

Media Summary Paper

Gonzalez, Xinicol

BUF 4700: Contemporary Issues in Fashion

Dr. Denise H. Sutton, PhD

New York City College of Technology (CUNY)

Media Summary: Global Issues In Beauty

Within the beauty industry, there is a common similarity between the concerns and what the world views as a global issue. Unlike fashion, when it comes down to beauty as a whole, its definition has changed its terms through the years, adjusting to the standards and eras of each generation. This has caused concern about what the main issues are within the corporation. One thing that might have not changed, and could be suggested is the beauty industry's wasteful production, causing many sustainability issues. With a generation so media-based, it is hard to imagine the beauty lines and products you see online, are also being a part of the wasteful issue. One could now wonder, how much of a wasteful environment has the beauty industry created. And is it as serious as many researchers believe it to be? Although the concern isn't as loudly talked about as apparel is, they all lie under the same umbrella with their sustainability issues.

Taking a deep dive into what exactly sustainability is within beauty, many answers result. One of the main responses is packaging. Nowadays, social media and influencers are the main exploiters for many beauty companies, it is all about showing out and showing off. For that reason, packaging plays a huge role in how beauty brands sell themselves. This includes prescription beauty boxes such as IPSY, Boxycharm, Kinder Beauty, and many more. Such packaging can include lots of plastic, I picked an article from Glossy that speaks on this issue, allowing us to understand more of how sustainability matters. According to the Glossy article it states, "In Oct. 2020, Australia's national science agency reported that between 9.25 million and

15.9 million tons of microplastics are embedded on the seafloor. And, according to a WWF International study, the average person consumes the equivalent of a credit card's worth of plastic every week, mostly due to microplastics in tap water and shellfish" (Glossy, 2021). The consumption of plastic comes from the packaging and products themselves. Having millions of consumers increases the spillage of waste that is put out. Because of this, many beauty brands have collectively tried to "reduce" this issue, "Glossy reported on Monday that REN and Biossance skin-care brand will present their formal solution to eliminate sachets samples to a coalition of brands in July. Birchbox is in talks with TerraCycle for a recycling program for both sample- and full-size items" (Glossy, 2023). This is one step in the right direction for sustainability, but when we think of packaging and beauty, we also have to keep in mind the traditions and holidays many of what the beauty industry gets involved with. Advent calendars, product boxes, and gift-giving materials are all a part of production and selling. All are huge wasteful environmental products. In an article by Banuba they state, "According to statistics from the Zero Waste Week research, plastic packaging waste from the beauty industry reaches over 120 billion units of packaging annually" (Banuba, 2023). Even in recent times, the beauty industry has still increased its waste, resulting in more going to landfills than recycling. It seems not only is plastic waste, but many are viewing above that and realizing some of the generated formulas these beauty companies are creating, are also toxic. "Waste is generated by a formula, testers, unsold, or returned products, and items that expire in warehouses or on store shelves. Compounding the problem is the lack of data on how much actually gets wasted, as well as a lack of solutions for managing the waste better." (Vogue, 2021). Not only have the concerns of plastic packaging been an issue, but the formulas themselves have turned into an added issue within the beauty industry, answering the question that this problem, is a serious matter.

Overall, as the beauty industry expands, and many consumers continue to buy, this sustainability issue will continue to grow and increase. Many companies, although trying, find themselves between increasing prices to pay or making a strong environmental choice. Some beauty industries may feel they can not attain being eco-friendly. This all also comes down to the consumer who makes the decision to buy these products or not, and growing the issue more.

References Page

Banuba. “Cosmetic Waste.” *Banuba AR Technologies: All-In-One AR SDK for Business*, 12 Apr. 2023,

www.banuba.com/blog/cosmetic-waste#:~:text=It's%20obvious%20that%20beauty%20products,billion%20units%20of%20packaging%20annually.

Cernansky, Rachel. “Beauty Has a Waste Problem, and It’s Not Packaging.” *Vogue Business*, 16 Sept. 2021,

www.voguebusiness.com/sustainability/beauty-has-a-waste-problem-and-its-not-packaging

Sandler, Emma. “How Subscription Beauty Boxes Are Approaching Sustainability.” *Glossy*, 23 Apr. 2021,

[www.glossy.co/beauty/how-subscription-beauty-boxes-are-approaching-sustainability/.](http://www.glossy.co/beauty/how-subscription-beauty-boxes-are-approaching-sustainability/)