

User Research on Responsible Bathroom Grooming Rituals

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Topic: Bathroom Grooming Rituals

What are the key product and experience factors that influence consumers' decisions-making in purchasing “responsible” personal care products?

“Responsible” products? :Harmless for your health and the environment

Purpose of this research is to understand consumers' journey when purchasing a responsible personal care product based on

- Access to information
- Cues that affect their **perception** and purchasing **decisions**
- Consumers' **priorities**

Outcomes of the research are to determine the pain points, define opportunity areas for the brands, products, industry and government policies by

- optimizing access to reliable, meaningful and unified **information**
- fulfilling **transparency**
- improving user **experience**

Methods Used:

- Interviews
- Usability Testing / Remote Usability Testing
- Contextual Inquiry
- Role Play
- Co-Design Session
- Questionnaire

Overview and Hypothesis

Bathroom grooming industry, mostly referred as personal care industry, is an ever growing domain, addressing both men and women with product lines in **skin care, hair care, shaving, make-up cosmetics, mouth care.**

Consumer awareness is increasing in preferring healthy and non-toxic products that are harmless both for themselves and the environment. **Organic personal care** is a fast growing market trend that is expected to reach **\$25 billion** by 2025. However, although many brands and associations like Personal Care Council claim to prioritize **consumer safety** and **sustainability**, **many fail to prove it** and to be truly transparent. There are **no reliable regulations**, monitoring nor accountability. Consumers are **confused**. They don't find the information on "healthy/responsible" products reliable.

Hypothesis: Improving the regulations on healthy/green products' manufacturing and marketing as well as the design of information in labeling will enhance consumer experience, trust and awareness in responsible personal care practices.

Recruiting Participants



Prefer to use responsible products for certain steps of personal care

- Graduate students and young professionals
- Male (29%) and female (71%)
- 18-31 years old
- Diverse backgrounds: field/profession, nation, geography, culture
- Based in East Coast and West Coast of the US

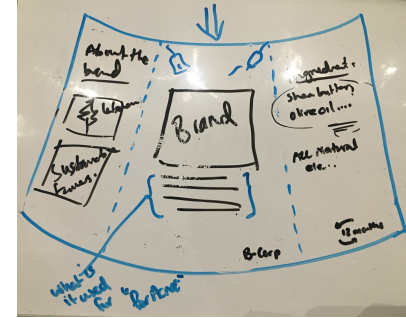
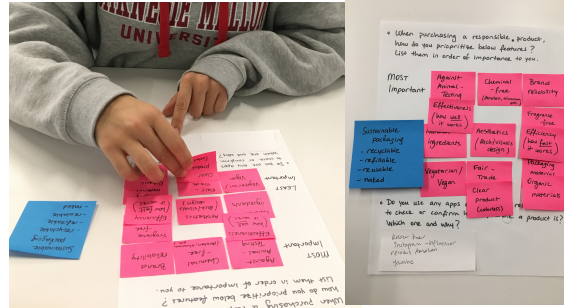
Age limit to eliminate the effects of potential inter-generational biases

Diverse backgrounds and locations to identify external factors in consumer preferences and opportunities

Primary User Insights

- Consumers are confused by unstandardized labeling of responsible products
- Consumers don't understand what ingredients mean, find it intimidating and give up on choosing a responsible product
- Visual cues on packaging such as simple information design, clear indication of “responsible” claims, and pure pastel and natural colors (green, white, clear) influence consumers' perception positively.
- In-store experience such as customer support, sampling and product availability have a direct effect on purchasing decisions.
- Although feeling good about consuming environmentally conscious products, sustainable packaging is not a main concern for most consumers.
- Customer service representative on hotlines are not conscious and knowledgeable enough about “responsible”, green products.
- Price can be a trade-off factor to avoid responsible products

Co-Design Sessions



P Hypothesis and insights considered for design of the session and questions:

- Store preferences and in-store experience
- Influential cues on product and packaging (color, texture, material)
- Prioritization of “responsible” features
- Redesigning information architecture on packaging
- 3rd party resources

E 20-30 minutes

X Met graduate students at Tepper Quad and home

E Video recorded the session

C Participants explained while completing

U Engaged the most in redesigning pack

T

I

O

N

R Most purchase from pharmacies, branded stores and online

E In-store ambiance, trials and support adds reliability

S Look and feel should be natural

U Effectiveness > Sustainability

L Simple, clear information. No meaningless chemical ingredients

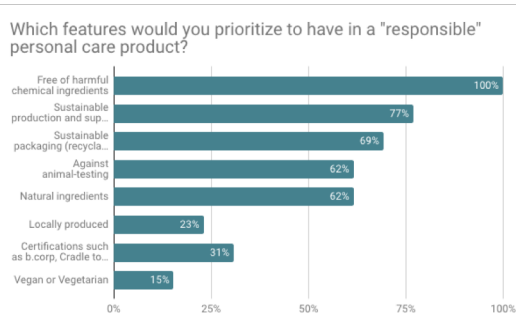
T Brand values

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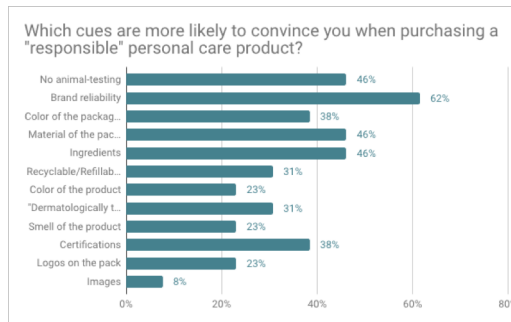
Additional Research & Synthesis

Questionnaire

Conducted a Google Survey on the same participant demography and used bar charts to visualize the highlights of the results



! Unlike co-design participants and interviewees (sustainability is a later concern)



! Brand reliability –the most influential factor

! Packaging material appears more effective here than in previous research

Only 15% of participants use 3rd party products to check how responsible products are (ie. Beautypedia, Good Guide, bcorp website)

Contextual Inquiry

also confirmed questionnaire results!



Graduate student driven by **brand reliability**



Young professional driven by **Chemical-consciousness**

Additional Research & Synthesis

[Remote] Usability Testing

3 shampoo products with responsibility claims

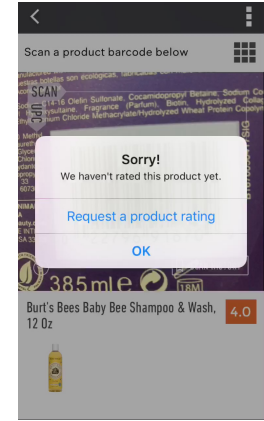
Good Guide App to check harmlessness ratings of products

- 3 graduate students at Tepper Quad and home
- 1 student remote – video and screen recording

Pain Points: Confused with ingredients and rating system in app

Missing product data in app

No standardized information – not reliable

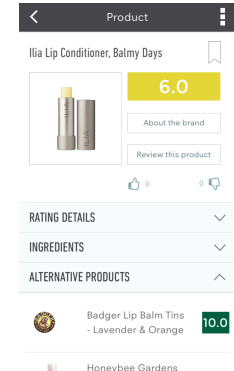
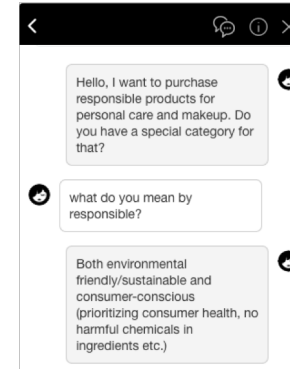


Role Play

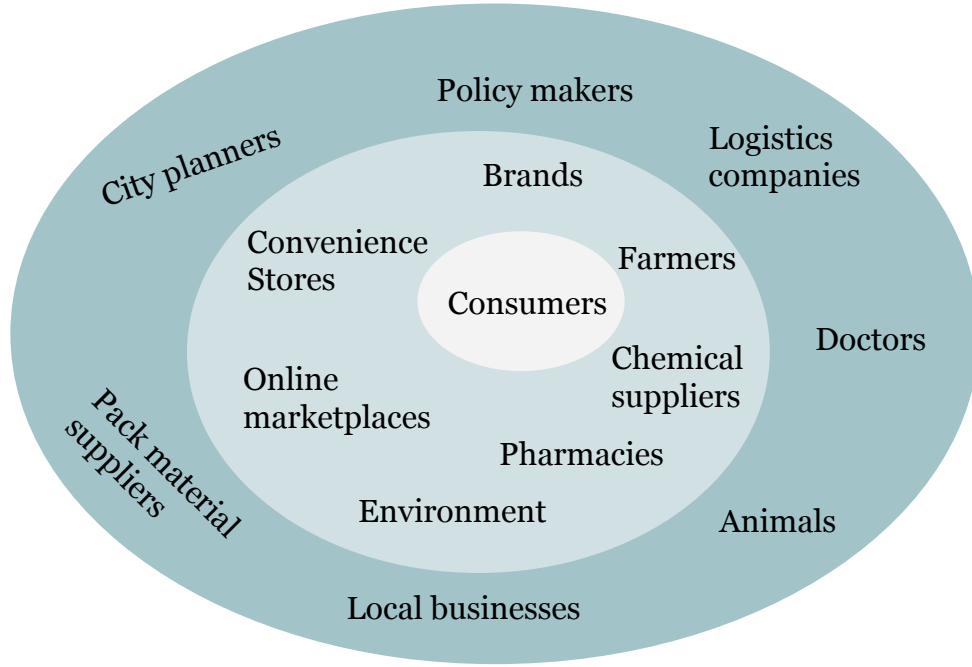
Talked to two Sephora customer services representatives online

- One rep didn't understand "responsible", couldn't help me
- Second rep advised 6 different branded products as "natural"
- Checked the products on Good Guide App:
 - 3 of them –not found!
 - 2 products rank high, but 1 contains mica and cornstarch (not healthy)
 - 1 ranks mediocre

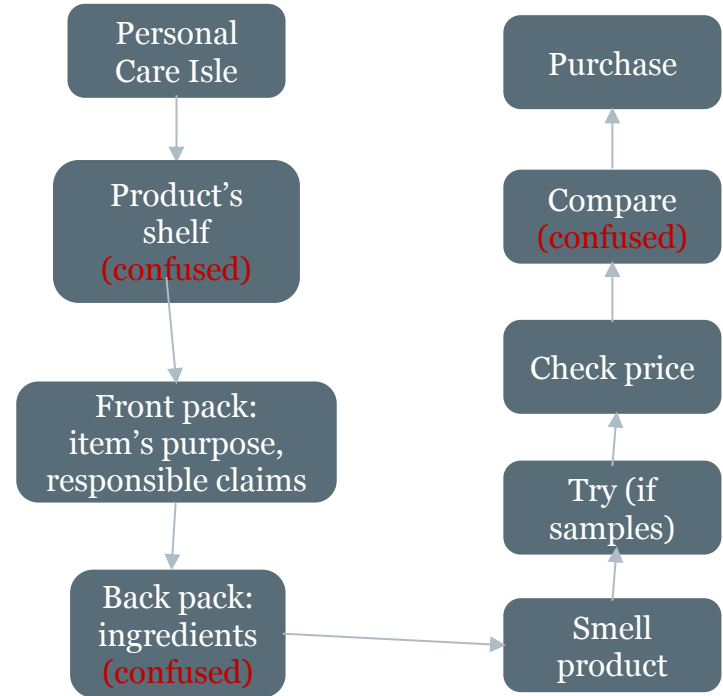
Result: Confused and frustrated. No reliability.



Stakeholders



User Journey Map [In-Store]



Recommendations

Product and Service Opportunities:

- Compostable packaged or naked products that would be carried without mess (convenient for travel)
- DIY recipes with list of recommendations for organic ingredient suppliers
- Mobile refill stations/vans of ONLY natural products to get in small amounts and refill in short intervals depending on ingredient's expiration
- Responsible grooming products collaborating with organic food services' logistics (ie. Sunbasket, hello fresh)
- Standardized and monitored regulations by governmental body, also providing an open source and real-time library of products

Guiding Design Principles:

- Simple design of information (texts and images)
- Standardized logos
- Bigger fonts of ingredients and warnings (regulated)
- Natural colors recommended (white, green or no color if possible)

Appendix

Literature Review:

<https://www.healthline.com/health/beauty-skin-care-cosmetics#product-safety>

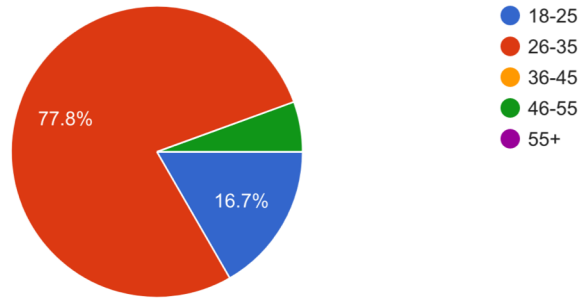
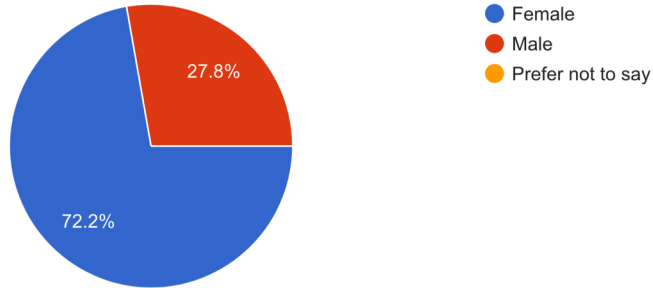
<https://www.cosmeticseurope.eu/cosmetic-products/safe-design/>

<https://www.mjspackaging.com/blog/organic-personal-care/>

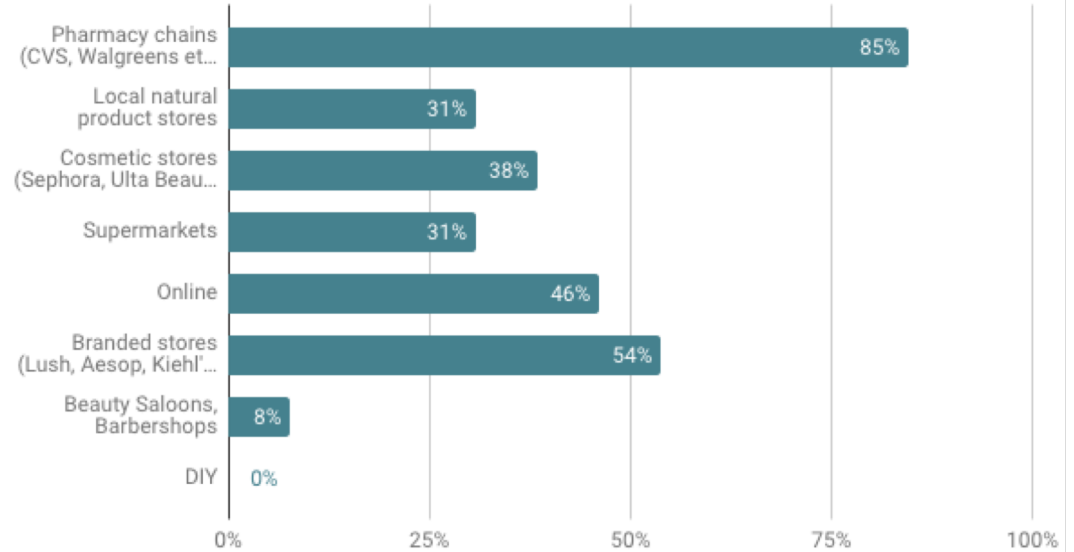
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5698398/>

<https://www.personalcarecouncil.org/>

Additional Data Visuals



Where do you purchase your personal care products?



Future Improvements in the Design of the Research

- Equal number of participants of each gender
- Research and analyze further the differences in gender-based preferences and habits
- Question participants on specific given examples of packaging or ingredients
- Interview store owners and policy makers
- Develop feasible solutions