Beyond Light, Medium, and Dark: Diversity and Inclusivity in the Makeup and Beauty Industries

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BEYOND LIGHT, MEDIUM, AND DARK:
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY IN THE MAKEUP AND BEAUTY INDUSTRIES

A Capstone Project Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree Bachelor of Science
with Honors College Graduate Distinction at
Western Kentucky University

By
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*****

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this project is to promote diversity within beauty and continue the push for representation and inclusivity. I conducted research on the history of makeup in America during the 1900s and studied how the makeup industry has evolved into what it is today. Rihanna’s launch of Fenty Beauty in 2017 was seen as the start of a new era, challenging beauty brands to be more inclusive. As Fenty created a new industry standard of 40 shades, many other brands followed suit. I then compared my findings with the experiences of real women in my community. I interviewed 10 diverse women about their experiences with makeup and their opinions on beauty. I then photographed these 10 women in their most confident makeup looks. I created a walk-through portrait gallery with these photos to showcase the beauty of diversity, and through sharing their experiences I want to encourage inclusivity and representation in the makeup and beauty industries.
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INTRODUCTION

For decades, the makeup industry was predominately geared towards Caucasiens, with products such as foundation and concealer only available in a limited shade range of light and tan tones. When singer Rihanna launched Fenty Beauty in September 2017, the makeup line featured 40 shades of foundation, ranging from fair to deep dark, and challenged other makeup brands to create collections that were more inclusive to all skin tones. This has since created a shift in the beauty industry towards inclusivity and diversity of all races, genders, ages, and sizes.

The goal of this project is to raise awareness about diversity in makeup and beauty as well as to tell the personal beauty stories of several individuals. Many people of color have struggled to find makeup products that are suitable for their skin tone. Through presenting these experiences, I hope to educate others about diversity within the beauty industry and continue promoting inclusion.

This project included several challenges. Because this project explores an aspect of pop culture, there is not a lot of current research and literature regarding diversity and inclusivity specifically within the beauty industry. As a result, most of my research and information was pulled from non-traditional sources. Examples of these sources include social media, online and printed advertisements for makeup and beauty products, and online beauty magazine articles. Because Rihanna’s launch of Fenty Beauty in 2017 marked the start of this beauty revolution, I will use the ideology and aesthetic of this brand as inspiration for this project.

The first part of this project involved research on the history of makeup in American society. It includes the story of how makeup has become a part of everyday life
and a look into the demand for cosmetics for darker skin tones in the 1900s. I then explore the recent surge of inclusivity within the makeup industry, in the form of new extensive shade ranges and representation of diversity in marketing and advertising.

The second part of this project is a photo gallery of portraits of 10 women of different ages, races, and backgrounds. I interviewed these 10 diverse women about their experiences with makeup and beauty and analyzed these interviews for common themes and similar occurrences. I then created a walk-through gallery in the Intercultural Student Engagement Center in DSU at WKU in order to highlight the individual beauty of each woman, and to share each story with the public in hopes of promoting diversity and inclusivity.
A HISTORY OF MAKEUP IN AMERICA: 1900s

Though the use of cosmetics dates back to ancient times, the practice gained popularity in the United States in the 1900s with the foundation of Maybelline and Max Factor. Maybelline was founded in 1915 by chemist Thomas Williams, who created a product for his sister to darken her eyelashes and brows (Maybelline, 2018). Max Factor, a Polish immigrant and stylist for Hollywood actors, was known for creating cosmetic products to use on screen. He launched a cosmetics line of eyeshadows and brow pencils in 1916, hoping to help all women feel more glamorous (Max Factor, 2019). In 1920, Max Factor created the first modern foundation and coined the term “make-up,” furthering the transition of cosmetics products from on screen into everyday use.

With cosmetics products being mass produced and available in drug stores for the first time, the industry took off. However, these products were only being produced for and marketed to wealthy white women. With the United States still experiencing segregation and racial oppression, films and beauty advertisements featured only white actors and models. Despite the fact that women of color were not presented in mainstream media at the time, there was still a demand for darker cosmetics. Chicago’s official cultural historian, Tim Samuelson, claims that black women in the early 1900s did not have access to cosmetic products. “Large department stores – they’re not going to stock for people of color” (Nittle, 2018). This led to the creation of a niche market, with a handful of companies creating makeup specifically for black women.

Lawyer and chemist Anthony Overton recognized the lack of cosmetics for women of color and created a “high-brown” face powder in the early 1900s. (Nittle, 2018). Morton Neumann, also a chemist, knew that cosmetic companies marginalized
black clients and created Valmor’s Sweet Georgia Brown face powder in 1926. (Nittle, 2018). In 1935, Lucky Heart Laboratories was launched Jewish chemist Morris Shapiro. Lucky Heart Cosmetics advertised that their products were not available in stores and could only be purchased from sales representatives. This was due to department store racism and segregation, which prohibited black customers and products (Nittle, 2018). These brands relied on community members to serve as sales representatives to promote their products.

In the 1940s to the 1960s, social reforms such as the civil rights movement led to desegregation as well as social and economic mobility for African Americans. Low-income families, people of color, and women gradually gained access to more resources during this time. As makeup counters became desegregated, companies such as Maybelline began competing for customers of color (Nittle, 2018). In 1961, Avon began featuring black models in its Ebony magazine advertisements (Walker, 2007). In 1973, Johnson Publishing launched Fashion Fair Cosmetics after 15 years of running the Ebony Fashion Fair fashion show featuring black models and designers. However, finding appropriate makeup for the models was a challenge. CEO John Johnson and his wife approached major cosmetic companies like Revlon about creating cosmetic products to better serve women of color, but they declined (Ingham & Feldman, 1994). So, the Johnsons decided to create their own makeup brand, and Fashion Fair Cosmetics was born.

While the makeup industry was slowly expanding to include women of color, the cosmetic needs of these ladies were still not being met. “There have been myths about how we engage with makeup and what kind of makeup. They never thought of us as part
of that conversation. But if you speak to any woman of color, her parents and
grandparents, there was never a time where we didn’t wear makeup,” stated Desiree Reid,
general manager of Impala Inc., which is the parent company of several makeup brands
(Nittle, 2018).

Despite being rejected by major manufactures, the Johnsons were determined to
make Fashion Fair Cosmetics an upscale brand. They approached large department stores
such as Bloomindale’s and Dillard’s about stocking their cosmetics, and by the late
1980s, Fashion Fair could be purchased in over 1,500 stores (Nittle, 2018). In recent
years, the company has not been doing well, as its parent company Johnson Publishing
filed for bankruptcy in April 2019 (Larson, 2019). However, according to makeup artist
Zarielle Washington, many women of color remember wearing Fashion Fair Cosmetics
and consider the brand as the first modern cosmetics line for women of color (Nittle,
2018).

In the 1990s, supermodel Iman noticed that all women of color – African
Americans, Latinas, and Asians – were being overlooked by the cosmetics industry. She
responded by creating her own makeup line, IMAN Cosmetics, in 1994. The brand
“works to meet the skincare needs in African-American and multi-cultural makeup that
other companies were lacking” (IMAN, 2019). IMAN Cosmetics can still be found at
select Target, Walmart, and Walgreens stores.

The creation of these cosmetics brands geared specifically towards women of
color reveal that there was a long-lasting market for those products. However, major
makeup companies overlooked these women for decades. It was not until recently that the
beauty industry has finally made strides in the right direction. With makeup brands
becoming more diverse and offering more shades than ever, it is important to look at the makeup launch that started the push for inclusivity.
THE “FENTY EFFECT”

In September 2017, singer Rihanna launched Fenty Beauty, which included a line of Pro Filt’r Foundation with 40 shades ranging from fair to deep dark. She was inspired to create this brand after seeing a void in the makeup industry for products that performed well across all skin tones and types (Rihanna, 2019). This launch focused on hard to match skin tones, pinpointing universal shades, and creating formulas for all skin types, “so that women everywhere would be included” (Rihanna, 2019). Fenty’s foundation product was so revolutionary that it made Time’s Best Inventions of 2017 list (Time, 2017). This launch was well-received, earning a reported $100 million in sales in its first few weeks (Robehmed, 2019). The initial launch of 40 shades, the darkest of which was the first to sell out, was unprecedented. Many brands have launched an initial set of shades and then created shade extensions later on, which seems to suggest that people with darker skin tones are an afterthought. Fenty’s vast range of initial shades was seen as inclusive to women and men of all skin colors and skin types. The attention and excitement Rihanna received from this launch was termed the “Fenty Effect” (Saputo, 2019), and challenged other makeup brands to be more inclusive to all skin tones.

Other makeup brands have since responded positively to the “Fenty Effect” by expanding their own makeup lines. In May 2018, the creative director of Revlon, Linda Wells, announced the launch of a new line called Flesh that would feature 40 shades of foundation. In June 2018, CoverGirl launched TrueBlend Matte Made liquid foundation in 40 shades. Other brands, such as Dior and CoverFX also launched foundation lines in summer 2018 featuring 40 shades. This goes to show that Fenty Beauty has created a new “industry standard” of 40 shades.
Despite all of Fenty’s success, they were not the first makeup brand to feature an extensive shade range. M.A.C. already had 43 shades of Pro Longwear Foundation, Maybelline’s Fit Me line had featured 40 shades since May 2017, and Make Up For Ever launched 40 shades of Ultra HD foundation in 2015 (Rodulfo, 2018). Shortly after Fenty’s launch, Make Up For Ever seemed to call out the new brand in an Instagram post, stating that 40 shades were “nothing new” to them. Rihanna responded by commenting “lol. still ashy” on the post, implying that Make Up For Ever’s product was lacking in range and made people of color appear gray, or “ashy” (Li, 2018).

The Pudding, a digital publication that debates ideas within pop culture, collaborated with researcher Jason Li to test the validity of this comeback in a 2018 visual essay. In order to measure inclusivity in the foundation lines, Li recorded the hexadecimal color code used to represent each shade on both brands’ websites.

**Figure 1** A depiction of Fenty Beauty's 40 foundation shades versus Make Up For Ever's 40 shades. (Image by Jason Li, 2018)
Using Photoshop, the lightness values were extracted from each shade. These lightness values were then plotted to see whether the brand catered towards lighter or darker skin tones. By comparing the number of shades within each lightness range, we can see which skin tones are being catered to by each brand.

**Figure 2** Comparison of lightness values of each shade in both collections. (Image by Jason Li, 2018)

It is evident that Fenty’s foundation shades are evenly distributed and support a greater range of skin tones, with shades available on the lightest and darkest ends of the
spectrum. In contrast, Make Up For Ever’s shades cater to light and tan tones, with 31 of the 40 shades falling into the 60-90 lightness range (Li, 2019). With only a few dark shades available, Make Up For Ever has not reached the richness or extensiveness of Fenty’s shades.

This study reveals that having an extensive shade range alone does not make a brand diverse or inclusive. Equally as important is the distribution of those shades and presence of different undertones. Meeting the new 40 shade standard means very little if 35 of those shades are light and medium. The diverse range of shades available in Fenty’s collection is one reason why the brand has been so successful. In January 2019, Fenty Beauty announced that 10 additional shades of foundation would be added to the collection, now totaling 50 inclusive shades.

It is also notable that the launch of Fenty Beauty included a campaign trailer, “Beauty for All,” which was praised for its representation of diversity and inclusivity. Sandy Saputo, the chief marketing officer at Kendo Brands, which includes Fenty Beauty, stated that Rihanna made it clear that no one was to be excluded. The approach to inclusion marketing was about showing, not telling. The word “inclusive” was never used in the company’s messaging. Rather, the company focused on sharing authentic stories that are meaningful to the consumers (Saputo, 2019). This campaign marked a breakthrough in the representation of beauty by including models of all races, cultures, skin types, and sizes. “Beauty for All” has been further exemplified on Fenty’s social media platforms, which prominently feature models of color. It is important for makeup brands to include representation of people of color in their marketing and advertising campaigns. In order to be successful, brands must represent their target audience. Many
brands have been criticized for launching extended shade ranges, but then failing to represent the darker shades on social media and in their advertising. For some brands, it seems that diversity is just a bandwagon marketing tool, but for brands like Fenty Beauty, diversity and inclusion are at the core of the brands’ values.

**Figure 3** Beauty For All: A depiction of all 50 shades currently available in Fenty Beauty’s Pro Filt'r Foundation. (Image by Saputo, 2019.)
With an understanding of the existing research, I felt it was important to compare these findings with the experiences of people in my community who wear makeup. Through personal references and social media outreach, I selected 10 people of different races, ethnicities, ages, sizes, and backgrounds to participate in this project. Although I was open to including men and all genders in this project, the interest I received came from only women. I interviewed 10 diverse women about their experiences with makeup and asked them to share their personal feelings about beauty. Among these 10 unique women, I noticed common themes relating to shade-matching, discrimination, and beauty on the inside.

I was not surprised to hear that all 10 women have struggled to find their foundation shade before. Some felt that until recently, makeup brands were not making a shade for their skin tone at all. Others felt that their shade may have been available but noticed that stores were not keeping the darker shades stocked. Additionally, many of the women mentioned that they have found products that match the base tone of their skin, but the undertones of the product were incorrect, causing their complexion to appear unnatural.

After being unable to find their shade on their own, several of the women I spoke with turned to professionals for help. Many makeup counters and beauty stores, such as M.A.C., Sephora, and Ulta offer professional color-matching services. Of the five ladies who used these services, three of them reported being color-matched incorrectly with shades that were too light for them. This reveals that despite recent efforts to create more
shades for people of color, makeup artists and employees lack the proper education and experience to correctly match these skin tones.

Additionally, 4 of the 10 women have felt personally discriminated against in regard to beauty. They feel as though they are being held to a different standard of beauty because of their race or ethnicity. One woman has been told by strangers that she looks “different.” Two women stated that they feel as though the goal of many beauty products is to make women of color appear lighter in complexion. One of these ladies further emphasized that it seems some makeup artists try to make women of color look more like a Caucasian woman by attempting to make their noses appear slimmer and their full lips appear smaller.

Despite these negatives, their experiences with makeup and beauty have not been all bad. All 10 women expressed that makeup helps them feel confident, empowered, and inspired. It was especially refreshing to hear each woman agree that beauty is more than physical appearance. These women collectively stated that beauty is a feeling; it is being comfortable in your own skin and confident in the person you are on the inside. Beauty is all about self-expression and individuality.

I asked each of these ladies to wear makeup that made her feel most confident and photographed each woman individually. I created a walk-through portrait gallery to showcase the unique and diverse beauty of these women. By sharing their experiences, I hope to promote diversity and continue the push for inclusion that has been recently demonstrated by brands such as Fenty Beauty. The following pages contain the portraits and personal beauty stories of these 10 diverse women.
Rosa grew up in the Okolona neighborhood of Louisville, Kentucky – a neighborhood that she feels at the time was not very diverse. She was often told that she looks “different” from other girls, and strangers often asked her about her ethnicity. She started wearing makeup around the age of 14. She noticed that most of the foundations that were available were for pale, ivory, and white skin tones. There were not any shades that featured her yellow undertones.

When she was in her early 20s, she discovered her shade in an unconventional way: through Oprah’s talk show. Oprah began showcasing makeup tutorials on her show for women of color and women with different undertones. This is how she discovered
Max Factor Panstik foundation in her own shade. She was interested to learn that Max Factor created one of the first makeup brands in America and played a key role promoting makeup for everyday use. Rosa commends that Oprah always featured lots of diversity on her show.

Today, Rosa chooses to wear makeup because it helps her feel younger and feel more confident. She places a heavy emphasis on skincare, making efforts to stay hydrated and fight wrinkles. She feels that beauty means “expressing the way you feel on the inside on the outside. Someone’s smile and their eyes reflect on who the person truly is, because makeup is just a mask” (R. Morales, personal communication, October 11, 2019).
Dejah was a self-proclaimed tomboy while growing up. She became interested in makeup around the age of 16 because she thought it would help her “look better.” Since her mom has never worn makeup, she had to figure out how to find her shade and apply different products on her own. She found that foundation shades for people of color were either too light or too dark for her skin, and she had to mix products to create her own custom shade. She recognizes that today, it is not as hard as it used to be for her to find foundations that work for her now that many brands have launched collections with extensive shade ranges.
Dejah feels that women of color are often compared to white women in terms of beauty. She feels put down by men she knows who have claimed that white women are “more beautiful.” She believes many beauty experts do not know how to work with her skin tone or with her textured hair, and said that until recently, she was embarrassed to wear her hair naturally. In the past, people have told her to avoid wearing certain colors due to her skin tone, and she was clear that she is confident in her own skin and will wear whatever color she pleases. She spoke a lot about empowerment for women of color and believes that while society has come a long way in recent years, we still have a long way to go.

Dejah says that beauty means “being comfortable in your own skin and going out however you feel. As long as you’re happy, you can always switch it up and try something new. The most important thing is that you’re good with how you look, because at the end of the day, the only opinion that matters is your own” (D. Cliff, personal communication, October 11, 2019).
ALEXIS

Figure 6 Alexis, 23, identifies as black. She feels that her skin type is oily.

Alexis was also a tomboy as a child. She was never interested in makeup or beauty until college. She wanted to try something new by experimenting with different hair and makeup styles like her friends. She was professionally color-matched at Sephora, but the shade she was given was too light. She feels that some makeup artists try to make African Americans “look more white by slimming their noses making their lips smaller” (A. Purifoy, personal communication, October 11, 2019). She stated, “I feel like people hold women of color to a different beauty standard when it comes to hair and makeup. People will often say things to me like, ‘You’re really pretty for a black girl.’”
Alexis also feels that race comments are often related to hair. She has tried to wear long, straight hairstyles in an attempt to fit in, and has also experimented with wigs. Recently, a lot of stylists are still wanting to use heat on her hair, but she is trying to find more natural stylists.

Today, Alexis is inspired by black hair and makeup artists on social media. They have motivated her to try new looks and products. Lately, she has been experimenting with false eyelashes, pressed highlight powder, eyebrow pomade, and lipstick. Alexis says, “Beauty is mostly about feeling good about yourself, and also seeing the good in other people rather than focusing on flaws. Makeup is cool and can hide imperfections, but you shouldn’t have to wear it and shouldn’t feel bad if you’re not wearing it. People shouldn’t judge you either way” (A. Purifoy, personal communication, October 11, 2019).
Shawndrielle, who goes by Sissy, is black-white biracial. Her skin is oily in the summer and dry in the winter.

Shawndrielle, who is known to her family and friends as Sissy, started wearing makeup at the age of 13, because it was trendy at the time. Her older sister influenced what products she used. She stated that she has always used makeup minimally and prefers a natural look, therefore she only wears foundation when she has a blemish she wants to cover. She has been using Mary Kay mineral foundation ever since she started wearing makeup. She also mentioned that when she occasionally shops for different foundations in stores, she has trouble finding her shade because the colors of the bottle do not usually show the true color of the makeup. She stated, “I’ve been wearing makeup long enough to know what I like. I’m sticking with Mary Kay. They’ve had my shade from the beginning.” Sissy feels that beauty “is on the inside, not necessarily on the
outside. That’s why I’m confident with and without makeup” (S. Saunders, personal communication, October 12, 2019).
Rushika started wearing makeup around the age of 15 to cover breakouts. Today, she wears makeup for confidence and “the appearance of being presentable” (R. Fernando, personal communication, October 17, 2019). When she was new to makeup, she went to Sephora for a professional color-match, but the product she was given did not match her skin tone, and it was too heavy and oily for her face. She felt that all of the skin tone products at Sephora at the time were all either a little too light, or a little too dark. She has noticed, however, that Sephora has started carrying her shade just within the past five years. While she appreciates Sephora’s recent shade extension, she mentioned that Sephora employees tend to direct her only to more expensive products.
Rushika noted that she has to visit two different makeup stores to get the products she needs in her shade. Her shade of foundation is only available at Sephora, although they sometimes do not keep the darker shades stocked. She has to purchase her shade of concealer at Ulta, because it is not carried at any other beauty store. Rushika also mentioned that she has “pretty much never” found her own shade at a drugstore.

Despite these experiences, Rushika keeps a positive attitude when it comes to makeup and beauty. Her personal definition of beauty is “being and feeling confident in your own skin, whether you need to wear makeup or not, and accepting your beauty and your skin no matter what” (R. Fernando, personal communication, October 17, 2019).
Jarie, 21, is Native American (Cherokee and Blackfoot). People often assume she is black or mixed. Her skin type is well-balanced, but sometimes becomes oily due to moisture and other products she uses.

Figure 9 Jarie, 21, is Native American (Cherokee and Blackfoot). People often assume she is black or mixed. Her skin type is well-balanced, but sometimes becomes oily due to moisture and other products she uses.

Jarie started wearing makeup in 6th or 7th grade and admits that the products she used often lighten her skin tone. She did not know how to find her correct shade. Two years ago, she traveled to Orlando, Florida, and while there, she visited a M.A.C. cosmetics store where she was correctly color matched. She now prefers M.A.C. for skin tone products, because knowing that she is wearing the right shade helps her feel more confident. She stated that prior to M.A.C., she had never reached out to any resources to help her with makeup.
Jarie exudes self-confidence and acknowledges that everyone is beautiful in their own way. She believes that beauty is “feeling good within yourself. Everyone has beauty, but once they find their own sense of style within their beauty, that’s what makes them unique” (J. Newby, personal communication, October 21, 2019).
Olivia grew up as a trained dancer, so she began experimenting with makeup at a very young age. She was always excited to get to perform in stage makeup. However, she did not start wearing makeup out in public until 5th grade. Her everyday makeup routine has always been light and simple. Olivia noted that as she got older and new makeup products and techniques became popular, she never got on those “bandwagons.”

“Contouring, filling in lips, false eyelashes… that’s doing a lot for schedule that I have,” she said as she laughed. She likes to use facial cleanser, foundation, blush, mascara, “and a lip stain or matte liquid lip if I’m feeling extra spicy” (O. Mattox, personal communication, November 5, 2019).
Today, Olivia wears makeup to hide exhaustion and bags under her eyes due to her busy schedule. She does not like to spend lots of money on high end makeup brands, because she feels that drugstore brands are sufficient. “I truly experiment with every brand, depending on what product I need” (O. Mattox, personal communication, November 5, 2019). Her favorite brands include Revlon, CoverGirl, Maybelline, and Neutrogena. Olivia stated, “To me, beauty means a combination of qualities that embrace a person in their best light. Beauty can be defined in different ways by different people” (O. Mattox, personal communication, November 5, 2019).
Dhay, 19, has an oily skin type with olive undertones. While she identifies as white, her ethnicity is Middle Eastern. Currently, there is not a separate race or ethnic category for people of Middle Eastern descent.

Dhay started experimenting with makeup in high school. She says there was no specific reason; it was something she tried and really enjoyed doing, especially on other people. She spent a lot of her early makeup days just trying to find the right shade of foundation, which she claims was the hardest part of her makeup journey. She was not able to find her shade until she got professional help. Originally, she preferred not to wear eyeshadow, but she now loves it, claiming it “adds so much to the definition of the eye” (D. Kamaludeen, personal communication, November 7, 2019).

Dhay tends to wear makeup on days when she has more time in the morning to get ready. She claims that makeup helps her feel more energetic, and as a result, she gets
more things done throughout the day when she is wearing her makeup. As with many other women, makeup helps boost her confidence and self-esteem.

Dhay thinks that today, many makeup brands have made efforts to be inclusive. Some brands she mentioned were Fenty Beauty, Huda Beauty, and NARS. She feels that “beauty is a very wide idea. Each person has their own definition of beauty. For me personally, beauty is what makes you beautiful from the inside” (D. Kamaludeen, personal communication, November 7, 2019).
Figure 12 Reina, 20, is half white and half Latino (Guatemalan). She has combination skin type with red and yellow undertones.

Reina has experimented with makeup in several ways. She likes trying new products, such as the Beauty Blender sponge and false eyelashes. Her sister has been a source of inspiration for her when it comes to makeup. On Halloween this year, she was adventurous and tried out long-winged cat makeup and a full-face vampire makeup look.

Due to Reina’s yellow undertones, she too has struggled to find the correct foundation shade. She finds that most makeup for lighter complexions has pink undertones, which cause her to look “like a ghost.” If she tries a tan-colored foundation, the color is usually too dark. She also noted that she is limited by her budget, stating that she cannot afford makeup from Sephora, Clinique, and Morphe as a college student. While cosmetics are the most expensive products she buys for herself, she usually buys
her makeup products from Walmart. Some of her favorite brands that work for her skin
tone and her college student budget are CoverGirl and E.L.F.

Reina stated, “I choose to wear makeup because it gives me the confidence to be
unstoppable. I also wear makeup because even though most feel that feminism is not
wearing makeup or doing certain things, I believe that feminism is making the choice to
do what I please despite others’ opinions! Beauty to me means the power and endless
possibilities that anyone can use to feel fearless. Beauty is such an amazing feeling that
has given people the choice to choose what, how, and when they can wear as much or as
little as they want” (R. Johnson, personal communication, November 7, 2019).
Figure 13 Stephanie, 26, is white, with fair combination skin, pink undertones, and freckles.

Stephanie started wearing makeup during her senior year of high school. It helped her feel more confident in her appearance and put her in a better daily mood. Today, she likes to wear makeup to highlight facial features that are normally difficult to see. Her eyebrows and eyelashes are very light, so she likes to darken them with mascara and brow powder. She explained that today, makeup still helps boost her personal confidence.

Due to her freckles, Stephanie has had trouble with selecting the correct shade of foundation in the past. She chooses to wear a shade that closely matches the color of her skin, which ends up decreasing the intensity of her freckles. She added, “In the summer when my freckles are really popping, I usually have a different, darker shade of foundation” (S. Espinoza, personal communication, November 8, 2019). Having dark
freckles makes transitioning from winter to summer difficult, as she has to use different shades from day to day.

According to Stephanie, “Beauty to me means feeling comfortable in your own skin and appreciating your imperfections. It also means feeling confident in yourself and expressing yourself in the ways you want” (S. Espinoza, personal communication, November 8, 2019).
CONCLUSION

This project has opened my eyes to an issue that I never even knew existed until recently. Now that I am aware, I am conscious of shade availability and representation every time I visit the mall, every time I browse the cosmetics section at work, and every time I scroll through social media. I have learned that many women in my community are facing the same issues related to beauty, such as difficulty color-matching, discrimination, and being held to unrealistic standards. Despite this, makeup still fosters confidence and empowerment for many individuals. While I am proud of the progress the makeup and beauty industries have made in recent years, I want to continue to promote diversity and inclusivity through all of my endeavors.

It is important for makeup companies to continue evolving as society continues to demand a new definition of beauty. These companies should no longer promote a specific beauty standard, but rather embrace all races, genders, ages, sizes, backgrounds, and abilities as beautiful. Instead of launching 40 foundation shades as a means to appear inclusive, companies must put research into developing products that cover an extensive range of base tones and also include specific undertones. Moving forward, more research and representation of different skin types is necessary in order for brands and products to be truly inclusive to everyone. Oily skin, acne-prone skin, hyperpigmented skin, porous skin, and many other skin types are often not featured in beauty campaigns.

I hope this project inspires others to embrace their own beauty and to accept diversity with honor and respect. To me, beauty is having a kind heart and helping others. Beauty is intelligence, hard work, and determination. Beauty is being confident and
loving yourself. But most importantly, beauty is diverse. Beauty is captured in all ages, backgrounds, genders, sizes, and skin tones. This project celebrates diversity and encourages inclusivity while educating others about the lack of products for, and representation of, people of color within the beauty industry. As more people become aware of this issue, the demand for diversity and inclusion in society becomes even greater. I am excited for more progression in the years to come.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

Interview Questions

1. First Name/Age:

2. Race/Ethnicity:

3. Skin Type/Undertones:
   a. As defined by the skincare industry: well-balanced or “normal,” oily, or dry

4. What is your everyday makeup routine?

5. Tell me about some of your experiences with makeup:

6. When and why did you start wearing makeup?

7. Why do you choose to wear makeup today?

8. Have you ever had trouble finding your shade?

9. What are some makeup brands that you like, or feel are inclusive?

10. What does beauty mean to you?