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## Purchasing Products to Make a Difference: A Study of Corporate Social Responsibility, Gender, and Cosmetic Purchasing Behavior by College Students

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Purchasing Products to Make a Difference:  
A Study of Corporate Social Responsibility, Gender, and Cosmetic Purchasing Behavior by  
College Students

An Undergraduate Honors Thesis  
Submitted in Partial fulfillment of  
University Honors Program Requirements  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

By  
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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to investigate gender differences that exist in the way corporate social responsibility (CSR) is perceived by college students and how this affects cosmetic purchasing behavior. Two other objectives included finding what drives millennial cosmetic purchasing behavior as a whole and the ways in which millennials are informed of companies' corporate social responsibilities. Through analyses of interview data from fourteen college-age millennials, the study showed that non-binary participants more positively perceived CSR and actively bought from responsible brands. The male participant perceived CSR positively but had never been sure to purchase products from a brand that was responsible. The female participants fell in between the two, with a few being committed to avoiding animal testing and buying preferentially from responsible companies and others positively viewing social responsibility without actively buying from responsible brands. Although social responsibility was viewed as important to all of the participants, it was not mentioned as the main motivation to purchase products unless they were actively vegan or insisted on buying from cruelty-free brands. Instead, the participants most often cited price and quality as the main motivators for purchasing products. Social media and word-of-mouth were most often the modes by which the participants were informed of companies' responsibility. The various attitudes identified between the different genders' perceptions of CSR, other purchasing motivations, and knowledge of the ways in which millennials are informed of responsibility allows for companies to use CSR in tailored, strategic ways to increase revenue.

**Key Words:** CSR, Corporate Social Responsibility, Gender, Cosmetic Purchasing Behavior, Women's and Gender Studies

## **Review of Literature**

### *Introduction*

It has become increasingly important to consumers that companies conduct themselves responsibly to protect the environment and meet the needs of those who may be underprivileged. As a result, CSR has increased in popularity among companies as a marketing strategy to increase revenue, although some companies choose not to practice CSR and may behave in ways that negatively affect the environment and exploit those around them. Consumers purchasing products typically perceive socially responsible companies in a positive way, which influences them to buy responsible products instead of products created irresponsibly (Auger et. al, 2008). Millennials, specifically, are even more likely to perceive CSR positively and actively buy from responsible brands (Cone Inc., 2015). Furthermore, women are more likely to actively seek out brands that are responsible and purchase their products compared to their male counterparts (Cone Inc., 2015).

CSR as a whole and the ways in which gender affects how millennials perceive it has been deeply studied. However, there is little research on the impact CSR and gender have on millennials' cosmetic purchasing behavior specifically. Additionally, most research has been focused upon the gender binary, which includes men and women. Research largely ignores non-binary individuals and how this gender identity may affect perceptions of CSR and cosmetic purchasing behavior. Few studies sought out the manner in which millennials were informed of CSR activities and the possible ways companies can better reach their consumers.

In this paper, I will present results of a qualitative study involving 14 interviews with millennials attending college to discover how CSR and gender affects their cosmetic purchasing behavior. The purpose of the study was to discover what drives millennial, college-age

consumers' cosmetic purchasing behavior and the ways in which CSR affects their cosmetic purchasing decisions, how the participants were made aware of a company's social responsibility, and whether or not gender differences exist with respect to each of these. The findings of this study may allow for companies to tailor CSR strategies specifically for the gender identities they are trying to target. This study provides more in-depth research on how and why gender identity and CSR may affect cosmetic purchasing behavior, while including the perspectives of individuals who identify as non-binary. Additionally, this study reveals the ways in which participants are informed about companies' responsible actions to allow for brands to better reach their consumers and target millennials accordingly.

### *Corporate Social Responsibility*

As the values within the world continuously change, businesses need to change alongside them in order to maximize their revenue. Research shows that the price, fit, and style of products influence consumer purchases the most (Miller et al., 2017). However, a more recent strategy named "corporate social responsibility" (CSR) has been used in an attempt to tailor to what consumers want in order to increase the company's revenue. Originally, CSR was mostly directed toward reducing the negative effects corporations had on the environment, but the purpose has recently grown to include environmental issues, as well as issues surrounding social equity in a more proactive way (Branco & Rodrigues, 2006). Therefore, CSR is carried out in public activities, as well as in the creation of the products (Hasan, 2018). Due to the fact that it can touch upon a variety of categories depending on the business of concern, such as social, economic, and environmental categories, CSR is extremely ambiguous and difficult to define (Dahlsrud, 2008). For the purpose of this paper, the definition of CSR being used is "situations where the firm goes beyond compliance and engages in 'actions that appear to further some

social good, beyond the interests of the firm' (McWilliams, Siegel, & Wright, 2005, p. 1). In other words, the purpose of CSR is to protect the society's interest as a whole throughout the creation and selling of the companies' products (Holme & Watts, 2000).

In the past, the purpose of business was to "use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game which is to say, engage in open and free competition without deception or fraud" (Friedman, 1962, pg. 133). Over time, this perspective has stayed fairly similar. However, now more than ever, businesses are expected to keep their consumers in mind throughout their decision-making processes. Evidence has shown that consumers are more likely to buy from corporations that are more ethical compared to those that are not, which influences businesses to take part in CSR to appeal to consumer preferences (Auger et al., 2008). For example, a poll conducted by Cone Communications in 2017 discovered that '89% of Americans say they would be likely to switch brands to one associated with a good cause, if price and quality are similar' (Cone Inc., 2017, p. 12). This shows that CSR has an effect on purchasing decisions by encouraging consumer loyalty and creating a positive brand image which could improve the company's chances of success, although it may be viewed as a bottom-line factor (Hasan, 2018). In other words, the price and quality are viewed as the most important factors when buying a product, but if two products are similar in price and quality and one is involved with social responsibility, the consumer will choose to buy from the responsible company, as the CSR activities influence the bottom-line decision. Based on existing research, we expect to find that CSR will positively affect consumers' purchasing behavior as a bottom-line factor with respect to price and quality, but we may find other factors that influence it, as well. The positive brand image and improved

chances of success are why CSR is now a large aspect of the planning that goes into marketing strategies to attract consumers.

### *CSR and the Millennial Generation*

Corporations need to tailor their products to their expected consumers in order to increase revenue. This tailoring requires knowledge of the aspects that affect consumer purchasing decisions, which often vary between different generations. The millennial generation, otherwise known as Generation Y, is considered as those people born between the years 1980 and 2000 (Miller et al., 2017). This generation was raised in a society driven by consumption and is the most engaged with CSR activities, which may be the result of technological availability and their knowledge (Noble, S.M., Haytko, D.L., & Phillips, 2009). The research conducted on millennial consumers is relevant, because they make up a quarter of the population and have an estimated \$200 billion in yearly buying power (Schawbel, 2015). As a result, companies have found it imperative to create new ways to influence them to buy their products.

One of the first comprehensive surveys that focused on the ways CSR affects millennials' consumer purchases was conducted by Cone Inc. in collaboration with AMP Agency (Cone Inc., 2006). This online study, named The 2006 Cone Millennial Cause Study, included 1,800 millennials. The study found that 61% of millennials felt as if they were personally responsible for bettering the world and were more likely to purchase a company's products when the company was socially responsible (Cone Inc., 2006). A more recent study conducted by Cone Inc. in 2015 found that on average, millennials are more likely to buy products that have either social or environmental benefits, tell their network about a company's CSR, and give their opinions to a company about their CSR than the United States' average (Cone Inc., 2015). They are also more likely to make personal sacrifices, such as buying more expensive products or

accepting a cut in wages if it meant working for a socially responsible company or if it allowed them to make an impact on causes they care about (Cone Inc., 2015). These findings suggest that millennials are more responsive to and demanding of CSR than any other generation in the United States, which affects their consumer behaviors.

Transparency and authenticity play important roles in millennials' decisions to purchase products. The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary (2010) defines transparency as "visibility and accessibility of information, especially concerning business practices". Modern consumers expect businesses to show their transparency without the consumers themselves having to do much research on the product or brand (Bhaduri & Ha-Brooshire, 2011). Additionally, millennials specifically look for authentic brands from which to purchase products, because they doubt the true intentions behind advertisements (Cornelis & Peter, 2017). These two aspects require businesses to go out of their way to make their various socially responsible efforts known through the use of advertisements and social media without appearing inauthentic. We expect that most of our millennial participants will be informed of CSR activities through social media platforms, such as Instagram and Twitter, and that this will be the same across all the genders.

The consumer purchasing patterns within the millennial generation differ between male and female consumers. Female millennials were found to be more likely to search for products that were responsible, keep companies accountable for results showing their responsibility, and buy products linked to a responsible cause within the past year when compared to male millennials (Cone Inc., 2015). There is no known available research on the ways in which non-binary consumers are affected by CSR. Based on research, we expect that female participants will be more involved with CSR than male participants. Additionally, little existing research focused on non-binary participants prevents us from being informed about their purchasing

behavior and perceptions of CSR in general. In the absence of this research, I hypothesize that non-binary participants will be even more concerned about CSR than female participants, due to their identities often intersecting with the LGBTQ+ community. In particular, their personal experience with oppression may influence them to care more about the actions of companies.

In previous research, a difference was also found in purchasing patterns within the generation itself based on age. Young millennials between the ages of 18 and 24 were more likely to take a pay cut in order to work for a responsible company and use social media to be able to interact with CSR efforts, while the mature millennials between the ages of 25 and 34 were less likely to believe their purchases could make an impact and have a large gap between their intent and actions (Cone Inc., 2015). This shows that even within generations, different consumer habits are formed across age groups, which may affect how businesses strategize to increase revenue outcomes. The young millennials now make up a large part of the university population around the United States. When students attend college, they gain access to a large amount of freedom they did not have access to before. This freedom allows them to purchase products based on their own needs and wants, which allows them to have a significant impact on various industries.

The retail environment, as a whole, has been experiencing many barriers to success with multiple companies down-sizing or filing for bankruptcy (“Here’s a List”, 2019). American Eagle Outfitters and Aerie avoided both down-sizing and bankruptcy and have actually been extremely successful with a 3% increase in comparable sales by brand and a 23% increase in comparable sales with “Aerie”, their lingerie brand, in the fourth quarter of 2018 (“American Eagle Outfitters”, 2018). The effectiveness of this brand’s advertisements may be explained by a study that tested female millennials’ satisfaction with re-touched photo disclaimers and retouch-

free disclaimers (Cornelis & Peter, 2017). The *#aeriereal* campaign advertisements include retouch-free disclaimers on their advertisements to allow potential consumers to understand they do not edit photos of the bodies of their models. In this study, the researchers discovered that female millennials had a better attitude and greater likelihood to purchase the brand's products when they saw a retouch-free disclaimer on the advertisement (Cornelis & Peter, 2017). The study results suggest that authenticity can play a great role in the purchase intentions of millennials through their perceptions of whether or not brands are realistic and meaningful.

Additionally, the American Eagle Outfitters online site contains a CSR report page in order to inform their consumers of their behaviors outside of sales. This report includes breast and ovarian cancer detection foundation donations, the number of trees the company has planted, their partnership with Make It Right Foundation to encourage the donation of denim to be recycled for house insulation, and more. This brand's success may be due to the fact that it is easy for consumers to access their CSR activities and observe the transparency with which the business conducts itself and that they also provide apparel that is appealing to consumers.

#### *Corporate Social Responsibility and the Cosmetics Industry*

While research has shown various businesses in the retail industry appear to have taken substantial steps in creating a brand with a socially responsible image that is appealing to millennials, CSR within the cosmetics industry and its influence on consumer decisions is largely un-researched. However, consumers have in recent years begun to influence the companies within this industry to become more ethical in the making and testing of their products while uplifting marginalized groups of people within society (Hasan, 2018). This type of CSR is evident within the international brand The Body Shop. The brand boasts five core values, which include supporting community fair trade, activating self-esteem, defending human rights,

advocating against animal testing, and protecting the plant (Hasan, 2018). The creation of a brand whose values' reflect a respect for corporate responsibility, as well as the increase in the number of brands that support cruelty-free and vegan creation of products, may show that consumers expect to have their beauty enhanced as a result of their products and have the ability to observe the company they are buying from support those who are underprivileged and the environment. There has been little research on the connection between corporate social responsibility, gender, and cosmetic purchasing behavior in millennial, college-age students.

The purpose of this study is to find out what drives millennial, college-age consumers' cosmetic purchasing behavior, discover how CSR affects this cosmetic purchasing behavior, be informed of the ways in which consumers are made aware of a company's CSR before buying a product, and observe whether or not gender differences exist with respect to each of these.

I expect that CSR will influence consumer cosmetic purchasing decisions as a bottom-line factor, with price and quality affecting their decisions the most, and the perceived level of importance of CSR will most likely vary between genders with women viewing it as more important than men and non-binary participants viewing it as more important than women. Additionally, I believe millennial, college-age participants will be best informed of CSR efforts through social media platforms, such as Twitter or Instagram.

## **Methods**

### *Data Collection Method*

This research is based on semi-structured, in-depth interviews with fourteen participants, one male, ten women, and three non-binary participants. Their ages ranged from nineteen to twenty-two years of age. Each participant attended the same large, Midwestern university. The

interviews were conducted from May of 2018 to May of 2019 in private study rooms of the library on the university campus. Each interview was one-on-one and covered multiple topics related to CSR and cosmetic purchasing behavior, including the role of social media, personal values, and intimate relationships on purchasing behavior; characteristics of products that influence likelihood to purchase; barriers to buying products; perceived responsibility of companies to society; and perceived importance of CSR as a whole. A copy of the interview questions are provided in Appendix A. The interviews lasted anywhere from 25 minutes to 1 hour and 15 minutes, with an average length of 35 minutes.

Participants were recruited through flyers and word-of-mouth by prior participants. The recruitment flyer is included in Appendix B. Respondents initiated the process by either calling or emailing the researcher. After this, follow-ups and reminders were sent through email or text message, depending on the participant's preference. A maximum of two reminders were sent to participants about their scheduled interview time, one of which was sent the day before. If participants failed to make it to their scheduled interview time, one follow-up attempt was made to reschedule the interview. The phone call, text message, and email scripts used to correspond with respondents are included in Appendix C. A \$20 incentive was used to recruit participants to the study.

Before the interview began, each participant was presented with an Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved informed consent document. A copy of this form is found in Appendix D. We explained each section of the form to the participant, asked them if they had further questions, and instructed them to sign if they agreed to participate in the study. The participants were provided with a blank copy of the form to take with them in the case they needed to contact the primary investigator or advisor. Following signage, the participant was asked if I had their

consent to record the interview. Every participant provided their consent to have their interview recorded. Following the interview, participants were required to fill out an accounting form for the university and were provided with the \$20 incentive.

### *Data Analysis Method*

Each interview was digitally recorded, transcribed verbatim, and coded to identify themes relevant to the research questions. This process began after the first four interviews were conducted and was completed in August of 2019. The coding process started by identifying overarching themes that answered the research questions, such as factors affecting purchasing behavior. These overarching themes were then further dissected to discover sub-themes within them, such as how participants identify with respect to their gender and personal values and beliefs. The themes and ideas identified from early interviews were used to inform follow-up questions in later interviews.

## **Results**

### *Cosmetic Purchasing Decisions and Motivations*

Through qualitative coding of the interview transcripts, I was able to discover underlying motivations that explain why participants purchase cosmetic products in general and why they choose to purchase particular products from specific brands.

### *Female Participants*

Over half of the female participants stated that buying cosmetic products brought them a feeling of self-satisfaction and enjoyment, as the product allowed them to enhance their appearance while being creative. One woman explained this by saying, "...there's, like, two sides of it. There's, like, the concealing and perfecting your skin, and then there's just, like, fun

artful, creative, so both of those.” Three of them also mentioned that wearing makeup had become habitual after being encouraged by family members and friends to begin wearing cosmetics. One participant mentioned, “I actually didn’t wear makeup until I was a little bit older, and [my mom and sisters] were always like, ‘Oh, you should do your makeup! You look so pretty when you do!’ Stuff like that, you know?” An increase in accessibility to the internet has also allowed two of the female participants to become inspired by makeup artists and gurus through the use of videos and photos on social media platforms, which has influenced them to practice their application of makeup and use advice provided by those they watch.

Eight of the women were able to name a favorite brand and state the reasons why it was their favorite when asked. The most repeated motivation for purchasing from the brand was the price of the brand’s products. Four others also stated that cruelty-free or vegan labels are one of their requirements for buying from brands. The product’s quality was mentioned by almost every female participant. Many of them explained this reasoning by stating their specific facial needs that were necessary to be met, such as a product that does not exacerbate oily or sensitive skin or cause acne. Two participants also mentioned their brand had packaging and displays that were “really cute” and “[caught] my eye”. These were what initially attracted them to the brand as a whole. Lastly, a few participants also mentioned they buy products based off of online reviews and recommendations by those close to them. Only one female participant brought up CSR outside of cruelty-free and vegan brands without being prompted by saying:

[Consumers] wanna know, like, is it environmentally friendly? Like, what brand, what company is this, and what am I putting on, like, what am I actually putting on my skin? ‘Cause I care about that a lot, especially with the whole “we’re all gonna die in 10 years” with this whole environment thing. Like, that’s concerned me for years.

When asked in what case they would be willing to buy from brands that were more expensive, participants most often mentioned an increase in quality. In fact, most of the participants seemed to believe that most brands that were more expensive must have had products with a higher level of quality. One participant explained this by saying, “I think there are usually better things in the product, and the more expensive ones are usually the cruelty-free or the brands that, like, I know people use more. So if I know that they’re well-trusted, if they are more expensive, I’m probably going to go with that.” When asked why the quality mattered most to them, another participant stated, “...it’s your skin. Like, this is an entire organ. I’m definitely... I’m a cheap person, but I will pay more for, like, this whole organ that’s hanging on me right now [laughs].” One participant also mentioned that spending more money on a cosmetic product made her feel “luxurious” and as if she was treating herself, which may show that purchasing products may have a positive effect on one’s frame of mind.

#### *Male Participant*

The male participant said he was first introduced to cosmetics through the influence of his younger sisters, which inspired him to begin wearing them himself. Cosmetics are gendered in the way that women use them more often than men. It would make sense that his two sisters were the ones who first introduced them to him and influenced him to use them.

When asked what aspects motivated him to buy from a brand, the participant said, “I usually look for products that aren’t as expensive, because I can’t really afford them. Uhm, and I also look for brands that have, like, the right shade of foundation I need for my skin tone.” All of the participants were interviewed while they were attending university. College students often struggle to make ends meet while they are in school, so it is logical that he would mention one of his primary motivations for buying included the price of the product. This was one of the

primary motivations for the female participants, as well. Additionally, the need to buy from a brand that has his specific shade of foundation may reflect that a brand may have great products within the correct price range, but people will refrain from buying them if they lack shades that match the skin tones of their consumer population.

When asked if he would ever like to buy products that are more expensive, he said he would be willing to “splurge” on products that he wears daily. Two female participants stated something similar to this, while a different female participant said she was willing to spend more on the makeup she does not wear often. This discrepancy between reasoning may show that personal preferences still play very different, large roles in the situations in which people are willing to spend more on cosmetics products. The frequency of use may either encourage or discourage the purchasing of more expensive items depending on the individual. CSR was not mentioned by the male participant as a motivation for buying products without being prompted.

#### *Non-binary Participants*

All three of the non-binary participants mentioned that purchasing and wearing cosmetics allowed them to be creative and have fun with their appearance. One participant explained this by saying, “...So it’s more, for me, I think it comes a lot from, like, the artistry behind it, and I think that a lot of things that people can do with it is really pretty, and I like doing that, too, so.” Another said, “I like them, ‘cause they’re fun, and, like, I like vibrant colors... I love that, like, you can use fun colors to, like, stand out, because I’m pretty bland otherwise? [Laughs] And so I like, like, fun lipsticks or cool eye liner colors.” Although over half of the female participants mentioned similar motivations for buying cosmetics, it is interesting to note that every non-binary participant mentioned creativity and self-expression as a large motivation for buying cosmetics. The male participant did not mention a similar reason for wearing cosmetics. Similar

to what a few female participants mentioned, the internet, specifically YouTube, was mentioned by one of the non-binary participants as an outlet to be inspired by others' cosmetic expertise.

When asked what aspects of a cosmetic product is going to influence participants to buy them, one participant mentioned the importance of buying from a brand that had inclusive shade ranges, although not for themselves. When asked to elaborate, they stated, "I also like to support brands that have inclusive shade ranges. I'm, like, a super pale person, so that doesn't really affect me, but I still want to support something that supports other people, makes them feel good." This emphasis on inclusivity was only presented by this non-binary participant. All three participants mentioned the importance of buying from a brand that was not overly expensive. One explained this by saying, "I'm all about a sale. I'm all about a bargain. I am a college student, so I don't have a lot of liquid, spendable funds [laughs], so I don't know. I think I, yeah, I don't really buy really expensive [products], because I just can't afford it." This participant's reasoning lines up with the female and male participants' reasoning, as all of the participants were attending college.

The three non-binary participants were able to name favorite brands and the reasons the brands were their favorite when prompted. One participant mentioned they appreciated the packaging of their favorite brand, because it made it easier for them to create their own magnetic palettes. All three of the participants stated the quality or formula of the products to be a large motivation for purchasing from the brand. One participant was willing to spend more money on the product in exchange for the higher quality of the brand and explained, "Ben Nye has a really great, like, foundation powder, and it's, like, excellent. Like, it makes your tone flawless all the way through. Uhm, so that's what I use as, like, my base for pretty much everything." Two of the three participants discussed the importance of buying from a brand that was cruelty-free or

vegan. When asked to elaborate on their reasons as to why buying from a vegan brand was important, one stated, “Like... I’m not vegan. I like to eat meat [laughs]. And I don’t like vegetables enough to be vegan, but I like to use vegan products, ‘cause it makes me feel a little better about contributing to the environment a little less.” Another participant specifically mentioned a brand that was gender inclusive and had recently released a promotion that had men in it, as well. Gender inclusivity had not been mentioned by any of the female participants or the male participant previously as a main motivation for purchasing from a brand. This may have been a large priority to the non-binary participant due to the fact that they identify as gender fluid and want to be represented in a positive way by the brands they are buying from. Almost all cosmetics advertisements are directed towards the females, which may explain why this was not mentioned as a motivation by them. The male participant pool was extremely small. Had the number of male participants interviewed been larger, this may have been mentioned.

When asked in what case participants would like to spend more money on a product, all three participants mentioned an increase in quality. One stated, “I personally think that things like foundation and concealer are worth it, because you’re gonna get a lot more for that amount. And then, you’re gonna be using it, like, pretty frequently, so you want something that’s gonna be really good when you do wear it.” Two of the female participants and the male participant had similar reasoning as this participant; they were more willing to spend money on products they would be using regularly. Additionally, one participant mentioned that it is a requirement of theirs to buy from a company that is cruelty-free and that cheaper, drugstore brands tend to test on animals. They were willing to buy from more expensive brands if they were able to avoid animal testing and buy vegan products.

### *CSR's Effect on Cosmetic Purchasing Behavior*

Through the qualitative coding, I was also able to uncover the effect CSR had on purchasing behavior and whether or not this was related to participants' opinions about companies' responsibility to society.

#### *Female Participants*

When prompted for their opinion, all ten of the female participants stated that they believed companies have a responsibility to society. Reasons for this included the fact that consumers are giving companies money for their products and they deserve to be aware of what is being done during the creation of those products. One participant mentioned that companies have a very large influence in society both politically and socially. They stated they believed it was the companies' responsibility to "take the first step and be the example." Another participant mentioned that companies are simply a part of society and a larger system, which means they need to do their part in protecting it. She explained her response by saying:

They're a part of society and a part of this system, and your consumers want to know what you stand for... We live in, like, this capitalism driven society, and I think as time goes on you're just a part of society, and you're a part of a bigger picture, and when you let your consumers know that hey, we realize that we're a part of this big picture. We do actually, like, give some sort of a care about you. That means so much.

When prompted, all of the participants also said they would be more likely to buy from a company that is socially responsible over one that is not. One participant mentioned that the socially responsible aspects of companies are normally in line with her personal values, which allowed her to feel guilt-free and morally better about her purchase. Another participant mentioned that making responsible purchases allowed her to "feel a sense of doing good"

without doing it herself. One participant mentioned the difficulty of being informed that a brand you are loyal to is not responsible. She mentioned:

I think I use a lot of Clinique, and I think that I saw, like, a list, and I don't know if they were on it. I think they were. And it was something about testing on animals or something, and that was really hard for me, because most of my, like, skincare products are Clinique, and I'm like well, do I stop using it? Because, like, I know what they're doing? But also, I've been using it for so long. I was like I don't know if I can find something better, so... that's just really hard.

This may show that switching away from brands one is loyal to, even if they are not being responsible, can be a very difficult decision to make. This reflects CSR's bottom-line effect it can have on consumer purchasing decisions. In this participant's case, they use this brand because it is good quality. The brand's quality is of such high value that it causes this participant to have a difficult time deciding whether or not to discontinue use after finding out they test on animals.

When asked if the participants bought from responsible companies, seven participants said they did. Four stated they either actively or attempted to buy from companies that were vegan or cruelty-free. Three other participants also mentioned that they are more likely to buy from a brand if the brand appeared to be eco-friendly or donated to environmental organizations. Cruelty-free and vegan brands are often very outspoken about it and label their products as such. This may explain why many of the women cited these causes as reasons for supporting the company. Additionally, a few mentioned they preferred to buy from brands that appeared to be environmentally friendly. One was aware that some brands simply green-wash their products to appear responsible. Regardless of this knowledge, she chose to trust that the green-washed

companies were responsible and preferred to buy from them over those that were not green-washed. Three participants said they did not knowingly buy from responsible companies. One mentioned she did not know much about the companies and would trust that the popular companies she was buying from had that level of popularity as a result of them being responsible. She also mentioned laziness as a reason for not searching for responsible companies to buy from. Another mentioned that although she knew of brands that were cruelty-free and vegan, this was not of enough importance to her. The fact that they were cruelty-free and vegan was not her main motivation for purchasing their products or others.

When asked if the perceived importance of CSR varied depending on the industry, eight of the ten participants said it did not change. However, one participant mentioned that it is more difficult in the food industry to buy from responsible brands. She said:

...I think, like, take an example, Cheetos and Doritos and Pepsi and stuff? I think that's a little harder? Just because, like, there are only a few, and they own everything. And you literally cannot avoid them, otherwise, you gotta buy, like, organic. And I'm a health nut... but I can't always do that, because it's expensive.

Almost every gender group of millennials has discussed price as being a main concern when buying products. Although, people may have the opportunity to buy organic foods from more responsible companies, they are usually more expensive, which makes it difficult for college students to buy from those responsible companies. Another participant mentioned that it is more difficult for her to buy clothing from responsible brands. Due to this, she actively buys clothes second-hand or from thrift shops to try to reduce the impact she could have from buying from fast fashion companies that use sweatshops overseas to produce clothing. Two of the ten female participants said that their perceived importance changes across industries. One said that

she cared more about what company her clothing was coming from. She mentioned that she had heard from friends, family, and social media about the mistreatment of workers abroad to produce clothing. It was due to obtaining this information that she avoided brands that exploited their workers. This may show that a lack of being informed may explain why many consumers do not buy from responsible brands. I expect that advertising and social media activity would allow for more consumers to be informed, which would have the ability to change their purchasing behaviors. The other participant said that she should care about CSR in different industries equally but that she does care more about companies that contribute to her appearance. Due to this, she places an emphasis on buying from responsible brands involved in the fashion and cosmetics industries.

#### *Male Participant*

The participant stated he believed companies do have a responsibility to society when prompted. When asked to explain the reasons behind this belief, he stated, “We are paying companies when we are using their products, so it’s important to me that we make sure they’re giving back to the people who are buying their products.” This is similar to what many of the female participants said, which may show that regardless of whether or not they actively pursue responsible brands, each gender group believes that brands have a responsibility to give back to society.

When asked whether or not the participant actively went out of his way to buy from responsible companies, he stated he did not. He further clarified the reasons for this saying, “I just don’t make the effort to look it up. Usually, I go to the store with this specific idea of what I want to be getting but no idea where I’m gonna get it from.” In other words, he knows he may

need a new bronzer product but is unsure what brand he will be purchasing it from and will browse until he discovers one he is interested in.

When prompted, the participant stated he would be willing to buy from companies that are involved with CSR. However, he was sure to mention a price barrier and perceived level of importance of their cause saying, “As long as it’s not a huge step up in price and I feel like it’s a good enough cause, then I would buy from them.” He also stated he viewed CSR as a good way to market their brand when prompted. When asked if he believed it was authentic he said, “Of course, there’s the cynical part of my mind that’s like hey, they’re trying to manipulate us, but still, they’re letting people know about what they’re doing and why they should buy it, so.” He also stated, “A general feeling of helping makes me happier.” when asked if there were any other reasons as to why CSR activities would influence him to buy from a company. This sense of doing good without actually doing it themselves was mentioned by two of the female participants, as well.

When asked if his perception of CSR varied depending on the industry, the participant mentioned the different roles we can have as consumers within different industries. He explained this by saying:

...I believe it’s more important in the industries where we have a choice? Like, there’s some industries where we’re more captive consumers. We don’t get as much of a choice. Like, food industries, no matter what their practices are, if you go to a market, you don’t get multiple brands worth of carrots that you get to choose from. That kind of thing.

He was the second participant to mention that our different roles as consumers in different industries may affect our ability to support responsible brands. When asked if there was a specific industry in which he cared most about CSR, he stated he does research before buying

electronic products to be sure they are coming from companies that are ethical and have good practices. He explained this was important to him because he uses electronics daily, it is a significant purchase every time, and he has recently been made aware of companies being unethical through the news and Tumblr. This shows that although he did not actively pursue responsible cosmetic brands, he was involved with CSR in a different industry for other reasons.

### *Non-binary Participants*

All three of the non-binary participants stated they believed companies have a responsibility to society. Many of the underlying reasons for this belief were similar to the female and male participants, such as the fact that companies are a part of society and should do their part to contribute to it and being sure to meet the wants of the people to whom you are providing the products. For example, one participant stated:

Consumers are a part of society, so... I think that, like, morally, I think you need to value a lot about your constituents? Uhm, so I guess if they didn't care about the global footprint, they'd probably offend some sort of customer, and depending on what type of people are purchasing from you, you don't want to lose consumers by being someone who's like "I'm not gonna do anything good ever", so.

Two participants also mentioned the role their beliefs play in supporting responsible companies, which was similar to what one of the female participants mentioned. One explained, "...maybe that's just, like, my political beliefs in general... I think that if you have the power to make positive change, I think that you should do that, and you should promote the well-being of the earth and the inhabitants upon it [laughs]." These were the first two participants to mention political views as a reason for supporting responsible companies. When asked to further explain how their beliefs played a role, the participant explained that they do not like when people

contribute to climate change and hurt others, because people have a responsibility towards one another. This emphasis on personal beliefs and their willingness to actively buy from companies that are responsible may reflect that the non-binary participants' actions are more closely tied to their beliefs than the other participants' actions.

All three of the non-binary participants stated they tried their best to support companies that were responsible. Two of them strictly bought cosmetic products that were cruelty-free or vegan. The third participant attempted to only buy cruelty-free products but would occasionally not if they were unaware of a brand's values. They also all believed that CSR was important to them and that they would be more likely to buy from brands that were responsible over others. One participant explained this by saying:

I feel like it's, it's, like, the vote with your dollar sort of thing? Like, I'm gonna give my money to the one that's doing better in hopes that the one that's not doing better will realize that maybe they're doing something wrong and fix it in hopes that, like, other people will also do the same. And it'll be, like, a large wave of people going here when no one's going here, and they'll be like why? Maybe it's 'cause we test on animals and dump our toxic waste in the river.

In other words, they hope that their practice of purchasing from responsible companies would make it more likely that irresponsible companies would change their ways and be more responsible as a result of fewer consumers buying their products. Two of the participants believed that CSR was an authentic way to market. One mentioned that we live in a capitalist society where everyone is trying to sell a product to people and that if a company is doing good things at the same time, they are going to go out of their way to buy from them. They also mentioned they realize they are doing it to sell to a certain market but that they have the market,

which means they are being successful in the endeavor. The other participant said there was a line between CSR and authenticity. They respected the positive outcomes of CSR, but sometimes they have observed companies perform CSR insufficiently. The example they used was that a company may have 40+ shades of foundation, but this has no purpose if none of them match their consumer's skin tone. This was the first time that this concern was mentioned.

When asked if their perceived importance of CSR varied depending on the industry, the three participants said CSR was important in all of them. However, similar to what one female participant and the male participant mentioned, two of the non-binary participants mentioned they were more able to prioritize CSR in industries like cosmetics rather than fashion, because clothing can be very expensive. One participant mentioned:

It all matters to me. Uhm, fashion is hard for me, because I think with makeup, like, cosmetics, it's more accessible to be ethical. But with, like, fast fashion and those sorts of things- to invest in sustainable fashion, sometimes, those shirts are 100 dollars, and I don't have that kind of money, so I can't do it. Just, I'm not in a place.

This priority on price was mentioned by all three gender groups several times while discussing CSR as a whole, due to the fact that every participant was currently attending college. This emphasis on price may change in the future as the participants have a more disposable income after graduating and beginning their careers. The participant above would try to offset this difficulty regarding price by purchasing clothes from thrift shops instead of companies, such as Forever 21 or Charlotte Russe. The same participant also mentioned the difficulty of knowing where the food you buy is coming from. This was mentioned by the male participant, as well. They mentioned:

...With, like, a clothing brand, you can, like, research it, but with food? I don't know where it comes from, and it's hard to find out. It's really hard. Like, they will slap a label over it, like, maybe it was from this country, but you can't. I don't know who made those green beans. I don't know what they sprayed on them. I don't know, you know, what bee died because of what they sprayed on it. I don't know.

This concern may reflect the fact that CSR is most important in industries where consumers have a choice to decide which products they want to purchase and which companies they want to support. Within the food industry, it is very difficult to discover where the food came from and what company grew it. Within the fashion industry, sustainable fashion can be much more expensive than fast fashion, which is especially relevant for college students. In industries where consumers are captive, there is only so much they can do to support responsible companies with so little information accessible to them.

### ***Modes of Informing Consumers about CSR Activities***

Qualitative coding allowed me to discover the manner in which consumers were first informed of CSR activities, how they have been informed recently, and the ways in which they could be better reached in the future to be more informed.

#### ***Female Participants***

When asked how participants had first learned of a company's social responsibility, three participants mentioned being told by friends, family, and teachers and three others mentioned being informed through social media applications. These were the most often cited sources of information. One participant mentioned she had seen an advertisement on Hulu that was focused on the responsibility of a company. Social media use and internet accessibility has greatly

increased over the past fourteen years (“Demographics of Social Media”, 2019). Millennial participants have grown up with accessibility to the Internet while it has grown in popularity, which has made it an outlet for informing consumers. Additionally, one participant mentioned watching a YouTuber’s video focused on the cosmetics industry and the animal cruelty that is closely tied to it. After seeing this video, the participant did her own research and actively avoided brands that tested on animals to try to do her part. Lastly, one other participant learned about responsibility by reading the boxes and packaging products come in. This may be a simple way to inform consumers who are making an impulse buy.

Five participants mentioned that they would be best informed of companies’ activities through advertisements on social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook. As mentioned before, millennials have grown up with the Internet and have had access to it as it has grown in popularity making this logical. One participant mentioned that it would be helpful to have a video next to the product on their site that would mention the responsibility a company was taking part in. Two others said they should mention their responsibility in their mission statement. This would make it simpler for participants to research what a company’s values are and whether or not they care for the environment or social issues. Another participant mentioned that it would be useful to have ambassadors on sites that you can post videos, such as YouTube, that talk about a product and the company behind it to inform their viewers. Each of these recommendations emphasize the importance of brands having a social media presence and the use of the internet to reach millennials. Lastly, two participants said that signage next to the product or in the brand’s aisle would help to inform consumers as they are making their purchase.

When asked how they would prefer social media advertisements to appear, five mentioned they would like a short video with little text that explained their activities. A few of the participants explained that they do not enjoy taking the time to click on a video and listen to it. They prefer to scroll and watch short videos that include subtitles, instead, as it saves time. This is especially relevant for college students, because they have little free time. One mentioned that they do not mind how the advertisement appears as long as it has a legitimate source linked to it that they could read to be sure the company was responsible. This was the only time a participant mentioned the need for a company to be transparent without being prompted. A few others emphasized the importance of advertising and making use of their labels on their packaging. Lastly, another participant mentioned they would like advertisements to be as simple to recognize as possible with brands using their signature colors and text to make it easily recognizable.

#### *Male Participant*

When prompted, the participant stated he believed he had first heard of a company being socially responsible while watching television when he was young. This may have worked to inform consumers of CSR activities at the time, but I expect that with the rise of Internet use and streaming accessibility, television will not be the most effective area for brands to advertise their activities currently. Most of the participants mentioned they rarely watched television or cable. If they were to watch shows or movies, it would be on a streaming platform, such as Hulu or Netflix.

When asked how he would like to be informed of a company's social responsibility, the participant stated a small sign near the product he was buying would help inform him, since he was not willing to go out of his way to research it himself. This is similar to what many of the

female participants stated, as well, showing that physical signage may be an effective way to inform consumers.

When asked if there were other things he would want to see to make CSR activities more accessible for his knowledge, the male participant said “no”. When asked why this was, he explained that most of his purchases are bought on impulse, which makes advertisements an ineffective way to reach him as a consumer. This may explain why the signage directly near the product or brand aisle was mentioned as a way to reach him. The participant also stated he would prefer a CSR advertisement on social media to be a simple picture rather than a video or another form.

#### *Non-binary Participants*

One of the participants was informed about CSR through different brands’ advertisements focused on cruelty-free and vegan makeup, which was similar to what a few female participants mentioned. The other two participants were informed about responsible brands through word-of-mouth by friends. Three female participants mentioned that they were informed of responsible companies by friends and family, as well. This may show that although advertisements may not reach every consumer a brand would like to target, those who are passionate about a company’s responsibility will help inform their network of the brand’s work. Additionally, all three participants would research brands to be sure they were responsible using the Internet to search for cruelty-free and vegan directories. If a brand is advertising their activities, it is likely that these advertisements would be one of the results when searching the brand. This informing of one’s network and search results may show that advertisements can be an effective way to inform consumers of a company’s activities.

When asked how they would like to be made aware of a company's responsibility, two participants mentioned the importance of more brands using their packaging as an outlet for advertising. One mentioned that creating a system of symbols that signal whether or not a company is responsible would be preferred over them taking the time to research the brand. Another participant mentioned that brands should be more actively promoting their activities on their social media accounts.

When prompted, participants explained how they would like CSR advertisements to appear on social media. One participant was an art major and said they would like to see a "nice image that was well-designed" for that reason. They also explained that a video would be appreciated, however, they realized that this would be more expensive to make than a photo. Another participant said they would prefer a video on Twitter and Facebook applications and a series of photos on Instagram that you would be able to swipe through. Instagram also has the ability to link sites to a photograph. The participant said that inserting the link that allows you to learn more onto the photo would be helpful, as well. The last participant mentioned the importance of having an advertisement that catches their eye in a short period of time as they are scrolling. It was due to this that they preferred a simple photo with large text on it.

## **Discussion**

This study was one of few conducted to directly examine what drives millennial, college-age consumers' cosmetic purchasing behavior, how CSR affects their cosmetic purchasing behavior, the ways in which consumers are made aware of a company's CSR before buying a product, and whether or not gender differences exist with respect to each of these. Similar to studies previously conducted, this study found that price and quality are the top motivators for

buying products from cosmetic brands. This is logical, because students attending college have a less disposable income to spend on desired products compared to their older counterparts, and they want to invest in products that are long-lasting, made with a great formula, and meet their individual skin needs while being frugal.

Most of the participants did not mention a company's social responsibility when explaining why they choose to buy and consume their products unless they had firmly decided to become vegan or only buy cruelty-free products. However, when prompted, all participants claimed that a company's social responsibility would increase their likelihood to buy from their company, due to believing the companies have a responsibility to society. I believe this supports my expectation that corporate social responsibility would increase the motivation to buy from a brand as a bottom-line factor. Simply put, the price and quality are the largest influencers when buying a product. However, if two products are similar in both their price and quality and one is involved with social responsibility, the participant will choose to buy from the responsible company, because CSR influences participants as a bottom-line factor.

Although there were many similarities across the genders regarding supporting companies that were socially responsible, such as self-satisfaction and being sure companies are giving back to those buying their products, a few differences arose. The participants whom identified as female were more likely to connect their actions to their beliefs and pursue brands and products that were responsible than the male participant was. The non-binary participants were even more likely to buy from responsible companies than their female counterparts. These results fall in line with the theory of "doing gender" created by West and Zimmerman (1987). One way women "do gender" is by being the care takers; the same does not apply to men. These results may show how doing gender can affect people's role in society as a whole, making

women more responsible for taking care of the environment and other people around them while having the opposite expectation for men. The non-binary participants' may have intersecting identities within the LGBTQ+ community. This may reflect why they place an emphasis on needing to buy from responsible companies. They understand what it feels like to be oppressed within society, which makes them more empathetic towards the use of animals for testing and exploitation of people by companies. Due to this, they avidly avoid brands that take advantage of fellow living beings, whether animals or humans.

The different genders had very similar things to say about how to best reach them as consumers and how they are informed of a company's activities. Almost all of the participants either used the internet to actively search for brands that were responsible or recommended that brands use the internet to inform consumers of their responsible activities. Millennials grew up with the Internet and have experienced the increase in accessibility to it over time. Due to this, they are particularly technologically skilled and use it quite often. It is due to this that I expect companies will best reach consumers through social media platforms. Additionally, many also mentioned the importance of using tangible signage and packaging as a way to inform consumers. This would be helpful for those consumers who have little time to research a product before buying it or those who are making an impulse buy. Lastly, participants preferred advertisements to be videos or photographs on social media platforms. Pictures and videos allow participants to have proof that companies are doing what they say they are and can be well-designed in a way that appeals to them. We expect that companies' advertisements will be most successful when put on active social media platforms with signature brand videos and photographs that show what they are doing.

While this study had the ability to explore the area of CSR and cosmetic purchasing behavior by college-age students and the ways gender affects this behavior, it is not without a few limitations. The scope and pool of the study was fairly small and prevented me from comparing how a difference in age, both within the millennial generation and other generations, may affect people's opinions about corporate social responsibility and how it affects their cosmetic purchasing behaviors and motivations. This may be a future area of research to be studied. Additionally, each of the participant gender pools was very small. I was able to make a few observations based off the exploratory data that was collected, but the small pools prevented me from being able to draw overall conclusions about the gender differences that exist within their generation regarding corporate social responsibility and the ways in which it affects behavior. The male pool specifically only had one participant. It proved to be difficult to recruit males to the study, which is most likely due to the fact that cosmetics are gendered with the majority of users being women. However, it may also reflect that men may not care to be interviewed about their cosmetic use or their perception of CSR. In the future, researchers may choose to get into contact with men who perform drag in order to better understand their cosmetic purchasing behaviors and reach a larger pool of participants. This study also failed to provide an international perspective on CSR and the ways in which it affects corporate social responsibility, due to the fact that eligibility for the study required participants to be a non-international student. Cultural values may have an effect on the perception of whether CSR is important to consumers, which is another important area of future research.

## **Conclusion**

Companies are being held to a higher standard of performing in the way that their consumers expect and demand, including having a positive impact on the environment and the world around them and addressing social issues. I found that all millennials in this study positively perceived CSR when asked about it and believed that companies had a responsibility to society. When asked to elaborate, I found that CSR has the ability to affect cosmetic purchases as a bottom-line factor after preference was given to price and quality. Each of the participants currently attended a university, which made it unlikely for them to have a high amount of disposable income. As they get older, the importance of price may decrease. However, I find it unlikely that they will ever find CSR as more important than the quality of the product. This may be a future area of research to be studied as millennials age, and cosmetic companies may keep this in mind for future product creation. This study also reveals the way gender may affect a consumer's perception of CSR and their cosmetic purchasing behavior. Although every gender group stated they believed CSR was beneficial, women more often actively pursued responsible brands than the male participant, and the non-binary participants even more so actively pursued responsible brands than the female participants. It may be useful for future research to focus on better understanding this link between non-binary identities and social activism through purchasing products from responsible brands.

Brands need to target and inform consumers of their responsibility in order to increase their revenue. A majority of the millennials in this study cited social media platforms as the best way to inform them of CSR activities. Almost all of them preferred these advertisements to be a concise video or photograph that explained and showed what the company was doing. A few mentioned the importance of making an advertisement that was unique to the brand and easily recognizable. Additionally, others mentioned packaging and signage near the product and

brand's aisle would be helpful for moments when they have little time to do research on the brand. Lastly, many participants were first informed of CSR by friends, family, or teachers. This may reflect that advertisements may still be effective in the way that they have the ability to indirectly reach consumers through a previous consumer's informing. Cosmetic companies may further research the best way to inform consumers to increase the knowledge of their brand and the revenue made as a result.

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## Appendix A

### Icebreaker Question:

- 1.) Why did you want to participate in this study? Did you find anything interesting about it?
- 2.) What is your major? Why did you pick it?

### Core Questions:

- 3.) What is your favorite cosmetics brand? What are some of the reasons it is your favorite?
- 4.) Why do you buy cosmetics? Do other people influence this decision?
- 5.) What aspects of a cosmetic product makes you more likely to purchase it? Does this change depending on the type of product it is?
- 6.) If it was an option, would you like to purchase some cosmetics over others even if they are more expensive? Why or why not?
- 7.) Have you heard of the term corporate social responsibility?
  - . A company's sense of responsibility towards the community and environment (both ecological and social) in which it operates. Companies express this through their waste and pollution reduction processes or by contributing to educational or social programs.
- 8.) Do you know of socially responsible brands and their CSR activities?
- 9.) Do you believe companies have a responsibility to society?
- 10.) Is CSR important to you as a consumer? Would you be more likely to buy from a company that is socially responsible than from one that is not? Why or why not?
- 11.) Do you buy from companies that are socially responsible? Have you ever bought a product mainly because of the CSR initiative?
- 12.) In what case would you be willing to buy from a company that is involved with CSR? What if price and quality are similar?
- 13.) How do you feel about learning of socially responsible aspects of companies? Do you appreciate CSR or do you consider it an inauthentic way to market? Does this affect your decision to buy their products?
- 14.) Do advertisements focused on socially responsible activities of companies influence you to buy their products? If so, why? If not, why?
- 15.) How have you found out about a company's CSR? If you're not aware of a company's CSR, how would you like to be better informed?

- 16.) Regarding CSR, are there areas in which you wish companies would perform better? Is there a particular area that would sway you to buy a product?
- 17.) How did you first learn a brand was socially responsible? Have you ever gone out of your way to learn whether or not a brand is socially responsible? How often?
- 18.) Would you be willing to switch from a brand with which you are loyal to another if you heard of its CSR activities?
- 19.) Are there situations in which you would switch away from a brand if they did something socially irresponsible? In what case? Is there something this company could do that would reduce your loyalty to it?
- 20.) Do you know what influences the cosmetic purchases made by your female/male/non-binary friends? Do you know if CSR is important to them as consumers? Do you think they would know what influences your purchases and whether or not CSR is important to you?

## Appendix B



### Do you wear cosmetics and attend UNL?

If so, you may be eligible to participate in a research study taking place at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.



In the study, we would like to learn about your cosmetic purchasing behavior and the ways in which corporate social responsibility and gender affect it. The one-on-one interview should take about an hour to complete.

You can participate in the interview if you:

- Are a non-international student at UNL
- Wear cosmetics
- Are ages 19-22
- Identify as male or non-binary

*Earn \$20 by taking part in a one-on-one interview!*

If you are interested in participating, please contact the research team:

Call or text (xxx)xxx-xxxx or email xxxxxxxx@gmail.com

CSR, Gender, and Cosmetic Purchasing Behavior  
Call or text :  
Email :

CSR, Gender, and Cosmetic Purchasing Behavior  
Call or text :  
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CSR, Gender, and Cosmetic Purchasing Behavior  
Call or text :  
Email :

## Appendix C

### **For an individual wanting general information about the study:**

[Name],

Thank for showing interest in the Corporate Social Responsibility, Gender, and College Student Cosmetic Purchasing Behavior research study. The one-on-one interview will take place at a location you feel comfortable, such as a coffee shop or study room on campus. The interview should take about an hour to complete. You will be asked questions about your use of cosmetics, cosmetic brands, and what makes you choose certain brands and products over others. You will receive \$20 for participating.

If you are interested, let us know through email or by calling 402-649-2298. A few screening questions will be asked to see if you are eligible to participate in the study. To be eligible, you must be a non-international student at UNL, wear cosmetics, and be ages 19-22. If you are eligible, we will set up a day and time for us to meet for the interview.

Thank you for your interest,  
Allegra Blomenberg  
402-649-2298

### **For an individual wanting to participate in the study:**

[Name],

Thank you for showing interest in our study. To be eligible for this study, you must:

- Be 19-22 years of age
- Be a non-international student at UNL
- Wear cosmetics

If you meet these requirements, then you are eligible to participate.

\*Insert scheduling information here\*

Best,  
Allegra Blomenberg  
402-649-2298

### **Reminder:**

[Name],

Thank you for showing interest in the Corporate Social Responsibility, Gender, and College Student Cosmetic Purchasing Behavior research study. This is a reminder that your interview is scheduled for [date] at [time] at [location].

Best,  
Allegra Blomenberg  
402-649-2298

**Reminder (day before):**

[Name],

This is just a reminder that your interview is scheduled for tomorrow, [date], at [time] at [location].

Looking forward to talking to you tomorrow,  
Allegra Blomenberg  
402-649-2298

**Follow-up if interview is missed:**

[Name],

I wanted to check in, because we missed our interview time yesterday. Would you be interested in rescheduling this interview?

Best,  
Allegra Blomenberg  
402-649-2298

**Text Reminder:**

[Name], thank you for showing interest in the CSR and College Student Cosmetic Purchasing Behavior research study. This is a reminder that your interview is scheduled for [date] at [time] at [location]. See you then!

**Text Reminder (day before):**

Thank you again for your interest in the CSR and College Student Cosmetic Purchasing Behavior research study. This a reminder that your interview is scheduled for tomorrow, [date], at [time] at [location]. See you tomorrow!

**Text follow-up when interview is missed:**

[Name], you had an interview scheduled for [date] at [time] at [location] but did not make it. Would you be interested in rescheduling this interview? Thanks!

**For an individual wanting to participate in the study:**

First, I have a few questions to determine whether you are eligible for the study.

- 1.) Are you a student at UNL?
  - a. Yes (Ask Q2)
  - b. No (Not eligible)
- 2.) Are you an international student?
  - a. Yes (Not eligible)
  - b. No (Ask Q3)
- 3.) Are you 19 years of age or older?
  - a. Yes (Ask Q4)
  - b. No (Not eligible)

- 4.) Do you wear cosmetics?
- a. Yes (Eligible)
  - b. No (Not eligible)

If not eligible:

Thank you. I'm sorry, but you are not eligible for this study. We appreciate your time.

If eligible:

Thank you. You are eligible for our study. Let me give you some additional information.

**Purpose of the study:**

The purpose of this research is to better understand how and why corporate social responsibility affects college students' cosmetic purchasing behavior and the ways in which gender may influence this in order know how to improve cosmetic companies' marketing strategies.

**What you will do and where you will go:**

You will be given information about the study and be asked to take part in a one-on-one interview that will take about an hour. You will be able to choose the location in which you would be most comfortable doing this. You will be given \$20 for participating in the study.

**Confidentiality:**

Reasonable steps will be taken to protect your privacy and the confidentiality of your study data. All information you provide during this study will be kept strictly confidential. The information gained from this project will be reported in a thesis and may be published in scientific journals and presented at conferences. No individuals will be identified in any report, publication, or other use of the data.

## **Appendix D**

### **UNL STUDENT INFORMED CONSENT CSR, Gender, and College Student Cosmetic Purchasing Behavior**

#### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this research is to better understand how and why corporate social responsibility affects college students' cosmetic purchasing behavior. In order to participate in this study, you must be a non-international UNL student ages 19-22 and use cosmetics. You are invited to participate in this study because you are a UNL student that volunteered by calling the study's phone number or emailing the study in order to arrange an appointment.

#### **Procedures:**

You will be asked to take part in a one-on-one interview. You will be able to choose the location in which you would be most comfortable doing this. The interview should take about an hour to complete. The interview will be aimed at understanding how and why college students' cosmetic purchasing behaviors are affected by corporate social responsibility. The interview will be recorded.

#### **Benefits:**

You are not expected to get any benefit from being in this study. The information gained from this study will help us to better understand the ways in which corporate social responsibility and its advertising affect cosmetic purchasing decisions in order to improve corporations' marketing strategies.

#### **Risks and/or Discomforts:**

There are no known risks or discomforts to you from being in this research study. Your welfare is the major concern of every member of the research team. If you have a problem as a direct result of being in this study, you should immediately contact one of the people listed at the conclusion of this consent form.

#### **Confidentiality:**

Reasonable steps will be taken to protect your privacy and the confidentiality of your study data. All information you provide during this study will be kept strictly confidential. The information gained from this project will be reported in a thesis and may be published in scientific journals and presented at conferences. No individuals will be identified in any report, publication, or other use of the data.

#### **Compensation:**

You will receive \$20 for participating in this project.

#### **Opportunity to Ask Questions:**

You may ask any questions concerning this study and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study. You may contact the investigator(s) at the phone

numbers listed at the end of this form. For questions concerning your rights or complaints about the research contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB):

- Phone: 1(402)472-6965
- Email: [irb@unl.edu](mailto:irb@unl.edu)

**Freedom to Withdraw:**

You can decide not to be in this research study, or you can stop being in this research study at any time before, during, or after the research begins for any reason. Deciding not to be in this research study or deciding to withdraw will not affect your relationship with the investigator(s) or with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

**Documentation of informed consent**

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to be in this research study. Signing this form means that (1) you have read and understood this consent form, (2) you have had the consent form explained to you, (3) you have had your questions answered and (4) you have decided to be in the research study. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

**Participant Name:**

\_\_\_\_\_

(Name of Participant: Please print)

**Participant Signature:**

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Research Participant

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

**Name and phone number of investigator(s)**

Principal Investigator: Allegra Blumenberg, [aeb.unl19@gmail.com](mailto:aeb.unl19@gmail.com) (402) 649-2298

Secondary Investigator: Jolene Smyth, Ph.D., [jsmyth2@unl.edu](mailto:jsmyth2@unl.edu) (402) 472-0662