culture as constituting the world, and the meaning attributed to products is viewed as originating from the culture. In relation to consumers, McCracken argue that culture is "the "lens" through which the individual views phenomena; as such, it determines how the phenomena will be

apprehended and assimilated" (Ibid.). Culture's influence on consumers determines McCracken's argument that "culture is the main driver for brands to endow the products with relevant meaning that resonate with consumers, as meaning is subtracted from culture" (Ibid.). McCracken argues that by deliberately endowing the products with meaning, consumption is made based on cultural aspects.

In his model 'Movement of Meaning', McCracken (1986) visualizes that cultural meaning is located in three places: the culturally constituted world, the consumer good, and the individual consumer, he explains how culture constitutes the world by supplying it with meaning, and how meaning moves in a trajectory at two points of transfer: world to good and good to individual.

Meaning transfer: World to good

McCracken describes the process of meaning transfer from the culturally constituted world into consumer goods through the *advertising system* and *fashion system*. The *advertising system* adds meaning to goods by bringing the advertised consumer good with a representation of the culturally constituted world, in a way that the receiver views a similarity between them, he refers to this as a symbolic equivalence and states that it is very important for brand advertising as it is left to the receiver to see the similarity as suggested by the brand (McCracken, 1986). It is argued that it is the role of the creative director to bring the successful conjunction of these two elements. He states that the consumer good is fixed and specified by the client, so the creative director cannot manipulate this element, on the other hand, the representation of the culturally constituted world, is the element that is constrained and free to the creative director to work with: "With this element, the creative director enjoys a wide range of discretionary control" (Ibid.) The role of the creative director is also described as creative, and therefore can proceeds at unconscious and conscious levels, and that directors are not always fully cognizant of the choices they make for the ads (Ibid.).

The *fashion system* is another method for meaning transfer, from which goods can be endowed with meaning, McCracken describe three capacities for this system, although only one of them is relevant to mention for this research: Inventing new cultural meaning in a modest way, undertaken by 'opinion leaders' who are "individuals who by virtue of birth, beauty, or accomplishment are held in high esteem" (Ibid.). This capacity will be elaborated on later in this chapter.

Meaning transfer: Good to consumer

The last point of meaning transfer happens from the consumer goods to the consumer. McCracken describes this step as taking place in rituals, carried out by the consumer: "Ritual is a kind of social action devoted to the manipulation of cultural meaning for purposes of collective and individual communication and categorization" (McCracken, 1986). The rituals that are used to transfer meaning from goods to individuals are: exchange, possession, grooming, and divestment rituals (Ibid.).

FIGURE
MOVEMENT OF MEANING

| Culturally Constituted World |

Advertising/Fashion System   Fashion System

| Consumer Goods |

Possession Ritual   Exchange Ritual   Grooming Ritual   Divestment Ritual

| Individual Consumer |

KEY: ☐ Location of Meaning
      → Instrument of Meaning Transfer
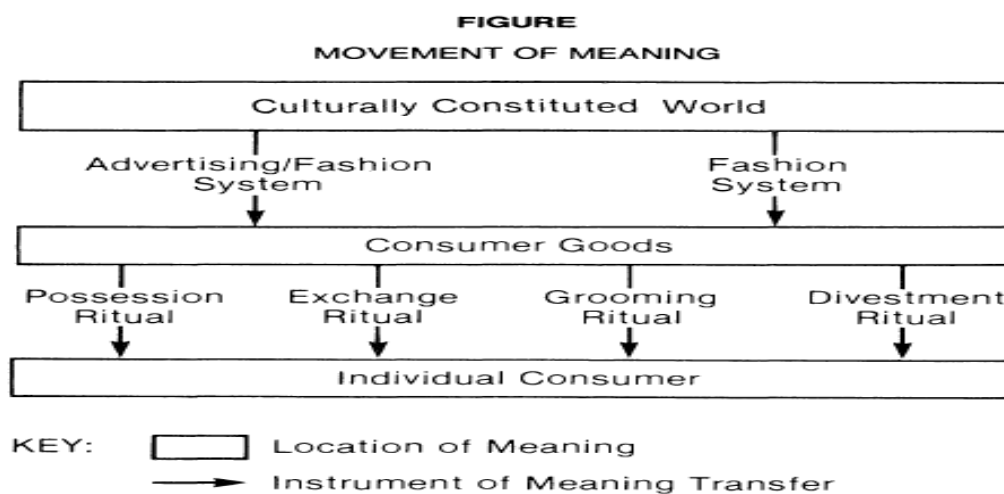
4.3.2 Douglas B. Holt: Cultural branding

In his book "How Brands Become Icons: The Principles of Cultural Branding" (2004), Douglas Holt talk about iconic brands and define these as "the ones that have managed to integrate themselves into culture more skilful than others. A brand that has moved beyond being used for self-expressive benefits and is considered an exemplary symbol of cultural meaning" (Heding et al., 2016). Becoming an iconic brand involves following Holts' Cultural branding strategy model, although, it is not relevant for this thesis to address the building of iconic brands, but the mindset Holt presents for Iconic brands is relevant to uncover as this mindset speak about the cultural aspects that has an influence on consumers.

Contribution to self-expression of consumers

Holt argues that in contemporary world, brands are viewed as more than just cultural blueprints, rather he argue that brands help consumers to construct their identity, he emphasize this stating that "the focus is more on what the brand represents and stands for instead of what it produce, as this is considered valuable to the consumers" (Heding et al., 2016). To help consumers construct their identities, Holt argue that brands should aim at creating 'identity value', which is the brands main value for the customers and is "the 'equity' that reflects the brand's contribution to the self-expression of the consumer' (Holt, 2004), based on this, Holt has argued that in order to create identity value, brands should focus on being offered as cultural resources from which consumers can produce the self they desire (Ibid.) Holt argue that "brands can create extraordinary value for consumers by addressing the collective anxieties and desires of a nation…. by providing symbolic and valued answers to some of the cultural challenges that encompass people in society " (Holt, 2004). This value is described as residing in brand's communication in regards to the stories they tell as connected to the products.

Collective identity projects

The word 'collective' have been mentioned a few times so far, hence it is important to mention that Holt view desires and anxieties as widely shared across people in society, as these similarities result because people are constructing their identities in response to the same historical changes that influence the entire nation (Ibid.). In general, Holt's theory puts an emphasis and focus on how endowing brands with culture is something that is valued by consumers with collective desires and anxieties that are not met due to their considerable remove from the national ideology.
However, three aspects from Holt's theory could be attributed to endowing brands with cultural meaning, the first one is related to social shifts (Holt, 2010); Holt argue that social shifts takes place at historical moments, and that these shift eventually leads to changes that disrupt consumers' identification with conventional category expressions, which lead to the desire for new ideologies that better resonate with these consumers. Therefore, brands should aim at understanding these societal changes and how they constrain consumers, in order to provide valuable symbolic answers that resonate with collective identity projects of the given time (Holt, 2004). The second attribution to the aspect is related to creating stories that contribute to the self expression of consumers based on an appropriate alignment with the brands reputation, meaning that the brand should consider what stories it makes sense to tell (Heding et al., 2016). The third attribution is related to cultural

knowledge; Holt emphasize that brands should forge a deep connection with the culture and gain cultural knowledge, as that is a powerful way to resonate with consumers (Holt, 2003).

Cultural Knowledge

Holt argues that brands should communicate the right cultural meaning that can be utilized in collective identity projects (Holt, 2003). In order to create identity value for consumers, brands must: "assemble cultural knowledge, rather than knowledge about individual consumers" (Holt, 2004). Holt argues that in general, companies should reinvent their marketing function as "companies should alter their approach on marketing strategy and research to encompass cultural knowledge, also, "…and they must hire and train cultural activists, rather than stewards of brand essence" (Ibid.). Holt argue that brand managers must acquire cultural knowledge about the brand and the consumers, Holt describe the role of cultural knowledge:

- Cultural knowledge focuses on the major social changes impacting the nation, rather than on clusters of individuals.
- Cultural knowledge views people holistically, seeking to understand what gives their lives meaning, rather than as customers of category benefits.
- Cultural knowledge seeks to understand the identity value of mass culture texts, rather than treating mass culture simply as trends and entertainment.

Holt argues that the described mode of understanding goes to "acquiring an embedded sense of what life really feels like if one were in their shoes [people]. The kind of knowledge required is more like what an author requires to write a great novel or screenplay. Great authors are highly attuned to the world around them so that they see the world through the eyes of the other" (Holt, 2004). As Holt argues for the importance of cultural content, he rejects the "outsourcing of the most critical strategic decisions on the brand to creatives at ad agencies, public relation firms, and design shops" (Ibid.).

By aiming at understand the culture and collective identity projects and thereby resonate with consumers, Holt argue that the brand will benefit from an enhancement of the brands quality reputation and status value, which are also supposed to create positive perceptions about the products of the brand (Holt, 2004).

4.3.3 The differences and similarities between Holt and McCracken

The theories of McCracken (1986) and Holt (2004) complement each other but also have their differences. One clear difference is that McCracken focuses on the process of meaning transfer from the culturally constituted world, through the consumer good and finally to the consumer, Holt on the other hand does not include goods and consumption in his perspective, but merely focuses on how to utilize cultural changes in order to contribute to consumers self expression by addressing collective identity projects. Although, the two theoretical perspectives complements each other in regards to the influence of culture, as both theories emphasize that in order for brands to resonate with consumers, the brand should forge a connection with the culture. This is shown as McCracken emphasize that the meaning consumers attribute to products is viewed as originating from the culture, while Holt emphasize that consumer's identity projects are influenced by the surrounding culture. Both theories thereby agree that that the culturally constituted world (McCracken, 1986) is where meaning transfer starts.

The two theories differ at an important point, which is the method of which the brand is endowed with cultural meaning. McCracken (1986) argue that it is the job of the creative director to conjoin the advertised consumer good with a representation of the culturally constituted, and the creative director is free to deliver the similarities of these goods and world in any way desired. This is interesting considering McCracken's view on culture as a crucial factor when it comes to branding. This is opposing to Holt's argument that brand managers should re-invent their marketing function by applying a deeper cultural perspective, and roughly speaking be "schooled" in cultural knowledge, by hiring and training cultural activists. Holt's view on this is based on his emphasis on brand managers understanding the culture and identity projects in order to properly address these in the communication through stories. Basically, the difference is that McCracken seems to put a lot of responsibility of the branding to the creative director, whereas Holt argues for empowering the managers to become "cultural experts".

This opposition in views could be explained based on their view on the society. Holt's theory argue for a dominant national ideology that leads to people "feeling acute tensions between their own lives and society's prevailing ideology, in the sense that many people might live at a considerable

remove from that ideology and visions that surrounds the society" (Holt, 2003). Whereas, McCracken argue that: "The groups responsible for the radical reform of cultural meaning are those existing at the margins of society, e.g., hippies, punks, or gays (McCracken, 1986). Lastly, we want to highlight a point of critique to McCracken's view on culture. McCracken states that "culture is a "lens" through which the individual views phenomenon; as such, it determines how the phenomenon will be apprehended and assimilated" (McCracken, 1986). We view this quote as oversimplifying the complexity of how culture has an effect on consumers. We believe that consumers are influenced by the culture, but also that they add certain behaviour based on their perception of the phenomenon, which might not necessarily be the same for all individuals. The same critique goes for Holt, who views consumers holistically and collectively, as desires and anxieties linked to identity are largely shared across a large fraction of people in society (Holt, 2004), although, we argue for an importance at gaining consumer knowledge at a more deep level, as described in the personal perspective.

4.3.4 Relevance of theories in relation to theoretical framework

We assume that d&i is a cultural phenomenon encompassing a lot of different consumers who take in cultural aspects in their shaping of attitude towards brands, and therefore we assume that it is important for brands to understand these cultural aspects. The theories of McCracken (1986) and Holt (2004), have contributed to shedding light on how cultural aspects can have a connection to consumers attitudes towards brands being d&i.

Both theoretical perspectives support an emphasis on how culture has an influence on consumers, and how culture should be the main driver for brands to resonate with consumers, e.g. McCracken mention how "meaning is subtracted from culture", and Holt very much focuses on how consumers' identity projects and expression of self is closely connected to the cultural changes surrounding them. As we argued in the introductory chapter, we view the phenomenon of d&i as closely related to consumers self, thereby we can draw a parallel arguing that d&i as a cultural phenomenon that encompass the expression of self and collective identity projects in society, could play a role in shaping consumers attitude towards brands, considering that, as Holt have stated (2004), consumers view brands as more than cultural blueprints, rather, they actually use them for the construction of self. Connecting this to the topic of study, the proposed theories from the cultural perspective, could contribute to gaining an understanding of how consumers attach cultural aspects to brands in

regards to attributing traits to the brand from the culturally constituted world (McCracken, 1986), which is constituted by d&i, that they can use for their self expression. Drawing from the proposed theories, d&i as a cultural phenomenon that aid consumers in their self expression, from a brand perspective, should encompass an understanding of identity projects, but also an acquiring of cultural knowledge in terms of what it is that actually matters to consumers, and how to successfully address the cultural phenomenon in a way that resonates with consumers identity projects.

Based on our observations, it seem that several fashion and beauty brands have been less successful in their attempts to appear as a diverse brand due to their lack of understanding of the tendency as a cultural phenomenon that matters to consumers and their self expression and identity construction. This observation supports McCracken's (1986) view on culture and consumption as being connected as the culture is viewed as constituting the world: "…. cultural notions are concretized in goods, and it is through their possession and use that the individual realizes the notions in his own life", we therefore adopt McCracken view on culture and consumption being connected, and therefore perhaps has an influence on consumers perception of d&i.

Although, we emphasize the individual differences in perception of the culture and what effect it has on consumer behaviour, which is an aspect McCracken's theory have not given enough attention to. Understanding the tendency merely as a phenomenon from the culturally constituted world that brands can tap into through creative advertising, can lead to "wrong" meaning transfer, we therefore emphasize adding Holt's arguments about gaining cultural knowledge and knowledge about consumers' identity projects to McCracken's process of meaning transfer. Gaining this kind of knowledge is something we view as a cultural-branding mindset that might be needed in order to understand how d&i as a cultural phenomenon has an influence on consumers identity projects. Concluding on this evaluation of the theories' relevance to the area of research, we apply McCracken's view on culture as constituting the world and that the meaning consumers attribute to products is viewed as originating from the culture. We also apply Holt's perspectives on consumer's self expression, collective identity projects and cultural knowledge. Although, as mentioned in the part above about the similarities and differences between the theories, we do not apply McCracken's process of meaning transfer as based on the advertising system. We do believe that cultural meaning is communicated in advertising, as that is also the case for many brands addressing diversity today, so we do take in the logic that brand advertising should conjoin a representation of the culturally constituted world and the advertised good (McCracken, 1986), but

we do not believe in the method McCracken proposes in order to communicate the meaning in the ad. Here, we apply Holt's theory about what it takes of cultural knowledge and consumer research, to successfully endow the brand with cultural meaning and resonate with consumers' identity projects.

Even though we don't apply McCracken's advertising system, we apply what he describe as the second capacity in the fashion system, which is "inventing new cultural meaning in a modest way, undertaken by 'opinion leaders", this will elaborated on later in this chapter(McCracken, 1986). The last step in this process, which both of these theories lack, is gaining a deep understanding of the consumer, and how the consumer is affected, which is applied to the thesis through the personal perspective. The application of the theoretical perspectives will be visualized in the final part of this theoretical chapter, which presents the final theoretical framework.

4.4 Final Framework

This part of the theoretical chapter will sum up on the *personal perspective* and the *cultural perspective*, in relation to an assembled theoretical framework. In the first part of the analysis we will use the theoretical components of the framework, which constitute the *personal perspective* and the *cultural perspective*, to explain and interpret our empirical findings, and thereby gain an understanding of how personal and cultural aspects are connected to consumers' perception of d&i and the shaping of their attitudes towards brands. After having analysed our findings based on the components of the model, we will go a deeper level by summarizing them in our framework and demonstrate how the model helps us in answering our problem statement.

We have assembled a theoretical framework that encompasses the theoretical aspects of the *personal perspective* and the *cultural perspective*. The theories presented in the personal perspective, contributed to understanding how consumers attribute meaning to their possessions and to brands in general. And the theories presented in the cultural perspective, contributed to an understanding of how brands can be endowed with cultural meaning in order to resonate with consumers and contribute to their identity projects.

This framework will be applied to the analysis part of the paper, by analysing the empirical findings and summarize them based on the components of the framework, and thereafter demonstrate how the framework helps us in answering our problem statement. By answering the problem statement, we hope to find some patterns and implications which can be used in a managerial guide for brands that wish to address d&i.

The chosen theories supports our assumptions regarding the impact d&i, as a cultural phenomenon, has on consumers and their constructions of identity. We argue that personal- and cultural aspects, which constitute the assembled framework, is what impacts consumers' perception of d&i and thereby also their attitude towards brands. The aim of the assembled framework is to be applied to the analysis of the empirical findings, however, the framework should be understood as an open question, as the theoretical framework is based on our observations and understanding, and the theories we believe can help answer the problem statement. Based on the empirical data, we will be able to investigate whether the chosen framework is applicable. Although, the analysis part of the paper seek to uncover this from the perspective of the consumers, we do not exclude that our assumptions might be wrong in relation to the theories used in the assembled framework, depending on the analysis results.

Figure 1. Our Assembled Theoretical Framework For Diversity & Inclusivity
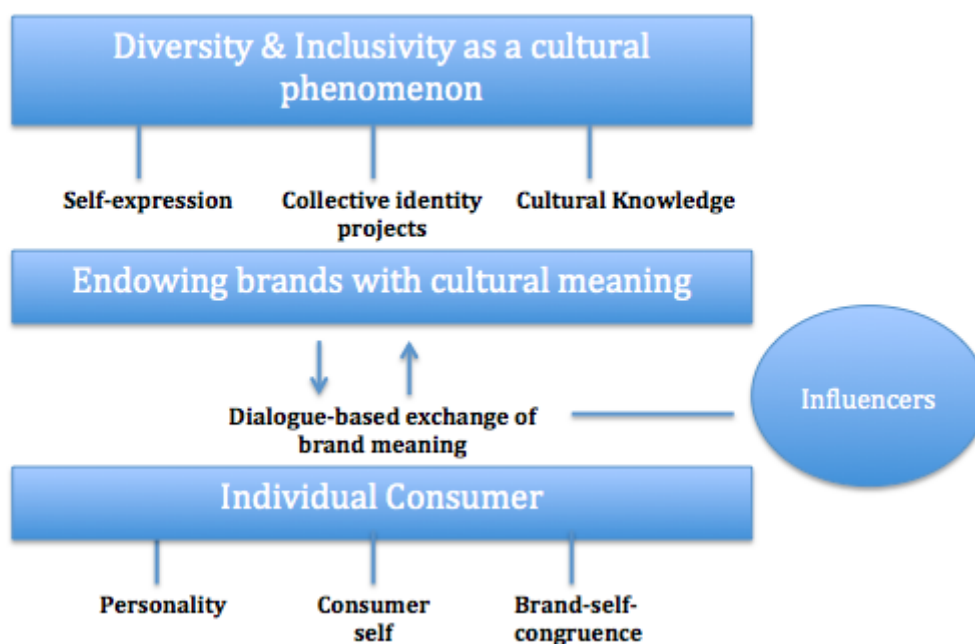
The assembled framework is inspired by the 'Movement of Meaning' model by McCracken (1986), and consist of three building blocks that works as "steps" in the process of meaning transfer. The building blocks are 'Diversity and Inclusivity as a cultural phenomenon' as we see the surrounding culture as supplied with meaning of d&i. The meaning then moves on to the second building block, which is 'Endowing brands with cultural meaning', and lastly, this meaning that it endowed in the brand, is interpreted by the 'Individual Consumer'. In order to move through the building blocks,

meaning moves in a trajectory at two points of transfer: world to good (brand) and good (brand) to individual. The different building blocks in the model will be described and elaborated on in the following part.

Individual Consumer

The individual consumer is found at the bottom of this model, however this should be seen in the light of how meaning moves from a societal level at the top. However, we have decided to start our analysis on a micro level of the consumer even though we argue the phenomenon happens on a higher macro level, as we view it as experienced on a micro level by consumers. Also, we aim at uncover how personal aspects has an impact on the individual consumer, we start our analysis based on the *personal perspective*, gaining an understanding of the individual consumer, their relation to fashion and beauty brands, and how they use brands in their identity construction. The three theoretical building blocks as adopted from the personality approach of brand management will be applied in this personal perspective.

Based on *personality* we will examine how consumers attribute personality traits to brand they see as diverse or not diverse, we will further through the interviews and focus group examine how the consumers use brand personalities in a dialogue based exchange of symbolic value in their individual expression of self and identity construction. As we see the communication exchange as dialogue based we have applied a two-way arrow between 'endowing brands with cultural meaning' and the 'individual consumer', as the interpretation and meaning making goes both ways, consumers do not just passively accept the cultural meaning endowed into the brand, rather they use their own self in interpreting the meaning. Secondly, we will examine the *consumer self* in the framework, as the personality approach says that consumers relate to brands with characteristics they believe to have themselves, we will see if this is the case in regards to consumer's attitudes towards brands who include people with characteristics of the interviewees. According to the approach, the more people feel a bond to and like the brand personality the stronger the brand is, this will be investigated in this framework. We will investigate how consumers use beauty and fashion brands in their construction and expression of self, and how this is affected by brands being inclusive and diverse. Using Belk (1988) will help us understand the interplay between how consumers use these brand personalities in expressing attributes and narratives of their lives. The emotional attachment to the brand will also be examined here in relation to the self, and what type of self the brand helps the consumer realise. The actual and ideal self will be investigated, as it has

been argued in the personal perspective that appealing to the ideal self of consumers is more efficient, this ties in with our purpose to investigate if people care about being included in beauty and fashion brands. Lastly, we will also investigate brand-self-congruence, investigating if the consumers will have a stronger relationship with the brand if they see themselves reflected in it.

After having collected our empirical data, we decided to ad factor called 'influencer', which is related to the last two blocks, and the dialogue-based exchange. The influencer block refers to McCracken's (1986) idea taken out of the fashion system based on certain opinion leaders, in his theory he used these opinion leaders within fashion, however we expand them to beauty as well. The influencers are defined as being social media influencers, and have two functions:

1. We argue that they influence the dialogue between consumer and brand, in the way that they influence how a brand is perceived, and influence the personality of the brand, by either borrowing their personality the brand, or by talking either positively or negative about the brand.
2. They also hold a cultural significance as they im themselves carry some cultural meaning which consumers interpret and use in their association and feelings towards brands.

Diversity & Incluivity as a cultural phenomenon
For the topic at hand, we see d&i as a cultural phenomenon "encompassing the world of everyday experiences presenting itselfto the individual in today's society" (McCracken, 1986). We assume that d&i as a cultural phenomenon affects consumers attitude towards brands, through the adopted theoretical perspectives, we argue that brands should utilize the cultural phenomenon by endowing the brand with cultural meaning, as consumers do not only consume based on the utilitarian characters of the brand, but also the symbolic value. We argue that consumers nowadays are affected by basic aspects like the product quality delivered by the brand, and prices and product range, but we assume that consumers are affected by cultural aspects, as we view the consumer as a *homo mercans,* being "a market man woven into the intricate meaning found in cultural consumer objects…. embedded in and influenced by the surrounding culture" (Heding et al., 2016). Assuming that consumers' brand attitudes is influenced by d&i as a cultural phenomenon, this building block of the assembled model aims at examining how culture and consumption is connected, in regards to how consumers evaluate brands based on cultural aspects of d&i, as this will help us understand

how culture affect consumers' perception of brands being d&i. Based on our argumentation that brands should be endowed with cultural meaning, the next step in the model will be examining the process of this meaning transfer from the cultural phenomenon to the brand.

World to brand

In order to endow the brand with cultural meaning, we argue that brands need to view d&i as a cultural phenomenon that affects people, hence we apply the concept of *self-expression*, as we argue that brands should utilize the cultural phenomenon of d&i to contribute to the self-expression of consumers who are part of minorities who are usually not represented in the fashion and beauty industry, and according to (Holt, 2004), this will create identity value for the brand and a stronger position. We view the phenomenon of d&i as based on a focus on the representation of different women from minorities, as these have desires and anxieties that have not been met before, we therefore argue that brands should focus on contributing to their self-expression, but also, they should understand how to create value for these consumers by understanding *collective identity projects*, which is another concept we apply. This concept will be used to understand how and whether our interviewees and focus group perceive d&i as important to address in regards to different people in society, or if the focus is more on seeing yourself reflected, as we argue that this shed light on how consumers perceive d&i and thus how brands should address it. Lastly, the concept of 'cultural knowledge' will be applied to investigate how brands knowledge about the culture has an impact on whether it is perceived as d&i. In order to resonate with consumers regarding d&i, we argue that brands need to acquire 'cultural knowledge' (Holt, 2004) in order to understand how to utilize the culture to resonate with consumers. We assume that perceiving the brand as a culturally aware brand that understand people's identity projects, will strengthen the consumers perception of the brands attempts to appear d&i.

4.4.1 Linking the model

In the introduction of the theoretical chapter, we argued for the relevance of applying both a personal and a cultural perspective in the framework. As we argued, the personal perspective gives us the tools for understanding the consumers and their feelings on a micro level in regards to the

topic, however we argue that this personal feelings regarding inclusion and diversity are mirrored on a societal level, as this is where the consumers take the meaning from. Using only one of the approaches would not give us a holistic understanding of the phenomenon and how it is perceived by consumers. If we only used a personal perspective we would only be able to examine consumers feelings in regards to brands, however, the theories in the personal perspective do not consider the influence of d&i as a cultural phenomenon and how these affects people's identity construction and self-expression in brands. Hence, the cultural perspective gives us the tools to lift the analysis to include what these cultural aspects mean to consumers and brands. The cultural perspective could not stand alone either, as the theories in this perspective only provide a holistic view on consumers, whereas we argue that it is necessary for a deep understanding of individual consumers. This interconnection between the two perspectives is reflected in the assembled model, and will be further elaborated on by linking the three building blocks.

4.4.2 The similarities

We argue that even though the two perspectives are different, they can still complement each other, as we argue that in the case of our analysis they are interconnected and cannot stand alone. First of all, we stress that the theories presented in both perspectives, emphasize the enhancement of identity value. In the personal perspective we understand this as the value brands add in the enhancement and expression of identity of the self. This is supported by the cultural perspective, which emphasize that endowing brands with relevant cultural meaning of the given time, contribute to the self-expression of consumers as well as providing symbolic answers for collective identity projects in terms of desires and anxieties. Both perspectives engage with symbolic consumption in a way: in the personal perspective consumers engage in a symbolic exchange when consuming certain brand personalities, in the cultural perspectives, the theories argue for exchanging symbolic and valued answers to some of the cultural challenges that encompasses people when society changes.

The theories in the cultural perspective argue that the brand need to be endowed with relevant cultural meaning in order to resonate with consumers in a symbolic exchange, as illustrated in two first building blocks, although connecting this to the last building block 'Individual Consumer', we argue for a linking, as the theories in the personal perspective, which encompasses the last building block, argue for the creation of a favourable brand personality that consumers can use in their self enhancement, however we argue that for this symbolic exchange between consumer and brand to be

efficient there needs to be an understanding of the cultural level surrounding and influencing the consumer.

CHAPTER 5. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

In the following section the empirical findings for the individual interviews will be presented. The interviews covered different themes with the purpose of getting general insights regarding the the awareness the respondents have about d&i in relation to fashion and beauty brands, but also getting the personal and cultural perspective of how d&i has an impact on their attitude towards brands. The description of the interviewees was provided in the methodology chapter (2.6.1).

Interviewee no. 1. Yusra Iqbal

5.1 (Y) Consumption of fashion and beauty brands

Yusra was asked to mention two of her favorite beauty brands and two of her favorite fashion brands, she answered: "Yes, two of my favourite beauty brands would be… I have quite problematic skin so Estee Lauder because they have a good foundation that covers everything and then I also like Maybelline because they are good as well and very affordable and I just use a lot of their products. Fashion wise I think it is hard to narrow it down to two, but I like H&M I love Mango as well and ZARA and Monki and then I also shop a lot online on ASOS" (A.1 l: 30-34). She also elaborate on her choice of fashion brands: **"**In terms of fashion brands I like them because I have a lot of options when it comes to my style, I am Muslim and therefore I have a certain way of dressing, I dress very modestly I would say, and H&M have a very broad range of clothes, Mango as well has recently made very good clothes that are covering".

When Yusra was asked what other factors than the functional ones makes the brands her favourites, she answered: "I think H&M are really good at being inclusive; they have always been very inclusive with all types of women in terms of sizes, also recently they began using a model with hijab and that is very important to me because I like to feel included as a minority, I think that gives you a connection to the brand and make you feel more accepted and make you want to support the brand as well. I see that in H&M and Mango, I don't quite see it in ZARA, and I don't like the way they advertise, they always use the same kind of girls, very skinny and light." (A.1 l: 66-76). Also, in regards to Yusra's favourite brands, she mentioned that she feel like she gets influenced by their

promotion activities: "When they advertise on Instagram and make commercials, and you see a commercial where you are included, you automatically want to go and support them" (A.1 l: 80-84). Whereas when asked about ZARA, Yusra answered: "I really don't like their branding, but there are a lot of their styles that suits me so I buy from them anyway, but I would rather buy from H&M or other brands that are more inclusive than they are." (A.1 l: 89-94).

5.2 (Y) Uncovering new tendencies in the fashion and beauty industry
Yusra was asked if she sees a movement in the fashion and beauty industry, she answered: "The movement is this new trend or movement about being more diverse and including more people, not showing unrealistic type of people, only one type of people in your branding like mostly a few years ago they were only using one type of woman and it didn't matter what kind of products it were, it would always be a white skinned, long hair, skinny woman. Mostly you could never really feel a connection to the brand whereas now you see more different kinds of women and not just one, and I think this make all kind of women feel more accepted. You like to feel more accepted" (A.1 l: 184-190), she later commented on this aspect again: "also consumers have a big voice now because everything is very easy with social media and we can voice our opinion very fast and easy. In general I think that all brands should cater to all women of different characteristics and work on being more diverse and inclusive" (A.1 l: 201-204).

5.3 (Y) Representation of consumers in ads
When asked about whether she gets influenced by the promotion activities of her favourite beauty brands she answered: "I don't think Maybelline and Estee Lauder are inclusive, it is kind of a functionality again that you used to buy one thing and you kind of get used to it. I would rather support Fenty Beauty for example they are so inclusive and have been very good at starting their brand from the bottom with having all kind of women and skin tones and religions included in their branding so I would rather support Fenty than Estee Lauder, and I think I actually will but I just haven't gotten around it yet (A.1 l: 96-104). We asked Yusra where she have seen the diverse appeal of Fenty Beauty, and she responded: "I follow their Instagram page where they feature people wearing the makeup and I often see every kind of women, hijabis, Asian, black, white and also all kind of ages and body types. I love to see everyone getting represented and not only one kind of person. I think Fenty is for everyone, everyone can find themselves in Fenty, and that is a very great quality" (A.1 l: 144-148). Based on this answer, we asked Yusra what it takes for her to

get influenced, she answered: "I have to see myself in the product, I have to see myself in the advertisement to feel a connection, if I don't feel a connection I wont feel drawn to it. So for me personally to buy a product I like to see myself in it and I like to see all the women be represented as well and not only the white beautiful blond women as we have seen for ages" (A.1 l: 100-103). .

5.3.1 (Y) Influencers

Yusra was asked what inspires her choice of fashion and beauty brands, she answered: **"I always get my fashion inspiration from Instagram and on Instagram I get it from the influencers, they show what they wear. That is where I find my ideas to what and how to wear" (A.1 l: 116-117). She also spoke about which influencers she follow: "I follow a wide broad of people, I follow a lot of hijabis, I also follow a lot of south Asian bloggers, I think they are very underrepresented in beauty and fashion and I love their style, but I also follow normal people, I kind of follow everything, I like to see a bit of everything but I mostly follow "my own kind". Being a mixed person I like to have the minority" (A.1 l: 126-129). Yusra also talked about influencers in relation to H&M and Fenty Beauty: I also think that H&M is good at collaborating with influencers on Instagram where they collaborate and show their support to these different kinds of people and ethnicities. And also Fenty Beauty if you go on their Instagram and scroll down, you see them featuring all kind of women with hijab, very dark skin colour, light skin colour and Asia. So it doesn't matter who you are when you go on that website because you will find yourself. The same with H&M as well" (A.1 l: 333-338).

5.4 (Y) Advertising diversity & inclusivity

When asked about what brands Sara thinks are not being genuine in their attempt to address diversity and inclusivity, she answered: "L'Oreal maybe...they still tend to cater to the very light and blond woman, so I think that they kind of try but I don't think it look genuine to me anyway, and when I see that it doesn't look genuine and they just once in a while try to do a small thing, I don't really find that appealing. I think in every kind of product and range you put out you should have a very diverse representation of models and people. (A.1 l: 343-348). She went on to compare L'Oreal with Fenty Beauty in terms of being genuine: "I definitely think L'Oreal is a marketing stunt because they are not doing it genuinely in every kind of post or product, when they promote this they only do it once in a while without doing much about it like other brands do, like Fenty which was built and started this whole thing with that this is who we are (diverse) and we are going

to do it always with everything. Whereas, L'Oreal can just suddenly put a different person in an ad and talk about oh we do it as well, but they really don't" (A.1 l: 361-365)

We showed Yusra a collage with different ads from brands, she commented on a picture from Fenty Beauty's lingerie collection that shows a very big, plus size women (A.13), she commented: "I think it's like she [Rihanna] takes diversity and inclusivity to the next level, I think she has really founded Fenty around this, and she does it with everything and amazingly good, there is no like shortcuts or anything, she uses every kind of women, from the very big sizes to the very elderly, and I think she deserves credit for that because no one else does that" (A.1 l: 385-389). When asked whether she thinks the founder of Fenty beauty is genuine, Yusra answered: "Yes, most definitely, because it is all that her brand is about, that is how she build it up and that is how it continues to grow, and there is no doubt that she wants to tell the world that this is how people are and look and people are different. And she shows that in every kind of promotion activity, and I think that is very genuine" (A.1 l: 402-405). Yusra was asked to compare the pictures from Fenty Beauty's lingerie, which featured both big plus size women and older women, with a picture from Victoria's Secret (A.13) in regards to if Victoria's Secret also can show women who are not young and skinny, she answered: "Fenty beauty is much more credible if they did it, because that is what their whole brand is about, it is about including everyone and Victoria's Secret is very idealistic American thin, tall skinny and light women and they have always been like that and that is how they build their brand, so it will not make any sense in their brand because till this day they are still like that so it would not be genuine at all" (A.1 l: 410-414). Another ad from the collage Yusra commented on was a cover from Sports Illustrated featuring plus size model Ashley Graham (InsideEdition, 2016). Yusra was asked if she thinks Graham represent plus size women, she answered: "No not really, she is not like the one who is on the Fenty Beauty lingerie ad, she is more a plus size woman, this woman I would just call a normal size woman, so no I don't think she is a representative of the plus size but in their world this is very plus size compared to what they usually have on their cover" (A.1 l: 437-440).

When shown a cover from Vogue Magazine, Yusra commented: "And then there is the Vogue cover which I saw recently and it made me very happy because there is literally everything in their, a Muslim, an Asian woman, and African, a brown skin woman and so on, there is also an Indian which, make me happy because they are not very represented, and a curvy one and some skinny ones. I think they did it very well" (A.1 l: 442-445). When asked whether she usually see Vogue as

being inclusive and diverse she answered: "No not at all, this is something new and I think this is new movement I think everyone need to kind of adapt and I think everyone is trying to do it in their own way and Vogue as well is trying to adjust to this movement and I think they did it in a very good way and I hope they continue to do so and not just once and then go back to their old ways" (A.1 l: 449-452).

Interviewee no. 2. Mishal Qayyum

5.1 (M) Consumption Behaviour

Mishal was asked to mention two of her favourite beauty brands and two of her favourite fashion brands, she answered: "Okay, so I think that regarding clothes I think, I like to dress in what Stine Goya makes, I like their colours, and yes just overall like the dresses it seems like they would be flattering for every body type. I also like the Danish designer Malene Birger a lot, I think that her clothing is really elegant and in makeup, I think I would say like different brands, but maybe Anastasia Beverly hills, then there are other brands too, like Marc Jacobs and M.A.C and Huda Beauty" (A.2 l: 15-19). She also elaborates on her choice of brands: "Okay so, for Huda Beauty it's the pigmentation in the lipsticks. Because I am dark skinned, so but you can still see the colour on my lips, whereas sometimes if I buy lipsticks from other brands, its not looking that flattering on me because my lips are darker so, the colour doesn't really pop. For Anastasia Beverly hills, it is difficult for me to find a foundation that suits me, but they have like every skin colour, and it was really easy finding the colour, I just went with my skin…. For fashion, I try not to show too much skin, and those brands I mentioned they make long dresses and dresses with like a high neckline. Those are the criteria; sometimes those dresses are also loose fit so it is not showing your curves too much" (A.2 l: 24-35). She was asked why she likes her clothes to be covering and loose, she answered: "First of all, it's because I gave birth 10 months ago, so I am not comfortable with my body yet, and I am Muslim so I don't like to show too much" (A.2 l: 39-40). Further, when asked about how she feels when she buys a product from one of her favourite brands, she responds: **"**It makes me feel happy, because at the time it is hard for me to find anything that fits me, because like for example I can't shop at ZARA at all, because I don't even fit in their XL and I am not that big, and it just make me realize how difficult it has to be for the bigger girls to find clothes, because XL seems like such a big size, but it is actually not. Because I haven't gained that much weights but it is just difficult for me to find clothes." (A.2 l: 45-49).

Mishal was asked if any promotional activities from her favourite brands or others that appealed to her, she answered: "Well, the first thing that comes to my mind is the Dove ad, because they are using women with different body types. That caught my attention, that's one ad I remember because I see so many ads during the day but that's just the one that has gotten stuck to my mind" (A.2 l: 79-81).

5.2 (M) Uncovering new tendencies in the fashion and beauty industry
Mishal was asked if she sees a movement in the fashion and beauty industry, she answered: "Yes I have, for example with the Dove ad example. That was something new you never saw that. But I noticed that you see more and more of that. For example there is like Rihanna made a makeup collection called Fenty Beauty and she has like all colours for foundation so there is like a foundation for every skin tone and that's really new, it makes me not feel any different. Actually, H&M made an ad with a woman wearing the Hijab, that is something I have never seen before" (A.2 l: 94-99). She also commented on the changes based on consumers: "I think that maybe the consumers now have more and more to say, that customers have more influence, also, I think all the brands they have more attention to what people want. They can see that we live in a diverse culture with people with different skin tones" (A.2 l: 104-106). She goes on to explain: "but it seems like there is only like, the brands are only promoting the standard white girl with blond hair and blue eyes, of course also skinny girls (A.2 l: 110-111). When asked about what other changes she sees in how brands are becoming diverse she mentions: "Hijab, religions, minorities in general. When we talk about minorities. I think the society is getting more diverse and accepted towards people that look like a standard person" (A.2 l: 120-121). When asked about which brands she sees as diverse, Mishal mentions: "Maybe Huda beauty, maybe also H&M, I think that brand did most to be in sync with society right now, and also Rihanna's Fenty beauty." (A.2 l: 126-127). When asked if she feels that brands should be in sync with society, she says: "Yes, because it makes me feel like they are more approachable. Also, when I saw women in Hijab in H&M ad it made me really excited even though I don't wear hijab, it is a positive change. It is okay for people to look differently and not "fit in" all the time. Sometimes H&M also uses different body types I like that too. It actually makes you want to buy their clothes. It just occurred to me but it impacts me that way, I feel like I want to go and support them and buy their clothes." (A.2 l: 133-139).

5.3 (M) Representation of consumers in ads

Mishal was asked what an advertisement in her opinion should contain, she answers: "It should contain different body types and different skin colours and just people dressing differently, they should show more acceptance towards more personal style, because some people like to dress in a gothic way and some people like to dress in a Muslim or Christian modest way, there are many differences and they should show all of them, not necessarily in one ad but be more open about this" (A.2 l: 333-337). Mishal was also asked how she would like to see herself represented, she answered: "It would definitely have to be a person that looks like me because for me it would make it more relatable, so of course a person with a darker skin and a person that isn't like very skinny, sometimes I feel that the problem is when I see the ads with the models that are plus size I can't even relate to them, because right now my belly is sticking out but they all have flat belly, and the fat is like perfectly distributed on their bodies, I have never seen my body type on TV. I think that is one of the things that make me really want to lose weight, because no one looks like me, that just make it harder. It is like my body type is not accepted, I am not pregnant but I look pregnant" (A.2 l: 165-171).

In regards to brands showing a "real body" Mishal mentions that: " I would have to see like more than one ad doing that, the thing is that these kinds of ads is made maybe 1 time a year then that's it. It is like it is still not normalized (A.2 l: 176-178). Mishal also mention that: … I think the brands should work towards making a more realistic picture of society instead of making a picture showing that you should look a certain way to get accepted" (A.2 l: 219-221).

5.3.1 (M) Influencers

Mishal was asked if she care about being represented in fashion and beauty advertisement, she answered: "Yes I do, and I am glad that there are a lot of beauty bloggers that looks like me, skin tone wise, so I get good makeup tips for my skin… I always look at how it looks on them, and if they make a good review of it I will buy it or consider buying it…. I think they are the most credible source of information… if they talk badly about a brand, I think I will just accept their opinion" (A.2 l: 186-201).

5.4 (M) Advertising diversity & inclusivity

Mishal was asked if she experience diversity and inclusivity as an emerging tendency in the industry, she answered: "Yes and no, because some brands are doing it and others are not at all, and

the ones who are doing it sometimes it feels like they are doing it as part of their business and not really genuine about it. They will just do an ad, and then after a long time do another one and then that's it" (A.2 l: 268-271). Mishal was asked to consider Fenty Beauty in relation to her above comment, she answered: "First of all, the founder of Fenty Beauty is a black women so that is already a huge step and they did it from the start, they were diverse from the start, they weren't pushed by society to make changes and be diverse, they did that themselves as the brand launched. And they just started with being accepting towards diversity" (A.2 l: 277-280). Mishal was asked how she see Rihanna [the founder] represent diversity as a person, she answered: "Yes she is a woman of colour and then she makes a brand with products for every skin tone and that is something that is new because it wasn't a normal thing just a few years ago so already there. She is also comfortable in her own skin too and thinks that makes an impact on me" (A.2 l: 295-298). Mishal also commented on how the brand promotion of H&M have had an impact on her: "H&M they haven't always done it but still it is a positive thing for society to be more open and accepting towards minorities and just people who dress differently because of for example religion" (A.2 l: 311-312).

Mishal was also asked, if she think of any brands that have tried to be diverse and inclusive but in her opinion failed, she answered: "Yes I think maybe L'Oreal tried, but they only have like 1 black model as far as I remember and then they just went back to their old ways…. I can't find my skin tone. I also can't use their eye shadow because my skin is dark so you can't see the colour; it just looked weird, and the same with the lipsticks" (A.2 l: 317-318, 322-323).
We showed Mishal a collage with different ads from brands, she commented on a cover from Vogue Magazine (A.9): "It is from Vogue, and woman with different skin colours are showed, they actually also has different body types, and a woman with a hijab. This is actually impacting me really positively because this is actually a change from what we usually see. There is always just a skinny model with a lot of makeup and not too much clothes, but these are all like dressed like they are not showing too much skin so it is not supposed to be sexy. This is just showing woman the way they really are" (A.2 l: 361-366). She also commented on the cover as being different: "Yes this is different, and with these different women, it is about the woman and not their bodies" (A.2 l: 387-388).
When being asked about what she thinks of the NIKE ad, which shows their athletic wear collection for women with hijab (Nike, 2017) Mishal responds: "…. they might be the first brand doing that

because Muslim woman have always been into sports but there has not been like Muslim appropriate sports clothing. So it is really big that they did that. Even though I don't wear the hijab, this makes me happy because it gives a lot of women the opportunity to do what they want to do without worrying about finding the right clothes. It gives them a lot of freedom." (A.2 l: 432-426). Mishal also comment on the Fenty Beauty lingerie ad showing a bigger plus size woman (A.13): "This will definitely be something I can relate to, because the woman in the black dress her body type actually reminds me of my body type. And she has a big tummy and big boobs and I feel like I can relate to that, I feel like she looks like a regular person that I can see on the street and not a regular model" (A.2 l: 442-445). Mishal was then asked to compare the pictures from Fenty Beauty's lingerie, which featured both big plus size women and older women, with a picture from Victoria's Secret (A.13) in regards to if Victoria's Secret also can show women who are not young and skinny, she answered: No I don't, because Victoria's secret they just have a way of doing things so if they did it, it won't seem genuine, because they are just promoting one body type, you have to be completely skinny and have a bit of boob and a bit of ass but not too much" (A.2 l: 471-473).

At last, we asked Mishal what she would characterize as a marketing stunt and a genuine attempt to be more diverse and inclusive, she answered: "For example H&M, they used a hijabi model and it is showing that they want to be inclusive and diverse because people look differently and want to dress differently so they are welcoming every type of person if you could say that" (A.2 l: 478-480).

Interviewee no. 3. Sibel Yildiz

5.1 (S) Consumption of fashion and beauty brands

Sibel was asked to mention two of her favourite beauty brands and two of her favourite fashion brands, she answered: "Hmm… I think two of my favourite beauty brands are actually NYX, I really like that brands, and let me think… There are actually quite a lot. Yeah… And I think L'Oreal. And fashion brands, I actually like H&M and ZARA. That's also what I use actually" (A.3 l: 38-40). She also elaborated on her choice of brands, for the beauty brands she mentioned: "I think that for example NYX, I have worked for them, and I know a lot of their products. And I know they have a lot of colours and I really like the quality of the products. And also L'Oreal, I like my makeup to stay natural, and I kinda think that their products are very natural looking on my face. Yeah, and I just like the quality. I think that is why I mostly like them. Actually NYX and L'Oreal are brands I have worked for. So, I also think that is why I really like them, because I know their

range. And also when you work for a brand, you know a lot about them. It gives you a lot of insight into the brand and their products" (A.3 l: 42-48). Sibel also talked about what she likes about the fashion brands: I really like H&M for…. they just have a lot, you know, plus sizes, and like the, I don't know if I could it the normal sizes. They have the plus sizes section; I think that is so cool, because when I shop with my mom, we can shop at the same store, because my mom is plus size. I think that it is a good thing that they speak to a lot of different women, with different sizes" (A.3 l: 59-62).

5.2 (S) Uncovering new tendencies in the fashion and beauty industry

Sibel was asked if she sees a movement or changes in the fashion and beauty industry, in regards to the representation of women, she answered: Of course, I do see that. I 've seen brands including more women… people with like a scarf; we have never seen that before. So to see that now, it really means that the society has been through some real change" (A.3 l: 292-294). Sibel also mentioned the inclusion of more curvy women: "Also, just you've never seen curvy women who are walking for brands or have collaborations with brands and are representing them, we have never seen that, but we do see that now" (A.3 l: 308-309).

Sibel was asked why she thinks these changes have occurred, she answered: "I think that it is the society that has changed, and that is why the brands are kind of following the society. I mean people always change, and I think that brands definitely should follow society, and the society sets the agenda" (A.3 l: 302-304).

5.3 (S) Representation of consumers in ads

Sibel was asked if she sees herself reflected in brands advertisement, she answered: "Yeah, I mean when I see someone with the same roots or religion as me, then I definitely feel like I am heard, but I would also say that it doesn't happen very often. I also think that when it happen it kind of leaves an impression". In terms of getting influenced by the promotional activities of her favourite brands, she answered: "Yes, I feel like especially with H&M, when they had that commercial going on called "she is a lady", when you think of a brand you not only think about the clothes, but you also think about what they stand for, and maybe you are not conscious about that, but in a way you are. And I definitely think that when I go and buy something from H&M that this is a brand that supports me, and supports all kind of people, and that just make me want to support their brand too" (A.3 l: 149-154). Also, when asked about if she has been aware of how they show the clothes in

their ads, she answered: "Yeah, they have like commercials where they have all these different kind of people, it was like coloured people, a plus size people, and can I say white people (laughs), black people, all kinds of people, even a Muslim girl, appearing in the commercial" (A.3 l: 75-77). We asked Sibel about whether she views ZARA and L'Oreal as inclusive like she said about H&M and NYX, she answered: "Actually not, I mean I think that L'Oreal is better now than before, but I don't think they always been like that. I think if I did not work for the band, I don't know if I would have the same relation to the brand and interest. But, I think that their way to marketing themselves is very much the typical way that we have always seen. The white beautiful, skinny girl. They are improving now, but I think the reason that they are trying to change, is maybe because they have been forced to be better" (A.3 l: 106-110). She also commented on ZARA: "And also with Zara, I haven't actually seen them doing anything where I feel that they are including people with different kind of cultures and colours" (A.3 l: 117-119). … "To be honest, I don't feel any connection to ZARA at all, I just think that they have cool stuff, so it's like on a product level. I don't feel anything about the brand, and i don't actually know anything about the brand. I don't have any interest in the brand, but I like their clothes" (A.3 l: 168-170).

When asked about if Sibel cares about being represented by fashion and beauty brands, she answered: "Yes, I look for the good products, but I also look for the feeling. If I don't feel like that I can relate to the brand in a way, and if I don't feel I can be included in the brand, I wouldn't feel the same way about the brand, as I would if it included me. Otherwise it would be more on a like superficial level" (A.3 l: 177-179).

5.3.1 (S) Influencers

Sibel was asked whether she sees NYX as an inclusive and diverse brand reflected in their promotional activities and not just in their products as she described earlier, she answered: "definitely, on their social media. When you go to their Instagram page, you see that they are one of the brands that really speak to everyone. They have pictures of different influencers, it can be not influencers that are wearing their products and they just post these pictures, and they do that because they also in a way want to speak to everyone. And it is coloured people, people again with scarfs (hijabs), white people. They have also in stores, they have like commercial bands, I think it is called, where they have like not usually the regular, you know models you see on the front pages of a magazine. But just you know a normal person, someone you can relate to. " (A.3 l: 94-100) -

"And also with NYX, when I see their Instagram pages that they have these different kinds of people with different kinds of colours and I just think that, they are the brand for the people. So, I definitely think that is something I want to support, and it makes me feel like I want to buy from this brand, because I have a connection with them" (A.3 l: 155-158). Sibel also mentions influencers when talking about where she gets her fashion/beauty brand inspiration from: " I am a Muslim, and I am a bit conservative when it comes to my way of dressing. And I think that it's very important for me to feel that these kind of fashion brands support my values. And I see that in influencers. Muslim influencers wearing hijab, wearing some certain clothing and they tag the brand and I see okay, well I kind of get influenced by that because I feel that if she can wear it, I can wear it too. The brand is something for her, so it's also something for me. Because I can relate to her, and if I can relate to her, and she relates to the brand, then I can also relate to the brand" (A.3 l: 192-197). She also mentioned her expectations for brands: "For me it is very important that it is also brands that makes collaborations with influencers, because that is where I get most of my inspiration from. Just being open to all kinds of influencers, just trying to reach different target groups" (A.3 l: 230-233).

5.4 (S) Advertising diversity & inclusivity

We asked Sibel which brands come to mind when she thinks of diversity, she answered: "H&M, they are really good... and Fenty beauty actually! It is a brand that Rihanna has created; I mean she is really diverse in her collection! I mean no one launches a foundation range with so many colours. And also just the way the way she advertise her brand. It is these real women. It is women of different colours, and I think that is why she maybe started a brand so diverse is because she is black herself" (A.3 l: 388-392). Sibel also commented on the beauty brand Huda Beauty: "Huda Beauty actually, because she is this Middle Eastern woman who started being a YouTuber and influencer, and she started her own business. Yeah, she is just, I can relate to her because she is Middle Eastern, like myself…. A woman like me has started her own brand and she is just being very honest in her way of speaking, in her brand, and in her communication. I mean she is a woman that I can relate to. I like brands that are just open to everyone and embrace colours and sizes, and cultures, and ethnicities (A.3 l: 210-217).

When asked about whether L'Oreal's attempts are genuine, Sibel commented: "I feel that it is a marketing stunt, because you are what you are. And if you haven't been like that from the

beginning, it just does not feel right and real. Because when I think of L'Oreal I think of these typical white, blond-haired girls, always skinny and with beautiful hair and stuff like that. That you actually cannot relate to (A.3 l: 123-126). "No one wants to buy something, or no one can relate to anything if they cannot see themselves in it. And I do not see myself in a totally pale girl with blonde hair and just a perfect body, because I am not like that" (A.3 l: 237-239). On a more personal level, Sibel express her thoughts about H&M using a hijabi in their ads: "I am Muslim myself, so of course it means something to me, because especially, nowadays, the society is very like focused on Muslim people, and you know there is a very bad reputation about Muslim people, and everyone always thinks that when it is a Muslim girl, she cannot wear what she wants to wear, and she is forced to do that…. it just means that they are open to the people, and open to not just one target group. It makes me feel comfortable in a way about the brand. I feel included" (A.3 l: 79-82, 89-90).

We showed Sibel a collage with different ads from brands, she commented on a Vogue cover (A.9): "If I look at this Vogue cover I see different women. Different hair, different shapes, different colours, just very real people. This is inclusive" (A.3 l: 415-416). She commented on Vogue's change: "I am very surprised that they have done a cover like this. When you think of Vogue you think about the really pretty girls, with light skin, the typical kind of women you see in magazines. So I am actually really surprised that they have done a cover like this" (A.3 l: 420-423). Sibel also commented on the pictures from Fenty Beauty's lingerie collection: "I mean it is definitely different from what you typically see! And I mean different in a good way, not only because of the age and size, but also they are photographed, it is not too polished, it is a picture you can relate to, because you could have taken it too in your bedroom. So I think it is cool! She (Rihanna) is just very diverse" (A.3 l: 451-454). Sibel was asked about whether she thinks Victoria's Secret (A.13), also can include bigger women in their promotion like Fenty beauty, she answered: "No, because it is just… It does not belong to that target group. And when I think of Victoria Secret I think of young women with like beautiful bodies. I would think that they are really trying, but it is not working, as they have always been one of the brands that show models based on their (small) sizes" (A.3 l: 474-477).

CHAPTER 6. ANALYSIS OF INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

This chapter provides an analysis of the empirical findings from the three individual interviews. The objective of this analysis is to gain insights into what significance d&i in brands hold to the interviewees, and influences their construction of identity and expression of self. In order to analyse on our findings, we will use the theoretical components of our framework, which constitute the personal- and cultural perspective, to interpret our findings and gain an understanding of how personal and cultural aspects are connected to consumers' perception of d&i, and the shaping of their attitudes towards brands.

6.1 Uncovering new tendencies in the fashion and beauty industry

In this theme, the interviewees were asked about whether they see any new tendencies within fashion and beauty brands, in regards to brand promotion. It should be noted like mentioned in chapter 5 that the interviewees did not know the purpose of the research at this point. All interviewees talked about how they now see fashion and beauty brands promoting differently on social media and in their advertising. Specifically, the interviewees talked about brands including a lot of different looking women, instead of the one dominant type, which they view as the light skinned, blond and skinny woman (5.1 (Y, M, S). Mishal commented that we have always lived in a diverse society, but brands always promote the above-mentioned type (5.2 (M)). Also, Yusra talked about how brands are starting to include more "realistic" women, who looks like the average woman, who previously did not fit into the fashion world, but can now feel accepted (5.2 (Y)). This quote shows how Yusra is interested and aware of brands showing the actual self of individuals, instead of an ideal self, and having people fit into certain categories. All three girls mentioned that they see more representation of women of minority groups, for example hijabis and curvy 'plus size' women (5.2 (S)). Mishal also mentioned the inclusion of more different skin tones, both in products and promotions, she used Fenty Beauty as an example of this: "Yes she is a woman [the founder Rihanna] of colour and then she makes a brand with products for every skin tone and that is something that is new because it wasn't a normal thing just a few years ago" (5.4 (M), A.2 l: 295-297). Mishal also mentioned Fenty Beauty and H&M as the brands that are most in sync with society, also she argued that brands should be in sync with society because, it makes her feel like the brands are more approachable, she said: "Also, when I saw women in hijab in H&M's ad, it

made me really excited even though I don't wear hijab. It is okay for people to look differently and not "fit in" all the time. Sometimes H&M also uses different body types, I like that too. It actually makes you want to buy their clothes. It impacts me that way" (5.2 (M), A.2 l: 133-139). From a cultural perspective, Mishal's quote show that she thinks brands should adapt to society and carry the right cultural meaning (Holt, 2004) as e.g. including hijabis or different body types, has a positive impact on her attitude towards the brand, as the brand personality seem to be attractive, which could indicate a resonance between what the brands communicate and how Mishal see herself reflected.

Analysing the interviewees' view on the changes in brands' promotion activities from the personal perspective, it is noticeable that the inclusion of women of minorities, is something they themselves can identify with. Yusra mentioned how she before the changes could not feel a connection to the brand, whereas the changes according to her means that women can feel more accepted (5.2 (Y)). They are talking about brands with personalities that they can relate to, and by the brand having personalities that are congruent with their own, they feel a positive connection with the brand. From a cultural perspective, this shows that identification of self in a brand, has a positive impact on the interviewees' attitude towards the brand as reflected in the "connection" the interviewees refer to, this supports our assumption that consumers' expression of self is closely connected to the culture surrounding them, which in this case constitutes the inclusion of different people through d&i (Holt, 2004), meaning that cultural aspects endowed in brands based on d&i actually matters to consumers (McCracken, 1986). This was further supported as the interviewees linked brands to society, e.g. Sibel said that brands are following the changed society, and that as people change the brands should too as society sets the agenda (5.2 (S)). Yusra also stressed that brands should cater to different women and work on being more d&i (5.2 (Y)). Hence, it is important that brands are endowed with the right cultural meaning (McCracken, 1986) and brand personality that resonate with consumers.

The interviewees were asked what they think an advertisement in their opinion should contain in order to appeal to them, Mishal answered: "It should contain different body types and different skin colours and just people dressing differently, they should show more acceptance towards more personal style, because some people like to dress in a gothic way and some people like to dress in a Muslim or Christian modest way, there are many differences and they should show all of them, not

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necessarily in one ad but be more open about this" (5.3 (M) A.2 l: 333-337). Here Mishal expresses concerns regarding a lot of different people, which show that she connect the phenomenon of d&i to collective identity projects of consumers belonging to minorities (Holt, 2004), rather than only referring to herself.

As an extension to what d&i means to the respondents, the interviewees talked about how brands should listen to consumers, Yusra mentioned that consumers today have a a lot to say and a big voice through social media, therefore she argued that brands should be d&i by catering to all women (5.2 (Y)). This also supports our assumption in the beginning of this paper, as we have observed that the power has shifted between brand and consumer. This also supports the argument that brands in the contemporary world are viewed as more than just cultural blueprints, rather they should aim at cultivating consumers identity (Holt, 2004).

6.2 Consumption of fashion and beauty brands

This was the first theme that was addressed in the interviews. The interviewees were asked to speak about their favourite fashion and beauty brands, and why these brands were their favourite. We found that all three interviewees evaluated a brand based on two aspects: the product attributes and the brand attributes. Yusra and Sibel mentioned that in fashion brands, they liked H&M, ZARA, (5.1 (Y, S)). Yusra mentioned that she prefers shopping at H&M due to their broad range of clothes that leaves a lot of options for a Muslim woman to dress in a modest and covering way (5.1 (Y)), Mishal besides her religious values likes her clothes to be covering due to the weight she gained as a result of pregnancy (5.1 (M)). This shows that Mishal and Yusra use these clothing objects to express who they are and their values, referring to the self in the personal perspective (Belk, 1988). Mishal expressed that she is struggling with finding clothes she can fit, she also stated that she cannot shop at ZARA as she cannot fit into even their XL. This seemed to bother Mishal as she said that even though she has gained weight, she does not find herself so big to not fit into an XL, which also makes her realize the difficulties bigger girls are experiencing (5.1 (M)). Even though she does not yet know that the topic of the research is d&i she is already talking about this based on her personal experiences, meanwhile also showing concern for how women who are bigger than her must feel. She also struggles with finding makeup which suits her skin tone (5.1 (M)), this shows that d&i seems to be something that she is aware of in term of herself and others. And in the way she speaks of herself, she also seems to recognise that she does not feel that she fits into mainstream brands. Based on Mishal's statements, it seems that ZARA does not aid Mishal, and other women

who are not small in size, in their construction of identity, as she cannot express herself through the brand (Belk 1988, Holt 2004), it thereby seems that the brands personality is one that excludes individuals like Mishal. These tensions Mishal describes, can be related to what Holt (2004) refer to as collective anxieties that a group of people have, as it seems that ZARA does not seem to aim at adapting to the cultural changes or gain cultural knowledge in regards to people's collective identity projects (Holt, 2004),

When Yusra was asked what other factors than the functional benefits makes the brands her favourites, she expressed how feeling connected to the brand is also very important to her, she explain this through H&M, which she views as being inclusive towards all types of women, especially H&M's use of a model with hijab in an ad had a positive impact on her, and this created a connection between Yusra and H&M as she as a hijabi felt more accepted by seeing this model represented, and therefore wants to support H&M (5.1 (Y)). This connection she talks about is something she experience with H&M, but not in ZARA, as ZARA always use the same kind of girls in their advertising and are thereby not inclusive towards different people (5.1 (Y)).

From the personal perspectives, Yusra's answer indicates that being represented provides a feeling of connection to the brand. This connection, which she speaks off, we argue, is related to emotional brand attachment (Heding et al., 2016). We gain an understanding of how H&M allows Yusra to see herself reflected in H&M's inclusive brand personality and by doing so, she can use the brand in her self construct by consuming their product as it makes her feel accepted. This self construct can be related to the cultural perspective, as her answer shows that H&M is a brand that carry a cultural meaning that resonate with Yusra as the brand manages to contribute to her self expression as hijabis are usually not represented by brands, but now that H&M have managed to address this cultural aspect and contribute to collective identity projects of minorities, Yusra feels more accepted, which in turn impacts her attitude towards the brand (Holt, 2004).

Another interesting point that supports the emphasis on collective identity projects, is that even though for example Sibel does not experience the same issue as Mishal, as she is skinny, she stress that she support brands she perceive as inclusive towards different women who are normally not represented in the fashion and beauty industry, as it reflects her values (5.3.1 (S)), for example, Sibel expressed how, on a more personal level, H&M using a hijabi model in their ads made her, as a Muslim woman, feel a connection to the brand: "I am Muslim myself, and it just means that they

(H&M) are open to people, and open to not just one target group. It makes me feel comfortable in a way about the brand. I feel included" (5.4 (S) A.1 l: 81-90). Also Yusra gives significance to how inclusive a brand should be: "I have to see myself in the product, I have to see myself in the advertisement to feel a connection, if I don't feel a connection I wont feel drawn to it. So for me personally to buy a product I like to see myself in it and I like to see all the women be represented as well" (5.3 (Y), A.1 l: 100-103). This aspect shows an emphasis on Holt's (2004) argument that in today's consumer culture "the focus is more on what the brand represents and stands for instead of what it produces, as this is considered valuable to the consumers" (Heding et al., 2016).

Sibel's sentiments about H&M are related to those of Yusra, as she mentions that she values H&M having a section with clothes for plus size women, as it enables her to shop at the same store as her mom who is plus size, based on this aspect, Sibel views H&M as a brand that speak to a lot of different women with different sizes (5.1 (S)). This comment from Sibel shows that she also, like Yusra, views the cultural phenomenon from the perspective of seeing everyone represented, which is the essence of diversity, and not only seeing herself (Holt, 2004). Here Sibel is showing that she does not only evaluate H&M based on her own identity projects, but also based on collective identity projects. This emphasizes the importance of understanding d&i as a cultural phenomenon that encompass a lot of different people, and as expressed by all three interviewees, d&i entails representing different people in your brand. This is supported by Holt who argue that "brands becomes more powerful to attract and mobilize consumers when its meaning resonates with collective identity projects of a given time" (Holt, 2004). This reflection of collective identity projects and emphasis on not only the interviewees self, is also reflected in the their support for H&M's promotional activities, e.g. Sibel referred to the H&M ad called "she is a lady" which shows women who are different in terms of size, skin colour, religion, age etc., the ad made Sibel not only think about what the brand stand for, which is as a brand that supports her and all kind of people, which makes her want to support the brand as well (5.3 (S)).

From the personal perspective, the way Sibel speaks about being 'supported' by the brand, and the 'connection' mentioned by Yusra we argue is based on feeling a brand-self congruence. Which is based on a matching process between their perceptions of associations derived from the brands promotion activities and their representation of self.

Regarding their favourite makeup brands, Sibel mentions that she likes the brand NYX, besides the product benefits, she also mentions that d&i is seen on their social media, in how the brand show different types of girls on their Instagram page, which makes them a brand for the people, making her feel a connection with the brand, and support them 5.3.1 (S)). This shows that Sibel associates positive personality traits with the NYX brand in her meaning making of the brand, which she bases both on their product offering and their promotion activities. As a contrast to this, Sibel mentions L'Oreal as one of her favourite beauty brands, however she only mentions the product level benefits of the brand, such as the quality and price, when asked if she also feels that L'Oreal is for everyone as she feels about NYX she says no, the brand is better than before, but she says that their way of marketing is very typical, with a beautiful white girl. She believes that they are improving and changing, but because they have been forced to be better (5.3 (S)). In this quote, Sibel express how she sees that the tendency of d&i pressure brands to adapt to the cultural changes and understand the collective identity projects that is connected to the cultural phenomenon, here we also see how Sibel identifies a change on a cultural level based on something personal as well, as she cannot relate to the "white girl". What is interesting to note here is that even though Sibel does not feel attracted by the brand personality, she still considers it one of her favourite brands, presumably due to its functional benefits, this is something, which we will discuss further in the discussion.

6.3 Representation of consumers in ads

This theme focused on uncovering the interviewees view on being represented in brands promotion activities, in relation to whether it is important for them to see themselves reflected and how it impacts their attitude towards brands. This is based on our assumption that consumers care about seeing their actual self-reflected in brands.

All three girls, argued that they would like to see their true self reflected in brands advertisement, Mishal talked about seeing the same physical features as hers in terms of body type and not only skin colour. Mishal has gained weight after giving birth, and she wants to be reflected through women in advertisement who doesn't look like a model in the traditional sense. Mishal's comment indicate that she wants to see her actual self represented rather than ideal self, which she feels is still the norm: "I feel that the problem is when I see the ads with the models that are plus size I can't even relate to them, because right now my belly is sticking out but they all have flat bellies, and the fat is like perfectly distributed on their bodies, I have never seen my body type on TV. I think that is

one of the things that make me really want to lose weight, because no one looks like me, that just make it harder. It is like my body type is not accepted, I am not pregnant but I look pregnant" (5.3 (M), A.2 l: 169-175). Mishal, here emphasize an issue as she perceive herself in a different way than is perceived as the "ideal" in society. From a cultural perspective, Holt (2004) address this issue, stating that many people might live at a considerable remove from the ideology and visions that surrounds the society, based on this, Holt (2004) argue that brands should be be endowed with the right cultural meaning of a given time, in order to contribute to the self expression of collective identity projects of consumers like Mishal who experience these anxieties. From a personal perspective, this shows some deeper feelings attached to feeling represented by brands, as Mishal does not feel accepted, her need for self expression is not fulfilled, and thereby she cannot positively enhance her sense of self. Mishal's quote also shows how important it is to find a brand, which is congruent with her actual self, so that she can feel good about herself (Heding et al., 2016). These deeper feelings of wanting to feel accepted is also seen in how Sibel is happy to see a brand like H&M using Muslim women in their advertisement. Firstly it makes her happy as she herself is Muslim, but also that on a societal level, she feels that Muslim women have a bad reputation, and are misrepresented as not having a free choice in what they wear, but H&M are showing Muslim in a positive light, as they do also care about fashion, and by doing so H&M are open to everyone (5.4 (S)). This shows that in light of d&i, the brand can create a feeling of societal acceptance, and engage in a meaningful dialogue with the consumer about something which is very close to them, and thereby the brand personality is able to create a strong emotional attachment (Heding et al., 2016).

The comments from the interviewees also show that they have a stronger emotional attachment with brands they view as d&i, as these brands manage to reflect their values, e.g. in terms of representing their religious beliefs, which thus aid them in their self expression. The quote from Sibel supports this while also stressing that the product itself is not enough: "I look for the good products, but I also look for the feeling. If I don't feel like that I can relate to the brand in a way, and if I don't feel I can be included in the brand, I wouldn't feel the same way about the brand, as I would if it included me" (5.3 (S), A.1 l: 177-178). In general, the answers shows that they somehow don't just passively accept the cultural meaning endowed into the brand, rather they use their own self in interpreting meaning, which emphasize the importance of understanding both the surrounding culture and collective identity projects.

6.3.1 Reflection of self through Influencers

This theme covers representation of self, however via influencers. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, we argue that the social media influencers, defined as being social media influencers have an influence on the dialogue between consumer and brand, in the way that they influence how a brand is perceived, and influence the personality of the brand.

The interviewees were asked if they see themselves reflected in the promotion activities of their favourite brands, Sibel answered that she saw herself reflected in NYX, as they use diverse influencers, and by that they include everyone, as they show normal relatable people (5.3.1 (S)). Here we see how according to Sibel, NYX's brand personality is reflected through their Instagram profile, and by using influencers, she sees them as having a d&i personality, which she can relate to. Also Mishal commented on how she sees herself reflected in influencers: "I am glad that there are a lot of beauty bloggers that look like me, skin tone wise, so I get good makeup tips for my skin…. I always look at how it looks on them, and if they make a good review of it I will buy it or consider buying it" (5.3.1 (M), A.2 l: 190-197). This shows that Mishal actually identifies with influencers, based on her physical appearance being in congruence with the influencer's. And we also see that Mishal perceives the opinion of influencer as being so valid that she makes purchasing decisions based on what they say. These comments show that the girls form association about the brand based on the influencers whom can be associated to their own self in the shape of personality traits. Sibel also mentioned that it is important to her that brands collaborate with different influencers (5.3.1 (S)), and she gets her fashion/beauty brand inspiration from them. Sibel stress that due her conservative way of dressing, she feels that her value is reflected in influencers who also dress this way or wear the hijab, she thereby gets influenced because the influencer relates to her, and as the influencer has a relation to the brand spoken about, Sibel also get to feel a relation to the brand (5.3.1 (S)). Here Sibel speaks about a symbolic exchange of value through influencers, as by brands using someone who dresses modestly like her, they appeal to her values, which we argue aids her brand-self congruence, as she can express certain narratives about herself via the influencer and brand used by them (Belk, 1988). Sibel directly links the personality of the brand with her influencers, saying that a brand, which is for them, is also for her, this supports or argument that the influencer borrows their personality to the brand, hence creating a connection between her and the brand, as she can relate to the influencer. From a cultural perspective, the influencer in herself carry some cultural meaning, as Sibel mentioned that she follows people who like herself belong to a minority, and so represent the diversity of culture. This cultural meaning is transferred by the influencer to the brand making also the brand look d&i. Yusra also admits that her brand choices

are affected by influencers, she says that she likes to follow all types of influencers, however she likes following south Asians, whom she feel are underrepresented in fashion and beauty brands, and also people who look like herself (5.3.1 (Y)). Yusra's thoughts on influencers also support the statements by Sibel and Mishal about how we argue that these consumers use influencers as a way to see them selves identified in brands. Further they all seem to have positive attitudes about brands that use influencers who are diverse, and especially the ones they can relate to themselves.

Yusra says that H&M are good at collaborating with influencers on social media, which show that they support different people, and same goes for Fenty Beauty, there you will find different women from hijab-wearing, to different skin tones, and so she says consumers can find themselves on their pages (5.3.1 (Y)). Yusra express how these brands appeal to her based on their personality, as they use people who she can identify with, which creates an emotional brand attachment, as by feeling identified in the brand her need for self expression is met (Heding et al., 2016).

6.4 Advertising diversity & inclusivity
During the interviews, it was uncovered how the interviewees look differently on brands' attempts to be d&i through their promotion, as they viewed some brands as more genuine in their attempts than others.

When asked about what brands the interviewees thought of as not being d&i, they all agreed that L'Oreal is not a diverse brand as it mainly target light skinned consumers. Sibel stated that she view L'Oreal's attempts at being d&i as not right or real, due to L'Oreal not doing this from the beginning, also she views L'Oreal as known for showing mainly white, blond-haired girls who are skinny and with beautiful hair that you cannot relate to (5.4 (S)). This statement is supported by the to other girls as well (5,4 (M), (S)). Mishal also mentioned that she couldn't find makeup products from L'Oreal that suit her skin tone (5.4 (M)). Sibel also expressed how being represented by the brand is important to her, as she states that no one can relate to anything if they cannot see themselves represented in it, and mentions that she can't see herself in L'Oreal's' advertisements (5.4 (S)). This once again shows the importance Sibel attributes to seeing herself in the brand in terms of her actual self. Yusra talks about how she has noticed that L'Oreal has been trying to appear more diverse through their promotion by using models of different ethnicities, but she doesn't think it looks genuine as they do not do it consistently and they do not show diversity in

models (5.4 (Y)). This shows that Yusra's perception of a brand being diverse is strengthen when the brand does it from the start, and when it is done consistently through the brands promotion activities, and reflected in their product range, this opinion was shared by Sibel and Mishal. The interviewees spoke a lot about Fenty Beauty during the conversation about what brands they perceive as genuine in their attempts to be diverse, they have all perceived Fenty Beauty and its founder Rihanna as very d&i. Yusra felt this as she sees the brand as being built up around diversity, as that this is shown in every kind of promotion activity of the brand, she states that this makes the brands attempts very genuine (5.4 (Y)). Mishal supported this statement from Yusra, and she added that Fenty Beauty wasn't pushed by society to be diverse, as they did it from the start of the brand. She also added that the brand was genuine in their d&i, because Rihanna is a person of colour, as well as someone who is comfortable in her own skin (5.4 (M)). It also has an impact on her that Fenty has foundation for every skin tone as Mishal has a hard time finding a foundation for her dark skin, and that the brand thereby managed to not make her feel any different (5.4 (M)). This creates an emotional attachment between Mishal and the brand, as it enables her to see herself included in the brand. Sibel also viewed Fenty Beauty as genuine due to the brands product offerings, and their inclusion of 'real women' in their advertising (5.4 (S)). From the personal perspective, these statements from the interviewees show that they transfer some of Rihanna's personality attributes into her brand, so that her brand gains the credibility she holds as a person, alongside being able to create an emotional brand attachment via her promotion and products. From a cultural perspective, Fenty Beauty is shown to be a brand that manages to contribute to the self-expression of the interviewees as the brand is endowed with relevant meaning. Overall, the brand appears as a brand with meaning that resonate with consumers as it provides valuable answers to collective desires in the time of d&i.

All three interviewees also spoke about a magazine cover from the brand Vogue when shown a collage of different brands. The cover feature 9 women who all look different in terms of skin colour, body type, hair type ethnicity and religion as one of them is wearing the hijab. Yusra commented that the cover makes her happy, and that Vogue did very well in terms of d&i, as they had included everyone (5.4 (Y)). Sibel and Mishal also reacted in the same way as Yusra, Mishal added that they were showing women for who they are and not just their sex appeal (5.4 (M), 5.4 (S)). They all reacted very positively to the cover, however they acknowledged that this was something which they normally did not expect from Vogue (5.4 (M), 5.4 (S)), Yusra said that this is

a new movement that everyone is trying to adapt to in their own way, she believes that Vogue is trying in a good way (5.4 (S)). Vogue is usually not known for being inclusive on their Magazine covers, so it is interesting to consider how Yusra perceived this cover positively and as a genuine attempt to tap into the diversity agenda, whereas L'Oreal is met with critique despite their attempts to be perceived as a diverse brand. This will be discussed in the discussion part.

When shown the collage with a photo from Savage x Fenty they all reacted very positively. Mishal stated: "This will definitely be something I can relate to, because the woman in the black dress her body type actually reminds me of my body type. And she has a big tummy and big boobs and I feel like I can relate to that, I feel like she looks like a regular person and not a model I can see on the street and not a regular model" (5.4 (M), A.2: l: 442-445). We asked them to consider whether it would be credible if Victoria's Secret also included diverse women in size, age etc. like Savage x Fenty, and they all agreed that it won't seem genuine, as the brand is about the idealistic tall, skinny and light woman, and that is what the brand is known for, so any attempt to be diverse won't seem genuine (5.4 (Y)).

6.5 Summary of findings from the individual interviews

This part will summarise the analysis findings in regard to the theoretical components of the assembled theoretical framework, which constitutes the *personal perspective* and the *cultural perspective*, and how the findings fits into each building block of our assembled theoretical framework. The aim of this is to explain how personal and cultural aspects separately has an influence on consumers attitude towards brands in regards to d&i, and thereby how they helps answering the problem statement, however, in the theoretical chapter we argued that the two perspectives cannot stand alone, therefore, this summary will be followed by a part drawing the connection between the perspectives.

Individual Consumer - *Personal perspective*

This part summarises on the building block 'Individual Consumer' and its components; Brand Personality, Consumer self, and Brand-self-congruence. In regards to our assumption that personal aspects related to the self affect consumers' attitude towards brands in regards to d&i, our findings have shown to confirm this assumption, which will be evident in the summarising of this building block.

Overall, we found that the interviewees felt an emotional bond with brand personalities they saw as being d&i, as they spoke of these brands in regards to feeling a 'connection' with the brand, and feeling 'accepted' by the brand, this feeling is what contributed to the interviewees' expression of identity. We also found that these d&i brand personalities aided the interviewees' realisation of their actual self, which they responded more positively to in contrast to brands that appeal to their ideal self, hence we saw an appeal of authentic branding. Lastly, we saw a positive brand-self-congruence when a brand appealed to their actual self. These findings will be elaborated on in the following part.

Personality, self, and brand-self- congruence

In regards to *brand personality,* we found that it is indeed the interviewees' need for identity expression that influences their brand attitudes, which was seen in the positive way they spoke about brands they felt included them in their promotion and products. It it an important matter for our interviewees to see themselves reflected in brands, as it gives them a connection to the brand. The brands that were mentioned as diverse by the interviewees were H&M, Fenty Beauty, NYX, and Vogue. These brand personalities were described as being approachable, inclusive, making one feel accepted, open, and comfortable. In regards to *consumer self,* we found that the interviewees in one way or another spoke about d&i related to themselves. However, we also found that they cared about d&i beyond themselves, as they spoke about issues regarding lack of d&i that did not relate to themselves. This was shown in the answers about H&M, as they spoke favourably about H&M including many different type of women. This also means that the brand personality was also liked as it gave them the feeling of being supported and included, thereby H&M allowed them to enhance their sense of self and feel this connection to the brand; which we argue is the emotional-brand-attachment.

We found a deep emotional importance to the girls, when they spoke about how a brand that is d&i makes them feel, Mishal for example opened up saying that she feel no one looks like her in advertisement, which makes her feel like something is wrong with her. But when brands are d&i all girls agreed that it makes them feel *supported and accepted.* These emotions resonate with the basic needs of all people, and we saw that in the way Sibel for example stated that H&M are portraying a positive image of Muslim women, as they validate her as a muslim by showing that she is not oppressed and can wear what she wants. In the same way that Mishal finds self validation when

Rihanna in her underwear line shows what according to her is a realistic depiction of a curvy woman. So what is an attractive brand personality? We discovered before even letting the girls know the motive of the interview that a culturally relevant brand personality was attractive. By understanding the cultural phenomenon of d&i, and using it in the right way. And what is this right way? Through the analysis we argue that for the respondents a genuine brand personality is one which has congruence across the brand, which means that there products have to show diversity, their communications in term of advertising, and on social media.

We also found something unexpected, based on which we revised our framework, as mentioned in theory chapter 4. We found that social media influencers affect the two-way dialogue between brand and consumer, and influence whether a brand is perceived as d&i. We found that the interviewees followed influencers who resembled them in terms of looks and values, these also showed to hold a lot of credibility, and the interviewees seem to care about their opinions on brands. We found that the interviewees use the influencers, as a mirroring of themselves, as Belk (1988) stated people are the mirror from which consumers sees themselves, so that the influencers are a way for the consumers to see themselves reflected in the brands and feel included. For Mishal for example, she sees herself identified in an influencer, with the same skin tone as her. Also, in regards to a connection between influencers and the brands they work with, it has shown that the influencer lends its personality to the brand, which in turn affects the consumers attitude towards that brand, as the consumer feels an attachment to the influencer and thus also the brand. We also found that influencers in themselves carry cultural meaning, as Yusra stated that a brand supports her values when a brand works with a Muslim influencer. We also argue that this cultural meaning is seen based on the influencer also belonging to a group which is not typically represented in advertising, so they endow the brands with d&i via their own personality.

Diversity & Inclusivity as a cultural phenomenon - *Cultural perspective*
This part summarizes on the building block 'Diversity & Inclusivity as a cultural phenomenon' and its components; Self-expression, Collective identity projects and Cultural knowledge, based on the *cultural perspective*. In regards to our assumption that cultural aspects related to consumers' collective desires and anxieties affect their attitude towards brands in regards to d&i, our findings have shown to confirm this assumption, which will be evident in the summarizing of this building block.

Overall, we found that the interviewees are affected by d&i as a cultural phenomenon, and that brands that wish to address d&i should utilize the cultural phenomenon by endowing the brand with the relevant cultural meaning consumers can use in their identity construct. This very much related to the connection between culture and consumption. Our findings have shown that the interviewees emphasized cultural aspects when evaluating brands, e.g. Mishal mentioned that is okay for people to look differently, and referred to H&M using different body types in their ads, which she felt impacts her and makes her want to buy their products. Yusra also mentioned that for her personally to buy a product, she likes to see herself in it and see all women be represented as well. This shows that their attitudes towards brands are influenced the surrounding culture, and that culture should be the main driver for brands to resonate with consumers. How to resonate with consumers was uncovered more deeply, and will be elaborated on in the following part.

Self-expression, Collective identity projects & Cultural knowledge

In regards to *self-expression*, we found that the interviewees valued brands that contributed to their self expression and perceived these as d&i brands, this was especially the case for Fenty Beauty and H&M, this was shown to be due to the interviewees on several areas having felt constrained in their self-expression. E.g. Mishal express an anxiety in regards to being able to not seeing herself reflected in advertisement, as women referred to as "plus- size" do not even resemble her, whereas her attitude towards brands that contributed to her self-expression was very positive, e.g. in regards to Fenty Beauty providing makeup for Mishal's dark skin, thereby contributing to her self-expression, as she and dark skinned girls in general have not been very much catered to in the beauty industry. In general, we have found that the interviewee's attitude towards brands have been positive for brands that exchange symbolic answers to some of the cultural challenges they have experienced, e.g. being represented as a hijabi or a bigger curvy woman, as these contribute to their self-expression.

In regards to *collective identity projects*, when talking about how the interviewees view brands whom they perceive as d&i or not, they several times stressed that they think brands should aim at being inclusive towards everyone in terms of religion, body type, skin colour, age etc. In order to endow the brand with cultural meaning, the interviewee's answers refer to an emphasis on collective identity projects. We discovered that the interviewees did not only evaluate brands based on d&i relating to themselves only, rather, their attitude towards brands was influenced by how the

brands cultural meaning resonate with collective identity projects in terms of desires that have not been met before in society, which means that their sympathy moves beyond the self. This was shown in e.g. the answers about H&M, as they mentioned H&M in regards to how it includes all types of women, and Sibel mentioned how H&M has a plus size section that allows her plus size mother to shop at H&M, and that had a positive impact on Sibel even though she is skinny, as this allows her to shop with her mother. Whereas e.g. ZARA was perceived as mainly targeting one type of consumer, rather than providing value for collective identity projects of consumers who are usually not represented.

In regards to *cultural knowledge*, the interviewees' perception of brands being d&i was also influenced by brands addressing the culture in 'a right way', meaning that having the right appropriate knowledge on the matter is important in order to resonate with consumers.

like the interviewees mentioned that Rihanna from Fenty has taken d&i to the next level, because she has truly understood d&i and is in sync with society. L'Oreal was a brand which was not considered genuine, as they have tried to appear diverse by promoting that their products are for also the darker skin tones, although, Mishal who is medium dark cannot use their makeup, and in general, the interviewees argued that L'Oreal does not seem diverse neither in promotion or products, which indicate that L'Oreal have not understood the top phenomenon level of our model, and not gained the right cultural knowledge in regards to how the phenomenon of d&i encompass different people in society that have been constrained in relation to their self-expression and construction of identity.

6.6 Part conclusion

Having used our assembled framework in this first analysis, we can conclude that the interviewee's attitudes towards brands they perceive as being d&i was very positive, as these brands promotion and product offerings reflected d&i and resonated with the interviewee's self-expression and identity projects. We found that a brand which was considered d&i, was one that carefully understood the cultural phenomenon of d&i, which is illustrated in the top building block, and endowed the brand personality with the right cultural meaning of d&i that contributes to the interviewee's desire for self-expression, and the solving of cultural challenges related to collective identity projects. By creating this culturally relevant brand personality, the consumers were able to use the d&i brands in their self construct, as the brands made them feel accepted, and provided a strong emotional attachment between the brand and the consumer. However, before making a final

conclusion, we will need to further investigate what makes a genuine d&i brand personality, alongside other considerations, which will be discussed below.

6.7 Discussion

In our analysis we have analysed our empirical findings guided by our chosen theoretical framework, we have found certain topics, which we will like to further discuss, as done below.

The following aspect, although not investigated further is worth mentioning, we uncovered from the analysis findings that even though the interviewees cared deeply about brands being d&i, they still had favourite brands, which they themselves defined as not being diverse. We argue that this shows that the very basic principles of factors such as price, and availability still very much matter, although we argue that a brand can be more favourable for consumers when the basic principles are met while the brand also manage to represent a lot of different people and thereby be diverse, as was seen in the analysis.

The following aspects in this part will be investigated further. The above argument about being more favourable leads to the second aspect we uncovered, which is that feeling a connection to the brand also plays a role, meaning that even though the products are good, another brand which also has very good products but differentiates by being d&i, could be the preferred choice of brand to shop from if a choice had to be made between the two brands, we here ad a quote from Sibel as this quote illustrates this aspect: "I look for the good products, but I also look for the feeling. If I don't feel like that I can relate to the brand in a way, and if I don't feel I can be included in the brand, I wouldn't feel the same way about the brand, as I would if it included me. Otherwise it would be more on a like superficial level" (5.3 (S). A.3 l: 177-179). This could indicate that consumers do not hold strong associations in their mind of brands that do not fulfil their need of self-representation. A third aspect we uncovered was that the interviewees evaluated d&i in brands based on traits they found as genuine and not genuine. One of the traits the interviewees attributed to brands they perceived as genuinely diverse, was that d&i was seen as reflected in the brands product offerings and also in their promotion activities, such as H&M having a plus size section, and also through their promotion activities, such as advertisement, and their social media. We also found that being consistent in these factors also aided brands in being genuinely diverse, as the brands which were criticised for not being genuinely diverse, were perceived as only addressing d&i once in a while.

E.g. L'Oreal was considered as not being genuine about addressing d&i, as the attempts were not considered sufficient, due to not being able to truly embrace diversity in both their promotion and products. Another trait that influenced the perception of a brand being genuine was that a brand such as Fenty Beauty was founded based on d&i, however, in the case of the Vogue cover the respondents reacted very positively and saw the cover as inclusive, even though they all admitted that this was a new move for Vogue and not something they associated with the brand. Another aspect we uncovered from the analysis findings, is that the interviewees associations of what the brand stand for and is known for doing has a strong effect on whether it is considered d&i. L'Oreal was perceived very negatively in relation to d&i, even though the interviewees said that L'Oreal also seemed to be trying, but not wholeheartedly, based this on the brand's associations and history. On the other hand, Vogue was perceived as diverse even though the brand is very new on the d&i area. We wonder that this might be due to the interviewees association of Vogue being a brand with an iconic status, even though they are known for appealing to the ideal self of individuals, the brand personality is so strong in that they set the tone in the fashion world, and so their attempt is looked upon more positively. Vogue also holds some kind of authority in that the magazine is so well known by everyone. But is that not also the case with L'Oreal? As the brand has also existed for many years, we argue that this might be something as simple as the exclusivity of the brand. L'Oreal is a brand found everywhere in supermarkets and on the sales isle, so that the general attitude towards L'Oreal is one of indifference, as consumers have associations of the brand that make it harder for L'Oreal to be perceived as d&i. The lack of diversity in L'Oreal as perceived by the interviewees, could be due to strong brand associations of L'Oreal as being for an unrealistic representation of the self, this could also be the reason for why the interviewees would not consider Victoria's Secret's attempts at diversity as genuine, if they did the same thing as Fenty X Savage.

CHAPTER 7. EMPIRIAL FINDINGS OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

In the following section the empirical findings for the focus group interview will be presented. The focus group interview covered different themes with the purpose of further insight into consumer's attitudes towards brands in relations to d&i. The purpose was to further investigate the patterns

found in the individual interviews, and investigates new themes, which were uncovered in the individual interviews.

7.1 What diversity and inclusivity means to the respondents

The interview started with a question about what diversity and inclusivity means to the girls in the group, to this question Sara answered: "I think it is the same when brands they use all different kinds of ages and skin tones and religions and were they maybe have as you said a variety of these people in their ads, and you can identify with these people, maybe one with a hijab on or a black woman or an Asian woman or an older or bigger woman as well. So for me it is when you include these types of different people" (A.4 l: 19-22). Humera answered with a product level: "When I think of a makeup brand, I just think about if they have my tone, is there anyone in the brand that are showing, you know something similar to me and it is important that I can see myself. If I see their products actually helps me and represents me" (A.4 l: 37-39). Hawra added: I will add a bit, when the inclusion is actually realistic, where you can see that it really reflects reality and not just a picture you are looking at (A.4 l: 32-33). In general, all six girls agreed on the above-mentioned statements (A.4 l: 19-39).

Amaya added an insight to this conversation: "Can I say something about the ads, because we were just talking about that we actually really don't care about the ads, but still when they do something different we notice it, and sometimes I think it talks to our subconscious, like if we see a brand using a hijabi woman, we notice it like "okay wow they are actually doing something different, so yes we are actually influenced by the ads, without even knowing it. It gives you the feeling of wanting to support them and you remember it, which is what they want you to do. So even if you can't necessarily relate like I don't wear the hijab, but I will remember that thing, and if they sometimes use a very big woman or something like you will remember that. It has an influence but you don't necessarily notice it" (A.4 l: 49-56).

7.2 Relationship between product attributes and promotion activities

The girls were asked which fashion and beauty brands come to mind when thinking about diversity and inclusivity, both in regards to products and promotion activities. Basically all the girls answered: "Huda Beauty, and Fenty beauty and Mango also, NOT ZARA, and M.A.C" (A.4 l: 69). Sara commented on ZARA with a statement four of the girls agreed on: "but they do have women of different colours but they just look so unrealistic, like when you look at their pictures you think

how is that real life? It looks like something that is in a vogue cover with some art kind of thing that no one is going to wear anyway, you can never connect to their website I think" (A.4 l: 75-88). Hawra commented on ZARA: I am happy they use skinny models, but I also understand other people with different sizes that they would be happy when the models are in their sizes. So it is understandable" (A.4 l: 118-123). Hawra also added a comment about realistic women: "But I don't think all these brands are diverse…. like Dolce and Gabbana they use white women wearing hijabs, who are not even Muslims and they don't even look Muslim so what is the purpose" (A.4 l: 126-128).

The girls was asked to think of brands they perceive as the opposite of ZARA in regards to diversity, Sara answered: "Mango I think are much better, as the models are more realistic, they wear the clothes in a way you can actually see yourself wearing them and the commercials are much better I think. And they had the Ramadan collection this year, I really like Mango they do it in a really good way, and they are not trying to be like "Unrealistic Vogue". So Mango is much better" (A.4 l: 92-95). Amaya added that they also have a plus size collection (A.4 l: 97). Sara commented on L'Oreal: "but for me L'Oreal have never been diverse in my eyes, I always think it is a white very pale skinned women with blue eyes for some reason like with their mascara commercials" (A.4 l: 135-136). Mahnoor commented on Sara's answer: "I kind of disagree because I remember growing up seeing an Indian famous woman as the face of L'Oreal, which is very close to my origins. So I remember growing up with seeing that even though she is very fair in her skin" (A.4 l: 138-140), Amaya commented on Mahnoor's answer: "yes she is fair and has blue eyes! She doesn't represent India" (A.4 l: 142). Sara and Amaya once again gave their opinions about L'Oreal, Sara stated: "Well their products are not diverse; they don't have a wide range of products, maybe they try to portray themselves as diverse but they don't do that with their products, its only white!" (A.4 l: 155-156), Amaya stated: "previously I could only afford to buy L'Oreal products, but they never suited my skin tone. I don't even buy anything more from L'Oreal, I don't remember L'Oreal ever being diverse, as Mahnoor was saying, they used an Indian model but she was completely fair skin and had blue eyes" (A.4 l: 158-161).

We later asked Mahnoor if she thinks L'Oreal is diverse in terms of their products and promotion, she answered: "I haven't really paid much attention to L'Oreal… but I think it is not that smart if a brand has a lot of different kind of products but only use one type of woman in their commercials because they have to show what they sell" (A.4 l: 186-188), Pakiza added a comment: **"I also think that it is a lie to show all these different coloured women, so when I go buying foundation then they

don't have a lot of colours to choose from, then I will feel cheated" (A.4 l: 190-191). Amaya also commented on this question: "I would say that promotion and product is very connected, all the examples we just gave that is showing that if they say are something, then it has to be like that in reality too" (A.4 l: 208-209). Humera also commented on the subject of promotion and product, based on L'Oreal: "That is how I see L'Oreal, sometimes they use some sort of diverse person, and they are trying to be in this movement and come along and portray themselves as being diverse, but clearly in their product selection they are not, and that is when you see what they really are, because if you look at the products they are definitely not diverse" (A.4 l: 211-214).

We showed the group two images, one of L'Oreal showing their 23 foundations and the models they have shown for each foundation (A.8), the other image was of the cosmetic brand Fenty Beauty and showed the same thing but they have 40 foundations (A.7). Sara first commented on the L'Oreal image: "yes and L'Oreal have been going on for like 100 years and they only have the 23" (A.4 l: 221). Amaya also commented: "The first thing I think about is that there is a bigger gap in the skin tones in what L'Oreal is showing, whereas Fenty Beauty only jump to the next skin tone whereas L'Oreal is jumping like 5 skin tones. They have so many white shades, maybe like 20 white and 5 dark shades" (A.4 l: 227-229), we asked Amaya how she thinks of that in terms of diversity, she answered: "That doesn't seem diverse at all compared to Fenty Beauty" (A.4 l: 233). Amaya commented again about L'Oreal: "Yes but it is like with L'Oreal there are 20 shades of the light and only 5 for the dark skin tones, and it is just like there are not only 5 ways of being dark, there should be at least as many as the light tones" (A.4 l: 237-239). Pakiza commented on the image from Fenty Beauty: "But I also heard that like Fenty, Rihanna specifically made makeup that would suit like a person from every skin colour and like lipsticks and blush and highlight, everything was made to fit everyone. She really made an effort to make it diverse and include everyone" (A.4 l: 241-246). Amaya commented again: "yes, with L'Oreal you are either light or really dark, I can't see myself in these foundations" (A.4 l: 248).

7.3 Brand associations affecting attempts at being diverse and inclusive
We asked the girls what they think of when they hear the brand name "Victoria's Secret" (VS), and we showed them pictures from the VS annual show 2017 (A.11), which included 50% women of different colour than white, which is an increase compared to the last few years. Hawra who is skinny answered: "I just think like general sexy girls, sexy beautiful girls, and very skinny" (A.4 l:

427), all the girls in general agreed on this description of Victoria's Secret, and Mahnoor who is also skinny added: "I have always followed Victoria's Secret, and they always had different type of women, like Tyra Banks who is black, and Adrianna Lima she is Spanish, and they have white women as well, everyone, so I think they have very different type of skin tones" (A.4 l: 429-431). After Mahnoor's comment about the inclusion of different skin tones, Hawra commented: "I don't think that all the brands have to be inclusive or diverse because maybe they are targeting these types of girls, they don't want to target maybe curvy girls, that's why they only include skinny girls, and I like them I have never thought of them in a bad way, and I really love their runways" (A.4: 440-443). Sara who is also skinny added a comment to Hawra's statement: "A brand is not bad if its not inclusive necessarily, that doesn't make them a bad brand, it is up to the brand who they are going to target their products for, and that doesn't have to be everyone, so everyone is allowed to advertise and promote for what they want, and they are always been known for very skinny" (A.4 l: 445-449). Mahnoor added a comment to the conversation: "but they have so many black women, and women with long hair, short hair, and even bold, I think they have a lot of different women" (A.4 l: 464-465). As only the skinny girls answered the questions, we asked the not skinny girls, Humera, Mishal and Pakiza to express their opinions about the subject, Humera stated: "I don't mind, that is just how they promote themselves, and that is how we know VS" (A.4 l: 477-478), Amaya stated: "As you said, they are just targeting a specific type and that is okay that doesn't make it a bad brand, but then again, I just came to think about that, it actually seems like that some brands are using this diversity thing as like, it is almost like a trend" (A.4 l: 480-482), Pakiza stated: "I think that is like how you know, that is what makes them like exclusive, because you know Victoria's Secret has like perfect bodies and that's what makes Victoria's Secret, Victoria's Secret!" (A.4 l: 484-486). Sara also stated: "for me it's a brand that have a standard that is not realistic, I don't know it is skinny but not realistic for me, but again it is not a bad thing but I don't find them diverse. That is just their brand" (A.4 l: 508-510). Humera added a comment: "I am not skinny but I do wear VS, so I do buy it and I feel like its, and it's not only small they have there. Actually they are not showing all those kind of products, they are not promoting all of it" (A.4 l: 512-514). The girls was later shown a video of plus size model Ashley Graham (InsideEdition, 2016) speaking about wanting to be part of the VS annual show, the skinnier girls first commented: Mahnoor: "I agree that all sizes should be celebrated, but VS is just known for their skinny models and I kind of think it would ruin the brand or their runway if something else would come like a plus size model" (A.4 l: 530-533), Hawra and Sara agreed with Mahnoor's statement, Sara added: "when

you are a brand like them, I think they have such a strong brand it would just kind of be fake, because all of these freaking years, there has been plus size models always" (A.4 l: 555-557). The not skinny girls then commented on the answers from the skinny girls: Humera: "if I see a plus size model for VS I would not find it weird, and it is maybe because so many other brands like them are showing different types of sizes… for me it will be normal actually, like why not show plus size? ...We were talking about realistic promotion, this is not realistic" (A.4 l: 545-547, 559), Sara added a comment to Humera's statement: "but that is there brand it is not realistic but that is what they are know for, this unrealistic thing that no one can achieve and that's why there is such a big hype to the show because everyone is looking at these women think they look so amazing and how no one can look like that" (A.4 l: 561-564). Hawra also added a comment, supported by Mahnoor stating that the brand is not unrealistic to her as she is skinny" (A.4 l: 573-579). One of the not skinny girls, Amaya, joined the discussion: "I think that if they want to be portrayed as a diverse brand, they have to include plus size models because when I only see different skin colours I don't feel like they are diverse, so if they want to portrayed as diverse they have to have some other models as well… I don't think it will ruin the brand" (A.4 l: 654-656, 662). We asked the girls if they think the brand name and their associations connected to VS play a role in relation to VS becoming diverse, Hawra and Sara both answered 'yes', and Sara stated: "If VS want to become diverse, then I think they are doing it the right way, gradually and slowly, but I don't think it will be more than this" (A.4 l: 633-636, 618).

7.4 Genuine or not genuine attempt at inclusivity and diversity

At this point the focus group was asked about their associations with VOGUE, Sara compared VOGUE with Victoria Secret saying that they also use the skinny white girls, however she acknowledged that recently there has been a change in that they are adapting and using different ethnicities, for example the hijab wearing model Halima (A.4 l: 713-716). Sara says: "I love that cover, I think that cover is very diverse, they have the bigger the smaller, the Asian, the light, the Afro and the Muslim. I think that is a diverse cover" (A.4 l: 720-721). When asked how she feels about the VOGUE cover in relation to her own statement about this not being something they do, Sara says: "well sometimes brand don't do it in a good way, but I think they have done it in a beautiful way, everyone is represented in a beautiful way, it is a good way of saying that this is how people look." (A.4 l: 728-730), and Amaya expressed that she likes that they are showing the women on the cover and not only their sex appeal. Mahnoor and Pakiza stated that brands seem to

be following a trend to gain people's acceptance (A.4 l: 738-743). Mishal's comment to this is: "basically everyone is following because it is the new trend, beside Fenty, every other brand you mentioned might feel a pressure" (A.4 l: 750-751). When shown quotes from an article (A.15) about the change on VOGUE's history and the hiring of the first black creative director, the girls talked about how the outlook have changed, so the brand has followed with the time and trend (A.4 l: 762-766).

When shown the two H&M video ads that shows a lot of different people in terms of ethnicity, religion, body type, skin colour, age etc. (H&M, 2015, H&M, 2016), the participants responded positively in terms of inclusivity and diversity, as they argued that they felt H&M included everyone (A.4 l: 791-795), Amaya said: "Yes because they are showing different ages, body types, genders, and religions everything basically. And people in different situations and even young people looking different ways" (A.4 l:791-792). However Mahnoor and Pakiza argued that in reality there are still certain rules to be followed in fashion, and if someone was dressed in a odd way people would find it weird (A.4 803-811). Humera says: "I think it's nice I think they are targeting a lot of society issues and stereotypes, and I think it's like when we are talking about different cultures and different perspectives on like, I just noticed that there was a lesbian in the end of the video, so its like they tell a lot of taboo subjects, and when they are saying there is no rules in fashion I think they are also talking about their clothes and how you feel beautiful and comfortable and happy. So there are a lot of topics in the ad, not only fashion. "(A.4 l: 805-810), Hawra adds to Humera's comment by saying**:** "I completely agree with both, and I think they were maybe one of the first one to have a Muslim woman in their ad, but I also think that it fits very well with their brand because it is a lifestyle brand. As Humera said you feel happy and comfortable with whom you are, and they are doing a good job because it fits with their brand and their products, not everyone would maybe succeed in this way." (A.4 l:812-818). Sara also agrees to this, and says that H&M is making a fashion and political statement via their ads, and it fits them, as according to her they were the first brand to address the topic of diversity (A.4 l: 833-840). Humera agrees by stating: "its not as you also mentioned, they are doing what they stand for, but H&M are taking lot societal responsibility and they are trying to show different cultural things and different types of people and I think we need of that. I think these kinds of brands, which are so big they have a responsibility and they should use their stage and voice to promote something good."(A.4 l: 842-845).

When steering the conversation in the direction of Fenty, the participants agree that Fenty beauty is doing inclusivity and diversity in a genuine way and they stress that the brand did it from the beginning (A.4 l: 856-872). Although Hawra agrees that Fenty Beauty is inclusive and diverse, she also says that other brands have done what was the norm in their time, however Rihanna started her band at a time when inclusivity and diversity was something that was the norm (A.4 l: 870-872), Sara disagrees with this saying that a brand like L'Oreal should have been inclusive and diverse years ago, since people of different ethnicities have been a part of a society like Denmark for a long time (A.4 l: 877-879).

When shown the Fenty Beauty video ad (Fenty Beauty, 2017), the participants agree that the ad is diverse, and Sara says that the ad is more relatable to her than L'Oreal (A.4 l: 909-922). Sara also mentioned that the ad does not show diversity in terms of age, however, she mentions that this is something Rihanna makes up for in her lingerie brand, where she also shows diversity in terms of age (Ibid.)

When shown the NIKE ad of the hijabi women doing sports (CNNMoney 2017), the participants agree that the video is empowering Muslim and breaking stereotypes, Mahnoor says: "in a positive way and empowering way, because a lot of people that doesn't know a lot about Islam and about women wearing hijab they think they are oppressed and think that they are not powerful and that they don't have their own opinion and their own power, and that they are not allowed to do certain things, but this commercial shows that it is not how it is at all." (A.4 l: 930-940). Sara ads: "I also think they are doing it in a very interesting way, because there is a stereotype in the West about how Muslim are but also in Muslim countries hijabi women are somehow seen as way more religious and not allowed to do sports or anything, just sit home and not speak loud and be a certain way, and that's also what they did in the ad with the hijabi on the skateboard and a man looked at her thinking like you are wearing the hijab you shouldn't skate, so I think they did a great job but not only try to break stereotypes but also showing that there are stereotypes within ourselves that we have to break down." (A.4 l: 959-965)

When speaking about what they in general feel is genuine attempts at inclusion and diversity, the participants state that consistency is important, (A.4 l: 886-996), Sara said: "If they are trying they should do their products as well as their branding, and not just have 1 dark person sometimes in their promotion, but have it all the time and have it like consistently, not just someone here

someone there, and maybe also with social media influencers. But also like with TV commercials that is what get most views and it is always a white woman with blue eyes and big lashes, always, and don't understand why it's never a dark person because they have the biggest lashes in the world, so why? It doesn't make sense, so if they want they should have a unity in their branding and products, both should make sense, they should have it all out." (A.4 l: 886-892). Amaya ads that in terms of makeup there should equality in foundation tones, and not like L'Oreal that only have few dark tones (A.4 l: 894-896). Hawra says: "I agree with what she is saying because it is very personal but I get really annoyed when some brands use Muslim models but do it in the wrong way, so I think if they even researched it because I know they research everything, so I get annoyed when don't do it right, because when they do something for Muslims it means they are doing something for me, so when I see that I am misrepresented I get really annoyed, but I continue shopping anyone, like ZARA and their latest collection which is very ugly, the clothes look like they are from the 1960s." (A.4 l: 395-400). She refers to herself and Sara who both wear the hijab, saying that they do not dress the way the ZARA collection portrays, they dress more fashionably then the collection portrays (A.4 l: 404-407).

7.5 Being represented in brands promotion

At this point of the focus group the participants were shown a collage with pictures from some magazine covers, and some images from Rihanna's lingerie line, the aim was to investigate whether the women were attracted by an ideal or actual self-representation. Mahnoor and Hawra stated that they found the Victoria Secret images most attractive, however they also mentioned that the plus size model Ashley Graham does not realistically represent plus size women (A.4 l: 981-999). Amaya on the other hands feels that that she is more attracted by the images of Rihanna's line, and she feels that Rihanna is showing a more realistic and relatable image of the women she sees (A.4 l: 1001-101). Humera also feels more attracted by Rihanna's brands, and sees herself reflected more in her brands than others, she also says that she is influenced to the extent that she bought Rihanna's foundation, even though a friend of hers, who is a makeup artist advised against it (A.4 l: 1019-1031). Mahnoor argues that she believes people are so influenced because it is Rihanna who is behind the brand, however Humera disagrees with this, saying that she would not us the brands of celebrities such as Kim Kardashian, and Kylie Jenner (A.4 l: l033-1046). Hawra also ads here that when she sees Rihanna showing a flat-chested girl looking good in her lingerie she would like that as she is also flat chested too (A.4 l: 080-1081).

When asked in general how the participants feel when seeing ads where women like themselves or other women who, might not be a part of the typical advertising is represented, they all respond positively, stating that it gives them more respect for the brand, and that they notice the brand for doing something different, also adding that this is something they believe to see more of in the future (A.4 l: 1083-1092).

7.6 Representation of self through influencers
All girls said that they follow beauty and fashion influencers (A.4 l: 266-269), When asked if they follow influencers who look or resemble themselves, Sara says: "I think everyone does, I think people follow someone they can identify with, in terms of religion like if the person wears a scarf or is big etc. I think people just like to see themselves and see yourself represented and feel a connection to the brand somehow or just get inspiration. I do that a lot with clothes and makeup also; I love to see how other people style their hijab because I am new with hijab. I follow a lot of hijabi Instagrammers, I think that kind of is a thing that everyone does, you like to see yourself and follow what you want to find for yourself" (A.4 l: 289-294) Hawra choice of influencer is also based on someone who reminds her of herself, and a likeable personality (A.4 l: 325-326). Mahnoor states that she cares about the personality and values of her favourite influencers, however she does not agree that she likes following influencers who look like her, her favourite influencers are a transgender male called Jefferey Star, and a big white woman called Nicki (A.4 l: 311-316). The reaction to whether they are influenced in their choice of brands by influencers is mixed. Hawra and Mahnoor say that it depends on the brand they are recommending and whether they have been paid to promote a brand (A.4 l: 280-285, l: 331-334). Sara says that she is very much influenced by influencers (A.4 l: 351-253), and Amaya agrees to this saying that she bought an expensive shampoo only based on the recommendation of an influencer, Huda Beauty, whom she says that she listens to (A.4 l: 355-362). When asked whether Amaya can relate to Huda Beauty she says: "Yes because we have almost the same skin tone and we both Muslim and both has black hair and the same hair type. I have quite big hair and its frizzy and she was mentioning the same things so I can definitely identify with her. She is a very well known beauty blogger but is not completely skinny, she has some curls and I can identify with these types as well." (A.4 l: 376-383). When asked if they would feel a brand is diverse if they worked with an influencer they like who is also part of a minority representation in fashion and beauty brands, Sara stated: "Definitely, I have several times clicked to see what brands they are wearing, then I check that brand and see what kind of clothes

they sell and check out their Instagram stories, and see that they support these girls and sends them packages, and they invite them to these big social events…" (A.4 l: 376-383). However, Mahnoor and Hawra disagree, as for Hawra, it still matters more knowing that someone has been paid to use a product, and for Mahnoor, she states that just because a brand decides to work with a hijabi blogger, it would not necessarily influence her, as she does not dress modestly (A.4 l: 385-397).

CHAPTER 8. ANALYSIS OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

This analysis serves as a continuation in the findings of our individual interviews as described in the previous discussion. As mentioned in our discussion, the first analysis uncovered some themes that we found valuable to investigate further. The first theme we want to investigate further is the relationship between product attributes and promotion activities, relating to how the findings in the individual interviews showed that for a brand to be d&i there should be congruence across the brand. The other theme relates to how the brand associations affect the how and whether a brand is perceived as d&i. Another theme in this analysis investigate when brands are perceived as genuinely addressing d&i, and why some brands are considered genuine in their attempt at being d&i, while others are not. Also, we will further investigate how and why consumers like to be represented in brands promotion, lastly we will also further investigate the role that influencer's play in brands being perceived as d&i. The following analysis is conducted by showing ads and images of the brands that the individual interviewees identified as diverse, being: Fenty Beauty, H&M and Vogue, and non-diverse, being: L'Oreal, ZARA and Victoria's Secret. We will also further investigate the role that influencer's play in brands being perceived as d&i.

8.1 What diversity and inclusivity means to the respondents
Like in the individual interviews, all girls agreed that d&i is about having all sorts of people feel included and represented through brands' promotion and products, and about being able to identify with the people brands use in their promotional activities (7.1).

Amayah expressed, with the rest of the group agreeing, that she usually does not think about brands promotion activities, however when a brand does something like including a hijabi in their ads, she appreciates and remembers the brand for doing something different that she can relate to (7.1). From a cultural perspective, Amaya's positive attitude means that these brands create value by contributing to the self-expression of consumers that are usually not represented e.g. hijabis. It is also interesting to notice that Amaya mention the representation of hijabis, even though she does not wear the hijab, this confirms what was also the case in the individual interviews (chapter 7), that the phenomenon of d&i carry a meaning that is about inclusion of everyone and not just yourself, the interviewees care about seeing collective desires met through valued answers from brands to some of the cultural changes that encompass, e.g. hijabis in or plus size women in society (Holt, 2004). This expression of self is, as we demonstrated in the analysis of the individual interviews (chapter 6) closely related to the personal perspective, as this shows the importance and favourable perception of brands (personalities), who provide the symbolic value of feeling included to consumers (Heding et al., 2016). So even if the consumers might not think about this, they admit to remembering a brand that is relatable, hence we argue that this relatable aspect creates an emotional brand attachment (Ibid.)

8.2 Relationship between product attributes and promotion activities

The group mentioned ZARA as a brand that is not diverse, as the brand was viewed as only portraying unrealistic body types in their ads, Sara stated that ZARA does show women of different skin tones, but that the women look unrealistic compared to how "real life" women look like, Sara therefore feels that she cannot connect with ZARA's website (7.2). Four of the interviewees agreed on the statement from Sara (7.2). It seems that ZARA is perceived as non-diverse du to the group's perception of d&i being about inclusion of different people in society, which shows that the group care about brands carrying cultural meaning that resonates with collective identity projects (Holt, 2004). Hawra did not agree with this as she can relate to ZARA's models due to being skinny (7.2). This comment from Hawra shows that she might not have an issue with ZARA not representing everyone, as her focus is more on her own identity project instead of the collective desires that is reflected through d&i as a societal cultural phenomenon. This is also interesting from the personal perspective, as it is about feeling a congruence with the brand, and here Hawra can identify with the women ZARA uses, however she does not elaborate whether she feels any attachment with the

brand, although she provides some criticism about ZARA, which will be addressed in part 7.4 of this analysis.

The group pointed out the high-street brand MANGO as being diverse, based on their promotion and advertisement, they emphasised that the brand has done a Ramadan collection, has a plus size section, and uses realistic models (7.2). This congruence across the brand, confirms what we found in the individual interviews. The mention of realistic models, which we will discuss further, could be the interviewees' preference towards authentic branding, as they are referring to an actual self-representation (Heding et al., 2016)

The group had a discussion about the cosmetics brand L'Oreal in regards to whether L'Oreal is d&i. Amaya, Sara, Humera, Pakiza and Mishal viewed L'Oreal as a non-diverse brand, Sara stated that she have never perceived L'Oreal as diverse, as she associate the brand with light skinned women with blue eyes (7.2), which is the same description of L'Oreal as given in the individual interviews. Mahnoor disagreed with this statement as she remembers growing up seeing an Indian famous actress as the face of L'Oreal, and as Mahnoor herself has Pakistani roots, she felt that this woman is close to her origins (7.2). From the discussion we saw how Mahnoor and Mishal who both share the same cultural background had very different opinions on L'Oreal brand personality, we argue that L'Oreal indeed is a brand based on an idea of the ideal self, we see here how Mahnoor seem to use a product like L'Oreal in a symbolic consumption to enhance her sense of ideal self (Heding et al., 2016), whereas Mishal does not use L'Oreal in her expression of self, as she seems more inclined towards an actual representation of the self (7.2). This also shows how the two interviewees have different expectations for when a brand is diverse or not, as mentioned in the theory chapter 4, we argued that people hold certain expectations of brands, and in Mahnoor's case the brand personality has behaved in proportionately to her expectations.

Sara stated that it seems that L'Oreal is trying to portray themselves as diverse, but that it is not reflected in their products as these are mainly for light skinned consumers, Humera and Amaya agreed with this statement, and Amaya added that she herself have not been able to find makeup at L'Oreal for her dark skin and therefore do not perceive the brand as diverse (7.2). These statements again show that the girls find it important that a brand is diverse in both promotion and product, and as Amaya expressed; these two aspects are very connected. According to McCracken (1986) these aspects are indeed very connected as meaning attributed to products is viewed as originating from

the culture, it is therefore important to understand the culture and what it is that creates value for consumers.

We later asked Mahnoor, whether she thinks that L'Oreal's diversity is also reflected in the brands products and promotion activities, she gave an interesting answer stating that she actually has not paid attention to L'Oreal, so she could not really answer that question, however, she expressed that a brand should "show what they sell" by reflecting their products through the women they use in commercials. Pakiza agreed on this statement also emphasizing that she would feel cheated if she saw a makeup ad showing women with different skin colours, but then in the store not seeing foundations for different skin tones (7.2). This again reinforces that the brand personality might not be expected by these two interviewees to be more diverse than this, however their statements also shows, that if a brand personality is trying to be perceived as genuine in d&i it has to be reflected in both promotion and products, or else it would be 'cheating'. This could be a reason why some brands might be hesitant to be a part of this phenomenon, as our individual interviews also showed, the phenomenon is something which touches people deeply on an emotional level, and not doing it the right way, could backfire and harm the brand's credibility.

Later in the interview, we showed the group two images, one of L'Oreal showing their 23 foundations and the models they have shown for each foundation (A.8), which we took from an article about L'Oreal addressing diversity (Roderick, 2017), the other image was of Fenty Beauty, showing their 40 foundations (A.7). One of the first comments after showing these two images was from Sara stating that that L'Oreal have existed for "100 years "and have only 23 foundations (7.2, A.4 l: 224). Also, the kind of foundations provided by L'Oreal was criticized as not showing diversity, Amaya commented: "The first thing I think about is that there is a bigger gap in the skin tones in what L'Oreal is showing, whereas Fenty only jump to the next skin tone, whereas L'Oreal is jumping like 5 skin tones. They have so many white shades, maybe like 20 and 5 dark shades…. it is like there are only 5 ways of being dark, there should be at least as many as the light tones" (7.2, A.4 l: 231-243). These statements support the findings of the individual interviews, as these interviewees seem to have very strong brand personality attributes associated with L'Oreal, in regards to the personality. Amaya also stressed that this doesn't seem diverse at all compared to Fenty Beauty, and that she can't see herself in the L'Oreal foundations. Fenty Beauty was also looked at positively by Pakiza who commented that it is a brand that specifically made makeup that

was made to fit everyone, and that the founder Rihanna really made an effort to make it d&i (7.2). From the personal perspective, Fenty Beauty seems to be a benchmark for beauty brands in regards to d&i, the brand personality is credible as according to Pakiza the brand was founded on this belief, and this is reflected in their product range. From a cultural perspective, Fenty Beauty is perceived as a diverse brand as it manages to cater products to a lot of different looking people, thereby contributing to the self expression of people by understanding collective desires that have not been met before, as Fenty Beauty allows the expression of self through products. Pakiza mentions that Fenty Beauty specifically made makeup for a lot of different looking people, which mean that Fenty Beauty have managed to create a strong perception of what the brand stands for, which according to Holt (2004) is considered valuable to consumers.

8.3 Brand associations affecting attempts at being diverse and inclusive

During the focus group interview, we talked about many different fashion and beauty brands, but one of the brands that created most discussion was the lingerie brand Victoria's Secret (VS). We asked the girls what they associate the brand VS with, and they all answered with no doubt: the beautiful girl next-door, sexy girls, and being very skinny. We showed the group pictures from the VS annual show 2017, which media have referred to as their most diverse show (A.11). What was interesting, was that the discussion about VS, instead of being about if they are diverse or not, like with the before mentioned brands, the conversation quickly turned to being about that VS should not be diverse. This was started by Hawra: "I don't think that all the brands have to be d&i because maybe they are targeting these types of girls, they don't want to target maybe curvy girls, that's why they only include skinny girls, and I have never thought of them in a bad way, and I really love their runways" (7.3 A.4 l: 446-449). Sara agreed with Hawra that a brand is not bad if it is not diverse. These statements gave us an interesting perspective on d&i, especially as compared to our individual interviews, where all three interviewees argued that all brands should be embracing d&i (chapter 7). From a personal perspective, the statements shows that there are different expectations of brand personalities, and the VS brand personality is acting as is expected from it. This is also seen in the way Sara and Mahnoor point out that VS is adapting to diversity gradually and slowly, which is good (7.3). The brand personality seems to have strong associations as being a brand, which is meant to create symbolic value by enhancing the ideal self, and thereby create ideal-self-congruence between brand and consumer.

When shown a video of plus size model Ashley Graham speaking about wanting to be a part of the VS show (InsideEdition, 2016), Hawra, Sara and Mahnoor, commented that it would ruin the VS brand image if the brand showed plus size models on the runway as that does not fit in (7.3). Also, Sara commented that the VS brand is so strong in terms of people's associations of the brand that changing those associations would ruin the brand and would not seem genuine, as plus size models have always existed. She expressed that people expect to see the "unrealistic" women, and that it is what creates the big hype around their annual show (7.3). These statements show that these interviewees think that VS should not include plus size women, whereas including women of different colour is a good way to gradually adapt to culture without changing the brand image. From the personal perspective, this shows that there are certain personality traits and brand associations which are core to the brand, and according these girls, the brand personality is one which is not expected to be d&i, as the brand is built around an ideal self representation. From a cultural perspective, the statements that including plus size women, would ruin the VS brand, could be discussed based on Holt (2004), as he argue that identity brands that want to contribute to consumers' self expression, need to consider appropriate alignment with the brand's reputation i.e. what kind of stories it makes sense for the brand to be telling, meaning that VS addressing d&i and including e.g. plus size women, maybe just does not resonate with the brand's reputation, whereas the inclusion of women of different skin colours might make sense for VS, as people associate the brand more with skinny models and not necessarily light skinned, the brand have also previously included women of colour, but never plus size women (7.3). This will be further discussed in the discussion chapter.

Amaya and Humera stated that they do not mind the VS brand only using skinny models, Humera also mentioned that she purchase size L lingerie from VS and she feel sexy wearing it, but the brand only portray the skinner body types, and that is okay, because that is what they are known for (7.3). This shows that even though Humera does not relate to the models VS uses, she still feels sexy in their lingerie, as the brand personality affords her the feeling of sexiness, and she, just like the above statements, feel that it is okay for VS to use skinny women, as that is what they are known for, which again confirms that the brand personality and the brands reputation, is strongly associated with one type of women. Although, Humera and Amaya disagree that including plus size women would not ruin the brand (7.3), as Humera mentioned that many brands are including plus size women, so they VS not do the same (7.3). Amaya also added that even though she doesn't feel represented by VS, she will still shop from the brand, but also, that if VS wants to be diverse, it is

not enough to include different skin toned models only, they have to also include plus size models or else it would not seem genuine, (7.3). The statements from Humera and Amaya shows that they feel that the brand personality of VS would not be conflicted by being d&i, this could be because they themselves do not feel a deeper connection with the VS models, as they use larger sizes, or that VS even though it appeals to their ideal self, could become stronger if it aided there self construct in a way that they could express their actual self.

8.4 Genuine or not genuine attempt at inclusivity and diversity

At this point, the focus group was asked about their associations of Vogue, Sara associated the brand with mainly using skinny light skinned women on their magazine covers, however, Sara and the rest of the group acknowledged that the brand recently have changed by showing women of different ethnicities on their cover, e.g. the brand showed a hijab wearing model, Halima, on a cover with other models. We showed the group the same cover as the individual interviewees (A.9), which received positive feedback in regards to d&i (7.4). The statements show that VOGUE is perceived as genuinely embracing d&i, as we also found in our individual interviews, it is interesting to note that Sara acknowledges how VOGUE has not always been diverse, but the attempt is still seen as genuine, we argue that this can be related to the perception of the brand personality of VOGUE. It seems that VOGUE holds some kind of authority, and set the tone in the fashion world, so when they address d&i, it is seen as credible, as their brand personality is viewed as being trustworthy. Mahnoor and Pakiza felt that VOGUE is just following the trend of d&i to get people's acceptance, Amaya commented on this by stating that basically every brand today is under pressure and therefore following the trend (7.4). First part of this statement shows that the genuineness is not necessarily a view they all share, and by being forced to be diverse, VOGUE loses some credibility, but as Amayah mentions, every brand is under this pressure, so the brand personality still holds a favourable position to her. This view will be further elaborated on in the discussion. The interviewees commented on the quotes about VOGUE's first black creative director by stating that the brand is simply following with the time and adapting to trends (7.4). From a cultural perspective, Holt (2004) and McCracken (1986) emphasize that brands should keep up with cultural changes and adapt in order to contribute provide valuable answers to collective identity desires, as meaning consumers attribute to consumer goods originate from the culture. The group's positive comments about the cover could indicate that VOGUE have managed to understand d&i as a cultural phenomenon that encompass a lot of different people that are usually not represented in

the fashion industry. Although, what is interesting to consider is whether any brand wanting to appear diverse for the first time, can simply gather a lot of different people in one picture? This will be discussed in the discussion part.

We also showed the group two H&M commercials (H&M, 2015, H&M, 2016), that feature a lot of different people, in terms of ethnicity, religion, body type, skin colour, age ect. The group viewed the ads as very inclusive towards everyone. Humera gave an interesting comment to the ads as she mentioned how H&M are targeting societal issues by showing that people should feel beautiful and comfortable in whatever they choose to wear.(7.4) Hawra and Sara agreed with this statement (7.4) As was explored in the individual interviews, there are some deep emotions attached to the d&i phenomenon, and these statements reinforce this as the group talks about feeling accepted, beautiful, and comfortable, when a brand includes them, and hence that creates an emotional brand attachment. These three participants also stressed that delivering this kind of message that talks to a lot of people in society that might feel that they are different, actually fits with what H&M stands for, Sara viewed H&M as the first brand to address the topic of diversity, and Hawra mentioned that other brands might not be as successful at delivering this kind of message. Humera also stressed that H&M is showing cultural differences in regards to people and that we need more of that (7.4). From a personal perspective, these statements show that H&M is attributed with personality traits like responsible - as the brand is addressing some societal issues, which is in congruence with the expectations of the brand, so there is a congruent brand personality across all facets of the brand. From a cultural perspective, H&M manages to contribute to the self-expression of a lot of different people in society that are usually not represented. What perhaps makes the participants attitude towards H&M more positive than it would be towards ZARA or L'Oreal, is as described by the group; what H&M stands for and what associations the brand have created among itself for consumers, this is supported by Holt (2004) who states: "the assets the brand has accrued through its historic activities, plays a role in the enhancement of it ability to create great stories".

When steering the conversation in the direction of Fenty, the participants agreed that Fenty beauty is doing d&i in a genuine way and they stress that the brand did it from the beginning (7.4). Although Hawra agrees that Fenty Beauty is d&i, she also says that other brands have done what was the norm in their time, and that Rihanna started Fenty at a time (2017) when d&i was the norm (7.4), Sara disagrees with this saying that a brand like L'Oreal should have been d&i years ago,

since people of different ethnicities have been a part of a society like Denmark for a long time (7.4). When shown the Fenty Beauty video ad (Fenty Beauty, 2017), the participants agree that the ad is diverse, and Sara says that the ad is more relatable to her than L'Oreal (7.4). These statement show that Fenty Beauty's brand personality is perceived as being d&i by all interviewees, we will further discuss how the brand could be a benchmark for I&D in the discussion. The statements also shows that Fenty Beauty has managed to do what McCracken (1986) describe as utilizing the culture to endow the brand with meaning that provides symbolic value. What perhaps shapes the group's attitude towards Fenty Beauty as a genuine brand using authentic branding, is that it have allowed them to express themselves and their identities through their consumption of makeup that reflects them, which is something they as a minority in the western world have had a hard time doing.

When shown the Nike ad of the hijabi women doing sports (CNNMoney 2017), the group agreed that the video is empowering Muslims and breaking stereotypes, Mahnoor says: ".... because a lot of people that do not know a lot about Islam and about women wearing hijab they think they are oppressed and think that they are not powerful and that they don't have their own opinion, and that they are not allowed to do certain things, but this commercial shows that it is not how it is at all." (7.4, A.4 l: 930-940). Sara ads that they are not only breaking stereotypes of Muslims in the west, but also in Muslim countries, where women who wear the hijab are not expected to do sports (7.4). The case of Nike is similar to H&M and Fenty Beauty, as Nike manages to resonate with Muslim consumers in a symbolic exchange of meaning, as these consumers have been constrained in relation to expressing themselves through consumption, and perhaps felt that they live at a considerable remove from the norms in society. Also, we once again see how the group tap into some deep feelings, such as empowerment, Nike's brand personality is allowing the Muslim women to tell narratives of self empowerment through this ad, all while also challenging the societal stereotypes of Muslim women in a hijab, and as we argued, the brand personality is attractive as they have managed to tap into some of the issues and concern that are based on a societal level, but resonate with the individual consumer.

When speaking about what our focus group in general feel is genuine attempts at appearing as a d&i brand, they confirmed that consistency is important (7.4), Sara said: "If they are trying they should do their products as well as their branding, and not just have 1 dark person sometimes in their promotion, but have it all the time and have it like consistently… they should have a unity in their

branding and products, both should make sense, they should have it all out" (7.4, A.4 l: 886-892). Amaya ads that in terms of makeup there should be equality in foundation tones, and not like L'Oreal that only have a few dark tones (7.4). Hawra agreed with the above statements and added that it is important to her as a Muslim, that Muslims in ads are portrayed in a right way, as she gets annoyed when she feels that she as a Muslim is misrepresented, she mentioned ZARA's latest fall collection (appendix) and stressed that hijabis like herself and Sara don't look or dress like the women ZARA portrays. Hawra also mentioned D&G who used models who are not Muslims and do not look like Muslims, walking on the runway wearing the hijab. Hawra views these attempts as not diverse at all (7.4). She speaks about "doing it in the right way", which shows she does perhaps not feel that the brand personality is relatable when they are not truly able to represent her, so that she can find a congruence between herself and the brand. As Hawra states, she feels that ZARA does not understand how Muslim women truly dress, this again emphasizes the argument that gaining the right cultural knowledge when trying to address cultural phenomenon like d&i is very important.

8.5 Being represented in brands promotion

At this point, the focus group were shown a collage with pictures from some magazine covers, and some images from Rihanna's lingerie line (A.13), the aim was to investigate whether the women were attracted by an ideal or actual self representation. Mahnoor and Hawra found the Victoria's Secret images most attractive, however they also mentioned that the plus size model Ashley Graham does not realistically represent plus size women (7.5), which reinforces Mishal's view from the individual interview (6.4) about plus size models not representing real women either. Amaya and Humera also feels that they are is more attracted by the images of Fenty X Savage lingerie, and she feels that the brand is showing a more realistic and relatable image of the women she sees (7.5). Humera also mentioned that she see herself reflected more in Rihanna's Fenty brands than others, e.g. she mentioned that she bought a Fenty Beauty foundation, even though a friend of hers, who is a makeup artist advised against it (7.5), which shows that the personalities of the Fenty brands are strong in their credibility. These statements also show a divide between the attraction towards an ideal self representation and an actual self representation, we argue that a brand like Savage X Fenty, is made to make people feel good about themselves as they are, whereas VS is selling more of a dream of the ideal self. Mahnoor argues that she believes people are so influenced because it is Rihanna who is behind the Fenty brands, however Humera disagrees with this, saying that she

would not us the brands of celebrities such as Kim Kardashian, and Kylie Jenner. Hawra also ads here that when she sees Rihanna showing a flat-chested girl looking good in her lingerie she would like that as she is flat chested too (7.5). Hawra has at times, taken a very critical stance towards d&i, and also spoken very favourably about brands that use ideal self, which is why it is interesting that she is also attracted by seeing a more actual self representation via Savage X Fenty.

When asked in general how the participants feel when seeing ads that reflect themselves and other women from minorities who are usually not represented in advertising, they all respond positively, stating that it gives them more respect for the brand, and that they notice the brand for doing something different, also adding that this is something they believe to see more of in the future (7.5). This supports Holt's (2004) argument that the brand becomes more powerful to attract consumers when it's meaning resonate with collective identity projects of a given time, due to its contribution to self-expression.

8.6 Representation of self through influencers

The whole group follows beauty and fashion influencers (7.6), and when asked if they follow influencers who look or resemble themselves, Sara answered yes, and that she thinks people follow someone they can identify with, e.g. following a hijabi, which she does as she is also a hijabi, or e.g. in relation to body type that resembles your own. She emphasize that this make people feel represented, while also getting inspiration for fashion and beauty styles (7.6). Hawra's choice of influencer is also based on someone who reminds her of herself, and a likeable personality (7.6). This statement shows, as expressed by Belk (1988), that people are the mirror from which consumers see themselves, and so that other people are also a part of the self and a part of our self expression, e.g. as Sara follows hijabi influencers who she can identify with, and express her sense of self and identity through. As Sara recently started wearing the hijab (7.6), seeing other people with a platform doing it perhaps enhances her sense of self, and makes her feel represented. Sara also mentioned that when brands work with these influencers, or the influencer uses a brand, Sara feels a connection to the brand too. Further as argued in the first analysis (chapter 6), these influencers in themselves also carry some cultural meaning which people can use to enhance expression of self (Holt, 2004), and thereby feel represented and acknowledged in society through brands. Mahnoor states that she cares about the personality and values of her favourite influencers, however she does not agree that she likes following influencers who look like her, this shows that

Mahnoor use influencers in a different way from Sara, however they still hold an importance to her as she chooses to watch their videos and listen to their opinions (7.6).

The reactions to whether they are influenced in their choice of brands by influencers are mixed. Hawra and Mahnoor, say that it depends on the brand they are recommending and whether they have been paid to promote a brand, while Sara said that she is very influenced by influencers, Amaya agrees to this saying that she bought an expensive shampoo only based on the recommendation of an influencer, Huda Beauty (7.6). We see two perspectives here, one is a more critical approach to influencers, and one is very much in favour of the influencer. Mishal and Sara's comments reinforces how the influencer plays a different role in the lives of consumers, as compared to a brand, they feel more like a relationship such as a friendship with them, due to relatable aspects, and also that they actually are consumers, so for Mishal and Sara they might be more influenced by the opinion of a fellow consumer, rather than what a brand communicates about itself. When asked whether Amaya can relate to Huda Beauty she answered yes, based on her and the influencer having the same skin tone, being Muslims and having the same black curly hair type, and not being completely skinny, which made Amaya identify with her (7.6). From a personal perspective, Amaya's statement confirms the importance of feeling represented, as Huda Beauty represents her due to their physical commonalities. When asked if they would feel a brand is diverse if they worked with an influencer they like who is also part of a minority representation in fashion and beauty brands, Sara stated: "Definitely, I have several times clicked to see what brands they are wearing, then I check that brand and see what kind of clothes they sell and check out their Instagram stories, and see that they support these girls and sends them packages, and they invite them to these big social events…" (7.6, A.4 l: 376-383). However, Mahnoor and Hawra disagree, as for Hawra, it matters more knowing whether they have been paid to use a product, and Mahnoor states that just because a brand work with a hijabi blogger who is Muslim like herself, it would not necessarily influence her, as she does not dress modestly (7.6)

8.7 Summary of findings from the focus group

We provided a summary of the findings from the individual interviews, based on our assembled theoretical model in regards to how the findings fits into each building block of the framework, and thus supports our assumption that personal and cultural aspects influence consumers brand attitude. This summary, serves as a continuation of those results, as this part will summarize on the findings from the focus group analysis.

The analysis of the focus group findings, contributed to getting closer to answering our problem statement, as our assumption about the influence of cultural and personal aspects were further supported.

Based on the *personal perspective*, in the 'individual consumer' level of the framework, we were able to confirm some of the findings of the individual interviews summary. We found that an inclusive and diverse brand personality was one that the consumers could see themselves and others reflected in, by the brand understanding both d&i as a cultural phenomenon, and then endowing the brand with that culturally relevant personality. We found that truly understanding the phenomenon was of great importance as when the brand got it wrong, like ZARA, it had a negative impact on consumer's attitude towards the brand personality. Like Hawra mentioned that ZARA does not really know how Muslim women like to dress, so she on a personal level did not feel like ZARA was reflecting her. We could also confirm that brands that were successfully endowed with d&i, created a strong emotional brand attachment with consumers. These were brands such as Fenty Beauty, H&M, and Nike, where consumers used strong emotions such as feeling empowered through the brand, hence we argue that these brands aid consumers expressions of self, and allow them to tell narratives about themselves, such as being empowered, and accepted. We saw a brand-self-congruence with brands where the consumers saw themselves reflected through d&i, however contrary to the individual interviews, some consumers, though a minority were also attracted by an ideal representation of self, although this depended on the brand personality. E.g. VS brand personality was not expected to fully engage with d&i, as it behaved in congruence with the expectations of the brands. Regarding a genuine d&i brand personality we found that consumers looked for congruence across the brand in this matter, and also a consistent commitment to d&i. Lastly, the findings from the focus group confirmed that consumers reflect themselves in influencers, who can either positively or negatively influence the dialogue exchange of the brand's meaning, and whether the brand is considered d&i or not

Based on the *cultural perspective* of the assembled theoretical framework, we argue that the answers from the individual interviews and the focus group, have provided us with a pattern in regards to how cultural aspects related to the desire for self-expression and collective identity projects, has an influence on consumers' perception of d&i and the shaping of their attitudes

towards brands. Our findings has shown that the focus group has positive attitudes towards the brands that carry cultural meaning that resonate with the interviewees' perception of diversity and inclusivity as a cultural phenomenon that involves representing them as a minority. This is shown as the brands that were considered diverse, managed to contribute to the self-expression of the interviewees by representing them through promotion and product offerings, and thereby allowing them to feel as an accepted part of society. Throughout both interviews, the interviewees have expressed attachments to brands they felt had understood their desire for seeing themselves, as this contribute to their identity projects. The brands H&M, Fenty Beauty, Vogue and Nike have been perceived by the focus group as diverse brands as they have managed to represent a lot of different people of different ethnicities, religions, body types etc. through their promotion activities and their product offerings. H&M, Fenty Beauty and Nike all have a thing in common that perhaps make them genuinely diverse, which is that they have provided valuable answers to the challenges our focus group,

and our interviewees from the individual interviews, have experienced as a minority. Going back to something Amaya mentioned in the very beginning of the focus group interview, was that she usually don't think about brand's promotion or advertising, unless she sees something unusual that she can relate to (part 6.1), which is what these three brands perhaps have done. These brands have managed to really gain cultural knowledge and understand the collective identity projects of a time that is very much about representing those that are usually not represented, but also actually understanding their desires in terms of self expression, and how consumption aid them in their identity construction. This shows how d&i is a phenomenon that minority groups really take in as it helps them feel as a part of society, thus, understanding how the surrounding culture affect their collective desire for self-reflection has shown to be important, as our findings have shown that the interviewees are very much likely to choose a brand over another if they feel that the brand provides valuable and symbolic answers to the cultural challenges they have experienced as a minority. Thereby, it can be confirmed that cultural aspects, and gaining cultural knowledge about the societal phenomenon's affect on consumer identity projects, can actually aid brands in being perceived as d&i brands consumers can reflect themselves through.

8.8 Connecting the perspectives

As we assumed in our theory chapter that our theoretical framework needs both a personal perspective and a cultural perspective in order to address our topic, we have found in our analysis

that this is true. We found that there was a natural connection between the personal and cultural perspectives. This is seen as our analyses showed that an attractive brand personality for the interviewees were based on one which understood the cultural phenomenon of inclusivity and diversity, and used this in both their promotion and products, and by endowing the brands with this relevant cultural meaning the interviewees could enhance and express their sense of self, as they saw themselves reflected in the brand, and hence they could use the brand in their identity projects. This symbolic consumption of brands which contained some of the cultural challenges the interviewees felt they were affected by as women, such as lack of representation, meet their need of feeling included in fashion and beauty brands. The identity factor that both perspectives also have in common, for the cultural perspective this is the collective identity projects (Holt, 2004), and for the personal perspective it is the consumer self in light of Belk (1988), our analysis confirmed that these two are also linked, as the interviewees spoke about not only seeing themselves represented in fashion and beauty brands, but spoke about general inclusion and diversity for all women, so their individual identity projects were linked with the collective. Our analysis also confirmed that that influencers have a big role in the identity constructs of the interviewees. They all stated that they follow influencers who look like themselves, and we could analyse from the answers that they used these influencers to not only in their own enhancement of self, but the influencers could imbue some of their personality into the brand, making the girls thinks positively of a brand. But they also saw them as carriers of cultural meaning, in the sense that when a brand works with an influencer who is e.g. a Muslim woman and represents d&i, then the brand was also seen as being d&i.

8.9 Discussion of focus group analysis drawing parallels to in depth interviews

During the focus group analysis we found certain patterns which confirmed some of our findings of the in depth interviews. As we were hoping, the focus group also generated interesting discussions, and provided views of d&i in brands, which were different from the ones we found in the individual interviews. Regarding the pattern we found how when defining d&i at the beginning of the interview, the answers were aligned, the group spoke about a broad inclusion of different people, beyond themselves. However, we also found, like in the individual interviews, that one's own identity projects also matter, how you feel that a brand personality is congruent with your own, which was the case with Hawra, who could identify her body type with the ones of ZARA models. We could also confirm that for a brand to be considered genuinely d&i, there had to be congruence across the brand regarding this matter, all brands which were spoken about positivity in this regard

were perceived as being diverse across their products and promotion activities, only showing d&i in one of these was not seen as credible. We found in our in depth interviews that all three interviewees found an attractive brand personality to be one who had managed to understand the cultural phenomenon of d&i, which meant that they felt included and accepted. The focus group also confirmed these sentiments, as when commenting on the video brand advertisement they found as being d&i, which were Nike, H&M, and Fenty Beauty, the brands resonated with the group because they were able to understand the cultural phenomenon of d&i, from a consumer perspective. This group, who seemed like they might feel that they live at a considerably remove from the norms of society, were afforded the opportunity to see themselves reflected in society, via the brands representing them. As we have mentioned in the individual analysis as well, the brands that successfully implemented d&i in their brand personality were able to create an emotional bond with the consumers. As we saw in the case of Nike, the women felt empowered through the brand, we argue that this sentiment, alongside feeling such as acceptance and inclusion, is of great importance, as it creates a positive attitude towards the brand by meeting some personal needs, and helps the consumers in creating strong associations of the brand, and hence creates a positive attitude. We found the case of NIKE especially interesting, as the group pointed out that Nike had understood the cultural phenomenon so well that in their ad they were able to target stereotypes of Muslim women in the West, but also target the stereotypes of Muslim women wearing the hijab, within Muslim countries. We see the case of Nike, Fenty Beauty, and H&M, as useful case examples, about the importance of truly understanding the cultural phenomenon, from the perspective of the consumers, and thereby gaining the right cultural knowledge to address this, and create a strong brand attachment between consumer and brand. the importance of having the right cultural knowledge, was also seen in the brands which were not considered d&i in the focus group and in the in depth interviews. In the focus group we saw, like in the individual interviews, the use of the terms "realistic", and "unrealistic", here we saw a comparison between the two competing high-street fashion brands MANGO and ZARA, where MANGO was mentioned favourably. We acknowledge that one of the focus group members, Hawra, did not consider ZARA unrealistic in regards to body types, as she herself is skinny, however we argue that this is only one aspect of d&i, because besides seeing her body type represented, she did not consider ZARA d&i, as she mentioned their newest campaign, which she perceived as trying to cater to Muslim women, but did not appeal to, as a hijab wearing Muslim. We do not know whether or not ZARA were indeed trying to cater to Muslim women via their campaign, but Hawra raised a valuable point of criticism,

she took a more critical approach brands doing trying to be d&i towards Muslim women, in that she did not feel that ZARA and other brand such as Dolce and Gabbana had truly understood how Muslim women dress in the West, and questioned whether they actually research Muslim women. This underpins our argument that in order to be truly considered d&i it is crucial to understand how the consumers perceive this phenomenon in relation to themselves. As we found in both our focus group and in depth interviews, were that a brand which was consistently considered as not genuine was L'Oreal, we argue based on our analysis that even though the brand seemed to be trying, the consumers did not find congruence in the product offering and their promotion. We do acknowledge that one focus group member remembered L'Oreal as working with an Indian actress, however the same person later on admitted to not paying attention to L'Oreal. This indifference towards L'Oreal's promotion activities was consistent in both interview types, we argue that this is a significant finding, as it confirms that brands who are not perceived as following with time, become insignificant, especially seen in light of that L'Oreal is actually trying to be perceived as D&i (Roderick, 2017). Even though we do realise that L'Oreal is a big brand, we argue that the brand according to our data is consumed based on product benefits, however we argue that this is not a very safe brand position as, if their competitors become better at understanding these cultural changes, the consumers might choose another brand over L'Oreal, which we confirmed in the individual interviews could be the case, due to feeling of connectedness.

Before doing our empirical research, and especially after the in depth individual interviews, we thought that this expectation of brands to be d&i, would be the same for all brands. However, when showing the focus group images of VS we thought they would be critical towards VS attempt at d&i, as they only had 40% women of colour (appendix VS), and no diversity of age or body type. However, the interviewees responded opposite of our expectations, and we learned something unexpected: the expectations of brand in regards to d&i are different, meaning all brands are not expected to do d&i to the same extent. In regards to VS, the group agreed that it was the core of VS to show this aspirational self, and they would lose their identity if they went all aboard d&i. From this we have learned that the degree of d&i, is dependent on consumers' expectations, these expectations are based on their associations of the brand. So that different brands can get away with different degrees of d&i. Even though we ourselves were critical towards VS attempt at d&i, we realised that like mentioned in the individual interviews (6.4), if VS went all in like Savage x Fenty, it would be too far what the brand personality stands for, and hence not genuine. Even though some

of the interviewees felt that including plus size women would not ruin the brand, they also seemed to not mind the way VS is doing d&i. Something we found common in the brands that were spoken positively about in the focus group was that there was no doubt about what the brand stands for, meaning that the brands were endowed with personalities by the brand that the consumers could easily recognise, and liked. An interesting brand we found was Vogue, we saw in the focus group and the individual interviews that the interviewees did not seem to associate Vogue with d&i, but based on their recent changes and the cover we showed them they felt positively, and did not criticize Vogue the same way as L'Oreal We argue that this is because the interviewees might generally hold more favourable associations of Vogue as being an icon within fashion, and the brand personality holding some authority whereas the attitude towards L'Oreal is more indifferent, a they might just be related to low-price makeup. This partly answers the questions we asked ourselves in the analysis: is enough for any brand attempting to be d&i to gather a lot of different people in an ad and call it d&i? The answer is no, the expectations of how d&i a brand should be depends on the brand personality, and what is expected from the brand personality by the consumers, and to embark on a journey towards d&i it is essential to first understand what the phenomenon means to consumers. We would like to mention a point raised in the focus group, which was different from the individual interviews, out of the total 9 people interviewed in both interviews, 2 focus group members did not find the cover as genuinely diverse, as they argued the brand was doing it because they had to, but we argue that it is okay to recognise that brands are doing to follow with the changing times, as long as it is done in a genuine way, by truly understanding the cultural changes that matter t the consumers. We argue that VOGUE is a great example of how it is possible to become d&i, even though the brand was not born this way. We also asked ourselves why more brands are not embracing d&i? Based on our analysis we argue that it is something which, if it is not done right could also harm the brand. This could be a reason why some brands might be hesitant to be a part of using this phenomenon, as our individual interviews also showed, the phenomenon is something which touches people deeply on an emotional level, and not doing it the right way, could backfire and harm the brand's credibility. Rihanna's two brand have also been given a lot of attention in this thesis, we argue that her brands could almost serve as a benchmark or inspiration for other brand who wish to be d&i, as we argue that the brand personality is so strongly associated with being d&i. Fenty Beauty, was one of the brands that peaked out interest about this topic, and based on the analysis we argue that d&i is something that brand can use to be perceived positively by consumers, and create a strong brand position in a brand landscape

with hundreds of brand to choose from. Another questions we asked ourselves was whether a brand appealing to the ideal or actual self would create the strongest emotional attachment, the individual interviews showed a clear incline towards the actual self, and the focus group provided some nuances in this, as two members seemed more attracted by an ideal self, the majority were still more appealed by an actual self. Even Hawra, who took a more critical stand in the way d&i was done by brands, liked that Savage x Fenty used a model who was flat chested like herself. We also argue that an ideal self can also be efficient, Fenty Beauty in one the ads (Fenty Beauty, 2017) only showed diversity in terms of skin tones and features, however she had a hijab wearing model, we argue that even in the ideal self context, there has to be someone consumers can relate to, based on either skin colour inclusiveness, religion, or body types, and that an ideal self representation should not be so far away from the actual self that the consumer does not find any brand-self congruence.

Lastly we ask ourselves the question, should fashion and beauty brands be d&i? We argue that in order to stay relevant, this is something brands should strongly consider; a sour research shows that consumers increasingly expect brands to represent them, and keep up with societal changes. Being d&i does not only mean completely changing the brand personality, but it is gradual steps in the direction, while staying true to the core of your brand personality, as we found that not all brands were held to the same standard of d&i. Based on our findings we argue that consumer hold a positive attitude towards brands that are d&i as they meet consumers' need of feeling represented, empowered, accepted, included, and comfortable. As we have demonstrated through our analysis being able to tap into these feelings and emotions through addressing this cultural phenomenon creates an emotional attachment to brands - a connection. This connection makes the brand attractive as consumers can use it to express themselves.

CHAPTER 9. MANAGERIAL GUIDELINES

Having provided the analysis of the three individual interviews, and focus group, summarized on and discussed these, this chapter will now provide some guidelines for brands wishing to address d&i, based on the consumer insights we have achieved. We proposed our problem statement, with

the aim of investigating how consumers' perception of brands being d&i has an impact on their attitude towards fashion and beauty brands. By investigating this, we have been able to create new knowledge on how d&i as a cultural phenomenon holds great significance to consumers and has an impact on their attitude towards brands. Based on this new knowledge, we will now gather the main insights from our findings that contribute to proposing a set of guidelines that are applicable for brands wanting to address d&i in a way that resonate with consumers.

Knowledge about d&i, based on consumers

The first point to consider when wishing to address d&i is understanding the societal and cultural phenomenon of d&i, from the perspective of what this means to your consumers, as this will allow the brand to tap into some cultural meanings, which resonate with consumers.

Gaining an understanding of the meaning ascribed to d&i by consumers, will enable you to create a brand personality which by being in sync with society, will be able to meet consumers need for self expression, and make them feel accepted and included. Here, the brand should also consider to include more than one aspect of d&i, as our research shows that consumers care about d&i beyond what only touches them. So e.g. consider showing diversity, not only in skin tones, but also including religious minorities. Once again, we stress that this knowledge about d&i, should be found by engaging in meaningful dialogue with the consumers, as misunderstanding what d&i means could harm the brand, and result in negative associations.

Degree of d&i

As our research has found not all brands are expected to be d&i to the same degree. The degree of d&i, is dependent on consumers' expectations, these expectations are based on their associations of the brand, and what the brands stands for in the consumers perceptions. So that different brands can get away with different degrees of d&i. Hence, we argue that the brand should research which associations are related to the brand, before deciding the degree of d&i.

Brand and promotion congruence and alignment

As found in our research consumers differentiate between genuine and not genuine attempt at d&i. What characterises genuine d&i, is that it is reflected in both the promotion activities of the brand, alongside the product offering. It is not enough to only show d&i in one of these aspects, such as promoting your brand as d&i in skin tone inclusiveness, but the product only reflect a few dark

colors. All brands mentioned as d&i had this congruence reflected across all aspects of the brand. So we recommend that the brand, if wanted to appear d&i, should ensure alignment across products and promotion, which also includes social media.

One way a brand can be perceived as d&i, is by working with influencers, who belong to groups that are usually not represented, and by using these influencers, the brand can benefit by the credibility consumers afford them, and so by acknowledging these influencers and working with them, the brand can show a commitment to d&i.

Consistency

An essential aspect about being considered genuinely d&i, was consistency. This consistency was in how the brand consistently conveyed the message of d&i, both in promotion and products, as our research shows that brands, which were also considered as doing it once in a while were not genuine, and were perceived as only doing it based on being forced by society to follow these cultural changes

Authentic branding

The brand should also consider if it wants to use authentic or aspirational branding. According to our research we found that consumers reacted positively to authentic branding, in terms of brands using realistic models, which they could relate to. When brands used this approach the consumers experienced deep emotions, such as feeling accepted, and supported by the brand, which in turn made them want to support the brand too. However, we also found that aspirational branding appealing to the ideal self, could also be an option, although less impactful, which we again refer back to degree of d&i, as long as this aspirational representation of the self, still includes d&i, e.g. by using a hijab wearing model, or a plus-size model, who might not be a truthful representation of the self of consumers, but still not so far from them, that the impact is lost.

As a concluding remark to this part of the paper, we argue based on our findings that addressing d&i in a genuine way can create a strong brand-consumer relationship and enhance the brands perception, and hence create a positive consumer attitude toward the brand. We argue that by contributing to consumer's self-expression and showing them that they are worth of representation, the brand can create a feeling of societal acceptance, and engage in a meaningful dialogue based exchange with the consumer about something, which is very close and meaningful to them.

CHAPTER 10. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to investigate how d&i has an impact on consumers' attitude towards brands, with the aim of creating new knowledge on the area of brands addressing d&i in a way that resonates with consumers. This research was designed to answer the following problem statement: ***How do consumers perceptions of fashion and beauty brands as being diverse and inclusive influence their attitude towards brands?***

The analysis and discussion of the empirical findings from the individual interviews and the focus group, helped answer the problem statement. We can conclude that brands, which the consumers perceived as genuinely addressing d&i, resulted in a positive brand attitude. We got to this conclusion by applying a *personal-* and *cultural perspective* based on the assembled theoretical framework, to our empirical data.

Based on the *personal perspective,* we can conclude that the theoretical components proposed in the 'individual level' of the assembled framework, was supported by our findings. In relation to 'brand personality', we conclude that the interviewees felt an emotional bond with brand personalities they saw as being d&i, as they spoke of these brands in regards to feeling a 'connection' and feeling 'accepted' by the brand, which is what contributed to the interviewees' expression of identity. We also found that these d&i brand personalities aided the interviewees' realisation of their actual self, which they responded more positively to in contrast to brands that appeal to their ideal self, hence we saw an appeal of authentic branding. Lastly, we saw a positive brand-self-congruence when a brand appealed to their actual self. In regards to influencers, we conclude that consumers use influencers in their self construct, as most of the interviewees saw themselves reflected in influencers, who were a way for the consumers to feel represented in brands, so when a brand worked with influencers that they identified with they felt a connection with the brand.

Based on the *cultural perspective*, we can conclude that the theoretical components proposed in the two first building blocks of the framework, was supported by our findings.

Overall, we found that the interviewees are affected by d&i as a cultural phenomenon, and that brands that wish to address d&i should utilize the cultural phenomenon by endowing the brand with relevant meaning that resonate with consumers. Based on 'self-expression' we can conclude that the interviewees valued brands that contributed to their self-expression and perceived these as d&i brands. We conclude that the interviewee's attitude towards brands have been positive for brands that exchange symbolic answers to some of the cultural challenges they have experienced, therefore, we argue that brands that wish to address d&i should contribute to consumers self-expression. In regards to collective identity projects, we conclude that the interviewees attitudes towards brands was influenced by wanting to see not only themselves reflected, but also seeing that brands carry cultural meaning that resonate with collective identity projects. Although, we conclude that all these cultural aspects requires cultural knowledge, as the interviewees' viewed brands as d&i when they could tell that d&i was addressed in a genuine way, hence we conclude that it is crucial to understand how d&i encompass different people that have been constrained in relation to their construction of identity.

As we assumed in our theory chapter that our theoretical framework needs both a personal perspective and a cultural perspective in order to address our topic, we can now conclude that is true, as we found a natural connection between the personal and cultural perspectives. We conclude on this based on the connection the two perspectives have in regards to how attractive brand personalities and construction of self, was based on how the brand was endowed with relevant cultural meaning that resonate with consumers.

Based on our analytical findings, and discussion we were able to find certain patterns within brands, which were genuinely perceived as d&i, and hence subject to a positive consumer attitude. From these patterns we were able to create managerial guidelines for brands wishing to address d&i. We conclude that brands should consider the following aspects in d&i:
 • Gaining the right knowledge about the phenomenon, based on what it means to consumers.
 • Deciding the degree of d&i based on consumer's expectations.
 • Aligning brand product and promotions in showing d&i in both aspects
 • Consistency is conveying d&i
 • Using authentic branding as a way to connect with consumers on an emotional level

We conclude that addressing d&i in a genuine way can create a strong brand-consumer relationship and so create a positive consumer attitude toward the brand. We argue that by contributing to consumer's self-expression and showing them that they are worth of representation, the brand can create a feeling of acceptance in consumers, which we argue create strong brand preference.

APPENDIX

Appendix A.1: Yusra Iqbal – Interview transcribe

RE: Hello! Thank you for participating in this interview, your answers will be very important for our thesis, we therefore highly appreciate your help. The purpose of this interview is to get your personal insights on a specific theme regarding your attitude towards fashion and beauty brands. Unfortunately, we cannot reveal just yet what the theme is, as that could affect your answers. What we can tell is that, the industry is fashion and beauty and the questions will be based on brands within that industry and their promotion/advertising activities. In this interview we want you to talk as much as possible, and with a lot of details and examples. As you have been told earlier, this interview will be recorded in order for us to be able to go back and analyze your answers. Your identity will be treated with confidentiality.

RE: Can you tell me a bit about yourself?

YU: Yes my name is Sara Nielsen and I am 26 years old, I am a pharmacist and I am half Moroccan and half Danish, and I am Muslim.

RE: And I can see that you also wear the hijab?

YU: Yes I wear the headscarf hijab

RE: Before we start in the introduction I said something about promotion and advertising activities, so I will just like to specify to you what we mean when we say that. **Promotion activities:** Here we think about how brands communicate very broadly, so in TV ads, Social media posts and activities, magazines and other kinds of media. It is wide and covers a lot. Does that make sense?

YU: yes it makes sense.

RE: Can you please mention two of your favorite beauty brands and two of your favorite fashion brands?

YU: Yes, two of my favourite beauty brands would be… I have quite problematic skin so Este Lauder because they have a good foundation that covers everything and then I also like Maybelline because they are good as well and very affordable and I just use a lot of their products. Fashion wise I think it is hard to narrow it down to two, but I like H&M I love Mango as well and ZARA and Monki and then I also shop a lot online on ASOS.

RE: could you explain these brands are your favourites, you mentioned Este Lauders high coverage foundation because of your skin issues, how about the other brands?

YU: In terms of fashion brands I like them because I have a lot of options when it comes to my style, I am Muslim and therefore I have a certain way of dressing, I dress very modestly I would say, and H&M have a very broad range of clothes, Mango as well has recently made very good clothes that are covering.

RE: Do you feel that these brands promotion/advertising activities influence you? TV ads, social media posts and ads, mentions in the media etc.?

YU: Well I follow brands on Instagram, which I use a lot, so when I scroll through my Instagram I see a lot of these posts and I see a lot of influencers wearing this so I get inspired and go buy it. So it is like a cycle, it goes through my social media and then I see this clothes then I go buy them.

RE: You said some of these brands, especially the fashion brands they have bloggers who wear them and you get inspired, are these bloggers like yourself Muslim and wear the hijab or?

YU: Yes I follow a lot of these Muslim bloggers or influencers on Instagram; I did that when I started wearing the hijab to get inspiration for what clothes to wear, they are a huge help, because you see the people wearing the clothes and you get inspiration to how to style and stuff and where to get the clothes from. That is definitely the way I do it.

RE: So you are speaking about some of the functionalities of these brands and you spoke a bit about ads and how influencers play a role, are there other factors that make them your favourites? Such as the brand name, what you associate with the name or what it stands for, the history etc.?

YU: I think H&M are really good at being inclusive; they have always been very inclusive with all kinds and types of woman in terms of sizes, also recently they began using hijabi models as well, and that is very important to me because I like to feel included and as a minority I like to see myself in advertising I think that gives you a connection to the brand and make you feel more accepted and make you kind of want to support the brand as well. I see that in H&M and Mango, I don't quite see it in ZARA, I don't like the way the advertise, they always use the same kind of girls, very skinny, very light, sometimes dark skinned model, but I don't think they are very diverse like other brands. Monki is very diverse as well, they don't retouch their pictures as well, which I really like, and they just show the women as they are, so I like them as well very much.

RE: Do you feel like you get influenced by the promotion and advertising of the brands you mentioned?

YU: Yes, I do, when they advertise on Instagram and make commercials, you see a commercial you are included you automatically want to go and support them, I feel that it is kind of a trend right now that this diversity and inclusiveness of all kind of sizes and ages and ethnicities are very in right now, I think that is very nice to see and you kind of miss this, so I am very happy to see this, and seeing brands get a lot of acknowledgement when doing it.

RE: you used the words inclusive and diverse, but for example ZARA, do their promotion activities influence you to buy the products?

YU: No, I shop there solely because the clothes are functional for me, I really don't like their branding, but there is a lot of their styles that suits me I buy from them anyway, but I would rather buy from H&M or other brands that are more inclusive than they are.

RE: How about Maybelline and Este Lauder you just mentioned, do you get influenced by their advertising activities?

YU: No I don't think they are inclusive like other brands can be, I just think it is kind of a functionality again that you used to buy one thing and you kind of get used to it. I would rather support Fenty Beauty for example they are so inclusive and have been very good at starting their brand from the bottom with having all from the start all kind of women and skin tones and religions included in their branding. So I would rather support Fenty than Este Lauder, and I think I actually will but I just haven't gotten around it yet.

RE: So for you to get influenced and actually want to buy the products is that something…?

YU: I have to see myself in the product, I have to see myself in the advertisement to feel a connection, if I don't feel a connection I wont feel drawn to it. So for me personally to buy a product I like to see myself in it and I like to see all the women be represented as well and not only the white beautiful blond women as we have seen for ages.

RE: what are some of the factors that are in play when you choose a beauty brand and a fashion brand?

YU: To me it is important that my style that I can find clothes that suit my modest dressing and makeup that covers my skin. These are the functionalities that I look for but I would also look to for brands that have these attributes that I mentioned, so it would me more likely to buy a brand if they are diverse and inclusive than a brand that isn't. I would rather support the diverse brand.

RE: Where do you get your fashion inspiration from and what inspires your choice of fashion and beauty brands?

YU: I always get my fashion inspiration from instagram and on Instagram I get it from the influencers, they show what they wear. That is where I find my ideas to what and how to wear.

RE: Do they also influence your choice of brand?

SN: Yes, if I see a brand pop up several times I will definitely go into the brands website and look there.

RE: What type of influencers do you then follow?

YU: I follow a wide broad of people, I follow a lot of hijabis, I also follow a lot of south Asian bloggers, I think they are very underrepresented in beauty and fashion and I love their style, but I also follow normal people, I kind of follow everything, I like to see a bit of everything but I mostly follow "my own kind". Being a mixed person I like to have the minority.

RE: Are there any fashion and beauty brands that you want to try and why do you want to try them?

YU: Definitely Fenty Beauty, I have been wanting to try it sins they came out and that is mostly because they came out with a huge range of shades of foundations and I love the way they market their products and I love the way they are so inclusive and diverse, and just a very great way for a brand to be in todays society where we have this globalized society and I think that is a great cause to support and a great brand to support.

RE: Where have you seen the diverse appeal of Fenty beauty? In their shop or through their communication or?

YU: Definitely in how they communicate both on their commercials they have this American model that is a hijabi named Halima, and also I follow their instagram page where they feature people wearing the makeup and I often see every kind of women, hijabis, Asian, black, white and also all kind of ages and body types. I love to see everyone getting represented and not only one kind of person. I think Fenty is for everyone, everyone can find themselves in Fenty, and that is a very great quality.

RE: Have you also seen Fenty beauty spoken about through influencers?

YU: yes they have, in the beginning it was very huge and all spoke about the products, great reviews and great reputation that makes you want to buy something.

RE: If you could think back, what are the last fashion and beauty brands that you remember talking to a friend about and why? Maybe an ad has left an impression, or you have heard someone else talk about the brand?

YU: Fashion wise I remember talking to a friend about a hijabi blogger walking on a catwalk for a Swedish brand where after the fashion show the designer herself asked the hijabi why she was wearing the scarf, so it was clear that even though the brand on the outside wanted to show that we are inclusive, the owner herself

did not think so and were not sharing these kind of views, they were only doing this so they could kind of follow this diverse trend there is right now. And the influencer she shared this experience on her Instagram and very quickly the brand got a big backlash, that shows how much influence the influencers have, and that very quickly everyone can know about a brand and make them come in a good or bad light.

RE: What should a brand contain to appeal to you, both in terms of products and advertising activities?

YU: Good quality, price and having a very open and diverse marketing and branding strategy.

RE: Have you personally faced any issues with fashion and beauty brands, when choosing/using a brand, or just simply an issue with some of their communication activities? And do you think that there are any issues in general in the fashion and beauty industry that need to be addressed?

YU: I have quite fair skin so in terms of beauty I haven't really had, in terms of finding colour wise, nowadays there are a lot of covering products so I find that easy, fashion wise I am a normal size so I can find clothes well, and now it is easy to dress modest as well. But I do think that a lot of friends have a long way to go.

RE: Do you see a movement in the fashion and beauty industry?

YU: The movement is this new trend or movement about being more diverse and including more people, not showing unrealistic type of people, only one type of people in your branding like mostly a few years ago they were only using one type of woman and it didn't matter what kind of products it were, it would always be a white skinned, long hair, skinny woman. Mostly you could never really feel a connection to the brand whereas now you see more different kinds of women and not just one, and I think this make all kind of women feel more accepted. You like to feel more accepted.

RE: During the last few years, society and especially the fashion and beauty industry have gone through some changes in regards to representation of women. In what way if any have you seen that portrayed when it comes to fashion and beauty brands?

YU: There has definitely been a big change in society, and a big change in women, women are now working women, and their own bosses and we see a lot of brands now that are founded by women like Huda beauty and Fenty Beauty, so that in itself is a change. The world has become more globalized and I think there are so many different kinds of people everywhere, so the brands have to cater to everyone, and the influencers as I talked about before about the girl who was criticized by the brand, I think that also these influencers have a big voice and a lot to say and also consumers have a big voice now because everything is very easy with social media and we can voice our opinion very fast and easy. In general I think that all brands should cater to all women of different characteristics and work on being more diverse and inclusive. Some brands are trying to just follow this movement, which is kind of sad because it is not truthfully maybe it is only because of the money and not to lose customers, but I think that it is very good that consumers have more to say now than before where you couldn't voice your opinion, it was more the brands that made all the decisions.

RE: You said that you feel some brands are trying to do it but not in a genuine way, and that for example Fenty Beauty is genuine, can you think of any brands that are maybe not doing it in a genuine way? That you see that have tried, you mentioned the runway show of the Swedish designer…

YU: I think that a lot of big brands like L'Oreal do it sometimes but they are still the same as they always have, still the white pretty girl with blue eyes that are making their commercials so I think they are pretty much lacking in the department, and Rimmel London I don't see any kind of diversity it is also always the same kind of girl, so I think these brands have a hard time, but then also high end brands like Tom Ford. Este Lauder just tried to launch a lot of new shades on their foundation so I think that is a try, but if it is genuine or not I can't really say.

RE: Do you feel that brands that you mentioned as your favourite reflect the tendency you mentioned with the new women and being more inclusive?

YU: I think they might be yes, because I think it is very important that women are strong and that we are independent, so I think when we see a brand where a woman has started it herself you want to support and empower that, like Fenty Beauty. Also, I think Este Lauder is not really diverse, I am just used to buying their products and it becomes a habit, the same with Maybelline and it is very cheap compared to Fenty Beauty, it is hard to tend to that. I wish brands like Fenty would be cheaper so I can support that. H&M I think tend to be diverse, they show all kind of women and ethnicity and ages, and the price is good it is a very great place where you can find everything. ZARA no, I don't think so I only like there clothes, Mango yes, also think it is a good price and they do collections, they did a Ramadan collection, the summer collection this years was also very inclusive with very modest clothes as well, and ASOS is also very inclusive right now, there website is filled with these very colour and brown skinned people, and they also show women with stretchmark's and hair on their body, so they have gone to a whole another level of not only being diverse but also boycotting the whole Photoshop culture, and showing what a real person look like, and that is also a very good way of being inclusive, because a lot of young girls see websites and think this is how a girl should look, and they don't look like that, but when they see a website with girls that have stretch marks and hair on their body they become more content with who they are and how they look, that is also a great step in this whole branding world.

RE: Now we are going to talk a bit more about you. Have you seen yourself reflected in fashion and beauty brand advertisements?

YU: Yes I have, but recently not always, but I have seen myself in Nike, in H&M where more I have seen myself on Vogue through the models actually and in commercials and I have seen myself… when I see myself I mean as a girl wearing a scarf. I have seen myself on H&M's commercials where they have used a woman with a hijab, and through Nike's sportswear for hijabis, and also Dolce and Gabana, they are also good at having this inclusive scarf and having Muslim women with a scarf on in their collections and I think that is amazing because you never ever have seen that before, and that make me happy that we are not "hidden" anymore but we are actually getting showed, it means a lot to me.

RE: Do you feel that you are represented enough in the fashion and beauty industry?

YU: I would just say that I am just happy about that we are going this direction and I hope that we will lead more and I also hope that other kind of cultures and people will get represented as well so for me I am just very happy that this has started and I think that it will continue to grow because that is how society is now and all of us are consumers and we should all be represented, of course it is hard to represent everyone because there are a lot of different people but I think this is a very good start and we are going the right way now.

RE: Does it impact your choice of a fashion and beauty brand if you see yourself more represented by some brands than others?

YU: of course it does, (NO SOUND! 8:20) it makes me feel like I want to support them. So yes it has a big influence on me when they do that.

RE: Can you think of a brand that is good at representing women like you and why?

YU: Of course there is the Turkish brand Modanisa, which is a brand that is solely for hijabis.

RE: do you think that there is a lack of representation of women that look like you in ads?

YU: yes but I think that brands might still be scared of jumping into it because of what is happening in the world, but I believe that we are going the right way but I definitely think that there is a underrepresentation, the majority is still the tall and very skinny white girl.

RE: Can you think of any specific brand that isn't representing women like you but you think should?

YU: I think there are a lot of brands, I like the brand Malene Bieber and they have beautiful clothes but I have never seen them representing anyone, I would love for them to do that. L'Oreal, because it is such a big brand and it has cheap products and everyone has access to it in the world everyday, so they should be representing more.

RE: Do you think it is enough to have women who has the same ethnicity as you and wear the hijab like you, but are still tall and skinny and has fair skin and face, so is it enough to just have someone who symbolically look like you but still look like a top model?

YU: No, I don't think so, I like the more realistic approach to advertisement I think all of us are tired of that whole perfect human, so I like when I see more people with flaws, like with wrinkles maybe pimples and grey hairs, and again other ethnicities, it doesn't have to be me, for example the south Asian ones I would say are really underrepresented, so no I think it is better when they show real humans, also in the term of sizes, most of us girls are not perfect, we have a little bit on the side and I think that should be shown as well. I think some brands do this but it could still be better.

RE: I would like to share with you what the theme with the thesis is and it is diversity and inclusivity, but you already talked about that. We did not want to mention it in the beginning to not influence your answers; we will now ask questions that will examine your attitude towards the tendency you spoke about.

RE: What does diversity and inclusivity mean to you in relation to fashion and beauty?

YU: It means that everyone has a right to be shown and that we are all equal, that there is now write and that there is not a perfect person and that we are all different and from different places in the world and we all have a place in advertisement because we are all consumers. When we consume and buy we should have the right to see ourselves in branding. Everyone needs to be represented because we are all buying, it is not just one type of person that buys, it is everyone.

RE: Do you think that brands have a responsibility to be inclusive and diverse towards all type of women?

YU: Yes, they do, some of the biggest brands are in Scandinavia and America and Morocco and the Middle East and Asia, when you are everywhere in the world you can't just have one type of person or ethnicity and body type always on your ads, it doesn't make sense. Because we are more than one person in the world and therefor you should be more inclusive. And I think that brands also kind of have a social responsibility, with that I mean that you know we all buy and we all have a right to feel accepted and as we all buys there products they have a responsibility for everyone to feel acceptance and see themselves in the brand.

RE: can you mention the brands that come to mind when we say diversity and inclusivity within fashion and beauty?

YU: Fenty Beauty because of their wide range of shades and colours, Nike, and H&M. I thin Fenty in terms of beauty and H&M in term of clothes are the "ambassadors" within this tendency.

RE: What stood out to you in these brands in terms of their promotion activities?

YU: The commercials where they have all kinds of women with different skin color, ethnicity and body size and they also show women with hijab, they are thereby not inclusive in only one aspect but inclusive in

terms of color, ethnicity and religion. So everyone can feel included. I also think that H&M is good at collaborating with influencers on Instagram where they collaborate and show their support to these different kinds of people and ethnicities. And also Fenty Beauty if you go on their Instagram and scroll down, you see them featuring all kind of women with hijab, very dark skin color, light skin color and Asia. So it doesn't matter who you are when you go on that website because you will find yourself. The same with H&M as well.

RE: Can you think of any brands that have maybe tried to be inclusive and diverse but in your opinion haven't succeeded in being so?

YU: I think L'Oreal maybe, they did have one hijabi one time, I think they had one for a shampoo commercial, and that was kind of it, I don't think they have done anything other than that. They still tend to cater to the very light and blond woman, so I think that they kind of try but I don't think it look genuine to me anyway, and when I see that it doesn't look genuine and they just once in a while try to do a small thing, I don't really find that appealing. I think in every kind of product and range you put out you should have a very diverse representation of models and people.

RE: So what could L'Oreal have done differently?

YU: Have more of it, and not just hijabis, like they could have more of other kind of types of women from all over the world and they should do it with more than one commercial. Like the shampoo would not have as much hype around it as the launch of a new mascara or foundation. I think that also again they choose products that is not going to be seen as much maybe, and that make me sad, they should do it with every product like Fenty does.

RE: What would you characterize as a marketing stunt and a genuine attempt to be more diverse and inclusive? Would you say that L'Oreal is a marketing stunt?

YU: I definitely think L'Oreal is a marketing stunt because they are not doing it genuinely in every kind of post or product, when they promote this they only do it once in a while without doing much about it like other brands do, like Fenty which was build and started this whole thing with that this is who we are (diverse) and we are going to do it always with everything. Whereas, L'Oreal can just suddenly put a different person in an ad and talk about oh we do it as well, but they really don't.

RE: At this point we will like to show you these two collages we have compiled, they have different photos and different brands and not all photos have the brand name on them. If you will just have a look at them at tell me what pops out to you?

YU: This is from the Mango Ramadan collection I talked about, and then we have the Dolce and Gabanna abaya collection, and that is the H&M commercial with the hijabi who is Moroccan, and we have the Nike commercial with the hijab, and of course the Fenty beauty foundation range, which make me very happy because there really is everything from the very light one to the very dark one. And also their collage of faces you have every kind of woman, the Asian one the Latina one, the very dark one, you just see every kind and I like that.

RE: You did not comment on these two photos in the middle, do you know that Rihanna has done a lingerie collection?

YU: yes

RE: Have you seen some of their activities around that?

YU: I have only been on that site once I think, but I think its like she takes diversity and inclusivity to the next level, I think she has really founded Fenty around this, and she does it with everything and amazingly good, there is no like shortcuts or anything, she uses every kind of women, from the very big sizes to the very elderly, and I think she deserves credit for that because no one else does that.

RE: Can you imagine seeing an old lady like the one on the photo who is maybe 70-80 years old walking down a runway in lingerie?

YU: you have not seen that before, but why not? She has a right as well to feel good and wear what she wants. You should never limit anyone and say no the can't or shouldn't, if she wants to wear that she totally should. And maybe an oversized woman, she also has the right to wear lingerie as well it is not just for thin women. I think this is a very good representation of everyone.

RE: Do you think that Rihanna as the women behind the brand Fenty Beauty is actually genuine in her attempt to be inclusive and diverse?

YU: Yes, most definitely, because it is all that her brand is about, that is how she build it up and that is how it continues to grow, and there is no doubt that she wants to tell the world that this is how people are and look and people are different. And she shows that in every kind of promotion activity, and I think that is very genuine.

RE: do you think that Fenty using an old lady in lingerie is as credible as if Victoria's Secret did the same thing? How would you feel?

YU: Fenty beauty is much more credible if they did it, because that is what their whole brand is about, it is about including everyone and Victoria's Secret is very idealistic American thin, tall skinny and light women and they have always been like that and that is how they build their brand, so it will not make any sense in their brand because till this day they are still like that so it would not be genuine at all. And I think they themselves know that they can't do that because it will ruin their credibility whereas this is what Fenty and Rihanna is and that is credible and genuine.

RE: What does Rihanna stand for do you think? You said this is how Rihanna is?

YU: I think inclusivity, I think it is part of her personality somehow that she makes every kind of women feel like "I can do this" if you are big or old or whatever skin you have and type of woman you are, you can wear what you want and make yourself look and feel good.

RE: And how about the next collage, anything that stand out?

YU: That is the model Winnie Harlow, she has a skin condition where you skin turns from dark to white, and she is also very much famous right now, also because she is very different and I don't think I have ever seen a model or any kind of this type of skin condition be represented anywhere and now we have this woman who is stunning being on the cover of Elle Magazine, and they should have credit for putting her there. Then we have Dove of course they have done this for years I remember them doing commercials with a lot of women in lingerie with normal bodies, for years, so I think they are the first ones who started the whole thing and they definitely need credit for that. Then we have Sports Illustrated with a plus size model on the cover and I don't know how to feel about that because Sports illustrated is very much about the skinny ones.

RE: Do you think she is representing plus size women?

YU: No not really she is not like the one who is on the Fenty beauty lingerie ad, she is more a plus size woman, this woman I would just call a normal size woman, so no I don't think she is a representative of the plus size but in their world this is very plus size compared to what they usually have on their cover.

YU: And then there is the Vogue cover which I saw recently and it made me very happy because there is literally everything in their, a Muslim, an Asian woman, and African, a brown skin woman and so on, there is also an Indian which, make me happy because they are not very represented, and a curvy one and some skinny ones. I think they did it very well.

RE: Do you usually see Vogue as being inclusive and diverse?

YU: No not at all, this is something new and I think this is new movement I think everyone need to kind of adapt and I think everyone is trying to do it in their own way and Vogue as well is trying to adjust to this movement and I think they it in a very good way and I hope they continue to do so and not just once and then go back to their old ways.

RE: How about the Teen Vogue cover?

YU: Again that is a hijabi model, Halima, she has also been on runways and on Fenty Beauty, and on the cover it says I am America, and that is kind of a political statement as Trump is now in the white house and with his whole "new America" slogan thing, I think this is a way of making a political statement showing that America is not only for the whites and privileged but also for the blacks and minorities. And also that is on Teen Vogue so that is young people seeing this message and that is great.

RE: Is this something you see typically?

YU: No not at all, I think most magazines tend to have a very neutral approach to things so I think this is very great that they are getting involved with the political scene in a positive way.

RE: Great that was it for this interview, thank you very much.

YU: Thank you too.

Appendix A.2: Mishal Qayyum – Interview transcribe

RE: Hello! Thank you for participating in this interview, your answers will be very important for our thesis, we therefore highly appreciate your help. The purpose of this interview is to get your personal insights on a specific theme regarding your attitude towards fashion and beauty brands. Unfortunately, we cannot reveal just yet what the theme is, as that will affect your answers. What we can tell is that, the industry is fashion and beauty and the questions will be based on brands within that industry and their promotion/advertising activities. In this interview we want you to talk as much as possible, and with a lot of details and examples. As you have been told earlier, this interview will be recorded in order for us to be able to go back and analyze your answers. Your identity will be treated with confidentiality.

RE: Before I start, just promotional and advertising activities. Promotion is anything that is like any communication that a brand does, so if you have seen any news article about the brand or any social media activities, or any statements from the brand, and also traditional advertising. So it could be an ad on the TV or in a magazine or social media ad or whatever.

RE: To start out with, could you mention 2-3 of your favorite fashion and beauty brands?

MQ: Okay, so I think that regarding clothes I think, I like to dress in what Stine Goya makes, I like their colors, and ya just overall like the dresses it seems like they would be flattering for every body type. I also

like the Danish designer Malene Birger a lot, I think that her clothing is really elegant and in makeup, I think I would say like different brands, but maybe Anastasia Beverly hills, then there are other brands too, like Marc Jacobs and M.A.C and Huda Beauty.

RE: Okay, and why are these brands your favorites? What are some of their criteria you really like and there characteristics?

MQ: Okay so, for Huda Beauty it's the pigmentation in the lipsticks. Because I am dark skinned, so but you can still see the color on my lips, whereas sometimes if I buy lipsticks from other brands, its not looking that flattering on me because my lips are darker so, the color doesn't really pop. For Anastasia Beverly hills, it is difficult for me to find a foundation that suits me, but they have like every skin color, and it was really easy finding the color, I just went with my skin.

RE: What about in you're clothing and fashion? What are some of the criteria you base your choices on?

MQ: For fashion, I try not to show too much skin, and those brands I mentioned they make long dresses and dresses with like a high neckline. Those are the criteria; sometimes those dresses are also loose fit so it is not showing your curves too much.

RE: Can I ask why it is you like the clothes being a bit more covering and loose?

MQ: First of all, its because I gave birth 10 months ago, so I am not comfortable with my body yet, and I am Muslim so I don't like to show too much.

RE: When you buy some of your favorite products and brands you like, how does that make you feel?

MQ: It makes me feel happy, because at the time it is hard for me to find anything that fits me, because like for example I cant shop at ZARA at all, because I don't even fit in their XL and I am not that big, and it just make me realize how difficult it has to be for the bigger girls to find clothes, because XL seems like such a big size, but it is actually not. Because I haven't gained that much weights but it is just difficult for me to find clothes.

RE: When you buy some of these brands, and some of the brands you mentioned are expensive brands, how do you feel the relation to yourself, do the brands say something about you?

MQ: They do, they show how far I have come in my life, I am settled now with a good job so I want a dress according to that.

RE: Do you feel a relationship with some of these brands?

MQ: No, not a part of me, I actually just buy stuff I like to be honest, I don't just target brands.

RE: So you would say that you feel the brands can define yourself, like maybe a status symbol?

MQ: Ya but also like some modesty, and like my values.

RE: When you choose these brands, do you ever take in consideration some of their promotion and advertising activities that stood out to you?

MQ: No, I actually don't, but when they advertise on Facebook or Instagram I look at it but I don't really think about it.

MQ: But although, even though I have gained weight I doesn't bother me to see an ad of a skinny model in the dress I like. In our society we have got used to seeing the models looking a certain way so don't even like think about it twice.

RE: Okay, now you say you don't really think about ads, but if you were to consider ads, how would you characterize a good ad within fashion and beauty that would appeal to you? Or can you think of any ads or promotional activities that appealed to your?

MQ: Well, the first thing that comes to my mind is the Dove ad, because they are using women with different body types. That caught my attention, that's one ad I remember because I see so many ads during the day but that's just the one that has gotten stuck to my mind.

RE: Have you ever seen the dove ad as you mentioned, has any of these ads seen that made an impact on you actually made you want to buy the product?

MQ: No I don't remember any ad ever having that impact on me, I think that was more the case when I was a child.

RE: Thank you. We are just gonna go to the next part now.

RE: Have you observed changes in society in the last 10 years in regards to the notion of beauty and how the ideal women look?

MQ: Yes I have, for example with the Dove ad example. That was something new you never saw that. But I noticed that you see more and more of that. For example there is like Rihanna made a makeup collection called Fenty Beauty and she has like all colors for foundation so there is like a foundation for every skin tone and that's really new. Whereas like Este Lauder like until a year ago. I wasn't able to find a foundation that matched my color. Actually, H&M made an ad with a woman wearing the Hijab, that is something I have never seen before.

RE: Can I ask you, maybe why do you think that these changes have occurred? That these brands are now showing women that look different, and these brands that have many skin tones makeup?

MQ: I think that maybe the consumers now have more and more to say, that customers have more influence, also, I think all the brands they have more attention to what people want. They can see that we live in a diverse culture with people with different skin tones

RE: You said we live a diverse society now

MQ: Yes, I think we always have, but it seems like there is only like, the brands are only promoting the standard white girl with blond hair and blue eyes, of course also skinny girls.

RE: But now you feel it is changing.

MQ: Yes I doo

RE: Can you elaborate on some of the new tendencies you see, like you mentioned skin tones, also about body types, anything else?

MQ: Hijab, religions, minorities in general. When we talk about minorities. I think the society is getting more diverse and accepted towards people that look like a standard person

RE: Do you see any specific brands that are good at being in tune with how society is today, any brands that stands out from the crowd?

MQ: Maybe Huda beauty, maybe also H&M, I think that brand did most to be in sync with society right now, and also Rihanna's Fenty beauty

RE: Now that you mention it, do you think that brands should be in sync with reality?

MQ: Yes, because it makes me feel like they are more approachable. Also, when I saw women in Hijab in H&M ad it made me really excited even though I don't wear hijab, it is a positive change. It is okay for people to look differently and not "fit in" all the time. Sometimes H&M also uses different body types I like that too. It actually makes you want to buy their clothes. It just occurred to me but it impacts me that way, I feel like I want to go and support them and buy their clothes.
Whereas there is like maybe Channel, they are maybe more appealing to the rich white girl, so every time I go to there store I feel a little awkward even though there brand is so good, but just like the clothes they make and everything they make just doesn't fit any other than the white rich girl.

RE: Have you ever seen any promotional activities from ZARA that appealed to you?

MQ: No, I noticed the girls in their ads are very skinny and even look anorexic which is negative, so if I ever shop at ZARA it is not because of their ads or anything, maybe it is just because of the affordability, that impacts as well.

RE: Lets talk a bit about you, your name, and age, occupation, what you do?

MQ: My name is Michal and I am 29 years old, I have a 10 months old daughter, at the time I stay home to take care of her, but I have to go back to home soon as a Jurist. I work at the Danish immigration service.

RE: Have you seen yourself ever reflected in brand advertisements of fashion and beauty brands, maybe seen and ad and thinking that you can see yourself like in terms of your ethnicity, body type or skin tone?

MQ: For skin tone I think it is definitely Fenty and ABH because of their range of skin colors. But for clothing, I don't think I ever felt I could see myself, I think more about how it looks at the model and will try it on myself, but I always no that it would not look the same on on me as on the model.

RE: if you were to see yourself represented, how would that person look like? There are too aspects, there is either exactly how you see yourself or someone who might not look like you, but who reminds you of you in some kind of way?

MQ: It would definitely have to be a person that looks like me because for me it would make it more relatable, so of course a person with a darker skin and a person that isn't like very skinny, sometimes I feel that the problem is when I see the ads with the models that are plus size I cant even relate to them, because right now my belly is sticking out but they all have flat belly, and the fat is like perfectly distributed on their bodies, I have never seen my body type on TV. I think that is one of the things that make me really want to loose weight, because no one looks like me, that just makes it harder. It is like my body type is not accepted, I am not pregnant but I look pregnant.

RE: How would it make you feel if you saw someone with like a "real" body? Also if you saw someone looking like you in ads?

MQ: I think it would make me happy, but I would have to see like more than one ad doing that, the thing is that these kinds of ads is made maybe 1 time a year then that's it. It is like it is still not normalized.

RE: So you would want like a consistency? And not just one ad.

MQ: Yes exactly

RE: Do you care about being represented in fashion and beauty advertisement?

MQ: Yes I do, and I am glad that there are a lot of beauty bloggers that looks like me, skin tone wise, so I get good makeup tips for my skin.

RE: You mentioned that you see some of these beauty bloggers and influencers with the same skin tone as you, are they someone who actually influences you to buy certain kind of makeup?

MQ: Yes, I always look at how it looks on them, and if they make a good review of it I will buy it or at least consider buying it.

RE: And these bloggers you like to follow, do you view them as credible sources of information?

MQ: Yes I think they are the most credible source of information

RE: would you say they influence your perception of a beauty brand?

MQ: Yes, if they talk badly about a brand, I think I will just accept their opinion.

RE: You mentioned H&M, Huda Beauty and Fenty Beauty, but can you think of a brand that is good at representing women that look like you beside the women you already mentioned.

MQ: Maybe M.A.C, I have seen their ads on Instagram, they will have their makeup done on a really dark skinned person and it will look perfect. I think that M.A.C is good at representing diversity.

RE: Would you say there is a lack of representation of women that looks like you in ads?

MQ: Yes there is, because I only see women looking like me when its bloggers, but not in real ads, that almost never happens, but mostly it is just like white girls and sometimes really dark skinned girls, but not the medium skinned tones as me.

RE: Do you think that you should be represented in ads too? So women that you feel you can relate to is something that brands should be working on?

MQ: Yes, I think so because not all people look the same way. I think the brands should work towards making a more realistic picture of society instead of making a picture showing that you have to look a certain way to get accepted. I know that a lot of young girls are really bothered about it and it leads to big problems for some of the girls, and young people are bullying each other for not looking the right way.

RE: So are there any brands you can think of that should be representing women like you, even though the right now doesn't?

MQ: I think, more the expensive brands like Louis Vuitton and Channel and Gucci. I think they should work on representing diversity, because then the smaller brands will follow them.

MQ: Also about Dove, I said that they have different body types and skin tones in their ads, but they are actually kind of too faced, they are showing double standards because I know that the company that owns Dove owns X too, and Dove is all about being natural and being yourself, and signaling that it is okay to be

different but in X it is just like the other brands and it is more about sex. They are really just showing double standards.

RE: How does it shape your attitude towards Dove knowing that they have double standards? How does it impact you?

MQ: It does have a negative impact to be honest because it just shows that they are not accepting that people look differently, but it is just a part of their way of doing business. Because it just seems like that they think, okay, the society is demanding us to show more diversity so lets just give them that.

RE: Do you think there are any specific ads that don't need to represent women that you identify with, or do you think that all brands should be inclusive?

MQ: I think that all brands should be inclusive, but I don't think that is going to happen any time soon.

RE: You mentioned some of the high-end brands like Channel; you said that they are not good at representing different women. Do you wish to be a customer at Channel; do you want to buy some of their products?

MQ: Yes I do, I have always wanted a Channel bag, but I don't feel like the brand has done anything to make me want it. It is just the status of the bag I am experiencing around people.

RE: The theme of this thesis is actually inclusivity and diversity within fashion and beauty brands, so in general, **Inclusion** is viewed as the inclusion of people of all races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, social classes, economic classes etc. Looking through a brand lens, inclusivity in branding allows for all customers to see themselves in that brand. **Diversity,** is viewed as something brands commit to be, by having a commitment to recognizing and appreciating the variety of characteristic that make people and communities unique. Our focus in on women and how different type are represented in terms of body, age, ethnicity, religion etc.

RE: Do you experience diversity and inclusivity as an emerging tendency in the industry?

MQ: Yes and no, because some brands are doing it and others are not at all, and the ones who are doing it sometimes it feels like they are doing it as part of their business and not really genuine about it. They will just do an ad, and then after a long time do another one and then that's it.

RE: some of these brands that you don't believe is genuine or credible, if you compare them to for example Fenty Beauty, then what has Fenty done maybe differently from these brands to make Fenty more believable?

MQ: First of all, the founder of Fenty Beauty is a black women so that is already a huge step and they did it from the start, they were diverse from the start, they weren't pushed by society to make changes and be diverse, they did that themselves as the brand launched. And they just started with being accepting towards diversity.

RE: So you feel it is more genuine because they did it from the start?

MQ: Yes

RE: You mentioned that the founder Rihanna is a black woman, do you think that the diversity and inclusivity is reflected through Rihanna's personality which is then reflected in Fenty beauty?

MQ: Yes, 100%

RE: In what way do you think that she represents that as a person? You say that she is a person of color

MQ: Yes she is a woman of color and then she makes a brand with products for every skin tone and that is something that is new because it wasn't a normal thing just a few years ago so already there. She is also comfortable in here own skin too and thinks that makes an impact on me.

RE: So you would say that Rihanna's personality in a way is reflected in the brand?

MQ: Yes

RE: you mentioned that with brands like Fenty and H&M, what stood out to you was the color range of the makeup how it is for every skin tone and for example H&M using a hijabi in ads. So these brands you mentioned, the fact that they are diverse and inclusive, has that had an impact on how you view the bran?

MQ: Yes actually it has a big impact, for example how Fenty was diverse from the beginning, they didn't make you feel any different, and H&M they haven't always done it but still it is a positive thing for society to be more open and accepting towards minorities and just people who dress differently because of for example religion.

RE: Can you mention some brands that have tried to be diverse and inclusive but in your opinion failed to be?

MQ: Yes I think maybe L'Oreal tried, but they only have like 1 black model as far as I remember and then they just went back to their old ways.

RE: What about in their makeup, can you find your skin tone?

MQ: No not at all, I can't find my skin tone. I also can't use their eye shadow because my skin is dark so you can't see the color; it just looked weird, and the same with the lipsticks. And it is the same with Maybelline; it is a cheaper brand too.

RE: So you think its maybe some of the more affordable brands that haven't been good at catering to woman like you?

MQ: Yes exactly.

RE: If an advertisement were to be inclusive and diverse, what do you think it should contain?

MQ: It should contain different body types and different skin colors and just people dressing differently, they should show more acceptance towards more personal style, because some people like to dress in a gothic way and some people like to dress in a Muslim or Christian modest way, there are many differences and they should show all of them, not necessarily in one ad but be more open about this.

RE: So in regards to body types, different skin colors and ethnicities and ages, how do you feel these characteristics are represented in ads for fashion and beauty brands?

MQ: They are not doing a good job so far, it is always just like really young girls that are extremely skinny, mostly.

RE: What characteristics about woman do you feel is lacking most in ads?

MQ: I think different age groups are lacking most, because it is always just really young girls, it is not even middle age woman. Sometimes they will use an older woman but it is still like either you are really young or just old

RE: Now yourself you are very young, but do you think older woman should also be represented within fashion and beauty?

MQ: Yes of course I think that, because they are part of society too, they want to look good and feel good too. I think a part of that is to feel accepted.

RE: Now I have just placed two colashes in front of you with different types of ads and brands communications, some of them are magazine covers. Tell me what you think of them, just start from an end maybe. We have the first one here what is that?

MQ: It is from Vogue, and woman with different skin colors are showed, they actually also has different body types, and a woman with a hijab. This is actually impacting me really positively because this is actually a change from what we usually see. There is always just a skinny model with a lot of makeup and not too much clothes, but these are all like dressed like they are not showing too much skin so it is not supposed to be sexy. This is just showing woman the way they really are.

RE: Showing woman the way they really are, do you think that is something we see a lot in society right now, that woman are more than just their bodies?

MQ: I think lately people are becoming more and more aware of that, I think that for a lot of time it has been about sex and that you have to ad sex into all ads, but now they are like going back to being looking more at the person and the natural beauty and not so much on the sex appeal. Because none of these models are wearing too much makeup, it is just about the woman and not their sex appeal.

RE: So would you kind of say that maybe that vogue with this cover they are tapping into the society and some of the developments of society and how it is right now?

MQ: Yes I couldn't have said it better myself. And maybe this has something to do with the me too movement so they are respecting woman more, that they don't always have to look like a sex symbol.

RE: You said this is different from a vogue cover you would have seen a few years back, so do you think this is inclusive?

MQ: Yes this is different, and with these different looking women, it is about the woman and not their bodies.

RE: Would you say that you to a higher degree could identify with this woman?

MQ: Yes

RE: How about this cover?

MQ: Yes this is a cover from teen vogue, and it is saying I am America! And that is actually a little funny, because Teen vogue is a fashion magazine but they are making a political statement with this cover, I think it might have something to do with Trump and his statements about what defines America. But that just shows the brands like following up on society because that is what is going on in America, so that is what they are showing in this cover.

RE: Do you think it is appropriate that a fashion magazine is showing something political?

MQ: In these trump times I would say yes, but other than that I don't think fashion and politics should mix.

RE: Are there any other images here that stand out to you?

MQ: There is this image with Winnie Harlow, and she looks different she has a skin condition called Vitiligo, and this is something new because it hasn't been normal if you can call it that, to have a person with a skin condition being a fashion model and I follow her on Instagram so I now that she did a lot of covers for big brands, and she does a lot of runway shows for big brands so she has really started a wave of it being okay to look different because she isn't like the classic beauty because of her skin condition but still she is a really recognized model that everybody knows.

MQ: And there is this ad from sports illustrated and her name is Ashley Graham, and she is a plus size model and we talked about them before, again she has a really pretty face and I wouldn't call her a plus size, she has big boobs but she has a completely flat tummy so I would not say that she represents me because I don't look like that, I think it is wrong to call her a plus size model because she is really not that big and if that's a big person then I don't know what you have to look like not to be a big person.

RE: Here we have more photos, anything that stands out?

MQ: Yes there is Fenty Beauty; this is showing all the different skin tones for foundation

RE: I don't know if you know, but Nike has done an athletic wear collection for woman with hijab?

MQ: I didn't know that, they might be the first brand doing that because Muslim woman have always been into sports but there has not been like Muslim appropriate sports clothing. So it is really big that they did that. Even though I don't wear the hijab, this makes me happy because it gives a lot of women the opportunity to do what they want to do without worrying about finding the right clothes. It gives them a lot of freedom.

RE: If you look here, Rihanna has also done an underwear collection and these are some of the photos she has chosen to feature the underwear with, and she has posted these models on her Instagram. But what do you think when you see this?

MQ: This will definitely be something I can relate to, because the woman in the black dress her body type actually reminds me of my body type. And she has a big tummy and big boobs and I feel like I can relate to that, I feel like she looks like a regular person that I can see on the street and not a regular model. There is also this woman who is an older woman and I think this woman is really cool, because older woman buy lingerie too so why should they not feel sexy? I really like those ads

RE: Can I ask you honestly, you said these things are very awesome but what was your thought when you saw this woman that is really big or this woman that is very old in lingerie? What was your initial reaction?

MQ: I felt like it was a bit od and I was actually chocked just because I am not used to see ads like that, and that is maybe just me having double standards right now, because in these ads I get exactly what I am asking for but when I get it, it is just like I am shocked anyways so I don't know it is quite difficult. I think the reason for that is that we have to see more ads like this so that it becomes more normal and you don't get that chock reaction every time, sometimes it is a good chock but it is just quite weird that you have to get chocked when you see these pictures because these are normal people I see on the streets everyday.

RE: Could you image see an old lady maybe 60-70 years old walking down a runway? What would you think about that?

MQ: I think that is quite cool because old people wear lingerie too and maybe that would make it more appealing to older woman to buy it. It will show them that it is as normal for them as for a younger person to do it.

RE: So do you think Fenty using an old lady in lingerie is as credible as if Victoria's Secret showed an old lady in lingerie?

MQ: No I don't, because Victoria's secret they just have a way of doing things so if they did it, it wont seem genuine, because they are just promoting one body type, you have to be completely skinny and have a bit of boob and a bit of ass but not too much.

RE: What would you characterize as a marketing stunt and a genuine attempt to be more diverse and inclusive?

MQ: For example H&M, they used a hijabi model and it is showing that they want to be inclusive and diverse because people look differently and want to dress differently so they are welcoming every type of person if you could say that.

RE: Actually that is that for the interview, thank you so much!

MQ: Thank you too.

Appendix A.3 Sibel Yildiz interview transcription

RE: Hi Sibel!
SY: Hello
RE: Hello! Thank you for wanting to participate in this interview, your answers will be very important for our thesis, we highly appreciate your help. The purpose of this interview is to get your personal insights on a specific theme regarding your attitude towards fashion and beauty brands. Unfortunately, we cannot reveal just yet what the theme is, as that might affect your answers. What we can tell is that, the industry is fashion and beauty and the questions will be based on brands within that industry and their promotion/advertising activities. In this interview we want you to talk as much as possible, and with as many details and examples as you can think of. As you have been told earlier, this interview will be recorded in order for us to be able to go back and analyze your answers. The recording will be treated with confidentiality. There are no wrong answers, so please feel to speak freely.
SY: Okay, I will do that.

RE: Could you please tell me your name, age and occupation?
SY: My name is Sibel Yildiz, and I am 25 years. Right now I am studying, something called entrepreneurship and design at KEA… Yes, that it was I do
RE: What do you do in your free time?
SY: Well I like to eat (laughs)
RE: I like that too.
SY: I like to spend time with my family and friends, and husband.

RE: Thank you. You start out with, I will ask you some general questions. But, before continuing, I will just like to identity what we mean when we say a brand's promotional activities, by that we mean communication activities: that can both be television advertisement, social media posts, and social media activities, and advertisement, other kinds of media, could also be brand's participations in interviews, essentially, all of their promotion activities.
RE: does that make sense?

SY. Yes.

RE: When we speak about fashion brands, we mean brands that are involved in clothing, bags, sunglasses etc. And beauty that is cosmetics and skincare. Just so we are cleat on that.

RE: first, could you please mention two of your favorite beauty brands, and two of your favourite fashion brands?

SY: Hmm… I think two of my favorite beauty brands are actually NYX, I really like that brands, and let me think… There are actually quite a lot. Yeah… And I think L'Oreal. And fashion brands, I actually like H&M and ZARA. That's also what I use actually.

RE: Could you explain why these brands are your favorite?

SY: I think it is because, when it is about the beauty brands. I think that for example NYX, I have worked for them, and I know a lot of their products. And I know they have a lot of colors and I really like the quality of the products. And also L'Oreal, I like my makeup to stay natural, and I kinda think that their products are very natural looking on my face. Yeah, and I just like the quality. I think that is why I mostly like them. Actually NYX and L'Oréal are brands I have worked for. So, I also think that is why I really like them, because I know their range. And also when you work for a brand, you know a lot about them. It gives you a lot of insight into the brand and their products. And regarding the fashion brands, I think it is most about the style, and also that they have a lot of… I think for me I like it when they have a good range of it… If that makes sense? Uhm…

RE: so that is basically what you like. You just mentioned some of the functional aspects that you like. That L'Oreal have very natural looking products. And the fashion brands you mentioned you liked because they have a wide range that you can choose from. If you actually had to answer what you think about these brands, besides the functionality? If there is something else that makes you like them? The brand name, what the brand stands for, the history?

SY: I really like H&M for… They have a line called conscious, and I really like that they are supporting the environment. I think that is a really good quality to have as a company and as a brand. So yeah, I think that when… That is one of the things that makes me feel also, just gives me a good conscious. And I like that. Also, they just have a lot, you know, plus sizes, and like the, I don't know if a could it the normal sizes. They have the plus sizes section, I think that is so cool, because when I shop with my mom, we can shop at the same store, because my mom is plus size. I think that it is a good thing that they speak to a lot of different women, with different sizes. I think that is just one of the things. And when it comes to the beauty brands, I think I like that for example NYX are cruelty free, and they really support animal rights, and the environment, and they like to speak to a lot of women with different colours, and you can see that in their product range. I like that because it just means that they are aware of different kind of people, if that makes sense? I also just like that they are playful in their way to communicate to people. And makeup is also about having fun, so I think that is also one of the things that make it appealing for me. Because when I wear my makeup I also want it to be fun.

RE: Can I also just ask, you mentioned that H&M have a big range of clothes, and they have something for maybe as you said normal size, but they have a wide range, so everyone can find something. So you that they have a wide range, but is this something you have only seen visibly in their stores, or this this also something you have been made aware of through their advertising? And if yes, where?

SY: Yeah, they have like commercials where they have all these different kind of people, it was like coloured people, a plus size people, and can I say white people (laughs), black people, all kinds of people. Even a Muslim girl, appearing in the commercial. So, yes, that is one of the activities.

RE: In the ads, why does it matter that they specifically use a Muslim woman?

SY: first of all I am Muslim myself, so of course it means something to me, because especially, nowadays, the society is very like focused on Muslim people, and you know there is a very bad reputation about Muslim people, and everyone always thinks that when it is a Muslim girl, she cannot wear what she wants to wear, and she is forced to do that. And I think that it just kind of shows that in a way that actually we can (wear what we want). Does it make sense?

RE: Yes, maybe that they show them in a positive light.

SY: Yeah, in a positive way, where it is like, we do also like fashion, we also do like to dress ourselves up, and buy normal clothes, in normal shops, where everyone else buys clothes. I really like that in that way, where it is more in a positive way, and a positive light. Because I always think that the Muslim in the society right now are very much in a bad light, but also because I am a Muslim myself, and it just means that they (H&M) are open to the people, and open to not just one target group. It makes me feel comfortable in a way about the brand. I feel included.

RE: Can I also ask that you said that you feel that NYX is for everyone because they have a lot of skin tones, because you work there. So the same question also goes for NYX, have you seen any of their promotional activities where you have seen that reflected?

SY: definitely, on their social media. When you go to their Instagram page, you see that they are one of the brands that really speak to everyone. They have pictures of different influencers, it can be not influencers that are wearing their products and they just post these pictures, and they do that because they also in a way want to speak to everyone. And it is coloured people, people again with scarfs (hijabs), white people. They have also in stores, they have like commercial bands, I think it is called, where they have like not usually the regular, you know models you see on the front pages of a magazine. But just you know a normal person, someone you can relate to. In their stores and on their social media, I don't know if there has been anything else I can think of.

RE: Can I also ask you also mentioned throughout the brands you mentioned ZARA and H&M, do you also feel that like you described H&M is for everyone, every size, and you felt that NYX is for also for everyone, that they have, you used the word inclusive, do you think that ZARA and L'Oréal are also like that?

SY: Actually not, I mean I think that L'Oréal is better now than before, but I don't think they always been like that. I think if I did not work for the band, I don't know if I would have the same relation to the brand and interest. But, I think that their way to marketing themselves is very much the typical way that we have always seen. The white beautiful, skinny girl. They are improving now, but I think the reason that they are trying to change, is maybe because they have been forced to be better. I think that, when I mean forced, I think forced by the society, because they see all of these other brands embracing colors, embracing every size, embracing everyone in this world.

I kind of think that they feel if they do not do it, they kind of also loose something? And no one wants to lose a good reputation, when it comes to their brand. I think they want to strengthen their reputation by doing what everyone else does. I see it that way, it might not be true, but I just kind of feel that way compared to NYX, because they have always been like that, and L'Oréal is a huge company since forever, so I think that they are kind of following the others. And also with ZARA I haven't actually seen them doing anything where I feel that they are including people with different kind of cultures and colours.

RE: You just spoke about L'Oréal saying that they are kind of just doing it now. Can I ask you if you feel that they are genuine in their attempt of including different skin tones. Do you see it as a marketing stunt or that they are actually really trying because they want to include everyone?

SY: I feel that it is a marketing stunt, because you are what you are. And if you haven't been like that from the beginning, it just does not feel right and real. But I mean it can also be that they have changed their concept; it happens you see that in brands that they change their approach.

But I feel it is because when I think of L'Oréal I think of these typical white, blond-haired girls, always skinny and with beautiful hair and stuff like that. That you actually cannot relate to.

RE: Alright. You said that you worked for L'Oréal right? Can I ask that when you had customers coming in maybe that… You said that L'Oréal is more for the fairer skinned people, so what if when you had people come in with maybe darker skin tones? Was it easy to match them in foundations, lipsticks, eye shadow?

SY: Yeah, I have had those customers, and it is so sad. Here in Denmark I think that they have a wider range in other countries, but in Denmark they don't have a wide range of colours. So when I had a customer coming up to me and saying I need a foundation in my colour and I could see that she is dark woman, and I just knew immediately that I couldn't find a colour for her. So I had to… It is kind of sad because of like, well, we unfortunately don't have your colour, and it shouldn't be like that. I have had customers coming up to me with dark skin tones without us finding a colour for her.

RE: thank you. We will just go on to the next question. Do you feel that you get influenced by your favourite brands promotional and advertising activities? So this is like TV ads social media post and social media advertisement, mentions in the media etc. If so, how?

SY: I mean, I think I do actually. Because, sometimes you do it subconsciously. But there is also where I am conscious about what I am actually feeling about this, and when I see something that you know, when they just embrace different kind of people especially when it comes to beauty and fashion industry it is a lot about the looks.

RE: And also this is in accordance with the brands you mentioned. From your favorite brands, that you feel influenced by, and you remember.

SY: hmm…Yes, I feel like especially with H&M, when they had that commercial going on "she is a lady commercial"), that this a brand… When you think of a brand you not only think about the clothes, but you also think about what they stand for, and maybe you are not conscious about that, but in a way you are. And I definitely think that when I go and buy something from H&M that this a brand that supports me, and supports all kind of people. And that just makes me want to support their brand too, if they support me, then I want to support them. I think that it has influenced me and still will. And also with NYX, when I see their Instagram pages that they just have these different kinds of people, with different kinds of colours and I just think that yeah, they are the brand for the people. So, I definitely think that it is something I want to support, and it makes me feel like I want to buy from this brand. Because I have a connection with them.

RE: And how about L'Oréal for example, do you feel that you are influenced by their promotional activities?

SY: Mmh… I don't think so. I think it is because their way to advertise themselves is very in a classic way. But I also think it is because L'Oréal is a very classic brand. I haven't actually experienced myself like wow, this is awesome, this is great, you know. I am just going to support this. I think as a said earlier, if I didn't work for the brand, I may not have the same interest. So…

RE: So maybe you wouldn't buy from them otherwise?

SY: No, I don't feel influenced by them, not in the same way.

RE: And how about ZARA? Do you feel influenced by their advertisement?

SY: To be honest I don't feel any connection to their brand at all. I just think that they have cool stuff. So, its like on a product level. I don't feel anything about the brand, I don't actually know anything about the brand. I don't have any interest in the brand, but I like their clothes.

RE: That's excellent.

RE: So what are some of the factors that are in play when you choose a beauty, and a fashion brand. What is important to you?

SY: I don't want to support anything that promotes racism for example. But you know, I have dark hair and have other roots of ethnicity than Danish, I would feel like offended, I wouldn't want to put my money in a brand where I know that they don't support people in general. I think it is important that I like the products that they have, but also that it is a brand that I want to support. So I kind of look for the good products, but also the feeling. For me it is also all about the feeling, if I don't feel like that I want to support a brand or can't relate to the brand in a way, if I don't feel I can be included in the brand, I don't feel the same way about the brand, as I would if it did. It would be more like superficial.

RE: Where do you get your fashion and beauty inspiration from? And what inspires your choice of fashion and beauty brands?

SY: I get my fashion and beauty inspiration from, I would say, mostly from Instagram and magazines also.

RE: and where on Instagram do you go for inspiration?

SY: Influencers maybe I would say? When it is someone I kind of in a way know, and they show some clothes I might also like. Influencer and the other question was?

RE: what inspires your choice of fashion and beauty brands.

SY: Okay, that is kind of the same question.

RE: Yes.

SY: it is definitely something I feel like I can wear. I am a Muslim, and I am a bit conservative when it comes to my way of dressing. And I think that it's very important for me to feel that these kind of fashion brands support my values. And I see that in influencers. Muslim influencers wearing hijab, wearing some certain clothing and they tag the brand and I see okay, well I kind of get influenced by that because I feel that

if she can wear it, I can wear it too. The brand is something for her, so it's also something for me. Because I can relate to her, and if I can relate to her, and she relates to the brand, then I can also relate to the brand.

RE: And how does it shape your perception of the brand when they decide to do a collaboration with for example a hijabi blogger, or a Muslim blogger? How does that make you feel about the brand?

SY: I definitely feel like that is really cool, it is great, and it makes me happy to see that brands include people like me, and people like her with the hijab. I definitely feel included. And in a way I feel like..

RE: Welcomed?

SY: Yes!

RE: All right. Going on to the next question. Are there any fashion and beauty brands that you are trying to try? And why do you want to try these brands? What do you think has triggered your want to try them?

SY: Let me think… Oh yeah! Huda Beauty actually, because she is this middle eastern woman who started being a YouTuber and influencer, and she started her own business. Yeah, she is just, I can relate to her because she is middle eastern, like myself. And I really want to try her products, because firstly I have heard many great things about the products. And she also has this very wide range of colours, and she is really speaking to everyone. And I think that is cool. A woman like me has started her own brand and she is just being very honest in her way of speaking, in her brand, and in her communication. I think she… it is cool, I mean she is a woman that I can relate to and I feel, just, the word that I am mostly used I think throughout this interview is comfortable. I like brands that are just open to everyone and embrace colors and sizes, and cultures, and ethnicities. I don't know if I can think of other brands.

RE: Can you think of any fashion brands that you are wanting to try? And what triggered your desire to want to try them?

SY: Hmm… I don't know.

RE: that is completely fine. If you remember any we can get back to this again.

RE: So what should a brand contain to appeal to you? Both in term of products and promotional activities? So if you could tell us what you feel both what the brand stands for and their products too.

SY: Firstly, good quality of course. And then no one wants to buy something that does not work or isn't any good. And something that is for everyone. I mean something that I can wear, and you can wear. So definitely something that can fit me and my… not only skin tone, but also my body, the way that I am built. On a brand level, I mean I follow a lot of social media, so for me it is very important that it is also brands that makes collaborations with influencers, because that is where I get most of my inspiration from. Just being open to all kinds of influencers, just trying to reach different target groups. Because we live in a society today, where we are just much more conscious and I feel that the brands also need to be conscious about what is going on. And I do not like the too classic brands, if that makes sense?

RE: can you just exemplify what you mean by classic brands?

SY: That is just everything we have seen before. The girl walking on the catwalk, who has the typical skinny shape, and she is… It is just always the same, seeing through different lenses. Because no one wants to buy something, or no one can relate to anything if they cannot see themselves in it. And I do not see myself in a totally pale girl with blonde hair and just a perfect body, because I am not like that. For me it is important that they are like honest.

RE: if you were to think back what is the last fashion and beauty brand that you remember talking a friend about and why? Maybe an ad that left an impression? Or hearing someone else talking about a brand.

SY: Hmm… I don't know like, maybe… The Huda Beauty brand.

RE: and they primarily advertise on social media right?

SY: Yes exactly.

RE: and why has that left an impression on you?

SY: First of all I just think that I love her personality and the way that she… She is fun in the way that she advertises her products, she makes a lot of fun with it. And I think it is cool, and I think that a lot of people take themselves too seriously. So it is nice when someone like her, who is having such a good reputation, and being such a huge influencer, is also just trying to be fun in her brand. There are not a lot of beauty brand that have a wide range of foundation colours. And I think that she does. And I also think that is connected to her roots, and maybe she has found it problematic to find a colour like hers. So yeah, I kind of was impressed that she made a foundation launch with so many colours, because that are not a lot of brands that do that, especially at first try.

RE: yeah, at their first launch. And that is something you remember talking to your friends about?

SY: Yes.

RE: that's great! Have you personally faced any issues with fashion and beauty brands, could both be their products or their communication activities.

SY: Can you please repeat the question?

RE: (repeats)

SY: I personally haven't faced any issues, but that is because I have a really standard size, and my skin tone is very standard. Can you say that?

RE: And with that maybe you mean that you have a fair skin tone?

SY: Yes, I have a very fair skin tone. But I do… When I'm out with my friend or we talk with each other that they can face some issues, especially when it comes to the skin tone, it is hard to find makeup that fits their skin colour. And also just in general when I'm just out with my mom or shopping on the Internet, it is not always that you can find the big sizes. I don't face it myself…

RE: you mentioned something about skin colours of your friends, are they darker skinned?

SY: Yes! They are dark.

RE: Do you think that they are any issues in general with beauty and fashion brand that needs to be addressed?

SY: I think in general there is a issue… But I feel it is important to say that I think that they are better, the fashion industry is getting better at like embracing people around the world. But I definitely think that they still need to upgrade their attempts.

RE: So you maybe feel that they have not been very embracing?

SY: Yes! I definitely think that there is an issue… Let me think… But I also think that I don't always think about it, maybe that is because I am the type of girl who can find the colours and sizes, so maybe I don't think about it. But when I hear my friends talk about it I can see that there is an issue, so yeah I definitely think that. But you also see that the society has become more open and realistic. And you see that on the catwalk when they have hijabis and when you see the plus size model walking down the catwalk, when you see different covers of magazines with different kind of women. So I think that they have become better, but there is still a long way to get where we need to be.

RE: we will now carry on to the next part of our questions. You have already spoken a bit about the society in general, so this next question is: during the last few years society and especially the fashion and beauty industry have gone through some changes in regards to representation of women. In what ways, if any, have you seen that portrayed when it comes to fashion and beauty brands? Both on a societal level, and also how brands portray women.

SY: Of course, I do see that. I 've seen brands including more women… people with like a scarf, we have never seen that before. So to see that now, it really means that the society has been through some real change. And I also think that is connected to the Internet, the social media we have, where we can follow the world. We can follow the world in Asia, in Africa, everywhere. And I think that is why they have also… they have done these changes, its because they feel like that the world is following them, and that is because of the social media we have, and you know, the Internet. And I think that they… Yes, they have changed, to answer your question, and you have seen that in the social media, in when they do these fashion catwalks and… Does that make sense?

RE: Yes! You say that there has been changes in how brands behave, do you think that is it society that has changed and that is why brands have changed, or are brands changing society?

SY: That is a really good question! I think that it is the society that has changed, and that is why the brands are kind of following the society. I mean people always change, and I think that brands definitely should follow society, and the society sets the agenda.

RE: So you say that one change you have seen in how women are represented is that you have seen more women with hijab, have you noticed other changes in beauty and fashion brands now, compared to some years ago?

SY: Also, just you've never seen curvy women who are walking for brands or have collaborations with brands and are representing them, we have never seen that, but we do see that now.

RE: Actually the brands you mentioned in the beginning as your favourites, do you feel that they represent the tendency you just mentioned?

SY: Yeah, I think some of them are. Like I mentioned earlier H&M and NYX are some of my favourite brands, and they are definitely following how the society is going. Some of them are in a really positive way, and some of them are not, and maybe that is because, I don't know why they don't…

RE: Now we will talk about brand promotions in this part. Have you seen yourself reflected in brands advertisement of fashion and beauty brands. I know it is a very general question.

SY: Yeah, I mean when I see someone with the same roots or religion as me, then I definitely feel like I am heard, but I would also say that it doesn't happen very often. I also think that when it happen it kind of leaves an impression.

RE: Al right. You say that you have seen yourself reflected in advertisements, but not very often. Do you remember where you saw yourself reflected?

SY: I don't see it directly in commercial, but I do see it when beauty brands make collaborations with influencers. For example there is this Kurdish girl called Sazan, and I see myself in her, because she has this dark thick hair, and she is also kind of pale like me. She has these features that I also have. And the same roots, and when I see brands collaborate with her I… Especially when it comes to beauty brands, that just makes more sense for me when a hair brand collaborate with her I can relate to that and I also feel like buying the product, because it if works on her hair it will also work on mine, because we have the same type of hair.

RE: Do you care about feeling represented by fashion and beauty brands?

SY: Yeah of course! I think everyone does.

RE: Why?

SY: Everyone likes to feel a part of something, and everyone likes to feel that they are included, I mean who doesn't want that? I want to wear something that I also feel is represented in the real world.

RE: Can you think of a beauty and fashion brand that are good at representing women who look like you?

SY: Yes, as I mentioned, when it comes to fashion it is H&M, and beauty I think Huda Beauty.

RE: Thank you. You already mentioned some of the reasons why you feel they are good at representing women like you.

RE: Do you think that right now, there is a lack of representation of women who look like you in brand advertisement?

SY: Yeah, I think so.

RE: So you don't think that there are a lot of women who look like you in brand advertisement?

SY: Yeah, I don't. As I mentioned earlier there aren't that many that represent me, but I don't know if it because I live in this part of the world, but still I don't thinkt hat should be a reason, because we live in a very multi cultural society, there should be enough room for everyone. I think it is kind of sad.

RE: Is it sufficient in fashion and beauty brands advertisement to have women who for example have the same ethnicity as you, but are still tall and skinny, with flawless skin and face?

SY: I think they should look like a real person, I mean, real people wear these things, makeup products and these clothes, so if it is not real people, how can I relate? Why would I… Maybe I would still buy it, but I wouldn't feel the same connection to the product and the brand. So yeah…

RE: Now we will move on to the next part of this interview. You have actually already touched upon some of these things in the first questions, in how fashion and beauty brands and society have changed, actually our thesis is about inclusivity and diversity within fashion and beauty brands.

SY: Aha!

RE: And we did not mention this in the beginning, as we didn't want to influence your answers, and wanted to know if this is something that you think about and see reflected in fashion and beauty brands.

SY: Ah, I see.

RE: You spoke a lot about inclusion, so with the following questions we want to examine your attitude towards diversity and inclusivity. So first we will just define what we mean by inclusivity and

diversity. Inclusion: is viewed as the inclusion of people of all races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, social classes, economic classes etc. Looking through a brand lens, inclusivity in branding allows for all customers to see themselves in that brand.

Diversity: is viewed as something brands commit to be, by having a commitment to recognizing and appreciating the variety of characteristic that make people and communities unique.

RE: Do you see it as a benefit that some of your favourite brands are diverse, do you think more positively about them? You mentioned NYX, H&M, and Huda Beauty?

SY: Of course! I mean if you… The more you include people the more you strengthen your brand, because you want to speak to everyone, so everyone can buy your products. That is what not only a brand is about, but also what a company is about. I definitely think it strengthens the brand. I think it is… I feel more positive about them.

RE: What does diversity and inclusivity mean to you?

SY: It means that you can… Including is making other people feel welcomed, and in a way just at home. It is about making other people feel like that they are a part of something. So including someone is just… It is speaking to them. And diversity that you have… speaking to different shapes, different colours, statuses, different…

RE: So diversity for you maybe is when brands actively include women of different colours, shapes, etc.?

SY: Exactly!

RE: Which fashion and beauty brands come to mind when I say inclusivity and diversity?

SY: Hmm… I would say H&M again, I think they are really good. I cant think of any other right now. And Fenty beauty actually! It is a brand that Rihanna has created, I mean she is really diverse in her collection. I mean no one launches a foundation with so many colours. And also just in the way she advertise her brand. It is these real women. It is women of different colors, and I think that maybe why she started a brand so diverse is because she is black herself.

RE: Can you mention any brands that you do not think of as being diverse and inclusive? Maybe some brands that have tried to be, but in your opinion have failed

SY: I think actually Este Lauder recently launched more colours than before, in foundations. It just does not… I don't buy their products, but I also think I don't have a connection to them and their way to speak to people. I just think they have started doing it because other brands are.

RE: So why do you think they failed have failed at being inclusive and diverse? Because they have just followed others brands?

SY: Yeah, they just did it because other brands also did it. When they advertise they use a lot of models, and it is typical white girls, for example Kendall Jenner, I cannot relate to that.

RE: Okay, so to sum up. You have seen that Este Lauder have launched more foundation colours, but they have just done it because other brands do it?

SY: Because they did it really late.

RE: Ah okay! And you also feel that in their advertising activities they do not show a lot of diversity?

SY: No. I haven't seen that.

RE: Do you think they could have done something differently.

SY: I think it is hard to change something that has always been one way forever. But I feel like maybe having some collaborations with coloured influencer, different women. I think maybe the way they show themselves in their advertising… Maybe using influencers, also because we have a really good relationship with influencers. So I think that would really strengthen them.

RE: Thank you! Now I would like to show you some collages with different brands, and their advertisement. If you could share what you think of them, and if you recognise some of the images? And do please describe the photo when you speak of it, as this is an audio recording.

SY: If I look at this Vogue cover I see different women. Different hair, different shapes, different colours, just very real people.

RE: Is this an inclusive and diverse cover?

SY: Yeah! I think so. Also because it just… They could look less polished, but it is a lot better than other brands.

RE: Is Vogue usually a magazine you relate to inclusivity and diversity?

SY: Actually, not at all. I actually haven't seen this before. I am very surprised that they have done a cover like this. When you think of Vogue you think about the really pretty girls, with light skin, the typical kind of women you see in magazines. So I am actually really surprised that they have done a cover like this.

RE: And how about the next Teen Vogue cover.

SY: That is like really powerful. It says I am America. And a black woman is standing in a field. I kind of associate it with slavery, but in a way that the people who were once slaves are now strong and are a part of America.

RE: Thank you! Are there any other pictures that stand out to you in the collages?

SY: Yes, there is. I actually remember this one, this is a DOVE commercial.

RE: That is interesting! Because there is not a DOVE logo on the photo, but you instantly recognised it.

SY: Yeah! And also this one from Sports Illustrated cover, with Ashley Graham. She is also a plus size supermodel, and I think that is really cool. And I remember having seen this one, this is NIKE, I remember this one really impressed me with the sports, active wear for hijab wearing women. I think it is really cool that they also speak to women who wear scarves. Actually also this one!

RE: Do you know which brand this is? (brand is not showing on image)

SY: Yes! This is Dolce & Gabbana. You do see low end brand doing commercials with different kinds of people, but seeing a high end luxury brand doing that really impresses me! I think that is really awesome!

RE: You remembered that this photo (pointing at DOVE) is from a DOVE commercial, even though there is not logo. Why do you think you remembered this photo?

SY: I think it is because… This commercial is actually really old, but as far as I remember they have always been empowering women, and I think they were one of the first brands that spoke to different kinds of women.

Okay, thank you. I also want to show you these two photos here (pointing at the two photos of Fenty lingerie), did you know that Rihanna has done an underwear collection?

SY: No, I didn't.

RE: Yes, she actually has, and these are two photos taken off the lingerie Instagram page, of two different women wearing Fenty lingerie. One is an older lady, and one is a plus size woman in lingerie. What do you think of these?

SY: I mean it is definitely different from what you typically see! And I mean different in a good way, not only because of the age and size, but also they are photographed, it is not too polished, it is a picture you can relate to, because you could have taken it too in your bedroom. So I think it is cool! She (Rihanna) is just very diverse.

RE: Do you think that Rihanna is pushing some boundaries here?

SY: I think she is kind of protesting against other brands that are not doing what she is doing, she is just trying to say this is the people and this is how they are, and this is what we should focus on, because she has an opinion of brands of brands not being inclusive.

RE: You said that she has an opinion about brands bot being inclusive, is this something you have read about her?

SY: No, that is just the way I feel that she communicates when I see these pictures, but I haven't read about it, I don't know if that is even true. But that is the feeling I get when I see these photos, that she has this opinion.

RE: Please feel free to answer this according to how you really feel: Can you imagine seeing an old lady like this walking down the runway for lingerie?

SY: To be honest no. I mean you can, but it just does not… I don't think it makes sense for a lot of 70 year old ladies, I don't think they dress like this. I also think that is why she does it, just to be you now, extra in the way she communicates. When I think of a 60-70 year old, I don't know if I'm being judgemental now, but it is just my honest opinion. I don't see them in purple furry lingerie set.

RE: Thank you. Do you feel that it would be as credible if Victoria secret did as Fenty? Showing an old lady in lingerie? Because you said this is how Rihanna is, she pushes boundaries and she is inclusive. Would you feel the same if Victoria Secret did this?

SY: No, because it is just… It does not belong to that target group. And when I think of Victoria Secret I think of young women with like beautiful bodies, it would just not make sense to me. I would think that they

are really trying, but it is not working, as they have always been one of the brands that show models based on their (small) sizes, so it would totally not make sense here. There brand has never been that way.

RE: All right, thank you so much Yasemin, I think that was it. Thank you for the interview.

Appendix A.4 Focus group interview – transcription

Introduction + Product and promotion + Influencers

RE: Okay girls, thank you for participating in our focus group interview, for those of you who don't know, a focus group is an interview where you are a couple of people and you are supposed to talk and discuss some of the things we are going to show you and ask you about. We are writing about branding, we are writing about inclusivity and diversity and when brands are inclusive and diverse and what this means. We are going to do a couple of terms in this interview, we are going to talk about diversity and inclusivity, and I am going to define the two terms for you: **Diversity** is something brands commit to be, by recognizing and appreciating the variety of characteristic that make people unique. **Inclusivity:** the inclusion of people of all races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, social classes, economic classes, it is something that allows for all customers to see themselves in that brand. For this focus we are focusing on women, in the fashion and beauty industry.

RE: During this interview we want you to speak as freely as possible, if you have questions please just ask us. If there is something you don't understand then ask, and share your thoughts and opinions.

RE: I want to start by asking you girls what diversity and inclusivity mean to you?

Sara: I think it is the same when brands they use all different kinds of ages and skin tones and religions and were they maybe have as you said a variety of these people in their ads, and you can identify with these people, maybe one with a hijab on or a black woman or an Asian woman or an older or bigger woman as well. So for me it is when you include these types of different people.

Hawra: To me, it means if I see my self in the ads or products if I can buy them and people are represented. The diversity of people including many different people instead of maybe 10 white girls and only 1 black, that is not diversity for me.

Mahnoor: I think it is very important when I shop for example for makeup I do look at the for example different foundation tones, are there tones for very dark skin women and are there also for very light skin woman, so for me it is important that a brand has something for everyone.

Hawra: I will add a bit, when the inclusion is actually realistic, where you can see that it really reflects reality and not just a picture you are looking at.

Amaya: I agree with everyone, they already said what I wanted to say.

Humera: When I think of a makeup brand, I just think about if they have my tone, Is there anyone in the brand that are showing, you know something similar to me and it is important that I can see myself. If I see there products actually helps me and represents me.

RE: You said that it is important to you to be able to find your skin tone in foundation is that easy for you or is it sometimes maybe an issue?

Humera: It was hard, at a time I think before Fenty Beauty and Benefit and Huda Beauty cam out…

Amaya: I think I only used to buy foundation from M.A.C and they were not even that good.

Amaya: Can I say something about the ads, because we were just talking about that we actually really don't care about the ads, but still when they do something different we notice it, and sometimes I think it talks to our subconscious, like if we see a brand using a hijabi woman, we notice it like "okay wow they are actually doing something different" so yes we are actually influenced by the ads, without even knowing it. It gives you the feeling of wanting to support them and you remember it, which is what they want you to do. So even if you cant necessarily relate like I don't wear the hijab, but I will remember that thing, and if they sometimes use a very big woman or something like you will remember that. It has an influence but you don't necessarily notice it. I don't mind what they have in their ads; I only care about if they have something that suits me.

Humera: I agree with what Amaya said because I remember ads using Hijabis, I think Dolce and Gabanna did it a year ago, H&M did it, and we do remember that.

Pakiza: I think H&M did it a lot; they have Instagram models I think with hijab.

RE: No I am just going to show you this, so when we say inclusivity and diversity, which fashion and beauty brands come to mind? Why do you think of these brands? Think of this both in regards to products and promotion? We have some options here but if you think of other brands that is okay.

All girls: Huda Beauty, and Fenty beauty and Mango also, NOT ZARA! And M.A.C

Sara: ZARA just did actually in their new collection, all the woman are wearing a scarf…

Humera: Yes but all those women are so skinny and all so tall!

RE: So you don't think ZARA is inclusive because of their products?

Sara: No it is how they portray the models

Mahnoor: Yes it is unrealistic body types

Amaya: because nobody looks like that in real life

Humera: And they are all so tall!

Sara: but they do have women of different colours but they just look so unrealistic, like when you look at their pictures you think how is that real life? It looks like something that is in a vogue cover with some art kind of thing that no one is going to wear anyway, you can never connect to their website I think

RE: That's ZARA, can you think of a brand that is like the opposite?

Sara: Mango I think are much better, as the models are more realistic, they wear the clothes in a way you can actually see yourself wearing them and the commercials are much better I think. And they had the Ramadan collection this year, I really like Mango they do it in a really good way, and they are not trying to be like "Unrealistic Vogue". So Mango is much better

Amaya: And they actually have a plus size collection

RE: and that is both in terms of products and their advertisement?

Sara: yes in the way they portray it

Mahnoor: Also Hunkemöller I would say, because I know that a lot of woman who have very larger breast have trouble finding bras in H&M for example, so Hunkemöller are very good at catering to different kind of women.

RE: That is the product, but have you seen their promotion?

Humera: they do have different types of sizes but I don't remember if they have coloured women, I think most of them are very light. Their was a plus size model as well

Hawra: I am not a makeup user so maybe I am not so familiar with makeup brands but actually L'Oreal when I think of diversity, and Vogue, and Dove comes to mind, because I have seen the ads and because I only remember they use Asian, like Chinese, Japanese, and Vogue I have recently seen the ad with Halima. But Dove they have also used diversity in terms of body types and colours women. But if I really think about diversity I don't think any of them are diverse.

Hawra: when we were talking before about ZARA and how their models are skinny, in my opinion, maybe it is different for not skinny people, but I actually like that their models are skinny because I can relate to them, and even though I use size XS I can never find a jacket that is good for me, all of them are big, because they have made their XS bigger. I am happy they use skinny models, but I also understand other people with different sizes that they would be happy when the models are in their sizes. So it is understandable.

Hawra: But I don't think all these brands are diverse because they don't include everyone. Like Dolce and Gabbana they use white women wearing hijabs, who are not even Muslims and they don't even look Muslim so what is the purpose.

RE: what do you guys think about Hawra's comments? Do you agree that the brands she mentioned are diverse? For example with ZARA's sizes or L'Oreal being diverse?

Sara: I think as she said no know is really diverse but it is also impossible to be completely diverse because there are a hundred of different types so it is hard to represent everyone.

Sara: but for me L'Oreal have never been diverse in my eyes, I always think it is a white very pail skinned women with blue eyes for some reason like with their mascara commercials.

Mahnoor: I kind of disagree because I remember growing up seeing an Indian famous woman as the face of L'Oreal, which is very close to my origins. So I remember growing up with seeing that even though she is very fair in her skin

Amaya: yes she is fair and has blue eyes! She doesn't even represent India

Mahnoor: yes but I still think it was cool that it was a woman who is not like white, because she was very Indian in the way she was, she was known from Bollywood. And she was miss India

Hawra: For me I also watch their local ads, from Arabic channels and its Arabic women represented in the ads.

RE: For example L'Oreal, you mentioned the Bollywood star and you mentioned Asian models, how about the products, when we talk diversity we think that it has to do with both products and promotion or maybe it

doesn't have to, so what do you think about that, do you think L'Oreal is diverse in both promotion and products?

Sara: Well their products are not diverse; they don't have a wide range of products, maybe they try to portray themselves as diverse but they don't do that with their products, its only white!

Amaya: previously I could only afford to buy L'Oreal products, but they never suited my skin tone. I don't even buy anything more from L'Oreal, I don't remember L'Oreal ever being diverse, as Mahnoor was saying, they used an Indian model but she was completely fair skin and had blue eyes.

Mahnoor: I guess I don't look that much at her face, I look more at where she comes from because she is very Indian in the way she is, she represents her country really well.

Hawra: For me, when it comes to fashion, like ZARA they are doing a bad job being diverse like speaking of for instance Muslim inclusivity, but I still shop from there, and I do find modest nice clothes, but I have to search and find these things, so they are doing a bad job.

RE: Thank you. In the beginning you talked about what diversity means to you, and we talked about products and promotion. Do you think that both promotion and products has to reflect diversity for the brand to be considered diverse? Or is it diversity if they for example have a wide selection of products for everyone but they only portray one kind of women in their promotion?

Hawra: In my mind I see Dove as diverse, because I have seen so many ads from them were they represent many different women, but I don't use their products.

Mahnoor: I think it depends a lot on if you have Instagram for example, I think a lot of us follow Fenty Beauty or Rihanna on Instagram so we would know that she use different kind of models, big, small, dark, pail, that's why we can relate with that. But if you don't have Instagram or are not interested in makeup then maybe you wouldn't care that much

RE: You are interested in makeup (Mahnoor) so what do you think of L'Oreal in terms of their products and promotion? Do you think they are diverse?

Mahnoor: I haven't really paid much attention to L'Oreal… but I think it is not that smart if a brand has a lot of different kind of products but only use one type of woman in their commercials because they have to show what they sell

Pakiza: I also think that it is a lie to show all these different coloured women, so when I go buying foundation then they don't have a lot of colours to choose from, then I will feel cheated, because why did you use Asian women if you don't have a colour for them. But if you have Instagram and so on, I think that it will come to how much knowledge you have about the brand, so for example L'Oreal, I don't know about their promotion and products because I am not interested in them and don't follow them.

Humera: Also, we are talking about diversity and including different people, it made me think about, it is something I saw on the Internet, that L'Oreal had a Muslim woman as a model, but then they looked her up and found that she had made a comment about Israel, then they fired her, and for me that is not diversity and opening up for different people with different opinions. It is not only about Muslim and colours, it is also about opinions, for me when I read that article; it was like "okay L'Oreal is not diverse at all."

Sara: It can also be because they use other Israeli stars that are very outgoing about their opinion and they are allowed to say what they want, but the Muslim woman is not allowed to say what she wants. If you say you are diverse you have to really be upon to all people.

Amaya: I would say that promotion and product is very connected, all the examples we just gave that is showing that if they say are something, then it has to be like that in reality too.

Humera: That is how I see L'Oreal, sometimes they use some sort of diverse person, and they are trying to be in this movement and come along and portray themselves as being diverse, but clearly in their product selection they are not, and that is when you see what they really are, because if you look at the products they are definitely not diverse.

RE: (Showing the group two images, one of Fenty beauty's products and promotion showing different women, and one of L'Oreal's products and promotion showing different women) Fenty Beauty is by the singer Rihanna and they started the brand with having like 40 foundations, and L'Oreal has 23 foundations.

Sara: Yes and L'Oreal have been going on for like 100 years and they only have the 23

RE: we have these two images, the first one is Fenty and the other is L'Oreal and they both show products and some sort of promotion. What are your thoughts about these images considering what we talked about in regards to promotion and products?

Amaya: The first thing I think about is that there is a bigger gap in the skin tones in what L'Oreal is showing, whereas Fenty Beauty only jump to the next skin tone whereas L'Oreal is jumping like 5 skin tones. They have so many white shades, maybe like 20 white and 5 dark shades

RE: and how is that in terms of diversity?

Amaya: That doesn't seem diverse at all compared to Fenty Beauty

Mahnoor: L'Oreal still have dark colours, Fenty just have more

Amaya: Yes but it is like with L'Oreal there are 20 shades of the light and only 5 for the dark skin tones, and it is just like there are not only 5 ways of being dark, there should be at least as many as the light tones.

Pakiza: But I also heard that like Fenty, Rihanna specifically made makeup that would suit like a person from every skin colour and like lip sticks and blush and highlight, everything was made to fit everyone. She really made an effort to make it diverse and include everyone. For example in the winter I get more fair and in the summer I get more tanned so it makes me happy that they have like foundations that are a couple shades darker or lighter, instead of what L'Oreal does with just jumping from shade to shade.

Amaya: yes with L'Oreal you are either light or really dark, I can't see myself in these foundations.

RE: When you decided to try Fenty, what influenced you? Did you see an ad or something?

Mahroon: For me I noticed how, what many brands are doing now, when they release new products they send them to YouTube's like makeup gurus, and they review everything, and it is easier to see people with the same skin colour as you trying on the product so you get a better idea of if it is going to suit you, it is really good branding.

Pakiza: It is also a very cheap way to promote your products.

Amaya: About L'Oreal, I am sure that if they do this and send their products to bloggers, we would have noticed it, but I don't think they do.

RE: Now that we are talking about social media influencers, bloggers and people on YouTube, do you follow fashion and beauty influencers?

All girls: Yes we do, mainly beauty influencers

RE: So talking about these influencers, do you consider them real human beings like yourself or do you see them as these more perfect human beings you kind of look up to?

Mahroon: I think it depends on who it is, like I love Jeffery Star for example, because he keeps it 100% real, if he doesn't like a brand he will honestly tell you. He got a lot of criticism because he said he didn't like Kylie Jenner's lipsticks, and Kylie Jenner is huge, and has a lot of fans so people criticized him a lot. But he just says his honest opinion, he has nothing to loose because he is very rich and has his own makeup brand called.

Mahroon: Jeffery star has his own brand called Jeffery star cosmetics, he is a billionaire and used to be a singer, and he has over 2 million subscribers on YouTube, and he dress like a woman but is a man. He also uses makeup. Anyway, I don't want to follow a YouTuber who gets paid for using the brand, YouTube has this new rule that the people have to say it if the video is sponsored by a brand, and I just scroll to another video when I see that it is sponsored because they get paid for it, so it might not be their honest opinion.

RE: Do you follow influencers who look like you in terms of body type, skin tone, ethnicity etc.?

Sara: I think everyone does, I think people follow someone they can identify with, in terms of religion like if the person wears a scarf or is big etc. I think people just like to see themselves and see yourself represented and feel a connection to the brand somehow or just get inspiration. I do that a lot with clothes and makeup also; I love to see how other people style their hijab because I am new with hijab. I follow a lot of hijabi Instagramers, I think that kind of is a thing that everyone does, you like to see yourself and follow what you want to find for yourself.

Hawra: I think regarding the thing you mentioned with us being close them or them being unrealistic, I think most of them started as being realistic and when they got rich they started being unrealistic. I am talking about some fashion influencers, when they got richer and bigger they started wearing only luxury brands and then we couldn't identify with their style anymore. In terms of for example finding their clothes, we cannot do that because it is very expensive. But we can look at their style. So now I follow non-Muslim influencers and I look at their style and find inspiration to find something similar from other stores like ZARA or H&M.

Sara: they usually start out realistic, but when they get to a certain point they stop being credible, but you still follow them because you maybe like their style and have followed their lives for so long.

RE: Sara you said something about following their lives, do you actually care about the personality of your favourite influencers and their values?

Mahroon: I think that is the most important thing, a lot of the girls said they like to watch YouTube's who remind of them selves look wise, if they wear hijab or skinny etc. I don't necessarily do that, the ones I like are the ones with the unique tutorials, like Nikki Tutorials who is a bigger white woman who is so funny, and Jeffery star he doesn't look like me at all, but they are both talented and good at what they do and I love their personality, that is why I watch them, that is more important for me than watching somehow who looks like me.

Sara: I think there is a difference between YouTube and Instagram, because on YouTube I watch Jeffery star as well and on YouTube you need to listen to people and you need to like their opinions and what they say, therefore I like to see different kind of people there as well, but on Instagram they don't talk as much, only through Insta stories, but usually most of the time you only watch a picture and a caption, so most of the

time there you only see the style and get inspiration, whereas on YouTube you know the personality and have to like the personality.

Hawra: I only follow 1 person on YouTube because I like her personality and the way she is, and because I think she reminds of me.

RE: Do you follow the recommendations of influencers about fashion and beauty brands? Like if they say a brand is good or bad?

Hawra: I think only general opinion wise, if they express positive opinion a brand I would have the same attitude towards the brand, but I have never been influenced in the way that I see someone like a blogger wearing something from e.g. ZARA then I go and buy it. I only shop when I feel like buying, I follow the influencers just to see things and get inspiration and keep up.

Mahroon: It depends on what type of skin you have; maybe they will recommend a product that is not good for my skin type, if they talk about makeup it depends on what kind of skin you have.

RE: Mahroon you said Jeffery star and you think he is honest, if he said a brand is not good or bad, would you follow his opinion?

Mahroon: Honestly no, because that is his personal opinion and that doesn't have to be my opinion, because he didn't like kylie Jenner's lipsticks but I tried some of them and I liked them, so it is different from person to person, I would ask my friends before asking anyone else. Pakiza for example, she told me that the Fenty foundation is amazing, then I went and bought it because I know we have the same kind of skin type, so I would get more affected by what my friend say than an influencer.

RE: Sara what do you think?

Sara: I think I would definitely be influenced, I actually bought something because of Jeffery, like he always talked about the Dior foundation so I bought it and its amazing. But in general I have been influenced and I still do.

Amaya: I agree with Sara. Like the shampoo I am using these days, I bought it because a blogger recommended it, I didn't even ask anyone, it is expensive but I just bought it and it is really good, it is from Sephora Alterna.

Mahroon: Is it a blogger you follow who recommended it?

Amaya: Yes it was actually Huda from Huda Beauty. I listen a lot to her, if she says a product is good I just believe it and go and buy it

RE: you think you can identify with Huda?

Amaya: yes because we have almost the same skin tone and we both Muslim and both has black hair and the same hair type. I have quite big hair and its frizzy and she was mentioning the same things so I can definitely identify with her. She is a very well known beauty blogger but is not completely skinny, she has some curls and I can identify with these types as well.

RE: If an influencer you like, who is also from a minority or represent you works with a brand, will it impact your perception of the brand being diverse or not, in the sense that the brand represents you by using an influencer from a minority? Like if a brand decided to collaborate with your favorite hijabi influencer, would that brand be diverse?

Sara: definitely, I have several times clicked to see what brands they are wearing, then I check that brand and see what kind of clothes they sell and check out their Instagram stories, and see that they support these girls and sends them packages, and they invite them to these big social events were, like Armani they had a perfume release, and I liked how all these hijabi bloggers were invited, and that is something you don't see it doesn't get shown, it is not something the whole public see it is just a party and you invite the people you choose, and in that way you get your products promoted to people watching these things, and I get happy when I see that brands choose these people because they didn't do that before, so I think that is a new thing I like.

Hawra: I will like to ad something, maybe my answer is a bit different, but if I for instance follow an influencer who has never used a product from this brand, but then all of a sudden she wears a shirt from this brand, I would just think that she is promoting for money it is not that she just like this brand. But some bloggers maybe very often use products from certain brands like for free not because they are promoting, then maybe in the future they will start promoting, then it is more realistic and then I would say yes maybe the brand is a bit diverse. But just using for money maybe the blogger also wants to earn money, not only because the brand is diverse, but it is a matter of economy.

Mahroon: I think it is also when I see an ad where I see a hijabi woman like a Muslim, to be honest I don't think I will buy from that brand just because they use a Muslim woman, I don't personally use a hijab and I am not that modest in the way I dress, so it doesn't affect me, but I think it is awesome when I see something like that but it doesn't affect me.

Hawra: I agree with what she is saying because it is very personal but I get really annoyed when some brands use Muslim models but do it in the wrong way, so I think if they even researched it because I know they research everything, so I get annoyed when don't do it right, because when they do something for Muslims it means they are doing something for me, so when I see that I am miss-represented I get really annoyed, but I continue shopping anyone, like ZARA and their latest collection which is very ugly, the clothes look like they are from the 1960s.

Mahroon: don't you think that is your personal opinion? Maybe other hijabis love the clothes?

Hawra: Yes I am saying my own personal opinion, and also I think it looked very traditional style and what I see on streets woman like me or Sara we don't go very often with these traditional wear outside, I see more stylish and fashionable girls, I don't see them wearing this ZARA collection, I think they are doing it bad, but I still shop at ZARA because I like most of their clothes.

Mahroon: I remember M.A.C made an ad that was called "getting ready for suhoor" it got a lot of criticism because a lot of women were like, who gets ready for sohoor everyone look like garbage and whatever, and a lot of people was like M.A.C doesn't even know what sohoor means.

Hawra: But on the other side, maybe they are doing it for those in the Middle East, because I am from the Middle East and we actually go out after the iftar and we go out until the sohoor, so girls get ready after the iftar because that is the time they go out, so in Arabic countries maybe it is suitable.

Hawra: Maybe these clothes (ZARA fall collection) people in Turkey or in the Middle East they will die for these, but us here as a minority we are not represented at all because we have a different style.

What the brand stands for and brand associations

RE: Brands tend to carry with them a certain image and a "way of being" and something that they are known for, so when I say Victoria's Secret, what do you immediately think of?

Sara: the sweet American beautiful girl next door, its so American, it cant be more American than Victoria's Secret

Hawra: I just think like general sexy girls, sexy beautiful girls, and very skinny

Mahroon: I have always followed Victoria's Secret, and they always had different type of women, like Tyra Banks who is black, and Adrianna Lima she is Spanish, and they have white women as well, everyone, so I think they have very different type of skin tones. Some might have bigger breast than others but they are all very skinny with no plus size and its very sexy

RE: So you immediately think of like sexy skinny pretty girls

Mahroon: with different skin tones

RE: What do you girls think; do you agree that they have different types of women?

Hawra: I don't think that all the brands have to be inclusive or diverse because maybe they are targeting these types of girls, they don't want to target maybe curvy girls, that's why they only include skinny girls, and I like them I have never thought of them in a bad way, and I really love their runways, I love them

Sara: A brand is not bad if its not inclusive necessarily, that doesn't make them a bad brand, it is up to the brand who they are going to target their products for, and that doesn't have to be everyone, their is also an underwear brand that is only for plus size women and no one said they were bad and why don't you include everyone, so everyone is allowed to advertise and promote for what they want, and they are always been known for very skinny, and when Tyra Banks was there she was still skinny she was not big, when she was big she stopped, and I don't know if they fired her.

Mahroon: but she always said that they never asked her to loose weight, and she had bigger breasts and bigger bump, than everyone

Sara: but she was the only one, its always been Adrianna Lima, Giselle etc. all very, yes they are Latin American by they are still white and skinny, so they definitely have a type, but it is not a bad thing

RE: Sara do you then disagree with what Mahroon said because Mahroon said, that they have always had a lot of different types?

Sara: I don't see it that way because Tyra Banks was the only black woman

Mahroon: yes but now they have so many black women! Women with long hair, with short hair, and even bold, so I would disagree with that, I think they have a lot of different women.

Sara: yes but a lot of brands start out one way and then they change their marketing as time changes, and new phenomenon comes up and new stuff happens and the world changes, and they have to follow a long and I think they are doing that in their way by following a long but still staying within what they are known for and I think they are doing it in a fine way.

RE: So having all that in mind we are just going to show you a video now…
RE: Before the video, we want to ask you girls, Amaya and Humera what do you think about this? Do you also feel that it is okay that they have a specific type like very skinny girls, or do you think that they should have women of different sizes?

Humera: I don't mind, that is just how they promote them selves, and that is how we know Victoria's Secret this is how it is like

Amaya: as you said, they are just targeting a specific type and that is okay that doesn't make it a bad brand, but then again, I just came to think about that, it actually seems like that some brands are using this diversity thing as like, it is almost like a trend

Pakiza: I think that is like how you know, that is what makes them like exclusive, because you know Victoria's Secret has like perfect bodies and that's what makes Victoria's Secret, Victoria's Secret!

Hawra: I came to think of something, I was in Fields the other day and I saw older very curvy women shopping at the Victoria's Secret shop and they were buying perfumes and you know these bags, I think also it's a brand who would like to emphasize the aspirational like who you would like to be or feel pretty, not necessarily how you actually are. Maybe this is the type of brand they are, so when even curvy women buy from there because they are still going to feel sexy when they use the Victoria's Secret perfume or if they like buy a bra, if they can fit the sizes over there, because the image is always the sexy woman, when you think of Victoria's Secret and I think you will feel sexy when you use their products.

RE: So it is not necessarily when you think VS that you think skinny, you might think sexy?

Hawra: I have never actually thought like skinny, I have always just thought of pretty sexy girls. When you show the picture (a picture of the VS models on the runway) we all know they use skinny models, and I think maybe what you think about when you go in the shop you think about sexiness and feeling pretty. So you buy the perfume and you know you are going to smell like wow and your husband is going to be blown away.

Sara: I also think that on Instagram when you follow these models and you see how hard they work for these shows, I think that is why I always think about skinny, because they have very extreme work outs and diets, and they need to fit this crazy thing and they work out like five hours a day. And I think like what the heck! So for me it's a brand that have a standard that is not realistic, I don't know it is skinny but not realistic for me, but again it is not a bad thing but I don't find them diverse. That is just their brand.

Humera: I actually have a comment in regards to what diversity means to you. Looking at VS, it is not a secret that they use only skinny models and I am not skinny but I do wear VS, so I do buy it and I feel like its, and its not only small they have there. Actually they are not showing all those kind of products, they are not promoting all of it. You can find a large for instance as well. I don't know how to say it but it is not only what you see on promotion.

RE: Now we have a short video and it features Ashley Graham, she is a plus size model. One of the most famous plus size models, this is about her and VS, watch it and then we will talk about what you think about it.
Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qFoEBG3drqI

Mahroon: she was the first plus size model on the cover of Sports Illustrated Swim suit magazine.

RE: What are your thoughts about this? The video also mentioned that we have to celebrate all sizes and VS have to portray that… what do you think? You talked about how VS is the brand that shows the sexy skinny women and they don't necessarily have to show women like Ashley Graham, what do you think after hearing what Ashley Graham thinks (that she wants to be a VS angel)?

Mahroon: I really like Ashley I think she is great! And I agree that all sizes should be celebrated, but VS is just known for their skinny models and I kind of think it would ruin the brand or their runway if something else would come like a plus size model, not that I mind someone who is bigger, I just don't think it would fit in, because it has never been like that, so it would be weird.

Hawra: I agree, you should either be good at it or don't do it, it is not okay like many people fight for certain causes and maybe this girl in the video who drew the image of Ashley she fight for this cause, and maybe many people on social media are supporting her, but that doesn't mean that the brand should comply with her, I think that would ruin the image if I see something different on their runway, I wouldn't like it, I would rather see them as they are and have always been, maybe others have included plus size models to appeal to these women because they want to target these women and want to be perceived diverse and follow the trends even though it would ruin their brand, I wouldn't like it either. I still like VS.

Humera: Maybe it is me who doesn't have the knowledge, it sounds like Mahnoor know a lot more about VS than I do, but if I see a plus size model for VS I would not find it weird, and it is maybe because so many other brands like them are showing different types of sizes… for me it will be normal actually, like why not show plus size? Like Sara said, you need to find your way of promoting your self and everyone is going to do it, and maybe if they feel some kind of pressure now due to Instagram talking about Ashley Graham, for me it wouldn't be bad for the products.

Sara: I don't think they will ever do it though…

RE: But do you think they should do it?

Sara: for me I don't really know, I don't think they should actually, because when you are a brand like them, I think they have such a strong brand it would just kind of be fake, because all of these freaking years, there has been plus size models always

Humera: but again Sara, we were talking about realistic promotion, and this is not realistic

Sara: no it is not realistic at all, but that is there brand it is not realistic but that is what they are know for, this unrealistic thing that no one can achieve and that's why there is such a big hype to the show because everyone is looking at these women think they look so amazing and how no one can look like that. If they are going to have a plus size it is going to be not plus size it is just going to be a normal woman that they will call plus size like Calvin Klein did a year ago, but the woman was no plus size she looked very normal sized, with some curves

Mahnoor: yes they will never choose a obese woman

Sara: they will never choose Ashley she is too big but that is just what they are, and they should just stick with what they are.

Hawra: but I disagree with this being unrealistic, I think I don't know but maybe I am skinny myself, and there are many people like me and I think people are always commenting "they only use skinny they never use plus and they are so discriminating" but people like me, should we not have the freedom to feel skinny as well, I think we are being discriminated because we are naturally skinny

Mahroon: I totally agree

Humera: but then I think that if it is only skinny then it is not diverse

Hawra: it is not diverse…

RE: The discussion is, why not both?

Sara: the problem is I have been skinny too most of my life and I never gained weight, but for me it is not, yes it is something else, it is like I know that I am skinny too but I want to be represented too, but for most people that is not the norm and that is not how most women look, most women are in between so very skinny

and very obese is two minorities extremes as well, but the normal woman is not like that. I can talk for myself and say I am skinny, everyone wants to be represented as well, but the normal woman is not like that. But nothing is wrong with that, this show is amazing I watch the show sometimes too, and I think it is great to watch there is nothing wrong with VS, we are just talking about if they are diverse or not and they are not, and that is cool, you should stay who you are and not just follow movements like L'Oreal does a lot of times. If they did something else I would have kind of like "hmm they are just trying to gain a few likes or followers".

RE: Exactly about that, this picture, if you type on Google "VS diversity" blab la stuff like that, this is there 2017 show in Shanghai and that's show was celebrated as the most ethnically diverse in its 22-years history, because they had about 50% of the models being black/Asian/Hispanic compared to the 30% in 2016, and the years before that had an increase in the inclusion of Asian models. If you read online, there are a lot of articles about VS saying that this development in terms of ethnicity shows that they are trying to be more diverse, so be something else than the all white brand. So they are maybe trying to be diverse one step at the time, they have started with ethnicity so maybe body type could be the next step?

RE: Amaya you have not commented on this, what do you think?

Amaya: Actually the reason why I have not commented because I don't mind I like to watch the show even though I feel like I am not represented in it, but I don't care I will still go to their store and buy underwear and body mist. But I feel like they are fine as they are.

RE: this was described as diverse, online. A lot of articles say that they are becoming diverse, because they used to be something and now have taken a huge step, they are a big brand so for them to take such a huge step, that was like showing that they mean it when it come to diversity and maybe it is not just marketing?

Sara: If VS want to become diverse, then I think they are doing it the right way, like doing it gradually and slowly, but I don't think it will be more than this. But who knows, things change.

Amaya: right now it just seem like they are following the trend of being diverse

RE: It could be a pressure? Because we have Fenty beauty and they also have lingerie, and they have lingerie for everyone, compared to VS. so maybe it is a pressure?

Hawra: I think, from a business perspective, they need to follow certain things but they need to adapt it to their brand specifically, if they do not follow certain things they will fall behind and they would not exist. Many big brands did not follow the trend like Nokia, they didn't believe in Smartphones and they died even though they were very big and top performers. So when I see the picture of VS in terms of colour they are diverse, but in terms of body shape of course not. But that is specific to their brand image, which is very fine.

RE: So you do thing that the brand name and those associations you connect to the VS name play a role when it comes to being or not being diverse?

Hawra and Sara: Yes.

Sara: It have been so many years of seeing only one certain type, but I do think there is a big pressure now and it is a huge movement and everyone is doing it, and demanding it, and I think the consumers now have a bigger voice than we had back then, we didn't have social media. We have so much influence now as consumers, we are seen and hear because brands now can very easily have a hate movement towards them and then the brand is dead. I think a lot of brands now are trying to be a middle thing, or adapt slowly. I think VS is doing it because everyone is doing it, because they don't want to be known as that white supremacy American brand that hates everyone else. I think they are doing it because everyone else is doing it.

RE: But do you think they should do it?

Sara: No I don't think they should do it, I don't think every brand should cater to everyone.

RE: How about the 2018 show, do you think they should have like 60% more women of colour, and maybe have 5 kinds of Ashley Grahams?

Amaya: I think that if they want to be portrayed as a diverse brand, they have to include plus size models because when I only see different skin colours I don't feel like they are diverse, so if they want to portrayed as diverse they have to have some other models as well.

Sara: they should include more, not just colours, they need many different things. There are many ways you can be diverse and they have only selected one. But again it would ruin their brand, even though I love when brands are diverse, but in this case it would ruin the brand.

Amaya: I don't think it will ruin the brand…

Mahroon: if they have to like next time have bigger models, the next time again should they have older models? And next time have short models? I think they should stick to what they are known for but of course they can change it up in a positive way.

Amaya: so you are saying there should be a limit to diversity?

Mahroon and Sara: It depends on the brand.

Pakiza: Ashley Graham could walk like one show, just to show people they are diverse, because if they keep doing it is like changing the brand. Just to represent another body type.

Hawra and Sara: that would backfire

Pakiza: that's the thing that would ruin the brand, it's not fair for their models because they work so hard and eat nothing like. That is just how they want their models to be specifically.

RE: In terms of the VS show, do you think about when for example young girls watch these women on the catwalk, don't you think the brand should show real women having in mind that young girls watch it instead of showing unrealistic body types?

Amaya: The brands do have a responsibility in some way! But I think the parents are responsible too, so you cant say that brands have to do all the work, because I grew up watching the brands like VS, with only skinny models but I new I was told by my parents that not everyone look like that so it never bothered me. The young people from today are really influenced by social media and they feel a bigger pressure to look a certain way so society as a whole have a responsibility but I don't think you can only say that the brands have to make the changes, it is the whole society.

Sara: Society as a whole has changes, when we were teenagers, we did not know what makeup was and looked like hoboes, but today 13 year olds look like 20 year olds, they look at stuff we did not care about in that age. I would say that girls in that age are very conscious about them selves and see stuff that they are manipulated by because when you get older we saw those things but only when we got older then you have more brain to know that these things are not usually for everyone. But in that age you can definitely look at that and think that you want to look like that and maybe get an eating disorder. But you cant put all the blame on brands, but I do think it can be important and very scary nowadays that girls grow up so fast.

Hawra: I think it is like not young girls but now even young ladies like 25+ they are changing their appearance in terms of plastic surgeries and not because they changed anything when they were young. But people now in my age, they change them selves now because new trends always comes out. And some women they want to follow these trends and other women want to stay natural, I don't think it is the brands responsibility to teach people has to be. But I think every brand has a position and represent something specific, so I think every brand should stick to what they represent instead of being everywhere and make us confused. And I think in terms of diversity there are different levels, and I understand that each brand should adapt to their image and do it good instead of being all over the place and be confusing and they would loose their value.

RE: Okay, Vogue Magazine, what do you associate the brand with and think about and are the brand diverse? Thinking about the mother brand, not local Vogue magazines.

Sara: it is the same as VS, because they have always been one way, always the artistic white and very skinny girls. But now of course they have started again to adapt and we have not Halima and darker persons and we have different ethnicities, so again they are adapting and I think they are adapting.

RE: Do you think its good they are adapting? What about this Vogue cover?

Sara: I love that cover, I think that cover is very diverse, they have the bigger the smaller, the Asian, the light, the Afro and the Muslim. I think that is a diverse cover.

Amaya: they have a woman wearing the hijab.

RE: How does it make you feel that they are using these people on the cover? Considering you said they are known for the white skinny girl?

Sara: well sometimes brand don't do it in a good way, but I think they have done it in a beautiful way, everyone is represented in a beautiful way, it is a good way of saying that this is how people look.

RE: So you think this is a good way of being diverse even though Vogue has not done it before?

Sara: yes I do

RE: Do you think it is a genuine way of being diverse?

Mahroon: at think it is something the feel like they have to do in order to get people's acceptance, and get more people to think that they are better than others. It is almost like it is a trend now, to include everyone, but I think they are just following the trend and not really being genuine about it.

Pakiza: I think people nowadays, the brands they try too hard, they are trying too hard to be the diverse brand, it is the cool thing now.

Amaya: I feel like this cover is very genuine because it is not about the women being sexy or anything like that, they are all fully covered…

Sara: I just think it is a beautiful way of doing it

Amaya: basically everyone is following because it is the new trend, beside Fenty, every other brand you mentioned might feel a pressure.

RE: the thing is that is that if they don't follow it, maybe the brand would die?

Hawra: I think it is a 50-50 because maybe they also think that they actually need to include others because we would like to represent others, but in a genuine way, not only because they are forced to follow. And I see them as a diverse brand.

RE: Then how about when you, now this cover is from 2017 how about when you see these quotes, these are from articles that are new from this year (attach to appendix).

Sara: again, these things have existed for so long, when they started there was a different outlook on things and now things are changing and the editor of chief changes, then of course you are going to have someone with a different outlook than the previous ones. So these also have a way of going, things change. When you have someone from now being a new director then of course this will change. But they could have picked him out on purpose because of the trend.

RE: but it is a big thing that they now have a black editor for the first time in 101 years, so is that a genuine attempt to be more diverse?

Hawra: brands when they start of course, every brand start on a local level, if I am a Danish brand I will start at a Danish market, as I grow I will expand to other markets slowly, and of course in 100 years if I had a brand people would say it took her 100 years to enter the Canadian market, of course because I wasn't able to it before, because I wasn't wealthy.

RE: But Vogue has for example been in the US for a lot of years and there have always been black and Hispanic people.

Hawra: well I don't think it is fair that they should only be for white because they are afraid of reputation. Now they are doing it because it is more natural to do it now. I see that as a coward step but again they are trying to develop and we can't do anything about that. The more they become diverse we will automatically think of them as diverse, we don't look at history much in my opinion.

RE: Thank you for very interesting answers. Now we are going to move on quickly to the next theme. We want to show you 2 ads from H&M: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s4xnyr2mCuI - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-RY6fWVrQ0

RE: Do you think that H&M address diversity and women and how?

Amaya: Yes because they are showing different ages, body types, genders, and religions everything basically. And people in different situations and even young people looking different ways

Mahroon: and they also say be your self and have your own style, and that there are no rules, at the end of the day there will always be rules and standards, but of course it is a great commercial.

RE: Do you think H&M is breaking with some of the beauty standards? That everyone is beautiful in different ways.

Pakiza: When you live in a minor society like Denmark, everyone look the same, if someone will come really over dressed or something, people will not think of it as weird

RE: Humera, how do you think this represents diversity in women?

Humera: I think it's nice I think they are targeting a lot of society issues, stereotypes, and I think it's like when we are talking about different cultures and different perspectives on like, I just noticed that there was a lesbian in the end of the video, so its like they tell a lot of taboo subjects, and when they are saying there is

no rules in fashion I think they are also talking about their clothes and how you feel beautiful and comfortable and happy. So there are a lot of topics in the ad, not only fashion.

Hawra: I completely agree with both, and I think they were maybe one of the first one to have a Muslim woman in their ad, but I also think that it fits very well with their brand because it is a lifestyle brand, they have all kind of clothes for all ages and they have even home furniture stuff, so that's complying with their brand and I think they have done a very good job in these ads. As Humera said you feel happy and comfortable with whom you are, and because it fits H&M, and they are doing a good job because it fits with their brand and their products not everyone would maybe succeed in this way.

RE: Because they have it at both a brand level and product level?

Hawra: yes it is a complete area, it is not like if VS did it, that would not ad up at all, it is not because they are bad but because they have a different position and different brand, we like them for who they are and we like H&M for who they are.

RE: Its fun you mention that, I saw a video from 3 years ago only because these ads I just showed you one of them is H&M's fall collection ad where they have all these different women. The one 3 years ago they had an ad with Adrianna Lima and two other models and that was it! That was their whole summer campaign. So its interesting that you say that H&M they embody diversity but if you look at their ads 3 years ago, that wasn't the case, but it still seems like they are making a genuine attempt at being diverse or what do you think?

Sara: I love the commercials, I think they are very well made and they have a very good message, I think they are showing something, political and fashion wise and I think it is just an amazing commercial overall. I really like the way they did it and it also fits them and I think they were one of the first to go into this area and therefore I think it fits them, because they were the first ones to touch upon this whole subject about diversity. So I think it fits them and of course everyone start somewhere, if a new brand launch now they will of course launch being diverse like Fenty did. But I just think they have been doing it in a great way, they show all type of women, its ages, religions, sexuality and just everything and it is a great way of doing it, there is room for everyone.

Humera: its not as you also mentioned, they are doing what they stand for, men H&M are taking lot societal responsibility and they are trying to show different cultural things and different types of people and I think we need of that. I think these kinds of brands, which are so big they have a responsibility and they should use their stage and voice to promote something good.

Sara: But also because H&M has children clothes so its like clothes for every age and I think it is not only adults that watch these commercials, actually kids too, they know they wear H&M, and they see these things, so I think it's a very good way of showing them selves and also some kids can watch these things and be like okay it's another way of showing these things. If we only saw VS everywhere it is not good, but I think this is amazing.

RE: So you have spoken about Fenty Beauty, and it is a new brand, is there anything about their promotion that stood out to you from the beginning? Like in their ads and what they represent?

Sara: they did start out with it from the beginning by having every single one and having Halima also in their commercial and I have never really seen a hijab model in any beauty brand commercial from the beginning of the launch and she was in there. And there was Asians and blacks and whites and ginger and whatever you can think of

Amaya: and different age groups

Sara: what I think they did is starting out hard with having everything from the beginning and that is also what makes them different

RE: Do you think that also make them genuine?

Sara: yes I think so too

Hawra: I like what Sara said before that it depends on the time we are, because all the other brands they started way early before we were even born so they did what was okay in the society, and now Rihanna has done an amazing job at what is good right know.

RE: But don't you think for example a brand should have the budget to have 40 shades instead of 23 from the beginning?

Sara: yes because we have been here for a long time as well as our parents, so its not like they have not had other ethnic groups. L'Oreal should have done this before not just when Fenty and Huda and everyone else doing it.

RE: You talked about these brands that have been here for like 100 years and not done diversity, the pressure is there, so maybe we can agree that with time they might actually have to do something, so what can they do? What does it take for them to get your trust because they are trying?

Sara: if they are trying they should do their products as well as their branding, and not just have 1 dark person sometimes in their promotion, but have it all the time and have it like consistently, not just someone here someone there, and maybe also with social media influencers. But also like with TV commercials that is what get most views and it is always a white woman with blue eyes and big lashes, always, and don't understand why its never a dark person because they have the biggest lashes in the world, so why? It doesn't make sense, so if they want they should have a unity in their branding and products, both should make sense, they should have it all out.

Amaya: and they should have equality, when I say that I mean, like we talked about earlier the picture with L'Oreal foundations, they had like 20 white foundations and only 5 dark foundations, but they should have the same amount of dark skin tones.

RE: Maybe also in terms of not only having black women but also having maybe plus size women, not only having women with long hair but also have bold women for example.

All girls: yes exactly

RE: I think you have all maybe seen this before? (Fenty beauty ad)

All girls: yes

RE: what do you think about this video, is it inclusive and diverse?

Pakiza: Yes it shows every type of women

Mahroon: I think she took an extra step and really showed many different people, and I think it makes it more interesting and more captivating, but maybe not relatable.

RE: Do you others feel that this is relatable?

Sara: of course it is, way more relatable than for example L'Oreal's models. It is more realistic

Amaya: and it shows that you can be beautiful in different kind of ways

Sara: even though she didn't do the inclusivity in age, but she did in religion and in colour and in body type, but again she has different brands, in makeup she does a lot about skin colours, but in her lingerie she does a lot about the ages as well.

RE: I am going to show you an ad, I don't think a lot of you have seen it; it's a Nike ad
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T1Qyg8l-l8U

RE: What message is Nike trying to send through this ad and how does it make you feel watching this video, and the way they portray the woman wearing hijab?

Mahroon: in a positive way and empowering way, because a lot of people that doesn't know a lot about Islam and about women wearing hijab they think they are oppressed and think that they are not powerful and that they don't have their own opinion and their own power, and that they are not allowed to do certain things, but this commercial shows that it is not how it is at all.

RE: do you think it is good that they are showing that

All girls: yes it's amazing

Mahroon: it definitely shows that you shouldn't trust everything you hear because it is not necessarily true.

Hawra: I think they are breaking many big stereotypes about Muslim women and I completely agree with what you said like many assume that we cant do anything basically, only wear the scarf and that's it but we actually like to do what everyone like to do.
I think its great, but I just noticed that the voice speaking behind is 1 dialect, which is from the Golf countries and its like that there are only Arab Muslim women wearing the hijab and not e.g. Pakistani women wearing the hijab, they did not make it in a universal language that others can also understand. But maybe this was only for Arabic countries maybe they have done the same for other Muslim countries. But even Arabic countries are all very different from each other. They could at least have spoken a universal Arabic language.

RE: you talked earlier about brands having a social responsibility, do you think Nike is doing it in a good way in this ad? Taking a responsibility?

Humera: I have seen this ad before, and when I saw it first time, I actually think its great because they give an opportunity to women who are not comfortable wearing shorts or something like that when doing sports.

Sara: I also think they are doing it in a very interesting way, because there is a stereotype in the West about how Muslim are but also in Muslim countries hijabi women are somehow seen as way more religious and not allowed to do sports or anything, just sit home and not speak loud and be a certain way, and that's also what they did in the ad with the hijabi on the skateboard and a man looked at her thinking like you are wearing the hijab you shouldn't skate, so I think they did a great job but not only try to break stereotypes but also showing that there are stereotypes within our selves that we have to break down.

Hawra: they are empowering the Muslim woman. And they make girls think that you can actually do things even though your culture looks at it like its wrong, but its actually not, so on this perspective I really like what they are doing.

RE: We have some collages we want to show you, on the top we have some photos of Rihanna's Lingerie line, these were posted on her Instagram. We have a girl who is skinny but with small boobs covered, on the

bottom we have Ashley Graham here, and this is a Victoria's Secret, so which photos do you find more attractive when you look at this?

Mahroon and Hawra: Victoria's Secret

Mahroon: But I also think Ashley Graham look sexy

RE: If you compare how Ashley look compared to the one from Fenty, who is the more realistic plus size woman?

Mahroon: Definitely the girl on top from Fenty Beauty, I always felt like Ashley yes she is plus size but she has a flat stomach

Humera: she seems skinny

Mahroon: she isn't realistic fat, she has a big but and big thighs but a small waist, that is what makes her attractive; I don't think she is realistic

RE: what do you think Amaya of these photos from Fenty beauty and Ashley Graham and VS models? Which photo do you find more attractive when you look at the plus size women, who is the best photo of someone who is plus size for you?

Amaya: I would say the Fenty beauty ad, because I just heard some of the girls talk about it and I agree that Ashley Graham doesn't look plus size she has a flat tummy and I cant relate to that, the Fenty beauty ad is more relatable

RE: is it a good thing that they are showing plus size (Fenty) they are a lingerie ad like VS and they are showing plus size women?

Amaya: they are showing a more realistic image of the women I see around, I don't see many women looking like Ashley Graham or the VS models

RE: So you would say that the top one is more relatable?

Amaya: yes it is more relatable, I would think more positively about Fenty beauty

RE: Humera what do you think about Fenty beauty's way of doing diversity, they have a big woman and a old woman and a skinny girl who is very flat chested, does that make you think more positively about Fenty?

Humera: yes I do, they are trying to capture each and every person, I think they are doing it way better than other brands and they are taking it to a whole other level

RE: and in terms of seeing your self through brands, would it be easier to see your self-reflected through a brand like Fenty or Victoria's Secret?

Humera: I would say that I have been more influenced by the ads of Fenty, like my makeup girl told me not to try the Fenty foundation, but I have seen so much from the brand online and so many ads and I got influenced so I really wanted to try it, and I did.

RE: when you see these lingerie ads, would you guys want to try the brand because they show so many different body types and ages?

Mahroon: I would love to do it, but I think the reason why anyone would buy Fenty its because its Rihanna's brand and I think that also affect it a lot, but if an unknown brand made these kind of pictures and stuff then it wouldn't be that much

Humera: I disagree because, other famous people have also made a lot like Kim Kardashian and Kylie Jenner, but their brand is not perceived as positively. I wanted to try Kim Kardashians contour kit but I don't think she is that nice

RE: Pakiza you said there is a lot of negative associations around Kim Kardashian?

Pakiza: yes compared to Rihanna, I think its also about how the product is, instead of who, its true that it obviously influence a lot that its Rihanna or Kim, but also just because its Kim it doesn't mean that the product is quality, really many makeup artists like went out and talked negatively about Kim's products and said its not good, everyone said that. The ones who just got paid to show their positive support like its so good they were paid, everyone else said that its just normal products and not that good and its so expensive so people were like its waist of money.

RE: What do you think about old women like her in lingerie?

Mahnoor: I think its weird to be honest, I know you should just be yourself but that's just weird

Humera: maybe we cant relate to that because of our age and my mom and grandmother doesn't look like that, right now its maybe weird

RE: For example you are not a hijabi but you might think its cool to show a hijabi in an ad, and in the same way you are not old, so when we talk about diversity and representing everyone?

Mahnoor: I think its more funny than anything else, she is cute and its funny its not like you look at the clothes and think that you want that.

Amaya: it is not really selling the product

RE: If you look at the Fenty website they have the same lingerie but on other models, this is from a private person Fenty used on their Instagram.

Sara: I think that we as a group here are not grown up in a culture were older women are "allowed" to be sexy. But I think everyone is allowed to do what they want, and if a 60-70 old woman wants to wear lingerie she should. We think its weird but that because of our culture.

Hawra: maybe this is exactly what they want, because the assumption is that older women should not wear these things, and more Western women are actually more cheerful and feel more young and they might want to wear this type of lingerie but because of the assumptions they maybe avoid it and wear it secretly, but now its becoming more normalized.

Hawra: if Fenty has models with flat chest and she looks nice in the bra then I would for example like that because I am flat chested.

RE: this is a general rap up questions, how does it make you feel when you see these ads where you feel that you or other women who might not be a part of the typical advertising are represented? How does it make you feel about the brand?

Mahroon: I get more respect for the brand I feel like I want support the brands that include different women and different cultures. And I think the world is changing all the time and that it will only get better from now on, like in 10 years I think every brand will be diverse.

Amaya: and you notice the brand more and remember the brand because they did something more different than the norm

RE: Do you guys think that we are going in that direction as a society? That the brands will become more diverse in the future?

Sara: I think that it will become very hard to chock now especially here in our western world, I think they are always trying to do something special because you will remember it because it is not something you are used to

RE: Do you expect non-diverse brands to follow the societal changes and become more diverse in the future?

All girls: yes

Mahroon: I think they are going to have to, because if they don't they will just get a lot of critic from people, I don't think they have a choice

Hawra: but maybe also another trend will come we don't know. But I think everyone will follow eventually.

RE: Okay thank you everyone for your answers, the interview is finished.

Appendix 5. A.5 - Interview Guide for individual interview

SETTING THE SCENE

Purpose: To investigate how consumer's perception of inclusivity and diversity affects their attitude towards brands.

Introduction: Hello! Thank you for wanting to participate in this interview, your answers will be very important for our thesis, we therefore highly appreciate your help. The purpose of this interview is to get your personal insights on a specific theme regarding your attitude towards fashion and beauty brands. Unfortunately, we cannot reveal just yet what the theme is, as that will affect your answers. What we can tell is that, the industry is fashion and beauty and the questions will be based on brands within that industry and their promotion/advertising activities. In this interview we want you to talk as much as possible, and with a lot of details and examples. As you have been told earlier, this interview will be recorded in order for us to be able to go back and analyse your answers. The recording will be treated with confidentiality. There are no wrong answers, so please feel to speak freely.

Interviewee personality - getting to know the person

1. Name, age and occupation?
2. What do you like to do in your free time (making the person feel comfortable)

Consumption behavior

Before continuing with the questions, it is important to identify what we mean by:
promotion activities: Here we think about the brands communication in both TV ads, Social media posts, magazines and other kinds of media.

3. Can you mention 2 of your favorite beauty brands and two of your favorite fashion clothing brands?
   a) Explain why they are your favorites?
   b) Can you think of something other than the functionality? For example: brand name, what the brand stands for, history?

5. Do you feel that you get influenced by these brands promotion/advertising activities? TV ads, social media posts and ads, mentions in the media etc. If yes, how?
   a) Do they make you buy from them?
   b) Do they influence how you feel about the brand?

6. What are some of the factors that are in play when you choose a beauty or fashion brand? what is important to you.

7. Where do you get your fashion and beauty inspiration from? And what inspires your choice of fashion and beauty brands?
8. Are there any fashion and beauty brands that you are wanting to try? And why do you want to try these brands, what do you think have triggered you wanting to try them?
9. If you were to think back, what is the last fashion and beauty brands that you remember talking to a friend about and why? Maybe an ad has left an impression, or you have heard someone else talk about the brand?
10. What should a brand contain to appeal to you, both in terms of products and advertising activities
11. Have you personally faced any issues with fashion and beauty brands, when choosing/using a brand, or just simply an issue with some of their communication activities? And do you think that there are any issues in general in the fashion and beauty industry that need to be addressed?

Uncovering new tendencies in the industry

Before starting with the questions, it is important to identify what we mean by fashion and beauty industry/brands.
Fashion: This industry/brands involves mainly clothing, but also accessories like bags, shoes, etc.
Beauty: This industry/brands involves cosmetics and skin care.

2. During the last few years, society and especially the fashion and beauty industry have gone through some changes in regards to representation of women. In what way if any have you seen that portrayed when it comes to brands in first products and then advertising?
   a) Do you see any tendencies that are in focus for many brands?
   1. Do you feel that brands you just mentioned as your favorites reflect the new tendencies you mentioned?

Representation of consumers in ads

- Can you define what beauty means to you?
- Have you seen yourself reflected in brands advertisement?
- Do you care about feeling represented in the fashion and beauty advertisement?
- Does it impact you choice of brand if you see yourself more represented by some brands than others?
- Can you think of a brand that you think is good at representing women that looks like you?
- Do you think there is a lack of representation of women that looks like you in ads?
    - If yes, should you be represented?
    - If a brand used models and had products that appealed to a diverse women and was inclusive how would that make you feel?
- Can you think of any specific brands that you think should represent women like you?
- Can you think of any specific brands that you think don't need to represent women like you?
- Is it sufficient to have women who for example have the same ethnicity as you, but are still tall and skinny, with flawless skin and face?

INTERVIEWER: You may already have touched upon it in the first questions about changes in the industry, but this thesis is about diversity and inclusivity. We did not mention it in the beginning to test whether you were aware of the existence of this tendency. As mentioned earlier in the first questions, diversity and inclusivity are becoming big tendencies in the industry. With the following questions, we want to examine your attitude towards this tendency.

DEFINITIONS
Inclusion: is viewed as the inclusion of people of all races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, social classes, economic classes etc. Looking through a brand lens, inclusivity in branding allows for all customers to see themselves in that brand.
Diversity: is viewed as something brands commit to be, by having a commitment to recognizing and appreciating the variety of characteristic that make people and communities unique.

7. The brands you mentioned as your favorites, do you experience them as being diverse and inclusive?
    a) If yes, how?
    b) If no, why not?
    c) If no, can you think of other brands?

8. How are they different from other brands in relation to what you just mentioned?

9. Beside the benefits of the products from these brands, do you see it as a benefit that they are diverse, do you think more positively about them?

    1. What does diversity and inclusivity mean to you? In relation to fashion and beauty
    2. Can you mention the brands that come to mind when we say diversity and inclusivity?
        a. Why specifically these brands?
        b. What stood out to you?
    3. Have you seen any promotion activities from these brands that you think show that they are diverse and inclusive?

4. Can you mention some brands that you perceive as not diverse and inclusive? Maybe some brands that have tried to be, but in your opinion failed?
5. What makes them not diverse?
    .   What could they have done differently?

Advertising diversity & inclusivity

1. What would you characterize as a "marketing stunt" and a genuine attempt to be more diverse and inclusive?
2. Can you imagine seeing an old lady (60-70 year old) walking down a runway for lingerie?
a.   If yes: why?
b.   If no: Why not? Old women buy lingerie too?
3. Do you think Fenty using an old lady in lingerie is as credible as Victoria's secret showing an old lady in lingerie?

Appendix 6. A-6 Interview Guide for focus group

Purpose with focus group: The purpose is to gain deeper insights into what it is that influences consumers (respondents) perception of when and how a brand can be diverse. The researchers have uncovered themes from the individual interviews, that we assume plays a role in regards to why some brands are perceived as more diverse and inclusive than others. These themes will be tested and uncovered in the focus group interview thru questions and mainly visual elements that has the purpose of allowing the respondents to put words into how they view different pictures and videos from brands while also comparing them to other brands. The most important aspect the researchers wish to uncover is, roughly speaking, what it is that makes people perceive some brands as more diverse than others, and basically what brands need to consider when addressing diversity and inclusivity.

Introduction

- Introducing our thesis subject
- Specify our focus on diversity and inclusivity (add definitions)
- Explain method (what is a focus group + what is expected + tell we will show ads and pictures + group discussion)

- **Define diversity:** is something brands commit to be, by recognizing and appreciating the variety of characteristic that make people unique.
- **Define Inclusivity:** the inclusion of people of all races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, social classes, economic classes, it is something that allows for all customers to see themselves in that brand.

Part 1 about the tendency (Grundlag)

- What does inclusivity and diversity mean to you when you think about the fashion and beauty industry? (Fælles spørgsmål)
- What brands reflects the current society? Show options on a slide. 5-10 brands.

Part 2 Relationship between product attributes and promotion activities of D&I
- When we say inclusivity and diversity, which brands (fashion + beauty) come to mind? Why do you think of these brands?
    - In terms of their products?
    - In terms of their promotion?
    - Take a few minutes in groups

- Is a brand diverse if only one of the aspects is addressed, like if the products are for everyone but the promotion shows the typical standardized type of woman that is thought of being the "ideal type"?
- We want you to discuss these two images, in regards to if and how they are diverse, considering both products and promotion: **PICTURE of Fenty and L'Oreal**

- Both of these pictures are supposed to show diversity in products, we the researchers know that for sure people will act more positive to Fenty, although, we want to hear their comments on L'Oreal, even though we know these might be negative, we need the comments and discuss their answers.

Part 3 The brand name and what the brand stands for + Associations

- Brands tend to carry with them a certain image and a "way of being" and something that they are known for, so when I for example say Victoria's Secret, what do you immediately think of?
    - (The girls will properly mention something about the skinny models and the lingerie)
    - Groups of 2 - association map

Victoria's Secret
- Do you think that an old brand like Victoria's Secret who is known for certain things, in the future might be able to change some of this? Maybe try to be D&I? (Open question to everyone) – (after they answer kind of broadly, show them this video: **(in groups)** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qFoEBG3drqI of Ashley Graham commenting on VS having plus size models -> After video let them discuss for a few minutes in groups.
- Depending on what they comment on the video:
    - Do you think VS can be a diverse brand by embracing plus size?
    - Does the brand name and what you think they are known for affect if they can be diverse?
    - Do you even expect them to change, is it okay for them to stay the way they are.
- In their 2017 Annual fashion show in Shanghai, the show was celebrated as the most ethnically diverse in its 22-years history, because they had about 50% of the models being black/Asian/Hispanic compared to the 30% in 2016. (Show the picture)
    - Is this diversity?
    - Is this good enough in regards to addressing diversity?

- Does it affect your perception of the brand? (in regards to what they mentioned about who the brand is in the beginning of the questions)
- If you read online about VS, you will notice that the discussion about diversity in VS was very hyped, like there is a lot of articles about how they were diverse in 2017 because of the models they chose and also the previous years they slowly chose more and more different looking models…
  - For their 2018 show, what would you expect to see in order to perceive them as diverse?
  - Also, not only the show, but in general in terms of products and promotions, can you imagine yourself seeing VS as a diverse brand in the future?

Vogue Magazine

- When I say Vogue Magazine, what do you immediately think of? What do you associate them with in terms of how they do things and are known for?
- Do you think Vogue is a brand that represents diversity? Or ever have?
- What do you think about this cover from Vogue: **(maybe group discussion?)**
  - We assume that the respondents will act positively to the cover, although, it is interesting to compare their first comments about perception of Vogue with their comments to this picture.
  - Does the brand name and what you think they are known for affect if they can be diverse?
  - After their comments and reason for their comments, we show them the statements about Vogue in the slides.
    - Through the quotes, do they think Vogue is a diverse brand, or on its way to being one.

L'Oreal Paris

- What comes to mind as the first when I mention L'Oreal, what do you associate the brand with in regards to promotion and products?
- Just like with Vogue, L'Oreal have also had diversity on its agenda, with promoting their 23 foundations compared to 15 from their closest competitors.
- Show them the diverse video and discuss if it is diverse, why and why not?
  - Here we need to connect the answers to their associations about L'Oreal.
  - Video: https://www.marketingweek.com/2017/03/01/loreal-power-diversity/

- Marketing stunt or genuine: This is a L'Oreal ad from two years ago (video 6), what do you think about it? Do you feel they are showing inclusivity and diversity? Do you feel that this a genuine attempt? Why and why not? **DISCUSS VIDEOS**
  - Is this something you have seen L'Oreal done often?

- Does the brand name and what you think they are known for affect if they can be diverse?
- Now, show them the quotes
  - After reading the quotes, we will discuss whether L'Oreal can be perceived as diverse, are they going the right direction, what do they have to do and focus on to change people's perception.

ZARA

- What comes to mind as the first when I mention ZARA, what do you associate the brand with in regards to promotion and products?
- Do you view ZARA as a diverse brand?
- Show them the Instagram post and pictures and discuss if it reflects diversity.
- Does your associations about ZARA as a brand and what they usually do affect whether they can be diverse in the future?

ZARA Fall 2018: https://www.instagram.com/p/BltKRqdjayU/?hl=da&taken-by=zara

Part 4 Addressing diversity and inclusivity by "going all in" and consistency

- what do you think of these two H&M ads (video 1, and 2) Do you think they address diversity in people and women in particular, and how?
- what do you think about this ad from H&M (video 3), which is three year old? (do they still feel H&M is inclusive and diverse?)

- Fenty beauty is a new brand, have you noticed their promotional activities from they started? and why?
- What do you think of this Fenty beauty ad (Video 4)? How do you feel about it in terms of inclusivity and diversity? Do you see yourself represented in it? do you see yourself as you are or maybe a more ideal version of yourself?
- What type of women does a brand like Fenty or H&M represent, based on the videos you have seen? Do you see this in their products too?
- What message is NIKE trying to send through this ad (video 5)? How does it make you feel when you watch this video? How are NIKE trying to show women in hijab?
- Here is some examples of Fenty Beauty, H&M, and L'Oreal's instagrams, do you feel that there is alignment between their social media and what they offer in terms of products? And also how you think of the brand

Part 5 Being represented in the promotion activities (SANIA)
- If you look at this collage: which photos do you find more attractive? All the photos on the top are Rihanna's new underwear line
- As a first thought on which models do the underwear look most attractive?
- How do you feel the Fenty photo represent women with curves versus the cover with Ashley Graham?
- And how do these two photos represent women of age to you? Which is more likable and why?
- Considering the videos we showed you and these collages: in which of them did you see yourself reflected? Why?
- How does it make you feel when you see these ads where you feel that you or other women who might not be a part of the typical advertising are represented? How does it make you feel about the brand?

Influencers
- Do you follow social media influencers?
- What type o influencers do you follow? Do they look like you , same body type, skin colour ethnicity?
- Do you consider them as "real" flawed human beings that you can see yourself in, through what they post and say, or are they maybe more perfect humans living great lives?

- Do you care about the personalities of our favourite influencers? Such as their values etc?
- Do you follow their recommendations on beauty and fashion brands?
- If your favourite influencer talks positively of a fashion or beauty brand, how does that shape your attitude towards the brand?
- If an influencer you like, who is also from a minority or represent you works with a brand, will it impact your perception of the brand being diverse or not? In the sense that the brand represents you by using an influencer from a minority.

Part 6 Final questions to sum up

- How do you see the future in regards to diversity and inclusivity in the fashion and beauty industry? are we going the right direction?
- Do you expect not diverse brands to follow the societal changes and become more diverse in the future?

Appendix 7 – A.5 Fenty Beauty

Source: Pineda, D. (2017). Why Rihanna's Fenty Beauty Line is shaking up the makeup industry. Retrieved from http://www.snippetmedia.com/snippetx/dianne/why-rihannas-fenty-beauty-line-is-shaking-up-the-makeup-industry/

Appendix 8 – A.6 L'Oreal

Source: Roderick, L. (2017). L'Oreal on how the 'power' of diversity transformed the brand and pushed sales. Retrieved from https://www.marketingweek.com/2017/03/01/loreal-power-diversity/

Appendix 9 - A.7 Vogue

Source: Corner, N. (2018). Vogue UK magazine cover applauded for diverse cover. Retrieved from https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-5566719/Vogue-UK-magazine-cover-applauded-diverse-cover.html

Appendix 10 – A.8 ZARA

Source: ZARA. STORIES-NEW IN | ZARA United States. Retrieved from
https://www.zara.com/us/en/editorial-l1469.html

Appendix 11 – A.9 Victoria's Secret

Source: Moloney, A. (2017). When and where to watch Victoria's Secret Fashion Show 2017 in the UK? | Metro News. Retrieved from https://metro.co.uk/2017/11/28/when-and-where-to-watch-victorias-secret-fashion-show-2017-in-the-uk-7115795/

Appendix 12 – A.10 Savage X Fenty

Source: Savage. (2018). SAVAGE X FENTY BY RIHANNA on Instagram: "Feelin' thyself in the High-Waist Cheeky   #DAMN | Pair this with the Embroidered Lace Unlined Bra in Candy   Red". Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/Bllpe2RgVLS/

Appendix 13 – A.11 Savage X Fenty, Ashley Graham and Victoria's secret
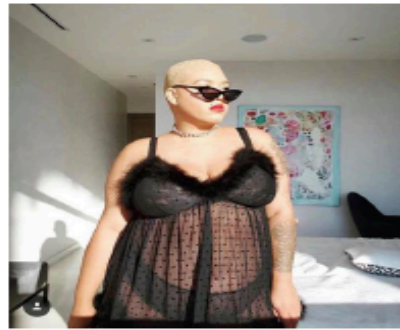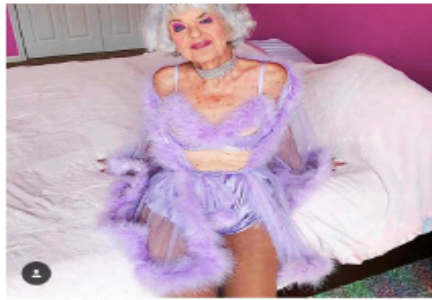
Source: Charendoff, C. (2016). Plus-Size Model Ashley Graham Gets A Historic Sports Illustrated Cover. Retrieved from https://www.theodysseyonline.com/size-model-ashley-graham-historic-sports-illustrated-cover

Source: Savage, X. (2018). SAVAGE X FENTY BY RIHANNA on Instagram: "Sunday serve brought to you by @jazzmynejay | #DAMN girl | Featured: Flock Dot Babydoll". Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/BlRclA_A8gb/?taken-by=savagexfenty

Source: Savage, X. (2018). SAVAGE X FENTY BY RIHANNA on Instagram: "SHE BAD | @baddiewinkle did not come to play in the Marabou Bra with Open Cups + Sheer Robe #BLACKWIDOW ". Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/BkxsaOyggMQ/?taken-by=savagexfenty

Source: Mcloughlin, L. (2018). VS Angels set pulses racing for new lingerie campaign. Retrieved from https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-5459947/VS-Angels-set-pulses-racing-new-lingerie-campaign.html
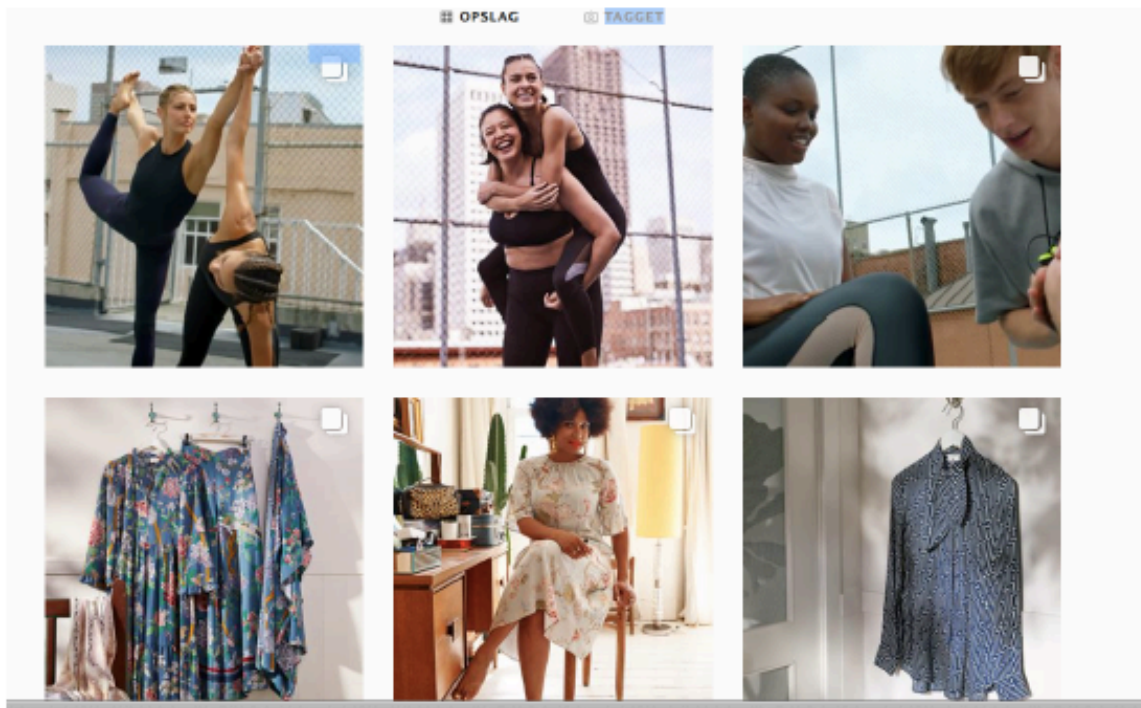
Appendix 14 – A.12 Fenty Beauty, H&M and L'Oreal Instagram pictures
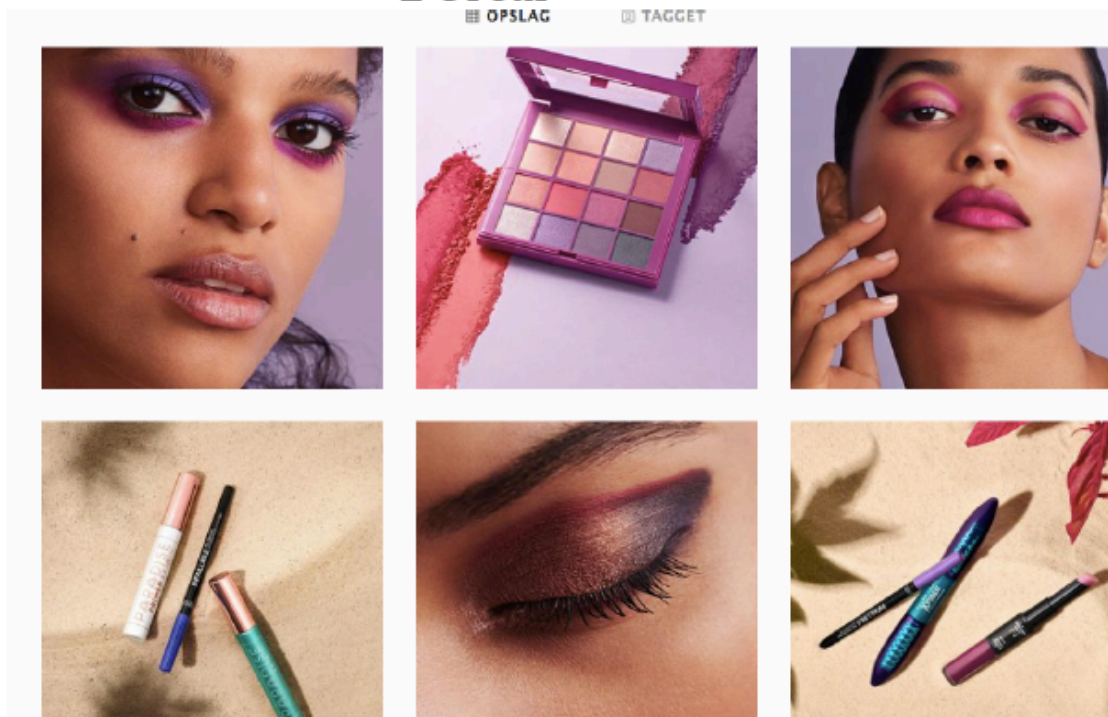
Fenty Beauty
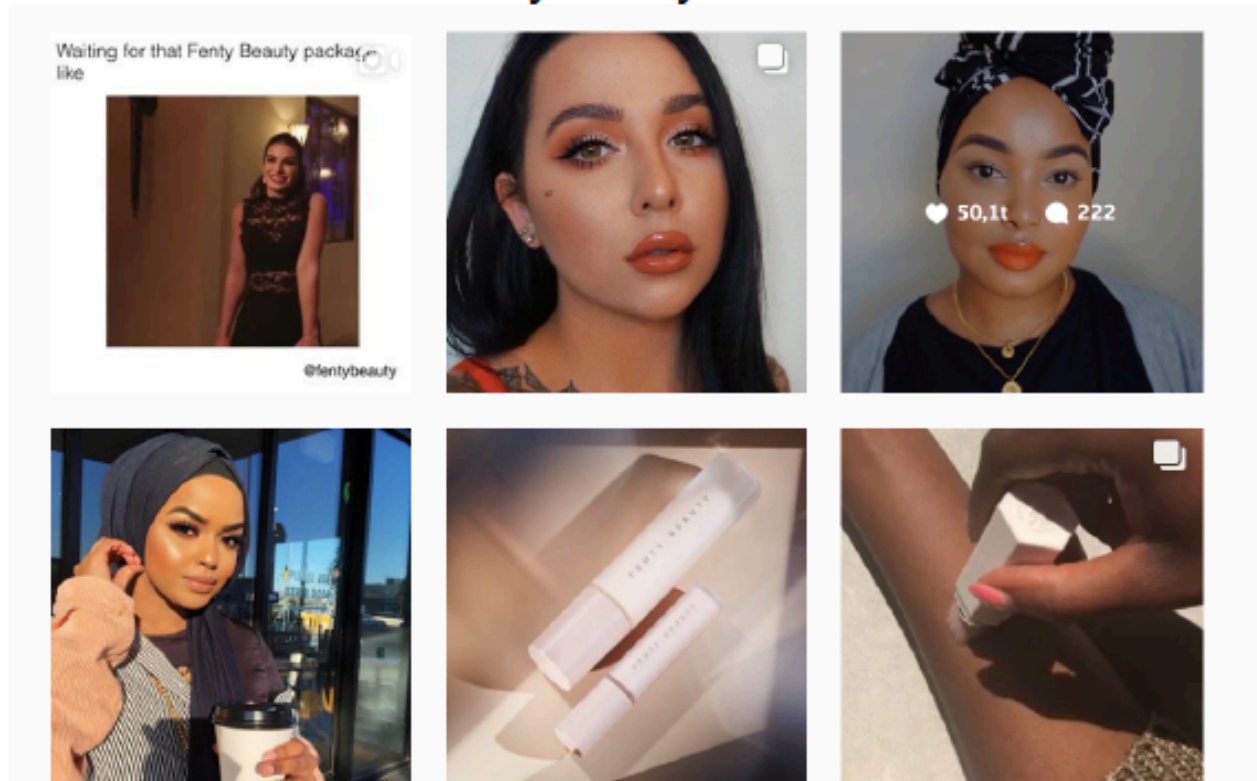
Source: FentyBeauty Instagram. (2018). FENTY BEAUTY BY RIHANNA (@fentybeauty) • Instagram photos and videos. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/fentybeauty/

H&M

Source: H&M Insta. (2018). H&M (@hm) • Instagram photos and videos. Retrieved from
https://www.instagram.com/hm/

L'Oreal

Source: L'Oreal Insta. (2018). L'Oréal Paris Makeup (@lorealmakeup) • Instagram photos and videos.
Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/lorealmakeup/

Appendix 15 – A.15 Quotes about Vogue

British Vogue

"It took 50 years for British Vogue to feature a black model on the cover. "For 12 long, whitewashed years between 2002, when Naomi Campbell first graced the cover, and 2014, not one individual black model was granted the cover of British Vogue" - Source: The Guardian , April 2018

"It's taken 102 years for there to be a hijabi model on the cover," — Source: EveningStandard, April 2018

Edward Enninful is the magazine's first black and first male editor in its 101 year history:

"The new editor-in-chief of British Vogue has set out his "inclusive" vision for the magazine, saying: "You are going to see all different colors, shapes, ages, genders, religions. That I am very excited about. You are going to see less of models who don't look so healthy." — Source: EveningStandard, November 2017

Source: Davis, A. (2017). Edward Enninful: My Vogue is about being inclusive, it's about diversity. Retrieved from https://www.standard.co.uk/fashion/news/edward-enninful-my-vogue-is-about-being-inclusive-it-s-about-diversity-a3685211.html