MERCHANDISING HEALTH INTERVENTIONS: BLACK WOMEN'S BELIEFS AND INTENTIONS TOWARD NATURAL AND ORGANIC BEAUTY PRODUCTS

by

MELODIE R. DAVIS-BUNDRAGE

(Under the Direction of Katalin Medvedev)

ABSTRACT

This dissertation uses the Health Belief Model (HBM) to examine the influence of perceived seriousness, susceptibility, benefits, barriers, self-efficacy and cues to action on purchase intention toward natural and organic beauty products. This study aims to determine the likelihood of black women purchasing natural and organic products as a health-promoting behavior. A multimethod netnography was conducted using three methods. First, an online survey was conducted with 161 participants recruited in online beauty groups. Second, an online focus group was conducted with 11 of the survey participants. Then, social media mining was conducted as a supplemental data collection method. Pearson's correlation and multiple regression analysis were used to test the relationships among the variables in the quantitative study. Focus groups were analyzed using grounded theory coding methods. The results indicate that each construct of the HBM positively influenced purchase intentions toward natural and organic beauty products except for perceived barriers, which has a significant negative relationship to purchase intention. Lifestyle and perceived benefits were included in the best predictor model for each all product types except nail products. Knowledge and cues to action predictors were added to the best model for skin care and body care. Self-efficacy and perceived

barriers were additional predictors of nail products. In addition to analyzing each HBM construct within the focus group data, an additional six themes emerged from the data to explain purchase intentions. This study suggests that beauty product manufacturers should develop affordable and accessible ethnic beauty product lines, educational programs and marketing strategies that emphasize health, natural and organic ingredients and product safety to address the specific needs and skin tones of black women. This study provides valuable insight into black women's consumer behavior regarding natural and organic beauty products by examining their health beliefs, relevant cues to action, knowledge, lifestyle and level of self-efficacy as factors that influence purchase intentions. Furthermore, this study extends the application of the HBM to the field of eco-beauty merchandising studies.

INDEX WORDS: natural and organic beauty, black women, health, health-promoting behavior, purchase intentions, beauty industry

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by

MELODIE R. DAVIS-BUNDRAGE

BBA, Howard University, 1995

MS, University of Maryland University College, 2003

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

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MELODIE R. DAVIS-BUNDRAGE

Major Professor:	Katalin Medvedev
Committee:	Patricia Hunt-Hurst
	Alex Kojo-Anderson
	Jori Hall

Electronic Version Approved:

Suzanne Barbour
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
May 2017

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my heavenly father as I honor you first and foremost. Then to my earthly father, Melvin Raymond Davis, Sr., who desired his children to complete college. He never would have imagined his baby girl would not only complete college but complete her doctorate as well. Also, to my mother, Virginia Ruthann Davis, who has always been the constant support system to all my past and current endeavors, this is for you as well. I could not have asked for nor received better parents.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since the turn of the 21st century, the development and sale of natural and organic beauty products has become a major sector in the cosmetics industry. The explosive growth of this part of the industry has increased consumer consciousness about how beauty regimens impact health and wellness. Consumers are beginning to inquire about the safety of their products as they seek to understand how they can "go green" with their beauty regimens and lead healthier lifestyles. Consumer awareness and concern regarding the ingredients in their cosmetic products is at an all-time high ("Meet the next leaders," 2016).

The literature documents significant growth with no signs of decline for the natural and organic beauty industry. Rajagopal (2007) stated that organic cosmetic brands were not yet familiar to consumers because consumers were unaware of the harmful effects synthetic cosmetics have on health with prolonged usage. However, customers who were aware were willing to buy organic cosmetics. Kim and Seock (2009) found that 89% of beauty product buyers stated that their concern over synthetic chemicals in products was a central factor in their purchase decisions. By 2010, Hae, Carr, Farr, and King learned that approximately 30% of adults in the United States were interested in lifestyles of health and sustainability and the total marketplace was $226.8 billion for this group of consumers. The natural and organic personal care products market in the United States totaled $3.8 billion in 2010 and grew to $6.6 billion by 2015, while global sales totaled $14 billion (Rybowska, 2014). The United States is the global leader in the natural and organic beauty sector, followed by Japan and Germany (Yeomans,

2013). However, the EU is the global leader in the number of certified organic cosmetics (Armstrong, 2010) and number of banned ingredients (approximately 1,300 in the EU compared to 11 in the U.S.) found to be toxic or cause harm to human health (Cairo, 2015; Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, 2016). Today, there are currently more than 6.4 million Google results for "toxic cosmetics" ("Meet the next leaders," 2016). Natural and organic products are the fastest growing sector in the cosmetics industry, seeing double-digit growth every year for the past six years ("Natural segment continues," 2014). Today, natural cosmetics is a $33 billion industry accounting for 13 percent of the overall global beauty market ("Natural segment continues," 2014; Pike, 2015). Sales are expected to hit $50 billion by 2019 ("Natural segment continues," 2014; Pike, 2015). These statistics have moved natural cosmetics from a niche market to mainstream mass market (Armstrong, 2010). Despite the growth, size and importance of this industry, the United States lags behind in reviewing, documenting, and regulating product safety within the cosmetic industry (Cairo, 2015). The cosmetic marketplace in the United States also provides less consumer education within retail environments than does the European Union marketplace about synthetic vs. natural beauty products, especially to minority consumers.

The global "going green" and mainstream eco-beauty movement just as the mainstream beauty industry is a highly racialized and segregated space ("Segregation at the beauty counter," 2011). "Clean" or eco-beauty products are manufactured mostly for white women and lighter skin tones. The natural and organic sector has mimicked the actions of the larger beauty industry by following the rules of the white beauty ideal and colorism, the discrimination against darker skin tones, which has been historically problematic in the United States since slavery. The clean beauty movement, although not a very diverse space, has inspired black women to create their own space to discuss how they could go green by "going natural."

This phenomenon, a deliberate and conscious natural hair practice (Henderson, 2015), is referred to as "a movement" by the popular Tribe Called Curl blog. The movement is led by a geographically dispersed, mostly online community. The online community members' desire to embrace their natural hair began conversations and launched learning communities about how to care for their hair in its natural state. The learning communities, which began in the United States, became so popular online and offline that they spread to Africa and most African diaspora locations worldwide, including the UK, France, Nigeria, Latin America and most Caribbean islands (Byrd & Tharps, 2014). Now, black women globally have their own beauty tribe focused on black hair care, beauty regimens, and education. The "tribe" is a consumer group with a common interest and usually has a cult following that requires specialized brand marketing called tribal marketing (Richardson, 2013). Black women share knowledge, develop products, and create beauty businesses to ensure their personal needs are met and assist one another along their natural journey within their tribal community.

Tribal members (also called "naturals") in large numbers began to make decisions to go natural during the early years of the 21st century. This decision meant to no longer use lye or chemical-based hair products to straighten their hair. Hair straighteners, also called relaxers (Byrd & Tharps, 2014; Thompson, 2009b), can severely burn the scalp, cause hair breakage/loss and other serious health issues such as fibroids, early puberty, breast cancer and harm to unborn children (Malkan, 2007; Uhlenhake & Mehregan, 2013). Naturals began to learn for the first time about synthetic versus natural ingredients. They also began to realize that the most harmful products, such as hair straighteners, skin lighteners, and highly pigmented color cosmetics, were being marketed specifically to them as black women (Malkan, 2007). In addition to these

harmful products being created and marketed to black women (and not other races), the use of these products causes disproportionate harm due to more frequent use of the products as well.

Essence Magazine's Smart Beauty Panel discovered that black women purchase 80% more cosmetics and twice as many skin care products than the average mainstream consumer (Smith & Bondy, 2009). As studies are released linking beauty products marketed to black women to many serious health conditions, including cancer, fibroids, respiratory illnesses, neurological damage, learning disabilities, and reproductive harm from chemical exposure (Ball, 2016; Chang, 2015), more black women feel confident in their decisions to go natural. The lack of trust in the mainstream beauty industry prompted members of the tribe to create natural and organic products to use as safer alternatives. The natural hair movement became a platform for environmental education (Nimocks, 2015) and learning how to avoid toxic beauty products.

Black women have begun to learn that toxic chemicals in beauty products disproportionately impact their health (Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, 2016). However, the level of belief that these issues are serious, as well as their susceptibility to experience negative health impacts due to beauty standards, may vary greatly within the black female community. With this new knowledge about toxicity and environmental health, some black women who began their natural journey with their hair are beginning to explore changing to natural beauty regimens or lifestyles overall. This knowledge may lead to the desire to have a healthy beauty regimen and change the use of other cosmetic products for face, body, and nails in addition to hair care.

Black women who implement healthy lifestyle changes such as veganism, vegetarianism, gluten-free or toxin-free foods may also see the benefit of changing their use of beauty products. Many natural beauty brands also offer vegan and gluten-free products as a part of their product mix. Cruelty-free products are also very popular, as can be witnessed by the widespread use of

the PETA and Leaping Bunny logos on cosmetic packaging (Padgett, 2015). In addition to using organic ingredients, preservatives, petroleum-based ingredients, and carcinogenic ingredients are eliminated because of the links these ingredients have to cancer, respiratory, neurological, and reproductive problems (Black Women for Wellness, 2016b; Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, 2016; Malkan, 2007) and are therefore options for black women who lead an organic lifestyle. Concern over how chemicals used in beauty products impact animals and the environment may also prompt change in product purchase decisions.

The dangers of using toxic beauty products while pregnant and on babies has also been highlighted in research and in the media (Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, 2016; Larsen, 2010; Malkan, 2007; O'Connor & Spunt, 2010; Weil, 2016). The ability to have healthy babies may be considered another benefit of using non-toxic beauty products. In particular, lead, toluene and mercury, ingredients found in cosmetics, can cause miscarriages, smaller babies, and learning disabilities in children (O'Connor & Spunt, 2010). Many times, mothers or women who are or desire to be pregnant change to natural and organic lifestyles. Since pregnancy is a time when many women are open to embracing a healthy lifestyle and trying to minimize exposure to toxins, going natural while pregnant is one of the best things women can do for their unborn baby's health (Thomas, 2012). Although there are varying reasons why black women decide to go natural, the natural movement has motivated black women to exercise power over their bodily aesthetics, lifestyle, and health.

Although the natural hair movement serves as a platform for environmental education in the beauty arena, the landscape of natural and organic products can be difficult to navigate. Product labels, eco-certifications and ingredient databases full of scientific language are difficult for consumers to understand. The use of industry jargon is complex and consumers must learn

what types of “free from” products serve their needs and desired lifestyle. These difficulties impact consumer self-efficacy in selecting appropriate products for themselves.

Terminologies used to describe healthier products vary greatly. Currently used industry terms may include: paraben-free, sulfate-free, talc-free, vegan, green beauty, clean beauty, cruelty-free, non-toxic, free from synthetics, all natural, organic, and eco-beauty. Paraben-, sulfate- and talc-free all describe the removal of the respective ingredient because of its direct link to cancer or other health problems. Green, eco, non-toxic and clean beauty are different terms which mean that the ingredients and total cosmetic footprint are environmentally and human-health friendly (Padgett, 2015). Organic lacks pesticides, while all natural means it is 100% derived from the earth (Park, 2012). Vegan means no animal by-products are included in the product (Harper, 2010). Cruelty-free means the ingredients of the product have not been tested on animals to determine product safety (Padgett, 2015). When determining which features or benefits of natural products are desired, many consumers may struggle with how these terms differ and which ones impact their health. Brands and retailers need to understand which features to highlight on product packaging, which terms are consistent with lifestyle desires, and how to merchandise natural products so black women will purchase them.

Greenwashed product packaging is also a problem for consumers shopping the natural cosmetic section. Many manufacturers and distributors of products include meaningless claims on packaging to disguise a product as eco-friendly (Padgett, 2015). They also design and place green nature visuals on packaging. At first glance, the product packaging stimulates the senses of a consumer desiring safer products. However, the product is falsely advertised as natural or organic. Often, such products are placed in less expensive retailers such as dollar stores or in shops located in minority communities. This packaging confuses consumers, unethically elicits

their dollars and further damages their health. The lack of availability of green products made for black women in beauty categories other than black hair care, such as skin care and makeup, is a challenge as well.

Determining which natural beauty product features solve the aesthetic needs specific to black women is a challenge of product selection. Black women have specialized needs in terms of hair moisturizing, straightening, skin tone matching, and hyperpigmentation resolution. There are alternative natural ingredients that may assist with these issues that can replace chemicals in current product formulas. Health literacy training, use of phone apps that list and define ingredients, natural product databases and quick guides for shopping may be helpful to assist black women in deciphering which product features will be good for their skin or hair care needs and which ingredients may be harmful. Every aspect of merchandising beauty products impacts the perceived benefits, beliefs, attitudes and ultimate behavior of black women and their ability to choose products as health intervention for themselves.

Significance and Objectives of the Study

Black natural beauty tribe members are commonly referred to as "naturals." However, natural is a generic term that is very loosely defined and understood. Due to its growth, the natural movement now impacts product availability and lifestyle choices for all black women. Black women spend an estimated $9 billion on beauty products (Black Women for Wellness, 2016) and total black hair care consumption is estimated to reach $500 billion by 2017 (Black Women for Wellness, 2016b; Opiah, 2014). Regardless of the massive size of the market and the spending power of black women on beauty, black women do not feel that the mainstream beauty industry meets their unique needs. They feel that they have been grossly underserved as

beauty consumers (Baldwin, 2008; Bryant, 2016; L. Davis, 2013; "Segregation at the beauty counter," 2011).

Beauty products marketed to black women are not tested as frequently for toxic health consequences (Ball, 2016) in comparison to mainstream products, which in the United States also falls below the levels of research in European countries (Cairo, 2015; Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, 2016). However, when they are tested, findings show them to be the most toxic products on the market (Ball, 2016). This creates the need to understand health disparities associated with beauty products black women use and study the link between health and product purchasing intentions for beauty products of black women. Although mainstream natural and organic brands have been studied over the last 10 years and black women going natural is no longer a new phenomenon, the topic of natural beauty has never been more relevant ("Beauty is not evolving," 2016).

Black women as a beauty community have clearly demonstrated their purchasing power by creating the natural hair movement. Collectively, they have changed the landscape of 21st century beauty product development (Bryant, 2016). It is therefore crucial that we understand the beliefs and attitudes of the black female consumer toward the natural beauty industry. We need to understand: (1) which demographics and lifestyles within the black female consumer base are more prone to shop natural, (2) when black women do shop natural, which product categories are they the most interested in purchasing, (3) whether and to what extent black women perceive health challenges to be linked to their use of beauty products, and (4) how their participation (purchase intentions and/or behavior) in a healthy beauty lifestyle is driven by their beliefs, marketed health-promoting jargon, level of self-efficacy, extent of tribal marketing and brand/product cues to action.

The findings of this study will be important because the lifestyle and beauty consumption choices of black women represent billions of dollars in the global beauty industry. Understanding how to perform market segmentation of the larger community of black women by demographics and lifestyle is key to appropriate product development and merchandising to address the needs and desires of this consumer base. Understanding product merchandising, tribal marketing, appropriate cues to action and needed consumer education are vital to brands that desire brand loyalty from black female consumers. The ability to forecast social movements and beauty trends of black women is extremely important.

The cosmetics industry found itself in a place of reactivity instead of proactivity during the 21st century shift to black natural beauty. For some reason, even though the natural and organic market targeting white women had seen double-digit growth, the industry did not treat black women as equals in terms of product development or include them in the change from toxic to natural products. Black women had to do it for themselves. The natural hair movement was driven by black female consumers and has caused major players in the industry, including L'Oreal, Dove, Neutrogena, Pantene, Head & Shoulders (Bryant, 2016; Henderson, 2015) and other major brands, to revamp or create entire natural product lines because they missed the pulse of the movement and were trying to make up for the millions of dollars they lost. L'Oreal has gone so far as to start a Women of Color Lab (Bryant, 2016). The late response from major cosmetic brands allowed a shift in market dominance from mainstream beauty to ethnic indie entrepreneurs and small brand success (Byrd & Tharps, 2014). Many new cosmetic and hair care lines, mostly black-owned (such as Koils by Nature, Shea Moisture, Naturalicious, Curls, Eden, Blac Minerals, LUV Mineral Cosmetics, The Mane Choice and many others), were founded to serve the black natural market and are now very successful.

Ongoing research in this area will allow all industry players to remain competitive. This study results in a greater understanding of the demographics and lifestyle choices of black women for successful product development, merchandising and use of tribal marketing to communicate product availability, benefits and cultural relatedness. In addition, the results of this study produce information that will ease black women consumers' shopping difficulties, spur health-promoting behavior by decreasing barriers to purchasing healthy beauty products, increase knowledge, increase understanding of cues to action that influence purchase behavior and increase self-efficacy toward natural and organic beauty products.

Theoretical Nature of the Study

In this interpretative, multiple-methods study, I have performed a netnography of the online black beauty community. I sought to understand the beliefs, perceptions, knowledge and cues to action that impact health-promoting behaviors of black women toward beauty products. This investigation allowed me to explore the extent to which black women consider health in their beauty product purchase decisions and whether those decisions lead them to natural and organic products. I used the Health Belief Model (HBM) to study the level of influence between constructs in the model and health-promoting purchase behavior toward natural and organic beauty products for black women. The associated demographics (age, level of education, income, parental status, skin tone) and lifestyles (vegan, vegetarian, natural hair, non-toxic, gluten-free), along with barriers and levels of self-efficacy, or their level of confidence to select appropriate products for themselves, were studied. The study reports whether environmental health and consumption behavior toward beauty products are linked for black women.

The beauty communities created by the natural hair movement and other online beauty groups for black women are spaces of information and influence. They are a prime example of a

gender- and race-based "e-tribe" (Kozinets, 2006) and marketing phenomenon. Netnography, being a method to study private access spaces and groups online, is a scientifically appropriate way to study a marginalized group by experiencing internal and participatory membership (Kozinets, 2010). This is because insider access to unprompted conversations is a clear way to collect uncompromised data. The purpose of this study is to understand how the natural beauty movement and tribal beauty marketing practices (natural and non-natural) have equipped black beauty consumers with education on healthier beauty consumption and whether that education further influences beliefs and purchase intentions toward healthier beauty products.

Data was gathered through multiple methods, including an online survey, and online focus groups. Data mining of online black beauty groups was also conducted as a supplementary method. All participants and events were selected through purposeful criterion sampling (Patton, 2002). Active members of black beauty groups and natural beauty groups were recruited to participate. Analysis of the data allowed me to understand if and how black women engage in health-promoting behaviors toward beauty products. The health of black women is an area of great concern and needed improvement. A study such as this, as eth(net)nographic studies do, invokes a call for action toward leading healthier lives and helps black female consumers use knowledge for social change (Rybas & Gajjala, 2007).

Statement of the Problem

From 2014 to 2015, several academic articles and books (Byrd & Tharps, 2014; Gill, 2015; Henderson, 2015; Jeffries, 2014; Nimocks, 2015; Randle, 2015; Rowe, 2015) documented the 21st century natural hair movement as a part of black beauty culture. However, although the natural beauty movement exists primarily online, it has never been explored using netnography. Many articles have documented the growth of the natural and organic beauty industry and

antecedents to purchase intentions. However, by the author's knowledge, to date, black women have never been studied as a sample group in eco-beauty merchandising articles. None of the previous research has investigated the relationship of health beliefs and barriers to health-promoting purchase behavior toward natural and organic beauty products by black women. To date, no studies have been conducted on what drives black women to engage in health-promoting behaviors toward beauty products.

Past research has focused on black beauty politics, history, and feminist approaches to the issues at stake but has ignored consumption practices and successful tribal marketing as they relate to the health aspects of beauty for black women. Although the phenomenon of black beauty is well documented and findings include a mix of political, economic, and systematic racism as the explanation for the development of ethnic beauty products, this study focuses on health as a historical and modern plight that has yet to be addressed. Baldwin (2008) states that beauty entrepreneur Anthony Overton convincingly argued that "white companies were not concerned with refining or uplifting the image of race womanhood but in pushing dangerous products that did not meet the practical needs of black skin and hair" (p.62). Although serious social and political discussions may stem from the findings in this study, the papers within this dissertation are focused on findings appropriate for fashion merchandising, consumer marketing, critical race and beauty and environmental health journals.

This study will fill a void in the literature by using the HBM to investigate black women's perceptions and health-promoting behaviors toward beauty products merchandised as natural and organic. The HBM specifies that health-promoting behaviors are likely adopted if individuals perceive a negative health outcome to be severe, perceive themselves to be susceptible to the negative health outcome, perceive the benefits of adopting the behavior that

reduce the likelihood of negative health to be high, and perceive the barriers to adopting those behaviors to be low (Carpenter, 2010; Rosenstock, 1974). The health-promoting behavior in this study is purchase intention toward natural and organic beauty products. The study reveals the nature of black women's eco-beauty consumption through statistically significant relationships and themes drawn from the data by studying the variables of the HBM. This data is useful for successfully marketing beauty products that address the needs and desires of black women and their health.

Definitions of Key Terms

Big Chop – The cutting off of all chemically straightened hair (Campbell, 2015; Randle, 2015).

Black – A person whose heritage is from Africa or the African Diaspora. For the purposes of this study, "black" will be used interchangeably within the text with African-American.

Colorism – Colorism, also termed the "lily complex" (L. Davis, 2013; Henderson, 2015; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003; Patton, 2006), is the belief and influence on beauty standards that the more European one's features are, the more beautiful the person is and the greater one's social value and acceptability is (hooks, 1994; Russell, Wilson, & Hall, 1992). Colorism is discrimination against darker skin tones, normally by people of the same race or ethnic group (Jha, 2016).

Cosmetics – The Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FD&C Act) defines cosmetics as "articles intended to be rubbed, poured, sprinkled, or sprayed on, introduced into, or otherwise applied to the human body...for cleansing, beautifying, promoting attractiveness, or altering the appearance" (FD&C Act, sec. 201(i)). Among the products included in this definition are skin moisturizers, perfumes, lipsticks, fingernail polishes, eye and facial makeup preparations, cleansing shampoos, permanent waves, hair colors, deodorants, as well as any substance

intended for use as a component of a cosmetic product (United States Food and Drug Administration, 2012).

Greenwashing – Greenwashed products are falsely marketed and packaged with green visuals and verbiage to resemble or be perceived as eco-friendly, natural, organic or chemically safe (Padgett, 2015).

Natural –Ingredients and products that are solely derived from nature or the earth, like herbs, flowers, essential oils or other botanicals; any product or ingredient derived from nature that is unprocessed and without chemicals (Park, 2012).

Natural Hair Movement – An online and offline movement that began in the early 21st century within the black female community to encourage wearing and embracing black hair in its natural state (Byrd & Tharps, 2014).

Naturalista/Natural(s) – A black woman who practices, all or in part, natural beauty regimens or wears her hair in its natural state unaltered by chemical processing (Byrd & Tharps, 2014). For the purposes of this paper, Naturals and Naturalista are used interchangeably.

Netnography – A form of ethnographic research adapted to computer-based interactions (Belk, Fisher, & Kozinets, 2013).

Online Community – A public or private group or forum where online phenomena related to a specific subject matter is discussed by members of the community (Poynter, 2010).

Organic – Organic ingredients are grown without the use of pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, sewage sludge, genetically modified organisms, or ionizing radiation (Park, 2012).

Protective Styles – Styles worn to transition the hair from a relaxed to natural state, preserving some length before cutting the rest of the relaxed/straightened hair off (Campbell, 2015).

Relaxer – A type of hair product or cosmetic emulsion that has a high pH and is used to permanently alter the tight curl pattern of ethnic hair through a chemical process (Henderson, 2015; Randle, 2015).

Safe Cosmetics – Personal care products that do not contain ingredients toxic or harmful to human health (Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, 2016).

Social Media – An online service network where users interact and connect with other users via posting of text and visuals (Poynter, 2010).

Tribe – A membership group that self-associates around a common interest or phenomenon (Richardson, 2013). For the purposes of this paper, the tribe is a group of black women who participate in online black beauty groups.

Tribal Marketing – A form of marketing that is tribe-centered. Its purpose is to support those things of importance to tribe members, thus becoming part of the tribe itself (Richardson, 2013).

Vlog – A video blog (O'Rourke, 2016).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Black Women and their Use of Cosmetics: A Historical Review[1]

"Beauty was the first racism" (Arogundade, 2011, p.9). The physical and psychological trauma of America's racialized past is evident in the literature that describes the history of black beauty from pre-slavery to modern times. bell hooks (1992) says of the history of black beauty that "loving blackness was hazardous in a white supremacist culture to the point where death was the punishment" (Porter, 2001, p.75). Throughout history, black women have been oppressed and discriminated against because their features (hair, skin tone, body image, etc.) have not matched society's standards of the white beauty ideal and were thus socially devalued (White, 2005).

The oppression of black women and discriminatory views of appropriate or desirable black beauty have been discussed and debated over the last 400 years (Arogundade, 2011). Racism has affected beauty routines, styling methods, the development and availability of beauty products, and ultimately the health of black women. Conformity was the goal, whether desired and purposeful or based upon psychologically induced and suppressed fears. Respect for individualized beauty, regardless of race, just like respect for bodily health, are human rights issues that go hand in hand, but, to date, have never intersected for black women. Therefore, this literature review traces the history of black beauty and highlights when health is documented

[1] Davis-Bundrage, M., Medvedev, K. & Hunt-Hurst, P. Condensed version to be submitted to Costume Society of America's *Women's Head Hair Issues* as a book chapter titled *"Black Women's Hair Politics Impact on Bodily Health"*

within black beauty culture. How and when, if at all, the desire or necessity for healthier beauty products may have guided or altered the purchase intention of beauty products for black women prior to the Natural Hair Movement of the 21st century was extracted from previous literature.

This portion of the literature review is written linearly. First, a survey of pre-slavery black beauty history is explored. Then, the limited grooming options during the period of slavery in the United States sheds light on how health as a primary focus in terms of hair care was impossible at that time. Thirdly, black beauty history during each major era of the 20th century is explored to understand if, how and when health became a focus in terms of beauty consumption for black women. Lastly, this literature review explores in depth the most recent Natural Hair Movement in the 21st century, which has been documented as laying a foundation for environmental health consciousness for black women in terms of their beauty regimens.

Pre-slavery

"In the beginning, beauty belonged to nature. It was raceless. Classless. Then, suddenly beauty was in the eye of the beholder, and the beholder was white" (Arogundade, 2011, p.11). This powerful quote by Arogundade speaks of the times of antiquity, prior to and including the 16th and 17th centuries. European traders and adventurers who traveled to Africa during these times wrote reports and drew illustrations documenting their perspective of the aesthetics and bodies of African people (Camp, 2015). Their view of diversity, of seeing skin tones, bodies and lifestyles that differed from their own, started the debate of whether or not black is beautiful. This debate has now lasted for centuries. The lens, worldview and opinions of the early European settlers and scholars made it possible to falsely equate their renditions of Africa with a new truth. The color white became promoted as the symbol of virtuousness, purity, and cleanliness. Black, the opposite, was labelled dirty, ugly, and tarnished. Those who belong to

the black race were now viewed as subhuman because of the values associated with the color black. Black was now equated with racial inferiority.

Prior to slavery and the existence of America, black was beautiful in Africa. Women adorned themselves with elaborate natural hairstyles and respected beauty as part of the local culture. Hairstyling in Africa indicated marital status, age, wealth, and religion (Henderson, 2015). Once Europeans became the arbiters of beauty, they began to theorize blackness. Arogundade (2011) explains how Europeans crafted theories of how the darkness of black skin came to be. Theories ranged from biblical curses to interpretations of art and biblical stories to permanent staining from extreme sun burns. These theories eventually equated black with evil. He suggests that European scholars created their own measurements of human body parts to create a hierarchy of beauty amongst races. Camp (2015) and Thompson (2009) agree with Arogundade (2011) regarding the complicity of European explorers in creating damaging accounts of Africans and the role of white American scientists categorizing humanity during the 18th and 19th centuries based on their opinions of black bodies.

Camp's (2015) research explains how black and white ideas and beliefs about beauty are rooted in the European ideas of differentiating between light and dark skins and equating them with beautiful and ugly. She refers to the meeting of Africans and English people around 1550 and describes early Europeans' contradictory views of black people, which varied from extremely complimentary of their beautiful appearances to total disgust toward their appearance. While at first these Europeans stated, for example, that "their hair was done up in the smartest ways" (Camp, 2015, p. 678) or they were "impressed by the extraordinary African hairstyles" (Byrd & Tharps, 2014, p. 8), the accounts of beauty and appreciation of African adornment

quickly faded as contempt for black looks grew and the categorization of racial beauty started in the Enlightenment period of the 1700s.

During this time, the enslavement of African people also began. The advent of slavery physically allowed Europeans to transfer their theoretical assumptions onto the black body as a way to demonize and justify the subjugation of Africans. They created a context in which black bodies came to be viewed as uniformly ugly. Outsiders' questioning of whether black is beautiful transformed into the beginning of an ugly history of slavery and a trajectory of destruction for a group of people differentiated by their skin color. African people were now seen as not beautiful, then physically not valued, which ultimately transformed into physically not healthy.

Slavery

Contempt for black bodies and using whiteness as a benchmark of hierarchical beauty standards progressed further during slavery (Camp, 2015; Tate, 2007). Black hair was the major point of disgust, as it was now deemed unattractive and inferior by the Europeans (Thompson, 2009b). During slavery, black hair begins to be politicized. During the slave trade, most slaves had their hair completely cut off to strip them of their identity and culture (Byrd & Tharps, 2014). After arriving in America, slaves were forced into living in inhumane and unhealthy conditions that prevented them from properly caring for their hair (Byrd & Tharps, 2014). This forever changed the relationship to and level of knowledge African-Americans have had about their hair and how to properly care for it.

The African comb (otherwise called a pick), documented in *400 Years Without a Comb* by Willie Morrow (1973), was the primary styling aid for tightly curled African hair. It was removed from the slaves' lives so they did not have appropriate hair styling tools (Byrd &

Tharps, 2014; Henderson, 2015; Kelley, 1997; Thompson, 2009a; Thompson, 2009b). Eventually, slaves began to make their own tools and use whatever they had available, for example, the sheep fleece carding tool was used for detangling black hair (Byrd & Tharps, 2014; Patton, 2006).

With regrowth, the slave's hair tended to lock up (entangle, dred or matt together) naturally when unattended to for long periods of time. English slave traders referred to black hair as "dreadful" when this happened, thus coining the term "dreadlocks" to describe the style of hair that is permanently locked together (Byrd & Tharps, 2014; Thompson, 2009b; White, 2005). The hairstyle, which is common in modern times, lost its previous negative connotations and is now affectionately and simply called "locs." It is now a popular chemical-free hairstyle, much healthier than wearing heat-styled or chemically straightened hair, wigs or weaves. Despite its popularity, however, the United States 11th Circuit Court of Appeals recently dismissed a discrimination lawsuit against a company that did not hire a woman who refused to cut her locs, continuing the discrimination against black women who choose to wear the style (Scott, 2016).

Performing slave labor for long hours in the sun caused diseases of the scalp (Henderson, 2015; Kelley, 1997), further complicating the ability to appear well groomed. Diseases included ringworm and lice infestations, which caused a vicious cycle of hair breakage and baldness (Byrd & Tharps, 2014). Head wraps or scarves were worn to hide ungroomed hair, diseased scalps and offer protection from the sun (Thompson, 2009). Slaves were often made to wear wigs by their masters (Hoffman & Bailey, 2014) to look more "presentable," further distancing slaves from their natural hair texture and grooming practices. Improper maintenance and conformity to racist appearance rules, however, were just the beginning. As white beauty

standards became the rule for acceptance, straight, long hair and white facial features became idealized, which made attaining beauty standards impossible for both enslaved and free black women (L. Davis, 2013).

The color caste system, a system that has perpetuated the falsehood that black is not beautiful in regards to skin tone and has prompted self-hatred among black women (Henderson, 2015), also began in the United States during slavery. The color caste system is a hierarchy of skin tones among black women (White, 2005). Dark skin has historically been deemed inferior to light skin, a common feature of whites (Campbell, 2015; White, 2005). The color caste system formed in slavery as a result of mixed-race individuals, who were generally the outcomes of rape (White, 2005). The systematic raping of black women by white slave masters created a new African-American persona, called a "mulatto," and she was given higher societal value (Arogundade, 2011; hooks, 1994; Grayson, 1995; White, 2005). Preferential treatment was given to lighter-skinned blacks, who were usually house slaves with less physically demanding duties (Campbell, 2015). African-Americans whose skin tone was darker, and thus closer to their natural ancestry, were devalued and relegated to hard field labor. The preferential treatment given to mulattos caused great psychological damage and division amongst black women. Women with darker skin tones began to desire lighter skin so they could feel more beautiful and be treated better. The classification of slaves based on skin tone was the beginning of colorism (Henderson, 2015; Iijima-Hall, 1995; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003).

Colorism still damages and separates black women (L. Davis, 2013; Henderson, 2015). Hill (2002) found that today black women still judge the attractiveness of other black women based on the lightness of their skin tone. Colorism, also termed the "lily complex" (L. Davis, 2013; Henderson, 2015; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003; Patton, 2006), is the belief that the more

European one's features are, the more beautiful the person is and the greater her social value and acceptability will be (hooks, 1994; Hunter, 2007; Russell et al., 1992). Colorism creates enormous pressure for black women to try to shift toward white appearance standards (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003). Both the idealized hair texture/length and skin color perpetuated by the color caste system, created in slavery, are products of cultural hegemony and white supremacy (White, 2005). Colorism helps to sustain the multi-billion-dollar toxic skin bleaching industry (Hunter, 2007). The effect of colorism was the focus of the Oprah Winfrey *Lifeclass*: *Colorism* series that aired on the OWN network (*Oprah's Lifeclass*, 2014). The impact of colorism was also the main theme of the *Dark Girl* and *Light Girl* documentaries (Berry & Duke, 2011). This highlights the fact that colorism is still an important concern centuries after slavery has ended.

The trauma caused by colorism and feeling unaccepted within mainstream white society due to appearance causes self-hatred and low self-esteem among black women. In fact, personal beauty is a leading cause of mental health treatment of African-American women (Iijima-Hall, 1995; Thompson, 2009b). Depression and other mental disorders, including eating disorders, are common health issues for black women who internalize mainstream beauty standards and try to conform to them (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003). Self-hatred, low self-esteem and coping with extreme mental pressure to change oneself are cited as the main reasons why black women have subjected themselves to toxic chemicals or worn wigs and weaves (straight hair sewn into braids) to approximate white beauty standards (White, 2005).

The use of unhealthy grooming ingredients also began in slavery. The health of enslaved black women was not a priority for their masters, who usually valued these women based not on their appearance but on their physical strength to perform slave duties or the ability to bear children. Because they had no other options, field slaves were forced to use homemade hair

tools or damaging small tooth combs suitable for white hair and harmful kitchen ingredients to keep up their appearance (Kelley, 1997). Ingredients such as fatty materials (axle grease, lard/butter, and bacon grease) and plant resins were used to style and cleanse their hair (De Sá Dias, Baby, Kaneko, & Valera, 2007; Patton, 2006).

By the end of slavery, the desire for greater social acceptance led black women to purchase and use beauty products to attain the status of higher-class citizens. Black women knew that adopting white beauty ideals was essential to "shedding the vestiges of enslavement" (Lindsey, 2011, p. 98) and achieving survival, freedom, education, employment and higher economic status in their new world of northern and urban living (hooks, 1988; Patton, 2006). At the same time, environmentalism, a belief that human physical variety—including skin tone and bodily aesthetics—arises from the local environment changed people's thinking about beauty. The innate right of people to be free and the questioning of the morality and legitimacy of slavery (Camp, 2015) was paramount during the revolution and end to slavery. This would be the second time in history where a connection was made between human preservation, beauty and environmentalism. When this happens, health and wellness is deemed necessary for all people.

1860s – 1930s

Post-slavery, for the first time in American history, black women had the financial means to secure beauty products. Also, manufacturers started to make products with black women in mind as consumers (Lindsey, 2011). Sarah Breedlove, otherwise known as Madame C.J. Walker, the nation's first black self –made millionaire (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003; Lutes, 2002), and Annie Turnbo were among the first African-Americans to prosper in the black hair industry. In 1905, Madame C.J. invented the hot comb and crafted a hair softening treatment to

use with it for straightening hair (Campbell, 2015; De Sá Dias et al., 2007; hooks, 1988; Patton, 2006; Tate, 2007; Thompson, 2009b). Walker also developed a healing treatment called "Madam Walker's Wonderful Hair Grower" for women who suffered from hair loss (L. Davis, 2013). In the 1920s, Walker also began to sell facial cosmetics. Annie Turnbo created a line of hair care products and face powder. Although they lacked regular distribution channels, their businesses, which utilized a door-to-door selling model, were very successful.

Madame C.J. Walker's hair products were designed to help African-American women straighten their hair without damaging it, and the skin care products did not contain skin-bleaching ingredients (L. Davis, 2013). Walker set out to address the specific needs of black women that beauty companies at that time were failing to address (Esposito, 2016). Although Walker promoted the healthiest products she could, she still came under scrutiny by some black equal rights activists. Some activists felt she was perpetuating a racial inferiority complex (Campbell, 2015) by promoting hair straightening, even though she did not promote skin bleaching (Walker, 2007). On the other hand, hooks (2001) argues that hair straightening for black women during this time before desegregation was not a racialized ritual of longing to be white, but one of entrée into womanhood and merely a time for black women to commune and erase the difficulties of life. The meaning of healthy hair and healthy hair products has also shifted and grown over time. Vaseline and petroleum-based oils used with the pressing comb may not have been known to be an unhealthy option for the scalp at that time. However, Walker's work brought to light, for the first time in history, a concern for black women's health in connection with beauty product consumption. Walker (2007) also emphasizes, along with other scholars, that Madame Walker's company did not promote a white beauty ideal in any way

before she died in 1919. Lutes (2002) states that Madame Walker "encouraged African-Americans to have healthy hair, not to emulate whites" (p.85).

The growth of black beauty culture exploded in urban northern cities like Washington, DC and Harlem, NY. In these cities, more products were developed specifically for African-Americans and many beauty salons and beauty schools in black communities were opened (Lindsey, 2011). During the 1920s and 1930s, one major product, skin lightening cream, was heavily promoted to black women, and "bleaching" became common. Many African-American women began to use these products, applying harmful ingredients to their skin to lighten their skin by several shades (Dorman, 2011; Henderson, 2015; Lutes, 2002). Skin lighteners such as Black-No-More, Black Skin Remover and Scott's Face Bleach and Beautifier ran thousands of advertisements in the black media. Skin lighteners were heavily marketed with connections to femininity, romantic and employment success, racial upward mobility and the ability to participate in consumerism. Bleaching was promoted and purchased as a necessity in the daily skin care regimen for black women in the 1920s (Dorman, 2011; Walker, 2007).

Skin lighteners include chemicals that are proven to cause permanent damage after use (Malkan, 2007). During the 1920s, the products contained caustic chemicals, including high levels of hydroquinone, that caused severe dermatitis, disfigurement of the face and in some cases death (Dorman, 2011). Although using skin bleaches causes both physical and psychological pain (Dorman, 2011), beauty companies heavily advertised skin lighteners and hair straightening in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Rooks, 1996; White, 2005). Skin lightening creams are still heavily marketed and sold in some countries even though their ingredients are banned.

Skin lightening/bleaching products and scalp ointments were made available so that women could transition to modern, middle-class existence. Many black women also desired to emulate the singers and movie stars popular in this decade such as Josephine Baker, "who was obsessed with light skin" and skin lightening (Arogundade, 2011, p.34; Campbell, 2015). The messages in the advertisements of these dangerous products promised a way for black women to be accepted more in society by lightening skin, straightening hair, and offering the ability to "look better and fix their appearance" (Henderson, 2015, p.12). Many women would bleach to the point where they could pass for white. This was also necessary to be included in the higher ranks within African-American society, including sororities, professional organizations such as the NAACP, and some black churches that participated in color prejudice (Dorman, 2011). Blacks who desired to pass as white for social inclusion in middle-class Black America, known as the Negro Elite (Byrd & Tharps, 2014; Lindsey, 2011), separated themselves from darker-skinned blacks who loved their natural being and participated in the anti-skin bleaching movement (Lindsey, 2011). Many of these people who took on a pro-black stance, including protesting skin bleaching, followed Marcus Garvey's teachings of Pan-Africanism. Garvey spoke of proudly accepting one's blackness and maintaining one's kinky hair and health because he was against the unhealthy processes of hair straightening (Arogundade, 2011; Dorman, 2011; Patton, 2006). This caused a rift in the black community that would last generations.

Product manufacturing began for the light-skinned Negro Elite, as an accepted class of people, during this era of the 1920s and 1930s. Even today, many prestige cosmetic companies still only offer the lightest shades of makeup foundation for African-American women. Many dark-skinned women, still viewed as unattractive and devalued by the marketplace, felt they had no choice but to succumb to product marketing for skin bleaching and the voice of society

suggesting lighter was better. They used unhealthy products to change their skin, as they too now desired lighter skin (Lindsey, 20011) in order to have a better life.

Although most black women desired upward mobility and lighter skin, documentation exists of a subculture of beauticians that focused on overall health and wellness. Madame G.A. Finnie Mack, a skin specialist, whose advertisements were locally published in urban areas such as Washington, D.C., is documented to have led a health-focused beauty shop and contributed to the "discourse of black women's health and its connection to her overall appearance" (Lindsey, 2011, p. 110). Despite those efforts, health mostly took a backseat to upward mobility, and the belief that shifting away from blackness to the predominant beauty standard could offer higher status only got worse in the next two decades.

1940s – 1950s

The first products made to chemically straighten black hair were developed around 1940 (De Sá Dias et al., 2007). This was the first time that African-American women had an alternative to heat styling or pressing the hair with a hot comb and petroleum-based oils. Using the pressing comb was a way to temporarily straighten the hair, but once exposed to water, black hair would revert back to its naturally curly state. Hair relaxers were a more permanent solution to straightening black hair (Thompson, 2009b).

Relaxers are highly toxic chemical products. One way users describe the obsessive reliance on these products that cause damage to the scalp and hair shaft is the nickname "creamy crack," as seen in Chris Rock's documentary *Good Hair* (2009) (Chang, 2015). Relaxers are made specifically for Afro hair, which is shaped differently, much more tightly curled, much drier and breaks off much more easily than Caucasian hair. Relaxers are marketed almost exclusively to black women and promote the benefits of smoothing and managing "unruly and

unmanageable" hair. Not only does the relaxer's inclusion of caustic and toxic chemicals cause physical damage to the hair, especially after years of use (Chang, 2015; Thompson, 2009b; Malkan, 2007), it also psychologically instructs black females that their features are inadequate and that they are in need of assistance to meet artificial beauty standards (Grayson, 1995).

Black women have experienced physical trauma to their bodies trying to meet the beauty ideal in terms of haircare by using relaxers and hot combs. The styling of black hair to transform it from kinky/curly to straight can only be permanently accomplished with the use of harsh chemicals that cause severe damage to the body. Millions of black women's hair and scalps have been damaged by using chemical straighteners (Thompson, 2009). An estimated 70-80% of black women have chemically straightened their hair (Thompson, 2009).

By the 1950s, the sodium hydroxide-based relaxer had been developed. This new relaxer allowed Afro hair to be manipulated while wet. This type of relaxer was mostly applied by trained professionals in specialized salons after testing hair threads for damaging reactions (De Sá Dias et al., 2007). In 1954, George E. Johnson, an African-American, created the first relaxer that could be applied in one's home (Thompson, 2009). Now hair relaxers were made from sodium hydroxide and guanidine hydroxide, a no-lye (soda) formula which lowers, but does not eliminate, the level of potential damage and irritation to the scalp and hair follicles. Neutralizers and conditioning agents must be used with the products. These additional products contain unhealthy ingredients such as mineral oil and silicones, along with proteins and vegetable oils.

1960s – 1970s

Black women's opinions about how to respond to white beauty standards have varied throughout the decades. However, "the 1960s was a pivotal decade for black beauty" (Arogundade, 2011, p.57). In the 1960s and 70s, the Black Cultural Revolution, which included

the Black Power Movement and the Civil Rights Movement, redefined blackness (Tate, 2007) and created a very different response to accepting beauty standards than in the 1920s through the 1940s. The concept of black self-love reached its peak during this era and black women now desired to wear their hair natural (Campbell, 2015; Henderson, 2015). Many black people proudly proclaimed during the 1960s and 1970s that "Black Is Beautiful" (Camp, 2015).

Nothing stated this more visually and outwardly than the wearing of the Afro. The Afro, first worn as early as 1952 by lecturer Lois Liberty Jones (Kelley, 1997) and in 1957 by high fashion models (Arogundade, 2011; Kelley, 1997; Walker, 2007), later became a popular hairstyle as a symbol of black pride (Arogundade, 2011; Henderson, 2015; hooks, 1988; Iijima-Hall, 1995). Women involved in the black freedom movement and African liberation also began to adopt the style (Kelley, 1997). The Afro was a must for any black woman involved in race activism (Gill, 2010). The Afro allowed black women to celebrate their naturally curly hair and deep brown skin as a total natural look. They abandoned relaxers and straightening combs. Straight hair, for many ethnically comfortable women, was deemed to be an outdated, tired look (Camp, 2015) and the *au naturel* was now high fashion (Kelley, 1997).

Many African-Americans who participated in the Black Power Movement believed that straightened hair was giving in to white supremacy, a denial of one's heritage and a rejection of the notion that "Black is Beautiful" (Campbell, 2015). Black beauticians, only trained in hair straightening, were no longer esteemed in the community, suffered heavy profit losses and were viewed as complicit in the oppression of black women (Arogundade, 2011; Gill, 2010). Unfortunately, the Afro was also viewed by some as a militant act due to images associated with the Black Panther Party; the politics of the time overshadowed the fact that the Afro is simply a natural and healthy hairstyle for people of African descent. Kelley (1997) explains that in certain

circles the intention of wearing an Afro was to achieve healthier hair and "was driven as much by health concerns as by identity politics" (p. 346).

Marcus Garvey and Malcolm X urged black women to not process their hair but to free their "processed minds" (Arogundade, 2011). However, despite going natural and abandoning chemically processed hairstyles, the Black is Beautiful Movement and Black Power Movement were ineffective in freeing African-Americans from the bondage of colorism within the community. Research studies show that light skin color was still a significant predictor of economic status and that dark-skinned women were still viewed as less attractive and less healthy than light-skinned women during this time (Camp, 2015; Iijima-Hall, 1995). Although there was a backlash against skin lightening, the products were merely remarketed as fade creams (Arogundade, 2011) and they included the same harmful ingredients.

All of the major cosmetic lines ignored the deeper skin hues of black women as customers until 1965, when the first modern commercial makeup line devoted to black skin, Flori Roberts (a white-owned company) was launched (Arogundade, 2011; Walker, 2007). Other factors in addition to the Black is Beautiful Movement that influenced the creation of more cosmetics for black women included black pride, the increasingly high income of black women and technological innovations used in the development of appropriate colors and shade ranges (Walker, 2007). Makeup became a tool that models could use to get rid of or hide their black features (e.g., create perception of thinner lips and smaller noses through facial contouring) in the name of success (Arogundade, 2011). While cosmetics advertising began to include black models, they still had lighter skin and long straight hair instead of the expected Afro and deeper skin tones.

The Afro style and corresponding ethnic consciousness began to fade in the 1970s as the Afro was promoted by the beauty industry as just another style without political significance (Campbell, 2015; Kelley, 1997) and without human or environmental health as a foundation. Beauty culture shifted away from diversity back toward a single socially accepted look that resembled white beauty standards (Arogundade, 2011). Wearing of the Afro style gradually came to an end in the 1980s and 90s (Iijima-Hall, 1995; Prince, 2009).

1980s – 1990s

During the 1980s, African-Americans began to assimilate into the corporate workforce in America, where power dressing was the norm. In order to look the part, black women had to style their hair straight for work (hooks, 1988), even though they often wore their hair in Afrocentric styles outside of work (Henderson, 2015). This is a common example of "shifting," the practice of black women having to lead double lives in America (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003). The racist rules of workforce dress and appearance forced many African-Americans to conform to the standards of white beauty ideals. Straight hair, makeup and traditional corporate dress were deemed to be the only acceptable and professional standard for success (Campbell, 2015; Tate, 2007). African-American women were forced to purchase cosmetic products that could give them the appearance of fitting into this culture or risk their chance to become gainfully employed and achieve middle class status (Campbell, 2015; Henderson, 2015; Patton, 2006; Rosette & Dumas, 2007; Thompson, 2009).

In white corporate America, natural hairstyles were seen as lacking professionalism (Campbell, 2015; Randle, 2015). Many punitive measures were taken by employers to restrict wearing natural styles at work (Gill, 2010; Thompson, 2009). Braided styles, in particular during the 1980s, were banned in the workplace and reinforced in American courts as inappropriate in a

place of employment (Byrd & Tharps, 2014; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003; Kelley, 1997). Although there were many instances of discrimination against braided hairstyles, one case, Renee Rogers (an employee fired for wearing a braided hairstyle to work) vs. American Airlines went to the federal court in 1981 and was ruled in favor of the employer (Byrd & Tharps, 2014). Although black women opted for braids as a healthy, protective style, the power of white corporations and the American judicial system joined the media and the beauty industry in overruling health for black women. To some extent, all women are asked to adhere to appearance standards in the workplace, but black women are unique because the standards threaten their natural being in terms of wearing their hair in its natural state (Patton, 2006). This was shown to be true in the 1990s but also as recently as 2014, when black women experienced a backlash against wearing their natural hair after the United States Army created a workplace rule that multiple braids, twists or dreadlocks, all commonly worn natural hairstyles by black women, were against hair regulations (Henderson & Butler, 2014).

Althea Prince (2009) states that there is no other group of people for whom wearing their natural hair is a problem in the public realm. Wearing black hair in its natural state has been viewed as unprofessional, unmanageable, undesirable, unacceptable, and ugly. This is because black hair is not naturally long or straight but instead curly or kinky (Thompson, 2009). However, during the 1980s and 1990s, many black women straightened their hair not because of negative connotations and or because of concern about health impacts of hairstyling. The main reasons for straightening were ease of maintenance, lack of time and ability to be versatile in styling (Iijima-Hall, 1995).

The 1980s also brought another hazardous chemical process called the Jheri curl. The popularity of this style led to dry curly perms for black hair, another style requiring hazardous

chemicals ("Let's talk curly perms," 2013; Kelley, 1997). The Rio Hair Naturalizer System, advertised as an "all-natural, non-toxic, chemical free relaxer" solution for Black women's "hair problems," was marketed almost exclusively to and used by thousands of Black women. After severe damage to their hair and scalps, including blisters, intense itching, unwarranted color changes and complete hair loss, the FDA shut the company down and seized their products (Grayson, 1995).

Braided natural hairstyles became popular again during the 1990s and created a booming business for African braiding shops (Thompson, 2009). This time, braiding was not only performed with one's natural hair, but to create long-lasting styles, synthetic or human hair extensions were added into the braids. Although these styles are natural and add versatility in style, they often create a tight pulling on the scalp, which is unhealthy.

During the 1980s and 1990s, a period of style versatility, it would be inaccurate to assume that straight hair meant purposeful emulation of white beauty standards, suffering from self-hatred or low self-esteem (hooks, 1988; Thompson, 2009). Nor would natural hair mean the wearer had a high level of black pride or ethnic consciousness. During the 1990s, having a variety of hairstyle options, versatility of fashion and doing what black women feel they must do for economic survival (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003) were the primary reasons for beauty choices, instead of ethnic, environmental or health consciousness. Yet, as hooks (2001) argues, changing oneself for any of the former reasons (fun, aesthetics or survival) still makes one inevitably complicit with the racial oppression that communicates that black women are not beautiful in their natural state.

Beginning in the late twentieth century, black beauticians used their role in the community to connect personal adornment to black women's resistance by promoting health

activism in beauty salons (Gill, 2010; Linnan & Ferguson, 2007). Since the beauty salon has always been a place where black women have traditionally gone to not only be pampered and cared for, but connect on a deeper level with each other and with their stylist, health-related topics often become part of the conversation. Attempts to combine health regimens with the salon environment have been documented. The beauty salon-based health education program *Black Pearls: The Health and Beauty of the Black Woman* is one example of such collaboration that has been replicated in several geographic areas (Browne, 2006). Although black women tend to be the most affected population in terms of disease or poor health, typically, they have less information regarding disease prevention than the general population.

Beauty shop-based communication and screenings have proven successful to improve black women's health regimen. Programs have been coordinated to address asthma, diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular and sexual health, and nutrition (Browne, 2006). Ironically, previous research does not point to any programs linking any of these diseases directly to a need to change the beauty products, styling regimens, and ingredients used in the salons, which can also cause health problems. Salon personnel also do not educate customers on recommended changes in black hair care product use or communicate to the community changes the salon may have already completed to assist in the prevention of these diseases. A communication gap still exists between the salon and black female consumers, even though evidence shows that tailoring health messages for racially diverse communities is a best practice for community health education (Browne, 2006).

2000s: Modern Cosmetic Use by Black Women

Tate (2009) discusses how, at the beginning of the 21st century, black women are still caught between anti-racist aesthetics of "naturalness" and the "black that's white" because hair

stylization choice still has political and social significance in determining whether a person is accepted or rejected by the mainstream society. Camp (2015) also discusses how for a century and a half blacks fought against the white beauty standard, yet it has endured into the 21st century where many black women still face pressure to conform (Thompson, 2009) to predominant white mainstream beauty ideals. Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003) state that the Black is Beautiful cry from the 1960s has still not been fully grasped, internalized and passed onto the post-60s generations.

Other options instead of heat-styling or permanently straightening hair, such as wigs and weaves, also create damage to the hair cuticle and cause hair loss (Thompson, 2009). In the 21st century, the pressure to conform has only gotten worse with the popularity of the weave market. Black women are sold straight hair from the heads of women overseas. They also continue to suffer scalp damage from wearing weaves and lace-front wigs (Thompson, 2009b). The media images on magazine covers and cosmetic ads also create pressure to conform. Advertisements promote the same Eurocentric beauty ideals and continue to convince black women that they need to emulate Caucasian skin and hair by having models pose in weaves (Arogundade, 2011).

Due to the negative consequences black women have historically had to endure because of their hair, hairstyle choices or skin tone, hard choices must be made in the area of beauty product purchases. Black women are forced to spend a large amount of money in the marketplace to meet the beauty ideal. A participant interviewed by White (2005) stated that she "realized she was giving too much money to whites and Asians to buy their products to look like them" (p. 303). In the early portion of the 21st century, in order to assimilate to the beauty standard, women are forced to spend thousands of dollars on beauty aids, tools, and treatments to appear "acceptable." Black haircare is a multibillion dollar industry (Grayson, 1995; Thompson,

2009b). In the US, black people spend, on average, $46 per person on hair expenditures per month compared to only $16 per person for the general population (Grayson, 1995) and account for 30% of hair care spending overall (Bitz, 2000). The *Essence* beauty panel reported that "black women spend 80 percent more money on cosmetics and twice as much on skin care products than the general market" (Smith & Bondy, 2009, p. 1).

Facial makeup is an important product category for black women, especially because of historical issues of colorism, low self-esteem and social acceptance. Although the physical purposes of wearing makeup for black women greatly varies, including covering blemishes, evening out skin tone, altering their features to fit white beauty standards (Iijima-Hall, 1995) or just entertainment, there is also a psychological effect on makeup wearers. Increased use of makeup has been associated with higher positive evaluations of oneself and of others, lower levels of social anxiety and higher self-confidence (Cash & Cash, 1982), as well as more credibility in the workplace and the appearance of being in good health (Dellinger & Williams, 1997; Iijima-Hall, 1995).

The definitions of "healthy" and "beauty" have been intertwined in American culture (Dellinger & Williams, 1997). Most institutional norms about makeup parallel whiteness, so black women may become perplexed in terms of what health and beauty looks like for them and how to go about achieving it. Even though when black women find a cosmetic product that works for them they are extremely brand loyal (L. Davis, 2013), the search for effective, suitable and healthy products for black women is not any easier in modern times than it was decades ago (Smith & Bondy, 2009). Caisey, Grangeat, Lemasson, Talabot, and Voirin (2006) found in their research that African-American women were not satisfied with their usual makeup products because the colors and shades are inappropriate. As Wadlington (2005) explains, this is due to

the gap that exists between product development, marketing, and lack of understanding of ethnic lifestyles in general (lack of a tribal marketing focus).

Corporate executives are not developing products that black women want or feel work for them, especially in area of color cosmetics. Nor do product developers in the beauty industry appear to understand what products work for black women. Research shows that not only do skin characteristics vary greatly according to ethnic group, but self-perception of skin complexion, skin tone measurement (amount of yellow versus red undertones in the skin), texture, and color unevenness (hyperpigmentation) varies as well, which influences the cosmetic needs of black women (Caisey et al., 2006). Companies also do not develop products that meet the needs and concerns of black women for health and wellness, which has made a new market possible for small black-owned businesses. This niche appeal suggests that black businesses will and can produce the healthiest products for black people because they understand the needs and care about the outcome (Wadlington, 2005). Black-owned companies simply understand the lifestyles of black customers better.

As of 2009, Thompson (2009b) declared that still "very few black women are aware of the medical ramifications" (p.88) of altering oneself in the name of beauty and that it is critical that we begin to examine our choices. Redefining health and beauty for their own needs and conquering beauty ideals are life-saving measures that Black women need to take. Gill (2010) states that platforms for black women's resistance in the realm of health activism for the 21st century are linked to beauty and care of the body. Camp (2015) makes the point that beauty ideals will not be conquered until constructed ideas of race are dissolved. This study adds to these viewpoints by evaluating whether black beauty choices, if focused on the environment, will allow issues of race to diminish and health and wellness to move to the forefront.

Research shows that black women are still investing heavily in unhealthy beauty products and the beauty industry as a whole. As the teen years of the 21st century approached, a shift back to natural began called the Natural Hair Movement. During this time, the choices that Thompson (2009b) stated above that black women need to examine came to light. Although naturalness seems to have landed on a trend line of the ups and downs of black beauty culture as shown throughout this literature review, more in-depth research into this new movement is taking place because going natural this time seems to be more than a trend. In the following section, a description of what has been documented in the literature thus far about the natural hair movement is provided. The hope is that the next wave of black beauty culture shows what Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003) suggest is needed for black women grappling with mainstream beauty ideals in their book *Shifting*: a "reinforcement of the idea that health is most important" (p. 204).

21st Century Natural Hair Movement and the Black Beauty Tribe

The natural hair movement is a phenomenon that has just begun to be documented in scholarly publications. This section of the literature review documents recent publications about the 21st century natural hair movement. The literature is supplemented with online data and the researcher's knowledge gained by her personal and professional participation in the movement.

The 21st century natural hair movement is an era in beauty culture reminiscent of the Black Power Movement of the 1960s, but with many new aspects. Whereas natural, in the 1960s, described a short cropped Afro, the term natural is now used to describe a wide range of hairstyle choices for black women as long as the hair is not styled with chemical straighteners (Gill, 2015). The natural hair movement is a celebration and acceptance of the curly, coily and kinky hair that black women are born with, no matter the length or style preference (Henderson,

2015). Interviews conducted by *New York Times* journalist Ruth La Ferla revealed that many people view today's modern natural as a gentler version shorn of the militant perception the style carried in the 1960s ("Is an Afro," 2013).

In addition to style differences, political meanings and perceptions are also different. The natural hair movement has returned attention to the struggles black women face in society due to their hair texture. However, the movement this time has changed perceptions about natural hair because it is no longer true or a common view that all women who wear natural hair are trying to make a political statement (Henderson, 2015). Jackson (2012) states that the overall purpose of the natural hair movement these days is decidedly different from the 1960s black power era and that even though black hair is still political, the new movement focuses primarily on health, spiritual growth, freedom, and self-acceptance and only to a lesser degree on politics. Even though when the movement began, straight hair (#teamrelaxed) versus natural hair (#teamnatural) wars (Campbell, 2014; Rucker, 2013) erupted in online spaces, it was necessary to debate the proposed political meanings of the movement. Members needed to navigate their personal feelings about going natural and deal with the many outright negative reactions from other black women. Members debated whether they were refusing white beauty standards or if new and more relevant reasons for going natural were their primary motivations. This debate was necessary. For many members, the negotiation process within the beauty community became a time of transition into a new home within the black community (V. Davis, 2013). Tribal brands within the community recognized that healthy products with cutting-edge formulas were needed so that Black women were able to meet a new standard of beauty – their own (Esposito, 2016).

The resulting movement proposed that black women in the natural hair movement were no longer predominantly concerned with the refusal of white beauty standards (Henderson, 2015) as had been the case in the black power movement. The movement is now spearheaded by fashion and the primary focus is self-love and total body health and wellness as a lifestyle for black women. The natural hair movement is a Black women's movement, whereas the Black Power Movement was driven by both Black males and females.

The natural hair movement began to build in the early 2000s, experienced explosive growth from 2009 through 2016, and continues to show no signs of slowing. The growth of the movement was possible due to the technological developments of the 21st century, such as online forums, blogs, YouTube and private groups within social media. These technological tools, unavailable in the 1960s, allowed the natural hair movement to become larger and more widespread geographically. This new movement has moved historically salon-focused sisterhood, debate, and beauty education to the internet (Jackson, 2012; Nimocks, 2015). The internet (and YouTube in particular in the natural hair movement) provided for the first time in history a global, safe space for informative, open conversation on the topic of black beauty (Brown, 2014; Campbell, 2015; Rowe, 2015). This space has revolutionized the way black women communicate, get advice and information, and shop for beauty products. Upwards of 70% of black women are online, reading, learning and buying hair and beauty products (Byrd & Tharps, 2014) due to the natural hair movement.

The natural hair movement began and evolved for varying reasons for different people. The original intent of the movement was to use cyberspace to share information about hairstyles and products that cater to curly, kinky hair (Nimocks, 2015). However, the timing of the movement coincided with a global heightened awareness of environmentalism. "Going natural"

was a way to "go green" for black women, as hair care was a significant part of the growing eco-conscious movement (Byrd & Tharps, 2014). Participants began to create vlogs (video blogs) and blogs dedicated to natural hair and eco-living. This began the formation of popular groups that are now the natural hair tribe. The natural tribe emerged as black women decided to participate in the worldwide "going green" movement. There is a mainstream eco-beauty industry within the going-green movement. However, many black women recognized that this new segment of the beauty industry still did not consider the needs of black women. They also felt that the mainstream beauty industry wrongly assumed that black women would not be interested in environmentally healthy beauty products for their skin tone.

In addition to the spread of worldwide environmentalism, some black women learned about the dangers of toxic chemicals in hair products by participating in the natural hair movement (Nimocks, 2015). They became concerned about the long-term safety of relaxing their hair (Campbell, 2015). Although Nimocks (2015) states that educating women about toxic ingredients in beauty products was not the initial intent of the movement, it was a natural and necessary part of its mission of maximizing self-love and personal preservation. Natural hair blogs and YouTubers began to speak out against toxins in hair products and initiate a community of women into the world of cultural environmental health. Once informed about the health hazards in black hair products, women used their hair as a starting point of their natural journey toward healthy beauty regimens by discontinuing chemical processing of their hair. The elimination of chemicals in hair products is now the main focus of many participants and companies in the activist component of the natural hair movement (Nimocks, 2015). Many women who were not health-conscious before the natural hair movement now are due to participating in the movement and becoming more hair-conscious. Tribal companies are

dedicated to helping members of the movement become informed consumers and expand their natural journey from haircare to leading a healthier lifestyle overall. The natural hair movement evolved into a movement for both consumers and brands that included more than just hair topics and products (Nimocks, 2015).

For other women, their previous interest or involvement in leading a holistic lifestyle was the primary reason for joining the natural hair movement as they had already decided on a more health-conscious lifestyle (Nimocks, 2015). Natural hair for these women was secondary. The natural hair community provided a space in the Black community to talk about an overall health conscious lifestyle in addition to hair. They were also able to have conversations about eating healthier, taking vitamin supplements and pursuing fitness. Members who take the natural lifestyle seriously seek to eat clean, monitor their hair and body for signs of nutritional deficiencies and enhance their intake of vitamins and minerals. The implication is that natural hair is part of a healthy lifestyle. Going natural evolved into "both intentional and unintentional congruence with leading a natural lifestyle" (Nimocks, 2015, p.84).

Convenience, manageability, personal preference, fashion preference and self-love are also reasons why more and more black women decided to go natural. Henderson (2015) and Randle (2015) state that convenience was a reason their study participants decided to go natural. Having natural hair eliminates the need for long visits to the hair salon, as hair can be done at home, which also allows women to use easily obtained kitchen ingredients as styling and moisturizing aids instead of spending time on shopping for beauty aids. Afrocentric hairstyles such as braids, twists, Bantu knots (all common black hair styles) and other protective styles are also convenient because these styles do not require frequent changes. Campbell (2015) cites perceptions of manageability and mere personal preference (Banks, 2000; White 2005) or

fashion preference as reasons to go natural. Some but not all black women, as Henderson (2015) and White (2005) have found, are physically refusing white beauty ideals or acting in resistance to dis-identify with the status quo. Many black women state that they simply do not care about and are not affected by white beauty ideals and have many other reasons for their beauty choices (Campbell, 2015). Henderson (2015) states that the participants in her study discredited the self-hatred theory that describes how black women conform to white standards when they straighten their hair or wear straight protective styles. Black women have formed a new definition of beauty and it is not concerned with mainstream society's definition, but with loving themselves just as they are, not in comparison to other races.

After the natural hair movement began, more and more participants, mainly on YouTube and blogs (Byrd & Tharps, 2014; Jackson, 2012), decided to continuously add to this community to explore, share, define, and debate beauty on their own terms (Rowe, 2015). The natural hair community is responsible for 133 million natural hair blogs (Gill, 2015), countless social media pages and forums, and Facebook groups with thousands of members. Within these online communities, movement participants (typically called naturals or naturalistas) discuss styling techniques, recommend products, produce step-by-step how-to videos on achieving looks, and provide information on health and wellness. Group members also voice their opinions on political issues regarding beauty, celebrate celebrities who have pushed the natural movement forward, condemn corporations that oppress women expressing their freedom through natural beauty and expand the discussion of natural hair to the benefits of an overall healthy lifestyle (Nimocks, 2015).

The community is also a resource space where black women share information and not only learn how to care for their hair and physical bodies but also receive emotional support.

Emotional support is often needed when transitioning from chemically processed hair to natural hair (Campbell, 2015). Private online natural hair groups are fast-moving. They contain continuous streams of posts and other media (videos, pictures, blog links, etc.) that offer beauty reviews, tutorials, Q&A sessions, debates and selfies to receive and offer support and feedback about challenges that members face when on a natural journey.

The massive amount of information exchanged within the community increases the consumption of healthy products (Gill, 2015), spikes beauty entrepreneurship (Gill, 2015), and expands health and environmental awareness (Nimocks, 2015). The movement is technology-driven, fashion-inspired and focuses on health promotion, although members may or may not be individually health-conscious. The members are all on their own natural journey (Gill, 2015), many documenting their "why did I go natural" stories (V. Davis, 2013) and their new lifestyle as naturalistas.

Naturalista is a name commonly used to describe some natural hair movement members, in addition to natural "tribe" and "#teamnatural." The term was included in *Hair Story*, the 2014 revised and updated edition, but the authors did not offer a definition. Depending on who you ask, some black women feel that naturalista should not be defined. Some women use it freely as a positive term and proudly wear the name (even on clothing). Others may be judged as naturalista simply because they wear their hair in its natural state, but actually dislike the term. Preliminary data for this study shows this variety of responses. When asked, "How do you define naturalista?" Sherrell Dorsey of Organic Beauty Vixen, an African-American organic beauty blogger, responded: "I don't define naturalista…I believe that by labeling ourselves we create division, exclusion and eco-apartheid among ourselves" (personal communication, October 25, 2013). Brandi Gilliam, another natural hair and healthy beauty blogger at Organic

Beauty Talk and now editor of *Thoughtfully Magazine,* responded that she doesn't use the naturalista term because her readership is mature, doesn't chase trends, and is more than the fashion girl who's also interested in green (personal communication, October 25, 2013). Many others proudly proclaim they are naturalistas, even agreeing that the term is used for everyone on a natural journey, from hair styling to veganism or anywhere in between. It may be that some self-proclaimed naturalistas care about hair fashion but are also serious about leading an overall holistic lifestyle. Naturalista is a coined term and there is no doubt that the term has been widely adopted. Whether or not a person claims the naturalista term, the common interests of the natural hair movement members seem to be fashionable natural hair and health, regardless of what degree they may or may not participate in an overall natural lifestyle.

Within the natural hair movement, being a natural or even having natural hair takes on different meanings to different people. Randle (2015) and Rowe (2015) define natural hair as hair that has not been chemically processed in any way, and the natural hair movement is the phenomenon of black women ceasing to habitually chemically straighten or alter their hair. This would include the use of hair relaxers, texturizers or any chemical dye. However, Henderson (2015) found that her interviewees had varying definitions of what it means to be natural, including: 1) removing relaxer from hair but allowing the use of other hair chemicals such as hair color; 2) natural hair supplemented with the use of fake afro or straight hair; and 3) hair straightened with heat styling tools instead of chemicals. Henderson (2015) states that because "natural" is such a subjective yet desirable term, women who straighten their hair also consider themselves natural. White (2005) defines natural hair as hair that has not been altered by chemicals, which can be straight or kinky. This tells us that being (or not being) a natural, naturalista or on teamnatural is a very popular yet highly individual choice. There is no single

definition for being natural because it takes on a different meaning for every woman based on her lived experiences (Henderson, 2015). Therefore, there is no clear-cut division between natural and non-natural black beauty tribe participants, but the common link for all participants is that at least some critical thought is given to the use of chemicals in hair products and the implications they may have on their health (Henderson, 2015).

Studies show there is much more going on in the natural hair movement than just discussion about hair (Campbell, 2014; Nimocks, 2015). As within any consumer tribe, tribal values are paramount and ultimately filter into a communication of the tribes' lifestyle. The communication is also very visible through various paraphernalia, including t-shirts, buttons, apparel, jewelry and bumper stickers, all of which can be found at any natural black beauty expo. Natural hair blogs include topics that have nothing to do with hair, including life management, entrepreneurship, parenting, home care, travel, fashion and health and wellness (Gills, 2015) for black women. The natural hair space is inclusive and celebratory of the wider black culture. It includes anything that black women are interested in as long as the natural lifestyle or self-health is kept at the center of discussion. This lifestyle is inclusive of all age groups and various demographics of black women. However, White (2005) concluded from her study that the influence of socio-economic class on wearing natural hair needs further exploration.

Lifestyle changes of black women due to the natural hair movement vary but center on altering the level of autonomy black women have over their own beauty. The goal is to redefine the concept of beauty and take all beauty services, products, and dollars back into their own hands. This includes beauty regimens, product development, product usage, spending behavior and the autonomy of styling hair. Because of their autonomy, the natural community has proven to be a very powerful group of change-makers within the global beauty industry.

The power of natural hair tribe members as a group has shifted the statistics of the beauty industry. Mintel studies show a decline of 26% in hair relaxers from 2008-2013, to just 21% of black haircare sales (Gill, 2015; "Hair relaxer sales decline," 2013). Seventy percent of black women say they currently wear or have worn their hair natural, revealing that natural may be the new normal and not just a trend ("Hair relaxer sales decline," 2013). The natural lifestyle has increased the sale of styling products such as shampoos, leave-in conditioners, moisturizers and curl-enhancing gels (Gill, 2015; "Hair relaxer sales decline," 2013). Most of these new styling products not only work better for natural hair, but are also made with natural ingredients or are free from damaging ingredients such as parabens, sulfates, and mineral oil. The black hair care industry is estimated to be a half-trillion-dollar industry, and the most rapidly growing product categories within it are related to natural haircare ("Black women spend," 2011; Opiah, 2014).

In addition to altering the direction of product development for global beauty companies, the natural hair tribe has created a new generation of black beauty entrepreneurs who have empowered hundreds of thousands of women with the confidence to be beautiful, but not at the expense of a healthy life. Many natural entrepreneurs have created their own hair care brands (Koils by Nature, Curls, Jane Carter, Naturalicious, Zandra Beauty and many more) and through tribal marketing techniques have successfully beaten larger brands in the marketplace and won the hearts of natural consumers. Large mainstream beauty brands such as Pantene, Dove, Suave, and L'Oreal have all tried to catch up with the new market by removing ingredients that black women no longer want in their products, creating dedicated product lines for naturals, or purchasing companies that already cater to the natural consumer (Opiah, 2014). However, as Delxino Wilson de Briano, President of the Buy Black Movement, states, when given the choice, Black consumers will buy from black-owned brands that have built strong relationships and have

tribal or cultural connections to black women (personal communication, May 30, 2016). Black-owned brands know how to become a part of the tribe and shine a spotlight on the lack of credibility of mainstream beauty brands that have a historical pattern of providing harmful products to black women. The tribe has created a new economy of natural beauty tribal entrepreneurship.

In the last few years, natural entrepreneurs have started many successful businesses in the areas of beauty press, blogging/vlogging, product development, international event planning, beauty consulting, cosmetic formulators, beauty speakers, chain natural hair salons and e-tailing. One natural blogger and speaker, Afrobella, was added to *Ebony Magazine*'s Power 100 list in 2011, next to President Obama (Black Women in Media, 2014). Another natural blogger, Curly Nikki, has several six-figure corporate contracts due to the success of her natural hair blog and meetups (Byrd & Tharps, 2014). Jane Carter, natural hair product developer, sold $1.7 million worth of product in 2007 (Byrd & Tharps, 2014). Carol's Daughter, a popular natural hair brand, was sold to L'Oreal in 2014 for an undisclosed amount; the company's revenue in September 2014 was $27 million (Gleason, 2014). The 21st century natural beauty tribe has established a new economic base and members who participate in the tribe as entrepreneurs make much more money than in previous decades. The movement began the reestablishment of black-owned businesses, similar to Black Wall Street in the 1920s and other black-owned businesses that existed prior to integration in the 1960s (Blakeney, 2008).

The natural hair movement is big business and through social media has had the power to not only establish a new economic base in the black community, but also provide education for black women on business, branding, and healthy beauty. Jeffries (2014) suggests that the use of media texts (blogs, video, photos, discussion forums, etc.) can be a catalyst for education and

exploration of the sociopolitical impact of beauty. The natural hair movement's creation of media texts has solved many problems for black women in terms of beauty and environmental health education. There is no longer 1) a lack of advice or information on black natural hair, 2) a lack of available options to learn about and care for natural hair, 3) fear surrounding self-expression and black beauty, 4) a lack of autonomy in product selection and care for one's hair, 5) a lack of media images with black natural hair, 6) a dependency on the white beauty industry to teach them how to style or care for black hair or supply proper products for hair care, 7) a lack of cues to action from within the community or brands promoting the use of healthier products, 8) an outward definition of beauty that black women must adhere to or can be imposed upon them (Henderson, 2015; White, 2005) or 9) a lack of information on how to make or select products that do not threaten their health. As black women have participated in the natural hair movement and learned of the health benefits within the movement, the peer support engrained in these media texts has encouraged many others to go natural, which should result in higher self-efficacy to make healthier lifestyle decisions. Campbell (2015) and Nimocks (2015) state that future research should explore the way black women have used the safe cyber space created by the natural hair movement as an ongoing resource for alternative information. Education and class divisions that exist within the movement and how the platform, which has highlighted environmental education, will be used in the future to market information to all black women, not just self-proclaimed naturals, should also be explored in the future.

Safe Cosmetics: Casting a Wider Net Beyond Hair

For many black women, the natural hair movement was an awakening experience in terms of learning about environmental health (Nimocks, 2015). Before this time, most black women were unaware of the harm caused by black hair products and not knowledgeable about

toxic ingredients. Now, the movement, media and research institutions have communicated to black women that hair products are a major source of health concerns. Along with awareness of this information about hair and safety, black women also understand that maintaining healthy hair is only one piece of an overall healthy beauty regimen and lifestyle.

Toxic chemicals are readily found in all beauty products including hair, makeup, skin care, body care, nail care and fragrance. These products pose health risks and hazards for all women. However, black women are disproportionately affected by these health hazards in most product categories. The two most toxic cosmetics, hair relaxers and skin lighteners, are marketed in the United States and throughout the African diaspora, mostly to black women (Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, 2016; Nimocks, 2015). Toxic ingredients in beauty products are linked to breast cancer, neurological disorders, learning disabilities, reproductive harm, endocrine disruption and respiratory illnesses (Malkan, 2007; Nimocks, 2015; O'Connor & Spunt, 2010; Palliser, 2010; Padgett, 2015). Each of these illnesses impact black women at higher rates than other racial groups. These products are not only harmful when used individually, but even more dangerous in combination with other products. Many products are skin-sensitizing and contain carrier ingredients, which mean that they make it easier for other dangerous ingredients to enter the body. These cosmetic chemicals not only harm women's bodies, but also pollute the environment by transferring toxic substances to fish, wildlife and waterways, thereby impacting our food supply, drinking water and bodies of water (Palliser, 2010).

This portion of the literature review first explores what is being done to educate consumers on scientific studies and the issue of harm caused by toxic chemicals in cosmetics overall. This will be followed by a review of studies that show how these cosmetics affect black

women specifically and disproportionately. A declaration that going green by black women's changing use of beauty products has been left out of environmentalism and race studies is also provided. Then, since natural and organic beauty products are documented as the healthier alternative, a review of the attitudes and purchase intentions toward these products will be provided. Even though the reviewed studies were performed on other ethnic groups and did not study health-promoting behaviors specifically, their methods and findings to understand consumer behavior toward healthy beauty products are noteworthy. This section is closed with a review of articles that studied non-cosmetic health-promoting behaviors of black women.

Toxic chemicals in cosmetics. Synthetic chemicals became the common replacement for natural ingredients in mass-produced cosmetic products in the 19th century (Stone, 2008). The pursuit of profits during the 19th century characterized the beauty industry, which in turn, has jeopardized human and environmental safety (Connelly, 2013) by creating synthetic beauty products formulated with ingredients that have proved harmful over the long term. During WWII, there was a high demand for synthetic materials and ingredients to replace more expensive materials, so petrochemicals, natural gas and coal were introduced into cosmetics. Since the introduction of synthetics into cosmetics, it has been difficult for a layperson to understand product ingredients because of the scientific nature of product formulation.

In recent years, a consumer trend toward leading healthier lifestyles has been promoted by new-age "activist researchers" that remain engaged in social and political issues relevant to non-experts. Through the work of these researchers, non-expert consumers can attain knowledge of scientific issues, thereby becoming citizen experts (McCormick, 2012). One group of activist researchers that aids the public in understanding the human health impact of cosmetic products is The Campaign for Safe Cosmetics. The Campaign is a coalition of health and environmental

groups that research ingredients in personal care products (Malkan, 2016). The organization advocates for and educates the public about hazardous exposures in the beauty industry, effectively making shopping for safer beauty products easier for people who may not understand the scientific ingredient labels. The work of this group is necessary because in the United States, companies can put ingredients into cosmetic products without first assessing them for safety and without disclosing all the ingredients (Malkan, 2016; O'Connor & Spunt, 2010; Padgett, 2015).

The Campaign for Safe Cosmetics' work began by publicizing scientific data in a simplified manner so consumers could understand what types of products included hazardous chemicals. The membership base of the group, which emerged from the environmental movement, includes women's health organizations. The organization creates public awareness campaigns to promote safe cosmetics throughout the industry and the government. Central to their efforts is promoting the ability to understand, interpret, and apply complex scientific knowledge and translate it into lay terms, while working with natural beauty brands to lobby for safe cosmetics reform through federal legislation (McCormick, 2012).

The group has been successful in creating the Compact for Safe Cosmetics, a pact signed by more than 500 companies that agrees to meet the stricter formulation standards set by the European Union (Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, 2011b; McCormick, 2012). The EU has banned over 1,378 chemicals in comparison to the US, which has only banned 11 chemicals (Cairo, 2015; Padgett, 2015). The companies that signed the compact only formulate products using the precautionary principle, which means formulating products free of chemicals that are known to cause or suspected of causing cancer, birth defects, or any other harm such as neurological or respiratory disease.

The Campaign also promoted the Safe Cosmetics Act of 2011 (McCormick, 2009), which sought to update The Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetics Act of 1938 in the United States. Since the proposed bill was not passed, the group is currently working to pass the Personal Care Products Act of 2015 (Malkan, 2016). Congress is currently considering the Personal Care Products Act of 2015 to successfully update the antiquated Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act of 1938, the US law that currently regulates cosmetics. The 1938 cosmetic act allows the development and sale of products that contain ingredients proven to cause harmful reactions and lacks regulation of the ingredients in personal care products (Kotschwar, 2014). According to the law, the FDA is not given any authority to regulate contaminates, nor can it require companies to test for safety (Cairo, 2015; Nimocks, 2015; O'Connor & Spunt, 2010; Palliser, 2010). It also permits the cosmetics industry to remain self-regulated by the Cosmetic Ingredient Review (CIR) board. The CIR is funded by industry and has only assessed the safety of 11% of cosmetic ingredients thus far (Cairo, 2015; Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, 2010b).

Many cosmetics contain ingredients linked to health problems and environmental concerns (Palliser, 2010) and are therefore considered unsafe. Safe cosmetics (or green cosmetics) are defined as beauty products made without ingredients suspected or proven to be hazardous to humans, the environment or other animals. They conform to the precautionary principle advocated by the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics and the laws of the European Union (Cann, 2011; Padgett, 2015). Proponents of the Safe Cosmetics Act asked the FDA to define "safe" versus "dangerous" ingredients, but the definition has not yet been finalized. One partner of the Campaign, the Environmental Working Group (EWG), launched Skin Deep, a publicly accessible database of over 25,000 products that consumers can use to query ingredient lists,

toxicity data, and toxicity ratings (McCormick, 2012). The database is an educational tool that, along with videos and advertisements, translates scientific data to laymen's terms.

Although this work has created a group of citizen experts, most cosmetic and personal care product buyers still lack sufficient knowledge on how the products they use on a daily basis affect their health. However, once consumers are aware of tools such as the Skin Deep database and phone apps such as Think Dirty and Good Guide (Padgett, 2015), which help them access ingredient information while shopping, consumers are able to narrow their choices and change their shopping behaviors toward healthier products. These tools assist shoppers in avoiding greenwashed products; however, they do not guarantee that black women will be able to find green products that match their skin tone or specific needs.

Non-profit websites, blogs, books, social media, phone apps, and clean beauty databases all provide information to consumers about which toxic chemicals to avoid. Scientific information about harmful beauty product ingredients is documented in academic literature as well. All of these sources help inform beauty consumers of the dangers prevalent in their everyday use of various cosmetic products. Many ingredients commonly included in cosmetics are known carcinogens—such as talc, which has been proven to cause cancer—or linked to other serious health problems and can be researched on the apps or internet.

Even though the amount of each toxic ingredient per product may be small, products contain several ingredients and women tend to use multiple products several times a day, which multiplies their effect. The average woman uses approximately 12 products per day in multiple doses per day (Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, 2010b; Malkan, 2007). Female consumers are exposed to an average of 168 chemicals every day from beauty products and this level of exposure over long-term use is proving detrimental to women's health (Malkan, 2007).

Ingredients of concern include: BHA, coal tar, coumarin, DMDM hydantoin, formaldehyde, hydroquinone, placental extract, fragrance, parabens, sulfates, dioxane, talc, phthalates, synthetic dyes and oxybenzone (Padgett, 2015; Wiel, 2016). These ingredients, commonly found in hair dyes, hair relaxers, shampoos, fragrances, skin lighteners, hair-growth products, and skin and nail care products, are petrochemicals, carcinogens and endocrine disruptors, which are linked to cancer, reproductive problems, allergic reactions, birth defects, and respiratory illnesses (Padgett, 2015; Velez, Monnier, Foster, & Fraser, 2015).

Mainstream purchase intention of natural and organic beauty products. Due to education about toxic ingredients and the increasing popularity of natural and organic cosmetics, researchers have begun to study consumer attitudes and purchase intentions toward green beauty products. One study explored female consumers' attitudes toward the green environment and animal ingredients when buying cosmetics in the UK and Bangladesh. The results of the study concluded that including eco-friendly packaging, reducing toxic ingredients, animal ingredients, and testing on animals were important factors to women when purchasing cosmetics both in the UK and Bangladesh (Pervin, Ranchhok, & Wilman, 2014). Mombeini, Sha'abani and Ghorbani (2015) questioned 360 Arab women on how their attitudes toward organic skin and hair cosmetic products impact their purchase intention. The relationship between the two variables was direct and positively significant, although the researchers had to familiarize some participants with organic product terms. Kim and Chung (2011) studied US consumer values (health consciousness, environmental consciousness, and appearance consciousness) as a predictor of attitude toward buying organic personal care products and, ultimately, toward purchase intention. Consumers' perceived behavior control was also hypothesized to moderate attitudes toward buying organic and purchase intentions. The study of over 200 people showed that

environmental and appearance consciousness did significantly impact attitudes toward organic products, but health consciousness did not. Perceived behavior control was found to moderate the relationship. Kim and Seock (2009) studied the influence of young college females' health and environmental consciousness on their attitude toward natural beauty products and willingness to pay more for natural beauty products. Results showed that environmentally conscious participants purchased natural cosmetics more frequently. Results also showed that health and environmental consciousness both positively influence the level of knowledge participants had about natural products and significantly influenced the level of importance placed on beauty product attributes. Rybowska (2014) surveyed 185 women in Pomerania about their attitudes regarding ecological cosmetic products. The study showed that participants did not believe in the benefits of using organic cosmetics, did not trust the labels on the products, felt the products were not available in convenient places, and were too expensive. Finally, Dragan and Petrescu (2013) took an alternative approach to studying consumer behavior toward organic skin care products. They sought out to create a profile of a Romanian customer who would be interested in natural and organic products. Although a demographic profile was created, overall, Romanian customers felt organic products were too expensive. While they found that organic cosmetics were not in high demand, they also concluded that consumer opinions were formed with limited knowledge of the health benefits of organic products. They also found that Romanian customers did not read the ingredient labels on products before purchasing or using them. These studies show cross-cultural and global attitudes toward organic beauty products by white women and prove that health-promoting beliefs and behaviors vary significantly by sample population and level of knowledge, as well as concern over environmental and health issues. Because no research has been performed on black women's attitudes toward natural and organic

beauty products, a literature review of the impact of cosmetics on Black women's health is necessary to establish a basis to study health promoting behaviors toward beauty products.

Cosmetic environmental health concerns affecting black women. Although the above health concerns are important for all women, many cosmetic products are created specifically for black women or marketed to black women as a solution for adhering to society-driven beauty ideals. Many are purchased and used more frequently by black women as well. Skin of color is susceptible to unique problems (various forms of acne, hyperpigmentation, and photoaging diseases) that cause cosmetic concerns. Products (treatment products, cosmetic products and protection products such as sunscreens) that address these issues are needed (Taylor, 1999). While we look to the cosmetics industry to develop products to address the cosmetic concerns of Black women, they must also be aware of and educated about the harm that can be caused by using beauty products. Black women also need to be educated on how to select products for themselves with healthier ingredients. Kotschwar (2014) states that we also need to understand the spectrum, or different levels, of greenness that black women have in their relationship to beauty products, beauty marketing, lifestyle and environmental practices.

Currently, hair care products for black women are the most toxic beauty products available (Solomon, 2016). Products have been marketed to Black women for decades by the cosmetic industry without full disclosure of the harmful effects. The mainstream industry realized billions of dollars from the sale of such products (Nimocks, 2015). As discussed earlier, the cosmetic industry markets products to black women to further society's psychological oppression by perpetuating the white beauty ideal. The industry further injures black women by intentionally manufacturing harmful ethnic beauty products for the financial gain of the industry without regard to consumer welfare. Many ethnic hair care products, including hair relaxers,

keratin treatments, hair dyes, scalp oils, shampoos, conditioners and other styling products cause serious health concerns.

Hair relaxer, a creamy solution made to permanently change the structure (by breaking bonds) of curly/kinky hair, is applied to make hair straight. Hair relaxers include the ingredients sodium hydroxide (lye) or calcium hydroxide (no-lye) chemicals, which cause hair loss, hair breakage, scalp burns, blindness, fibroids, and early puberty in girls (Gathers & Mahan, 2014; Nimocks, 2015; Uhlenhake & Mehregan, 2013). These chemicals also make it possible for other chemicals to permeate the body more easily through burns and sores on the scalp (Black Women for Wellness, 2016a). A recent study published in the *American Journal of Epidemiology* found a link between hair relaxers and fibroids, a condition that affects 80 percent of black women over their lifetime (Ball, 2016).

Malkan (2007) reported in her book, *Not Just a Pretty Face*, that when the most popular brands of African-American hair products were lab tested for toxic chemicals, the results showed that relaxers, perms, hair pomades, conditioners and dyes had the most toxic ingredients. Many of the products contain placenta to make hair stronger and more manageable. However, placenta is linked to breast cancer and early puberty. These products, which contain endocrine-disrupting chemicals, are directly linked to the high rates of breast cancer in young African-American women, who have a 41% greater rate of invasive breast cancer than white women and a higher likelihood of death from the disease as well, due to the early onset of puberty in young black girls (Malkan, 2007). Brazilian Keratin, a hair treatment formulated with up to 11% formaldehyde, a carcinogen linked to cancer (Andrews, Houlihan, Cluderay, & Shannon, 2011; Malkan, 2016; Nimocks, 2015; O'Connor & Spunt, 2010), was used by many black women with natural hair to straighten or loosen their curl pattern along their natural journey, but they did not

know the health hazards of the product. Many consumers who had the Brazilian treatment experienced and reported to the FDA large amounts of hair loss, flu-like symptoms, severe burns and rashes on the scalp and face. Although the manufacturers stated the products did not contain formaldehyde, the products were tested and the amount of formaldehyde detected in them was higher than what the Cosmetic Ingredient Review board deems safe (Andrews et al., 2011). Shampoos and conditioners marketed to black women for manageability contain sulfates and other chemicals (propylene glycol, diethanolamine, etc.) linked to cancer (Black Women for Wellness, 2016a). Detanglers, necessary for black women to easily comb through and style their hair, include hydantoin DMDM and diazolidinyl urea, preservatives that are also formaldehyde releasers. These ingredients are known carcinogens and are linked to the early onset of puberty in black girls (Black Women for Wellness, 2016b; Nimocks, 2015). The use of these products has been found to make black girls as young as age two develop breasts and show signs of puberty due to the placenta found in detanglers and conditioners (Ball, 2016).

The use of toxic relaxers, dyes and other products not only affects consumers and young girls, but the entire profession of black hair stylists in the US and abroad. Cosmetologists have a greater number of miscarriages than non-cosmetologists. Cosmetologists that are pregnant while in beauty school have twice the risk of miscarrying (Black Women for Wellness, 2016b) due to exposure to formaldehyde in relaxers and alcohol-based disinfectants at work. A study by the International Agency for Research on Cancer concluded that hair stylists exposed to toxic hair dyes have an increased risk of developing cancer over time (O'Connor & Spunt, 2010). Studies of hair stylists in the US and Nigeria show that a higher rate of respiratory illness was more common to hairdressers than the community at large, and they are most at risk from using toxic lye/no-lye relaxers, hair dyes and other beauty products on clients (Ball, 2016; Black Women for

Wellness, 2016b). Sixty percent of black hair stylists in the 2016 Natural Evolutions study by Black Women for Wellness indicated they have never received training on the potential health effects of chemicals in hair products, although 83% indicated they were very concerned about the effects on their health and on their client's health (Black Women for Wellness, 2016b). These long-term and severe health effects from exposure to products could be eliminated with federal oversight of product manufacturing, education, and proper labeling of products (*Amsterdam News*, 2016; Solomon, 2016).

Black hair stylists and consumers could benefit from cosmetic environmental health information as they seek out ways to improve the health of their hair and bodies. Although the natural hair movement has ensured the decline of relaxer sales, down 17% between 2006 and 2011 (Gathers & Mahan, 2014) and another 18.6% from 2013 to 2015 (Esposito, 2014), greenwashed styling products and hair dyes continue to be an issue for both stylists and consumers. Wearing natural hairstyles also enhances black women's ability to lead healthier lifestyles overall. For instance, one study shows that women who wear their natural hair are more likely to engage in physical activity to maintain a healthy body weight (Gathers & Mahan, 2014). Poor emotional state and lack of self-esteem caused by years of hair damage are common stressors that impact physical health. The resulting depression is a serious health burden for Black women. Gathers and Mahan's (2014) study reports that 41% of respondents feel bad about themselves due to their hair. Ninety-four percent of respondents in the same study stated that hair companies need to do more research to ensure the health of black hair.

In addition to hair products, black women also buy and use skin and face products to solve their unique cosmetic needs. These products are used to enhance their features or create the look that society has dictated is more socially acceptable. Most facial products are also

linked to health concerns. Black women are affected by product ingredients differently than women of other races. Many facial topical products are not tolerated well by African-American skin (Taylor, 1999) and produce excessive dryness and irritation. Products used to cleanse the skin to prevent break-outs or remove dirt may be formulated with sulfates. Sulfates are a cleansing agent commonly found in shampoo, facial cleanser, foundation, bleaching products and hair color. Sulfates are linked to cancer and developmental/reproductive toxicity (Palliser, 2010).

In addition to facial skincare products, color cosmetics are harmful as well. Color cosmetics must be highly pigmented (usually artificially dyed) in order to show up against deeper skin tones. Lipsticks may contain coal tar, a harmful chemical found in many synthetic colors in cosmetics (O'Connor & Spunt, 2010). Coal tar is linked to cancer, mental disabilities and infertility. FD&C dyes, colorants used to create bright colors in lipstick, eyeshadow and blush, are linked to autism and ADHD (Miller, 2016). Many brands of lipstick (especially brighter red lipsticks that deeper skin tones would gravitate toward purchasing) also have been found to be contaminated with lead (Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, 2007). Lead is a substance linked to ADHD in children (Larsen, 2010), reproductive problems, high blood pressure, brain and nervous system problems in children (Palliser, 2010). Lead has also been linked to miscarriages, delays in the onset of puberty and other reproductive issues. This makes pregnant women particularly vulnerable if they apply lipstick several times a day, every day, adding up to significant exposure (Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, 2007). Kohl, dark black eyeliners, hair dyes and other makeup products have been found to have levels of lead that may result in significant toxicity (Larson, 2010; Moyer, Nixon, & Ash, 1999). Not only is this a public health concern for women, but also for their unborn children as lead crosses the placenta and damages the fetal

brain (Centers for Disease Control, 2003; Larson, 2010). Cosmetics are a significant source of lead in humans and precautionary approaches need to be taken so that black women can opt for safer alternatives to reduce their exposure to heavy metals (Ayenimo, Yusuf, Doherty, & Ogunkunle, 2010).

Black women also experience different skincare challenges than others. Taylor (1999) states that African-Americans experience pomade acne, a different type of acne from that which troubles white skin. Pomade acne is a type of comedonal acne that occurs typically at the forehead, hair-line and temples due to the application of petroleum or mineral oil based hair products (pomades). Pomades are used to treat excessive dryness and improve manageability of ethnic hair (Taylor, 1999). To prevent pomade acne on black skin, safe, non-inflammatory and non-comedogenic products are needed. Unfortunately, most pomades are formulated with petroleum and mineral oil, which are unhealthy ingredients that should be avoided.

Acne on black skin also frequently and dramatically inflames, causing post-inflammatory hyperpigmentations, which are deep and darkly pigmented spots or lesions on the skin. Hyperpigmentation is removed via skin-lightening products, many times formulated with hydroquinone (Taylor, 1999), a toxic ingredient that is banned in the EU in cosmetic products but is still regularly used in parts of Africa (Fatimata, Soko, Dione, Niang, Kane, Bocoum, et al., 2007) and the United States. Studies show adverse effects from the use of topical corticosteroids and higher concentrations of hydroquinone in skin-lightening products. Adverse reactions may include halo lightening around the affected skin, irritant dermatitis or allergic reactions producing leukoderma and reduced quality of life (Fatimata et al., 2007; Taylor, 1999). Skin-bleaching creams are known to cause more discoloration, acne and skin lesions (Nimocks, 2015).

Many black women use skin-lightening products to reduce hyperpigmentation spots, while others use the products to combat colorism because society projects the belief that lighter skin is more attractive. Dark skin women are devalued because of their skin tone and are sold toxic products under the premise that they will benefit their skin. When the product is made from toxic ingredients, physical harm is added to the emotional harm already caused by societal standards.

Since ultraviolet light hinders the lightening effect of some skin-lightening products, it is very important to use sunscreen in conjunction with skin-lightening products to prevent further darkening of the skin. However, most sunscreens and products that include sunscreen (lip balm, moisturizer, foundation, etc.) are formulated with oxybenzone, also a toxic ingredient linked to cancer, allergies, hormone disruption, cell damage, developmental and reproductive toxicity (Black Women for Wellness, 2016a; Larson, 2010; Padgett, 2015; Palliser, 2010). Researchers at the University of Pittsburgh Center for Environmental Oncology found that personal care products that contain hormone disruptors are used more often by African-American women than other races (Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, 2009). Mothers with high levels of oxybenzone in their bodies are more likely to give birth to underweight babies, which is a critical risk factor linked to heart disease, diabetes, and hypertension (Larson, 2010). Oxybenzone is also a penetration enhancer that helps other chemicals penetrate the skin (Larson, 2010). This information about oxybenzone's link to cancer and the need to select healthier sunscreen options may not be widely known to black women. A study by Pichon, Corral, Landrine, Mayer, and Adams-Simms (2016) showed that skin cancer risk was not associated with sunscreen use among African-Americans, and it is ironic that researchers provide suggestions for African-Americans to use more sunscreen. It is actually healthier to prevent sun damage in other ways than by using

the currently available sunscreen options because it is not a good idea for black women to wear currently marketed sunscreen. In contrast to the common view, applying sunscreen is not a health-promoting behavior unless it is made with nontoxic ingredients. Unfortunately, many black women use makeup foundations with added sunscreens to cover hyperpigmentation, which only doubles the toxic exposure to sunscreen ingredients.

There are several problems with makeup for black skin. Heavy cream makeup that is caked on too thick for the skin can induce acne lesions (Taylor, 1999). Synthetic makeup has also been found to have significant levels of toxic heavy metals including lead, arsenic, cadmium, mercury and nickel that pose threats to human health and the environment (Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, 2011a; Nnorom, Igwe, & Oji-Nnorom, 2005). Heavy metals enter the products because 95% of products are formulated with synthetic compounds derived from petroleum (Ayenimo et al., 2010). These facial (foundation, concealer, powder, and blush) and eye products (eye liner, mascara and eye pencils) have been linked to diseases in black women in Nigeria and account for high levels of heavy metals in the milk of nursing women (Ayenimo et al., 2010; Parry & Eaton, 1991; Sprinkle, 1995). Most makeup for black women is also formulated with talc, a known carcinogen linked to ovarian cancer and lung tumors (O'Connor & Spunt, 2010; Padgett, 2015); parabens, a preservative with estrogen-like properties detected in breast tumors (Padgett, 2015; Palliser, 2010); mineral oils; or petroleum ingredients. Talc-based powders may also be used to provide a matte look to the skin, since the oil or texture of acne-prone skin is noticeable; however, talc is extremely dangerous. In 2016, Johnson & Johnson was ordered to pay $72 million to the family of a woman whose death from ovarian cancer was linked to use of the company's talcum powder (Malkan, 2016). Every step in the cosmetic process of skin care and makeup for black women that could be used to solve issues specific to

them is directly tied to harmful and toxic products that irritate the skin and cause serious illness. Taylor (1999) states that we cannot underemphasize the level of irritation that can result from skin products for skin of color.

Fragrance in cosmetic products is also a health hazard that disproportionately affects black women (Safe Cosmetics.org, 2016). A study of toxic chemicals in the umbilical cord blood of babies was conducted by the Environmental Working Group. Results showed that babies were exposed to several toxic substances while still in the womb. One substance compound found in 70% of the umbilical cords is galaxolide and tonalide, which are polycyclic musks in synthetic fragrances in cosmetics. Mothers can absorb synthetic musks through cosmetic application on the skin or by inhaling perfume scents and cologne sprays (Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, 2009).

Black women are exposed to phthalates at a higher rate than white women because they use relaxers and fragrances at a higher rate (Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, 2009; Velez et al., 2011). Phthalates, a group of synthetic endocrine-disrupting chemicals used in plasticizers to impart flexibility (Velez et al., 2015), are often used in cosmetics and personal care products such as feminine washes and hair relaxers (Chang, 2015). Phthalates are also used to maintain the scent in perfumes and cosmetics that have added fragrance such as body sprays, soaps, lotions and bathing products (Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, 2006). Pregnant women who use fragrance may expose their unborn fetus to diethyl phthalate (DEP), an ingredient linked to abnormal development of reproductive organs and ADD in children (Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, 2010a). Fragrance is a blanket term that incorporates many ingredients (up to 3,000 petrochemical ingredients not tested for safety) and is normally not fully disclosed because they are corporate trade secrets. Fragrance ingredients are not listed on many cosmetic product labels

but many ingredients frequently used in fragrances are proven to be associated with hormone disruption (Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, 2010a).

Cosmetics: the undocumented environmental health issue. It is well-documented that racial disparities exist in terms of exposure to environmental hazards (Glave, 2010; Larson, 2010; Velez et al., 2015). The significant gap between black and white health conditions is a historical problem that has its roots in the institution of slavery and the exclusion of African-American people from healthcare facilities (Harris & Johnson, 2000). Environmental racism, the inequitable exposure of people of color to air, water, and other pollutions significant enough to trigger cancer, birth defects, reproductive issues and emotionally based stress-related illnesses, has been documented since the 1980s (Glave, 2010). Impacted by racism and sexism, black women in particular have faced double jeopardy in their pursuit of a healthy lifestyle (Harris & Johnson, 2000) and freedom from toxic chemicals. The health issues stemming from this double threat on their existence have virtually been ignored, even though statistics show the death rate from cancer among African-American females is significantly higher than for white females (Harris & Johnson, 2000). There is a need for better accessibility to healthy products, health education, information, health care, and policy changes that impact the health of black females. There is also a need for more research focused on African-American women's health issues (Harris & Johnson, 2000), and environmental health should be one of the top priorities.

Federal agencies have indicated there is a greater threat of environmental disease to communities of color (Larson, 2010). Lower-income communities of color have higher risks of developing health problems from working in manufacturing plants, living near toxic dumps and having to patronize cheap retail establishments that do not carry healthy, natural or organic products (Black Women for Wellness, 2016a; Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, 2009).

Communities of color are deliberately and consistently used as toxic dumping grounds (Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, 2009). Race discrimination in the US has made it difficult for communities of color to partake in good healthcare; therefore, the environmental justice movement has been seeking equitable treatment for blacks through government policy, lobbying, and enforcement of existing laws (Bullard, 1994; Glave, 2010). Cosmetics legislation, specific to the needs and equal treatment of people of color, is needed because cosmetics pose an overlooked and undocumented environmental hazard causing serious diseases in black women.

National data show greater effects on people of color than whites from exposure to lead, toxins that trigger asthma, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), a group of manufactured organic chemicals, and dioxins (triggers cancer at smaller doses than any other chemical), and phthalates (Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, 2009; Larson, 2010). Data from the 1990s show that the blood lead levels of African-American children were 80% higher than white children (Larson, 2010). PCB levels in African-Americans are also greater than whites. The correlation of PCBs with various illnesses such as skin disorders, cancer, and reproductive problems has been an ongoing concern for African-American leaders of the environmental justice movement, such as Reverend Joseph Lowery and Walter Fauntroy (Glave, 2010). Phthalates are commonly used in cosmetic products (Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, 2009). In a study where seven phthalates chemicals were tested, four were widely found to be higher in blacks (Glave, 2010). Documented cosmetic health issues highlight the same chemicals of concern, which may help persuade environmental racism skeptics, but the two fields of study (race environmentalism and cosmetic product development and marketing) have never been combined so that solutions could be proposed.

Black women and children are disproportionately affected by toxic chemicals in beauty products and the risks caused by beauty product usage has a trickle-down effect to our food and

environment. It appears that solving the toxic beauty product issue could be a primary and significant step in solving other environmental hazards. Despite the statistics on the short and long-term hazards of beauty products, the topic has been left out of race and environmental education studies to prompt significant change in the community. Black Women for Wellness (2016a), an advocacy organization, states that the black community must show that we are a community that deeply cares about the issue of toxic chemicals, going green, and necessary regulations governing the personal care products developed for our use. The organization also states that very little research has been done on the impact of toxic chemicals on communities of color and more research, specifically aimed at black women, is needed to facilitate education and policy related to the impact of toxic chemicals and products on black families (Black Women for Wellness, 2016b).

The involvement of black women in the green economy needs to increase for the movement to change from an eco-apartheid condition to eco-equity. Eco-apartheid is created in the green movement when the benefits derived from the green economy only serve wealthy and white communities and fail to solve both environmental and social justice issues (Alkon, 2012). Throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, the reasons and urgency to go green have not resonated with the black community, even in terms of improving health (Ali, 2009). The natural hair movement, having laid a platform for black women's involvement as beauty and lifestyle environmentalists, is a good start to heavier consumption of green products and becoming overall enlightened consumers. Legislative and marketplace changes will happen if black women in beauty tribes demand eco-equity in available product options. This will spur demand and reduce the prices of green products, allowing for greater access beyond those in the upper and middle

classes. As Shirley Chisholm states: “health is a human right, not a privilege to be purchased” (Harris & Johnson, 2000, p.116).

Currently, the green market (especially for food) is a site of environmental privilege where affluent and highly educated patrons shop. The environmental movement has historically been led by white, middle-upper class people and therefore has not been very relatable to many black women (Nimocks, 2015). Green markets selling chemical-free food and beauty products are not widely available in black communities. This deters lower-income people of color from access to healthier products (Alkon, 2012). Since there are beauty supply stores on almost every block in African-American neighborhoods, the introduction of green beauty could be explored as a primary avenue to green consumption, along with or prior to changing the food supply in black neighborhoods. The green economy may spur faster growth through communities of color by way of the beauty industry because of the higher margins and small-scale entrepreneurship opportunities that are available when developing and creating natural beauty products.

The growth of the green economy has a triple bottom line that not only includes environmental justice and social equity but also economic and financial growth. Beauty is the one industry where black women have historically been very economically successful. The rise of the green economy and creation of green industries and technologies on a global scale is also a pathway out of poverty and black people should not let this opportunity pass them by (Ali, 2009).

Green jobs are being created globally. Green for All, a national organization that lobbies local governments to build a green economy, identified green jobs as well-paying, career-track positions. In 2007, the Green Jobs Act, which provides $125 million in training for low-income people, was passed by the federal government (Alkon, 2012). Within the green beauty industry,

many jobs are also being created to develop green packaging, green cosmetic formulations and beauty supplies, in addition to local opportunities in farming producing green ingredients, as well as retail and wholesale opportunities.

Many of the problems (health, lack of fresh or organic foods/poor diet, poverty, toxic salons and other places of business, water, problematic housing conditions, inability to shop locally) facing the black community can be traced to the social and physical environment, but very little information or studies focus on how green initiatives have benefitted the black community (Ali, 2009). The discourse thus far has concentrated on food, need for legislation, manufacturing plants and pollution in major cities, but the personal care products that the black community spends the most on or uses most often have been ignored. Going green is one possible solution to many of the problems in the black community (Ali, 2009), and legislation for and manufacturing of more green black beauty products could be a major source of needed change.

The natural hair movement added a new perspective that sparked discussion about health and wellness and black women's environmental consciousness (Nimocks, 2015). Considering the impact the movement has had on black beauty product offerings for black women and the light it has shed on using healthier products, we must seek to understand the beliefs and intentions toward this new healthy beauty space. This understanding should include products other than haircare and their influence on the lives of all black women, whether self-proclaimed naturals or not. The black beauty consumer is positioned within a larger beauty tribe exploring all her current health and environmental interests, not just natural hair. Author Veronica Chambers agrees that "as a community–especially where we [black women] are in this wonderful moment of really being seen and embracing each other as a truly diverse tribe–we

prize authenticity over both trends and traditions" (as cited in Byrd & Tharps, 2014, p.202). In an effort to further understand the authenticity and needs of black women, we must research their beliefs and health-promoting behaviors as we seek to assist them with their health and beauty goals.

Health-Promoting Behaviors of Black Women

Social relationships and environmental context are key to influencing behavioral change. Studies have explored health-promoting behaviors of black women and girls toward exercise, sexual inactivity, breast cancer screenings, and consumption of healthy foods (Cooper & Guthrie, 2007; Corral & Landrine, 2012; Sadler et al., 2007). Cooper and Guthrie (2007) found that positive relationships with peers and family influenced African-American girls increased engagement toward the health-promoting behaviors of sexual inactivity and exercising. Sadler et al. (2007) surveyed over 1,000 beauty salon clients to understand the health-promoting behavior of completing breast cancer screenings. Salon clients reported low rates of adhering to screening guidelines even though the perceived threat was taken seriously. The study showed that within the Health Belief Model, the knowledge construct scored lower than the rest. Client health-promoting behaviors were negatively impacted because they did not feel they had enough knowledge about breast cancer and didn't feel well informed. Corral and Landrine (2012) studied the health-promoting behavior of consuming health foods (fresh fruits and vegetables) by African-American adults (more women than men). They found no relationship between adaptive health-promoting behaviors and level of education, income or racial stress, as the behavior was at too low a level to have a relationship with any predictor variables.

The relationships between stress, racism, body image, self-efficacy, interpersonal support, and health knowledge as predictors of health-promoting behaviors have also been

studied (Ahijevych, 1994; Brown, Naman, Homel, Fraser-White, Clare, & Browne, 2006; Corral & Landrine, 2012; Edmonds, 2006; Edmonds, 2010). Corral and Landrine (2012) studied the possible link between stresses from racial discrimination felt by African-Americans to increasing *vigorous* physical activity as a health-promoting behavior and found a positive relationship. Levels of stress were also found to negatively influence health-promoting behaviors by participants in Edmonds' (2006 and 2010) studies of college educated African-American women. Positive body image and self-efficacy were both found to positively influence health-promoting behaviors toward physical activity and eating healthy foods. Ahijevych (1994) states that even though there was limited information on health behaviors of African-American women, study participants rated interpersonal support and self-actualization as the highest scales on the Health-Promoting Lifestyle Profile instrument. Brown et al. (2006) surveyed African-American and Afro-Caribbean women in a beauty salon setting about preventative health knowledge and behaviors. Although overall levels of health knowledge (of several diseases including breast cancer and heart disease) as a predictor of behavior was high, participants did not report engaging in health-promoting behaviors. This is a cause for concern and calls for in-depth study. Brown et al. (2006) recommend diving deeper into participant emotions and beliefs to determine possible causes or barriers to health-promoting behavior through qualitative inquiry, which this study intends to engage in.

Research has shown African-American health-promoting behaviors to be inadequate and studies recommend implementing health-promoting strategies to reduce the high rates of health disparities and death of black women (Johnson & Nies, 2005). However, various barriers to health-promoting behaviors for African-Americans exist and are important to understand. Johnson and Nies (2005) performed a qualitative study to determine what encompasses barriers

to implementing health-promoting behaviors. African-Americans (a majority of them female) living in both rural and metropolitan areas in the US cited a combination of structural and personal barriers, including: cost, lack of discipline, lack of time, family responsibilities, higher priorities in their personal lives and a lack of motivation as barriers to health-promoting behaviors. Several of these barriers, in terms of healthy beauty products, are taken into consideration in this study and the results will allow the development of health-promoting intervention strategies.

Once the barriers to health-promoting behaviors are determined for a group of people, intervention strategies can be culturally adapted to improve clinical effectiveness, cost effectiveness, and overall success in behavior changes (Liu et al., 2012). Adapting health-promotion interventions for ethnic minority populations to be culturally and educationally sensitive is also recommended (Edmonds, 2006). Culturally adapted interventions can increase the participants' perceived level of importance, acceptability, and uptake of changed behaviors (Liu et al., 2012).

Previous toxicology, environmental, medical, and cosmetic science research details how cosmetics and personal care products are a serious hazard to black women (Ball, 2016; Black Women for Wellness, 2016b; Gathers & Mahan, 2014; Nimocks, 2015; O'Connor & Spunt, 2010; Solomon, 2016; Uhlenhake & Mehregan, 2013). Merchandising studies show that consumer attitudes, health and environmental consciousness of other non-black ethnic groups positively influence purchase intentions (a health-promoting behavior) toward natural and organic products (Dragan & Petrescu, 2013; Kim & Seock, 2009; Mombeini et al., 2015; Pervin et al., 2014; Rybowska, 2014). Race and environmentalism studies describe the need for environmental justice (Glave, 2010; Larson, 2010; Velez et al., 2015) to reduce health disparities

of black women, who are impacted significantly higher than other women. However, these studies have ignored cosmetic use, the largest ethnic industry, as an environmental hazard or area of needed behavioral change to going green. Health-promoting behavior studies of black women set a framework and guidelines for understanding a few predictors and barriers toward healthy lifestyles outside of the cosmetics arena. By reviewing the literature in these four areas, a clear void in the literature has been determined. These four fields (cosmetic science/toxicology, merchandising, race environmentalism, and health-promotion) converge in this study to present original research exploring attitudes and beliefs of black women toward health-promoting behaviors in cosmetic consumption.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research Questions

The following research questions guide this study:

1. To what extent (if at all) do black women believe using beauty products can threaten their health?
2. To what extent are black women knowledgeable about environmental toxins in ethnic beauty products?
3. How does black women's level of self-efficacy to avoid health hazards influence their purchase intentions toward natural and organic beauty products?
4. To what extent are black women's purchase intentions toward natural and organic beauty products influenced by product benefits, market barriers or consumer and retailer cues to action?

Type of Research Design

This research study uses netnography to explore the health beliefs, lifestyle and health-promoting behaviors of black women in black beauty tribes toward natural and organic beauty products. IRB approval has been obtained from the University of Georgia for this study.

Study of Consumer Tribes and Tribal Marketing

A tribe is a group of contemporary consumers that experience a sense of community through their shared involvement in a phenomenon (Richardson, 2013). Consumer tribes can

form around a brand, hobby, activity or any other phenomenon. Tribes can promote multiple brands and engage members online and offline. The only requirements for inclusion in a consumer tribe are commitment, loyalty to the group or activity, and voluntary socializing or interacting with other members (Richardson, 2013). Tribes aspire to be free from top-down dominance. They are activity-focused and have collectively shared values, passion for the activity and participate in their chosen activity in highly demonstrative ways. Products and brands that the tribe connects with experience free advertising at an unprecedented rate through word of mouth. There are benefits for marketers that know how to engage tribes including their products selected for tribal promotion.

This study explored black beauty tribes, groups of black women who share their love for racialized beauty. Members gather to learn, discuss, inspire and influence one another's purchasing behavior toward beauty products. Black beauty tribes consist of black women involved in black beauty groups, which may include hair, natural hair, makeup and other beauty products of interest to black women. Since a great deal of the tribes' activities and discussion involves purchasing products, they are considered a consumer tribe. The tribe that this study researches shares, demonstrates, reviews, refers, and purchases ethnic beauty products.

Tribal marketing is "a form of marketing that seeks to establish what it is that holds meaning for consumers and seeks to support those things and the tribe's agenda thus becoming part of the fabric of the tribe" (Richardson, 2013, p. 14). The tribe is at the center of brand focus. Therefore, the idea of stakeholder theory, which regards the tribe as brand stakeholders, is implemented. In this scenario, the brand must become sensitized to the tribe's view of the world (Richardson, 2013). Once tribal marketing is instituted by a brand, social media, tribal sponsorship, community engagement and brand customization strategies will change so that the

brand is co-creating value with the tribe, instead of marketing to the tribe by pushing the brand's agenda.

During the natural hair movement, cosmetic companies practiced tribal marketing at an unprecedented rate. Many brands, founded by members of the tribe, are small businesses that specialized in the sale of natural products and are black-owned. These brands had an immediate connection with the tribe, were accepted quickly into the fold, and established successful businesses that could compete with mainstream beauty brands. Other brands without tribal membership support may not be able to achieve success with black women as consumers.

Ethno-marketing research is performed to study tribes and collect data that highlights the values of the tribe, reasons why the tribe exists and how the tribe creates meaning from their perspective. Black beauty tribes gather online, a space where netnography can be appropriately used to study their behavior. Netnography is a common ethno-marketing approach that identifies tribal beliefs, attitudes, values and behavior (Richardson, 2013). Netnography was used in this study to explore black beauty tribes, their health beliefs, and influence on beauty product consumption.

Within black beauty tribes, women turn to the internet to learn and share information on how to make proper beauty consumption choices. Socially supportive communities of thousands of black women talking about beauty have been built online. These spaces have become a home and even a place of refuge or acceptance for their participants because they know the other members of the group understand their beauty needs and can recommend appropriate solutions. Participation in the community ultimately impacts buying behavior. As black women create content through commenting, writing, making videos and supporting other members online

within their community, we can gain insight into their everyday beauty practices and culture through netnography. Through the member's online actions in the black beauty community, women redefine their identity, values, and priorities. They also redirect their spending power, bond and debate within a virtual sisterhood that has become an integral part of their everyday life.

Netnography

Since the turn of the century, the Internet has become a popular place for the collection of primary data (Stewart & Williams, 2005). Both quantitative and qualitative data are often collected online and through electronic and digital tools. In terms of data quality, "online qualitative research has proven to produce similar findings to conventional qualitative research" (Poynter, 2010, p. 110). One type of online qualitative research is netnography. Netnography is defined as "ethnographic research adapted to the unique contingencies of various types of computer-mediated social interactions" (Belk et al., 2013, p. 106). Netnography is a methodology used to study and provide up-to-date information on the symbolism, meanings, and consumption patterns of online consumer tribes (Kozinets, 2002). Netnography, otherwise called e-ethnography or online ethnography, is also defined as "ethnography adapted to the study of online communities" (Kozinets, 2002, p. 61) and "a way to view qualitative online data as indicative of communities or cultures" (Belk et al., 2013, p. 106). These definitions describe how netnography is a formal methodology appropriate to studying black beauty tribes.

The purpose of netnography as a research approach is to help marketers understand consumer culture, specifically, tribal environments (Kozinets, 2006). Brand marketers can learn how to implement tribal marketing and tribal branding techniques to address the findings of netnographic studies. The method also allows the voices within a particular consumer tribe or

culture to be heard. Netnography was developed to help researchers in marketing and consumer research understand the world and social experiences of online communicators. There are over a billion people who participate in online communities regularly (Kozinets, 2010). The methodology has been adopted as a superior scientific approach (Kozinets, 2012) to study these communities.

Researchers can listen in on the conversations of an online natural community through netnographic methods. A natural community is a generic phrase that describes the virtual gathering of people to discuss any phenomena online (Poynter, 2010). The community "exists because its members want it to for the purpose that they want it to" (p.188). Netnography makes use of broad categories of research methods including observational techniques and interactive approaches (Poynter, 2010), such as mining, interviews, focus groups, and surveys. The unobtrusive nature of the method uses publicly available information in online forums or groups to see naturally occurring behaviors. This information is examined to identify and understand the needs and factors that influence behavior of particular consumer groups (Kozinets, 2002).

Due to its ethnographic roots, netnography is an appropriate method to study the behaviors of a particular social group, race, or culture. The method entails gaining entrée, gathering and analyzing data, ensuring trustworthy interpretation, incorporating ethical research practices, and member checks. It is the goal of both netnography and ethnography to describe in detail the meaning of social life from the everyday perspective of the members of the culture (Kozinets, 2010). However, netnography differs from and extends ethnography and other online research approaches in several key ways.

Although both ethnography and netnography allow researchers to write about and represent culture, conducting a netnography is less expensive, less time-consuming and less

obtrusive. Since most data is gathered online, the need to travel to field sites and transcribe data is lessened or eliminated. Netnography is unique due to its ability to flawlessly record data by online lurking (scrolling through online data or social media) rather than being seen in the environment, as with traditional ethnography. The goal of netnography is rich cultural understanding–something that social media mining and analysis cannot produce alone. A netnographer should incorporate or combine several research techniques to create a powerful combination of inquiry and unobtrusiveness (Kozinets, 2010) to portray the fuller story of an online community. For this study, I combined three research methods to study the health beliefs of the black beauty tribe in online natural communities.

Rationale for using netnography: multiple methods. Studies that examine cultural phenomena are examples of naturalistic inquiry, which asserts that multiple realities can be constructed (Lincoln & Guba, 1986) by members of the same group. Because this netnographic study is concerned with studying many members of a cultural tribe, qualitative methods that enable naturalistic inquiry are appropriate. Therefore, I used the qualitative methods of focus groups and social media mining as appropriate methods for this study. However, because of the massive size of the tribe, I believed that I also needed to capture an initial overview of tribal demographics, beliefs, and the significant antecedents of tribal behavior by conducting an online survey. The survey was useful to understand large-scale patterns and categories within the tribe (Kozinets, 2010). I was able to probe further on survey results by questioning a smaller number of tribe members in a focus-group setting.

Netnography, a naturally multiple methods approach, was perfectly suited to perform the research needed for this study. The primary reason for conducting a netnography for this study was because the black beauty tribe is a group which, although it participates in offline events,

conducts most of the group's communication and activities (videos, posts, pictures, etc.) on the internet. Data is produced in the daily lives of its participants, a context in which lived experiences unfold naturally (Patton, 2002). Netnography was performed through survey research and focus groups enhanced with supplemental observation research via media mining. To conduct this study, specific procedures and standards outlined for netnography in marketing research were followed. The steps included research planning, entrée (into the online spaces), data collection, interpretation, ensuring ethical standards, and analysis (Kozinets, 2010).

Subjectivity Statement

To conduct this online culture study, there were several issues that I needed to be aware of in my role as researcher in relation to the participants. Beck (2005) states that "through the internet's flexibility in communication channels and in social support, the empowerment of marginalized women can be facilitated" (p. 413). I understand that the women in this study are revealing very personal stories about their beauty concerns and health. I realized that even though I was interested in empowering the participants to be able to make healthier beauty choices, I could not ignore the fact that as the researcher I had power over the study. Writing the questions and the narrative to accurately represent a historically marginalized group of women is a responsibility I did not take lightly.

Using netnography as a method to study the culture of this group created a question of how much I as a researcher could "go native" (Patton, 2002). As researcher, but also as a participant who has her own personal story that connects to the larger study, ethnographic reflexivity implies theorizing and analyzing how my subjectivity and those of the participants mutually interact (Rybas & Gajjala, 2007). I intertwine my own experiences in the research process while also engaging in netnography to study other members of the community (Gatson,

2008). Using a method like netnography also helped to broaden my insights as a researcher. Researcher immersion within online tribal discussions to identify the breadth of information that is of interest to the tribe while challenging your own preconceptions as to what the tribe thinks is or is not important (Richardson, 2013) is a challenge but also insight-producing. As an accepted member of the professional black beauty community, I was able to go fully native (Patton, 2002). Going native means that I had to be reflexive of my insider/outsider status. I naturally brought my own perspective and knowledge as a black beauty consumer and entrepreneur to the study, which contributed to an emic perspective. However, I had to remain aware that my experience is not necessarily common knowledge to my audience or matched the beliefs of other participants. In order to understand the beliefs of the study participants, I used the Health Belief Model (HBM) as a conceptual framework.

Theoretical Framework: Health Belief Model

The HBM has been a widely used conceptual framework since the original model was developed in the 1950s by a group of social psychologists at the U.S. Public Health Service. The model was later expanded by social psychologist Irvin M. Rosenstock in 1966 (Carpenter, 2010; Champion & Skinner, 2008; Janz & Becker, 1984). The HBM is used in health behavior research to explain and support interventions in health-related behavior. The conceptual framework is used to understand why individuals engage or refuse to engage in a variety of different health-related actions (Janz & Becker, 1984). Since 1966, the scales of the model have been modified or adapted to meet the cultural needs of the sample being studied (African-American, Iranian, Korean, Chinese, Hispanic, etc.) or the type of health problem being studied (cancer, diabetes, obesity, etc.) (Champion, 1993; Champion, 1999; Frank, Swedmark, &

Grubbs, 2004; Juniper, Oman, Hamm, & Kerby, 2004). Studies using the HBM have also addressed participation in health-related programs in addition to preventing diseases.

The HBM attempts to predict health-promoting behaviors (Champion & Skinner, 2008; Janz & Becker, 1984), by accounting for individual differences in beliefs and attitudes. In terms of studying beauty products, the model narrows the reasoning for purchase behavior to health. The model does not test non-health-related reasons for buying healthier products (for example, color, scent or packaging) and does not consider emotional reasons for buying products. The HBM tests the influence of modifying variables, antecedents to determine perceived threats against health-promoting behaviors and several variables as direct antecedents to health-promoting behavior. The model's key constructs include: perceived susceptibility, perceived seriousness, perceived benefits, perceived barriers, cues to action and self-efficacy (Champion & Skinner, 2008). The model is depicted below as Figure 3.1.

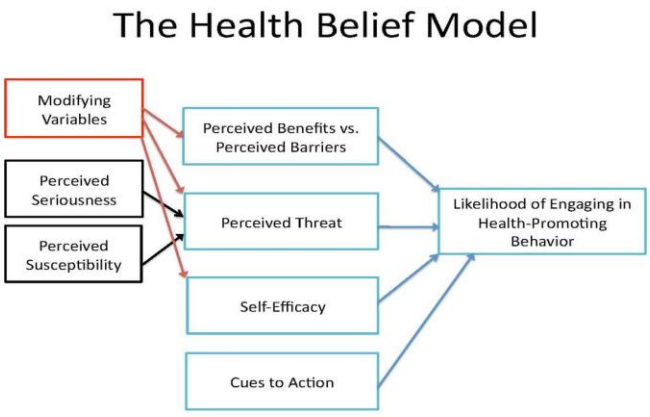

Figure 3.1. The Health Belief Model.

Health Belief Model Variables

In addition to the key constructs of the model, modifying variables may influence perception and indirectly influence health-related behavior (Champion & Skinner, 2008; Janz & Becker, 1984) and are, therefore, accounted for in the model. Modifying variables include demographics, sociopsychological variables, and structural variables (Champion & Skinner, 2008). For this study, race and gender will be verified and additional demographic data will be captured including: age, level of education, and parental status. Possible determinants from sociopsychological aspects will also be included, such as: colorism (light skin blacks vs. dark skin blacks), perceived social class, lifestyle (vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free etc.), and peer group pressure (in the online community). The structural variable will measure knowledge about toxicity of beauty products and natural and organic ingredients.

The model tests two antecedents to the variable Perceived Threat. Perceived seriousness is whether the health problem or issue is believed or assessed to be severe (Champion & Skinner, 2008; Janz & Becker, 1984; Montanaro & Bryan, 2014). Perceived susceptibility addresses whether the participant believes that they are vulnerable or likely to get the health condition if they do not engage in health-promoting behavior (Champion & Skinner, 2008; Janz & Becker, 1984; Montanaro & Bryan, 2014). When consumers believe that the health concern is serious and they are also susceptible to it, they consider it a perceived threat to their health. People are more likely to engage in health-promoting behaviors to avoid a perceived threat.

For consumer engagement in health-promoting behaviors to increase, the perceived benefits must be greater than the perceived barriers. Perceived benefits are defined as the perceived decreased risk of disease or health concerns (Champion & Skinner, 2008; Janz & Becker, 1984; Montanaro & Bryan, 2014). If the consumer believes that they will benefit from the behavior by not getting sick, for example, the likelihood of changing their behavior increases.

However, if the barriers outweigh the benefits, the likelihood of adopting a health-promoting behavior will decrease. Barriers are the potential negative aspects that act as impediments to the recommended health-promoting behavior (Champion & Skinner, 2008; Janz & Becker, 1984; Montanaro & Bryan, 2014). Barriers may include the lack of availability of healthy beauty products for one's skin tone, price, lack of product popularity within the tribe, lack of efficacy of products to achieve the look members desire, investment of too much time to find the right natural products or inconvenient purchasing channels, among others.

The level of consumer self-efficacy is the consumers' belief or level of confidence that they know how to choose the healthier option. Self-efficacy, which was later added to the HBM model by Rosenstock, Stretcher, and Becker (1988), is defined as the belief that one can successfully navigate or execute the behavior with desirable outcomes (Bandura, 1997; Champion & Skinner, 2008) or belief that one can take preventative action (Montanaro & Bryan, 2014).

Cues to action are the prompts that consumers receive to trigger changes in their behavior (Champion & Skinner, 2008; Janz & Becker, 1984). Cues to action may be internal or external (Carpenter, 2010; Janz & Becker, 1984). Examples of internal cues to action (e.g., within the body or mind) in regards to beauty and health may be skin issues such as skin breakouts or allergies that alert one of the need to use natural or organic products. Reproductive, cancer, or neurological issues may have been diagnosed and the consumer questions whether the products they have used contributed to the harm they are experiencing. Examples of external cues to action may include: health studies, blogger and vlogger influence, product recommendations from other members of the tribe, brand advertising and promotions, product warning labels, free-from warnings on cosmetic labels, eco-certifications, media, and brand communications such as

emails prompting one to buy safer products. The cues-to-action construct is the least-developed and least-measured variable in the model (Carpenter, 2010; Champion & Skinner, 2008; Janz & Becker, 1984). Many previous researchers decided not to test this construct (Carpenter, 2010; Champion & Skinner, 2008). However, in a retail and merchandising or marketing study, cues to action (also called calls to action) are very important aspects of the sales funnel, a process within the retailer's marketing program that moves the customer from interest in purchasing to the act of purchasing, resulting in increased conversions (Smith, 2015). Therefore, testing cues to action during data collection in this study will enhance the literature on the HBM.

Merchandising healthy products can also be a health intervention. Based on the HBM, cues to action from brands, the beauty industry, influencers, health activists, and fellow tribe members can all affect the constructs of the models and influence the buying behavior of black women toward beauty products. These cues to action can be used as health interventions through tribal marketing practices. Interventions may also aim to boost self-efficacy by providing training in specific health-promoting behaviors, particularly for complex lifestyle changes (e.g., changing to gluten-free, vegan or toxin-free or toxin-lessened living). Interventions can be aimed at the individual level (i.e., working one-on-one with individuals to increase engagement in health-related behaviors) or the societal level (e.g., through legislation such as impending cosmetics legislation or changes to the physical environment or product formulas). Janz and Becker (1984) noted that the HBM does not dictate any particular intervention strategy to alter beliefs. The results of this study may lead to recommendations for various forms of interventions that may assist participants with opting for healthier beauty products.

The survey and focus group questions asked of participants were designed following the constructs and scales of the HBM. Since disease and other health issues resulting from beauty

product use have never been studied in previous HBM literature, scales had never been created. However, a review of the literature shows that HBM scales had been developed for use on African-American populations for illnesses such as diabetes, physical activity and breast cancer (Frank et al., 2004; Hall et al., 2005; Juniper et al., 2004; Koch, 2002).

The lead researcher (MDB) chose to adopt a scale developed by Champion (1993) to study breast cancer in African-American women. Since survey scales are typically adapted to the culture of participants, the population is the same as in this study and since breast cancer is one of the illnesses linked to toxic beauty products, the content of these studies is related. The scale was revised specifically to evaluate the relationship between health beliefs and purchase intentions toward non-toxic or healthy beauty products. The development of the scale is a contribution to the literature and will be able to be used by future researchers of eco-beauty studies for other demographics or cultural groups. A Cronbach's Alpha score of .76 deemed the scale reliable. The results of this study determined the relationship amongst the variables and helped in the development of merchandising recommendations that should be made to the beauty industry or consumers to assist them in engaging in health-promoting behavior. The survey scales are provided in the Appendix.

Site Selection

Data for this study was collected in an online and digital context. The online communities and social media sites that were included were purposefully selected. The selection criteria for black beauty groups were that the group needed to be an active black hair or beauty Facebook group with more than 1,000 members. Groups were selected by searching for black hair and beauty groups on Facebook. The researcher's knowledge gained from participating in the industry to select popular groups also played a role in the selection. The Facebook sites that

were selected include: Natural Hair Chat (32,524 members), Team Natural (32,983 members), Makeup for Black Women (43,509 members), Black Women who Love Beauty and Business (3,172 members), Beauty of Colour (1,467 members), Black Vogue- Makeup for Black Women (14,166 members) and Makeup for Melanin Girls (77,345 likes on Facebook). The lead researcher gained entrée into all the above groups and pages. The lead researcher recruited participants in these groups to complete the survey after getting permission from the group moderators. Each group had recent communications, interactive participants, and had a substantial number of members and were therefore considered to be data-rich groups (Kozinets, 2010). Participants were also recruited via email through Qualtrics.

Sampling Strategy

The participants for this study included 11 middle class black women actively involved in the black beauty tribe as focus group participants, in addition to the 161 survey participants recruited through the Facebook community groups and Qualtrics via email. Social media mining on Facebook and Twitter took place within the sites described above and by searching the relevant hashtags of the black beauty tribe in connection with health. A detailed list of the relevant hashtags is included in the social media mining data collection section in Chapter 6. The sample selection criteria for all participants were as follows: (1) self-identify as black, (2) female, (3) over the age of 18, (4) an active online black beauty tribe member. These criteria were important because they define the study. Additional criteria such as income, class, education, marital status and a more precise age range cannot be determined in the context of online discussions, but were determined in the survey. Due to their active participation online, participants are technologically savvy enough to operate social media and online environments.

It may be arguable that highly educated individuals will be more aware of social and political hair and beauty issues than less-educated individuals. At the same time, the natural hair movement and black beauty tribe community thrives on educating its members. Therefore, this study is not limited to highly-educated black women.

Participants were selected by utilizing criterion-based sampling (Patton, 2002). They have experiences relating to the phenomenon being researched and were recruited by using the IRB-approved recruitment tool. The recruitment visual was posted and shared on social media within the black beauty groups and on tribal pages as well as sent to prospective participants by e-mail.

Focus group participants self-selected into the group through their participation in the survey. This guaranteed that all focus group members were a subset of survey participants. Focus group participants were provided an incentive to participate in the focus group. The incentive, $100 retail value of natural beauty products, was approved by the IRB. Survey participants were entered in a drawing to receive $100 retail value of beauty products. The drawing was approved by the IRB. The products were donated by a natural beauty company. An extrinsic reward was chosen because it was directly related to the research. It was deemed that participants would want the products because of their interest in beauty products or because the products will assist them on their natural beauty journey. They may also have desired the products to be introduced to healthier or safer products.

Data Collection Methods

Two primary and one supplemental data collection methods were used in this study. First, I conducted an online survey of 161 black beauty group participants. Then, I conducted a deeper study with 11 of the survey participants divided into two online focus group sessions. Four

participants were in the first session and seven participants joined the second session. As a supplementary method, I also performed social media mining of two of the large Facebook groups (one natural hair group and one black makeup group) and a mining of Twitter by linking black beauty hashtags to health and eco-beauty keywords. Whereas the online survey and focus groups provided direct results based on specific questions asked of the participants, social media mining does not and is therefore considered supplementary data; nonetheless, this information strengthens the study even further by providing investigational triangulation. Although relevant data can be gathered from "lurking" the internet, the web is a massive environment with a large amount of noise. In terms of the number of Facebook groups used for mining versus survey methods, a large number and access to thousands of participants in Facebook groups was needed for the recruitment process to complete the survey; however, only a smaller number of groups is feasible for the mining activity. Each chosen method—survey, online focus group, and social media mining—were guided by the research questions and variables being studied in the HBM. Specifically, survey participants answered questions for research questions 1-4. The survey guided the participants through each construct of the HBM, as each construct had its own section of questions. Data collected through social media mining and focus groups also addressed research questions 1-4. The mined data and focus group transcript were coded using the HBM constructs as themes in the data. The results from the qualitative coding sessions will address the extent to which each research question is answered. The final data collection point was determined when I reached "theoretical saturation," a point described by Glesne (2006) as the time when what the researcher has learned from the participants becomes redundant and the data seems complete and integrated. Each method is discussed below in the appropriate chapter

designated for that study (Chapter 4: Quantitative Survey, Chapter 5: Qualitative Focus Group, Chapter 6: Social Media Mining).

CHAPTER 4

RACE AND ECO-COSMETICS: AN ANALYSIS OF BLACK WOMEN'S HEALTH BELIEFS INFLUENCE ON PURCHASE INTENTIONS OF NATURAL PRODUCTS[2]

[2] Davis-Bundrage, M., Anderson, A.K. & Medvedev, K. To be submitted to the *Journal of Black Studies*

Abstract

Purpose – This study uses the Health Belief Model (HBM) to examine the influence of perceived seriousness, susceptibility, benefits, barriers, self-efficacy and cues to action on purchase intentions toward natural and organic beauty products. This study aims to determine the likelihood of black women purchasing natural and organic products as a health-promoting behavior.

Design/methodological approach – An online survey was conducted with 161 participants of online black beauty groups. Pearson's correlation, linear and multiple regression analysis were used to test the relationships among the variables.

Findings – The results indicate that each construct of the HBM positively influences purchase intentions toward natural and organic beauty products, except for perceived barriers, which had a significant negative relationship to purchase intention. Lifestyle and perceived benefits were included in the best predictor model for all product types except nail products. Knowledge and cues to action predictors were added to the best model for skin care and body care. Self-efficacy and perceived barriers were additional predictors of nail products.

Practical Implications – This study suggests that beauty product manufacturers should develop affordable and accessible ethnic beauty product lines, educational programs and marketing strategies that emphasize health, natural and organic ingredients, and product safety to address the specific needs of black women.

Originality/value – This study provides valuable insight into the consumer behavior of black women toward natural and organic beauty products by examining their health beliefs and retailer cues to action as factors that influence purchase intentions. Furthermore, this study extends the

application of the HBM to the field of eco-beauty merchandising studies and highlights the voices and preferences of black women in a highly racialized space of eco-beauty.

Keywords beauty, natural products, organic products, health, black women

Introduction

Since the turn of the 21st century, the development and sale of natural and organic beauty products has become a major sector in the cosmetics industry. The explosive growth of this industry sector has increased consumer consciousness about how beauty regimens impact health and wellness. Consumers are beginning to inquire about the safety of their products as they seek to understand how they can "go green" with their beauty regimens and lead healthier lifestyles. Consumer awareness and concern regarding the ingredients in their cosmetic products is at an all-time high ("Meet the next leaders," 2016).

Previous eco-beauty marketing studies document the significant growth of the natural and organic beauty industry and corresponding consumer behavior. Rajagopal (2007) stated that organic cosmetic brands were not yet familiar to consumers because consumers were unaware of the harmful effects synthetic cosmetics have on health with prolonged usage. However, customers who were aware of these effects were willing to buy organic cosmetics. Kim and Seock (2009) found that 89 percent of beauty product buyers stated that their concern over synthetic chemicals in products was a central factor in their purchase decisions. A year later, Hae et al. (2010) observed that approximately 30 percent of adults in the United States were interested in healthy and sustainable lifestyles and the total marketplace was $226.8 billion for this group of consumers. The natural and organic personal care products market in the United States totaled $3.8 billion in 2010 and grew to $6.6 billion by 2015, while global sales totaled $14 billion (Rybowska, 2014). Natural and organics are the fastest-growing sector in the cosmetics industry, experiencing double-digit growth every year for the past six years ("Natural segment continues," 2014). Today, natural cosmetics is a $33 billion industry accounting for 13 percent of the overall global beauty market. It is expected to hit $50 billion by 2019 ("Natural

segment continues," 2014; Pike, 2015). These numbers suggest that natural cosmetics have graduated from a niche market to a mainstream mass market (Armstrong, 2010). However, as history and modern marketing tactics show, ethnic women are not considered a part of the mainstream beauty space but are instead sectioned apart as minorities ("Segregation at the beauty counter," 2011). Consequently, there is a need to comprehend how the growing natural and organic market is serving black women. Marketers also need to understand to what extent black women intend to purchase natural and organic cosmetics and what variables influence that purchase decision.

Like mainstream beauty, the global "going green" and mainstream eco-beauty movement is a highly racialized and segregated space ("Segregation at the beauty counter," 2011). The clean beauty movement, although not a very diverse space, still has inspired black women to create their own space to discuss how they could go green by "going natural." The well-documented Natural Hair Movement (Byrd & Tharps, 2014; V. Davis, 2013; Nimocks, 2015), which is a chemical-free beauty movement, has laid a global foundation for black women to become educated about natural and organic products and begin to embrace personal and environmental health and education (Nimocks, 2015).

Through the education they received through the natural hair movement, black women now realize that the most harmful products are marketed to them specifically as black women. These products include hair straighteners, skin lighteners, and highly pigmented color cosmetics (Malkan, 2007). In addition to the products being marketed mainly to black women, the use of the products causes disproportionate harm to black women because they are more frequent users than other consumer groups. *Essence Magazine*'s Smart Beauty Panel reported that black women purchase 80 percent more cosmetics and twice as many skin care products as the

mainstream consumer (Smith & Bondy, 2009). Findings from recent studies link beauty products marketed to black women to many serious health conditions, including cancer, fibroids, respiratory illnesses, neurological damage, learning disabilities, and reproductive harm from chemical exposure (Ball, 2016; Chang, 2015). This new information that has been communicated through blogs and radio media enhances the confidence of more black women that their decision to go natural is a wise choice. The lack of trust in the mainstream beauty industry is also a contributing factor for many black women to seek safer alternatives.

Although the natural hair movement has served as a platform for environmental education in the realm of beauty, the marketplace of natural and organic products can be difficult to navigate. Product labels, eco-certifications and ingredient databases full of nomenclature of chemical compounds are difficult for consumers to understand. Terminologies used to describe healthier products vary greatly, which complicates matters further. Currently used industry terms may include: paraben-free, sulfate-free, talc-free, vegan, green beauty, clean beauty, cruelty-free, non-toxic, free from synthetics, all natural, organic, and eco-beauty. When determining which features or benefits of natural products are desired, many consumers will struggle with how these terms differ and which ones impact their health. The lack of availability of green ethnic products in beauty categories other than black hair care, such as skin care and make-up that meets the specific needs of black women, is a challenge as well. These difficulties impact black women's consumer self-efficacy in selecting appropriate products for themselves.

Because of the influence of the natural hair movement, the natural beauty product segment now impacts product availability for all black women. Black women spend an estimated $9 billion annually on beauty products (Black Women for Wellness, 2016b), and total black hair care consumption is estimated to reach $500 billion by 2017 (Black Women for

Wellness, 2016b; Opiah, 2014). Regardless of the massive size of the market and black women's spending power, black women do not feel that the mainstream beauty industry responds to and meets their unique needs. In fact, they feel that they have been grossly underserved as beauty consumers (Baldwin, 2008; Bryant, 2016; L. Davis, 2013; "Segregation at the beauty counter," 2011).

Because black women as a beauty community have demonstrated their purchasing power by creating the natural hair movement and effectively changing the landscape of 21st century beauty product development (Bryant, 2016), it is crucial that we understand the black female consumer of the post-natural-hair movement and her beliefs and attitudes toward the natural beauty industry. This understanding should include other categories of beauty products than haircare, such as products for skin, body, face, and nails. This study, which is part of a larger multiple-methods netnography of black women involved in black beauty communities, sought to understand the beliefs, perceptions, knowledge and cues to action that influence health-promoting behaviors of black women towards beauty products.

Conceptual Model

The Health Belief Model (as shown in Figure 4.1 below) is the conceptual model used to study the level of influence between independent variables in the model (perceived seriousness, perceived susceptibility, perceived benefits, perceived barriers, self-efficacy, and cues to action) on the dependent variable, which was the likelihood of engaging in health-promoting behavior.

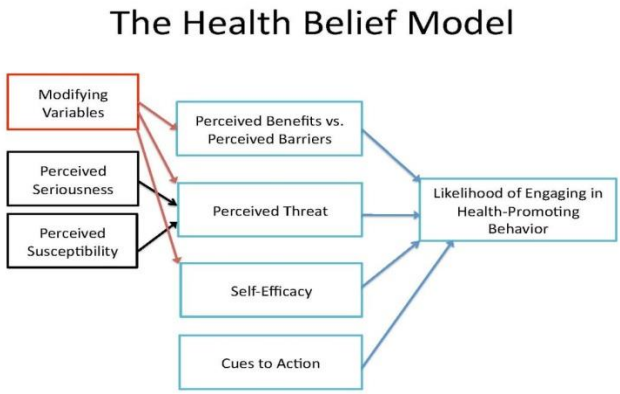

Figure 4.1. The Health Belief Model.

The Health Belief Model specifies that health-promoting behaviors are likely to be adopted if individuals perceive a negative health outcome to be severe, consider themselves to be susceptible to the negative health outcome, calculate the benefits of adopting the behavior that reduces the likelihood of negative health effects to be high, and perceive the barriers to adopting those behaviors to be low (Carpenter, 2010; Rosenstock, 1974). Self-efficacy was added to the HBM model by Rosenstock et al. (1988). Self-efficacy is defined as the belief that one can successfully navigate or execute the behavior with desirable outcomes (Bandura, 1997; Champion & Skinner, 2008) or the belief that one can take preventative action (Montanaro & Bryan, 2014). In this study, self-efficacy measures the level of confidence or ability that black women feel they have when they try to choose the healthier beauty product.

Cues to action are prompts that consumers receive to trigger changes in their behavior (Champion & Skinner, 2008; Janz & Becker, 1984). Cues to action may be internal or external (Carpenter, 2010; Janz & Becker, 1984). Examples of internal cues to action (within the body or mind) in regards to beauty and health may be skin issues, such as skin breakouts or allergies that alert individuals to the need to use natural or organic products. Alternatively, reproductive,

cancer, or neurological issues may have been diagnosed that make the consumer question whether the products they have used contributed to the harm they are experiencing. Examples of external cues to action may include health studies, blogger and vlogger influence, product recommendations from other members of the beauty tribe or beauty group they belong to, brand advertising and promotions, product warning labels, free-from warnings on cosmetic labels, eco-certifications, media, and brand communications such as emails prompting them to buy safer products. The cues-to-action construct is the least-developed and least-measured variable in the model (Carpenter, 2010; Champion & Skinner, 2008; Janz & Becker, 1984). Many previous researchers decided not to test the cues to action construct (Carpenter, 2010; Champion & Skinner, 2008). However, in a retail, merchandising or marketing study, cues to action (also called calls to action) are very important aspects of the sales funnel, because they initiate the process within the retailer's marketing program that moves the customer from interest in purchasing to the act of purchasing, resulting in increased conversions (Smith, 2015). Therefore, testing cues to action in this study represents an enhancement to the existing literature on the HBM.

In addition to the key constructs of the model, modifying variables influence perception and indirectly influence health-related behavior (Champion & Skinner, 2008; Janz & Becker, 1984) and are, therefore, accounted for in the HBM model and hypotheses below. Modifying variables include demographics, sociopsychological variables, and structural variables (Champion & Skinner, 2008). Lifestyle was the sociopsychological variable in this study. It included aspects of black women's lifestyle that typically affect consumer behavior toward beauty products, including: colorism or skin tone (light-skinned blacks vs. dark-skinned blacks), perceived social class, dietary lifestyle (vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free, etc.), and peer-group

pressure or social support (in online communities). The structural variable in our model measured knowledge about toxicity of beauty products and natural and organic ingredients.

The health-promoting behavior in this study was purchase intention (PI) toward natural and organic beauty products. Based on the HBM, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H1: Knowledge and Lifestyle positively influence Self-Efficacy (H1a) and Purchase Intention (PI) toward Natural and Organic Beauty Products (H1b).

H2: Perceived Seriousness (of a health issue) positively influences PI toward Natural and Organic Beauty Products (all product types)

H3: Perceived Susceptibility (to a negative health outcome) positively influences PI toward Natural and Organic Beauty Products (all product types)

H4: Perceived Benefits (H4a), Perceived Barriers (H4b), Self-Efficacy (H4c), and Cues to action (H4d) positively influence the Likelihood of Engaging in Health-Promoting Behavior (PI toward Natural and Organic Beauty Products).

Method

To conduct a netnographic study, it is recommended to incorporate online survey research and analysis (Kozinets, 2010). The survey research component is appropriate to examine usage patterns and preferences, demographics, and product adoption by cultures or online communities (Kozinets, 2010). Online surveys can help the researcher understand the attitudes of participants and draw conclusions about their current or changing behavior patterns. They are especially useful for gaining an initial overview of a large online community (Kozinets, 2010). As part of the larger netnographic study, the lead researcher (MDB) conducted an online survey, which is reported in this paper. The survey guided the participants through each construct of the HBM. Each construct had its own set of questions.

Group Site Selection

Online Facebook groups and pages were selected as research sites for the study. Active members of black beauty groups and natural beauty groups were recruited to participate through posts on social media within selected private Facebook groups. The online communities and social media pages that were included were purposefully selected. The selection criteria for black beauty groups included that the group needed to be an active black hair or make-up group with more than 1,000 members. Groups and pages were selected by searching for black hair and beauty groups on Facebook. The lead researcher's knowledge gained from participating in the beauty industry also played a role in the selection of popular groups. Facebook sites that were selected included Natural Hair Chat (32,524 members), Team Natural (32,983 members), Makeup for Black Women (43,509 members), Black Women who Love Beauty and Business (3,172 members), Beauty of Colour (1,467 members), Black Vogue- Makeup for Black Women (14,166 members) and Makeup for Melanin Girls (77,345 likes on Facebook) at the time when data collection was performed. The lead researcher gained access to each group by clicking the "Join" button on Facebook and requesting permission to join each group from the group's moderator or administrative team. After getting permission from the group moderators, the lead researcher recruited participants from the above groups to complete the survey. Because each group had recent communications, interactive participants, and had a substantial number of members they were considered to be data-rich groups (Kozinets, 2010).

Participant Recruitment

Survey participants were recruited through the Facebook community groups (mentioned above) by posting within the Facebook group feeds and sending emails through Qualtrics. Facebook social media posts were shared on other social media platforms and digitally through

email. Participants were selected by utilizing criterion-based sampling (Patton, 2002). The sample selection criteria for all participants were as follows: (1) self-identify as Black, (2) female, (3) over the age of 18, and (4) an active online black beauty tribe member. A "beauty tribe" is a consumer group with a common interest (beauty) and normally has a cult following. These criteria were important because they define the study. Demographic data, including income, level of education, parental status and age could not be determined in the context of online discussions, but was obtained in the survey. Each participant had experiences participating in black beauty groups or had opted into a group email list where their participation in a black beauty group was verified.

The Human Subject Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Georgia reviewed and approved the study protocol and recruitment visual that was used in the recruitment process. The recruitment visual was posted and shared on social media within the selected black beauty groups as well as sent to prospective participants by email. As an incentive to participate, survey participants were entered into a drawing to receive $100 retail value of beauty products. The products were donated by natural beauty companies either in sample or full size amounts. An extrinsic reward was chosen because it was directly related to the research. The incentive included products because of the participants' stated interest in beauty products and because the products would assist them on their natural beauty journey. They may have desired these products in order to be introduced to safer products. Each participant provided electronic informed consent.

Black beauty tribe members, recruited online and via email, were provided the link to the online survey to read the IRB-approved consent form and complete the survey questions. Qualtrics, an online survey platform, was used to recruit and capture participant responses and

record survey results. Participants recruited by email were given three additional screening questions to ensure tribal membership. The screening questions were as follows: 1) Do you identify as Black or African-American? 2) Do you use ethnic beauty products (hair, make-up or skin care) on a daily basis? and 3) Are you a member, participant in or follow at least one online black beauty group (hair or make-up) or page on Facebook?

Survey Instrument

The survey questions were grouped by the constructs of the HBM to answer questions pertaining to the hypotheses. Scales were adopted from previous health research conducted with samples of black women by Champion (1999). The scale was modified to include appropriate questions for beauty product usage. The survey questionnaire included a total of 105 questions. These were divided into 11 sections corresponding to each section of the HBM. Each variable was measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 being strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree). Five items assessed perceived seriousness. Eleven items assessed perceived susceptibility. Eight items assessed perceived benefits. Thirteen items assessed perceived barriers. Six items assessed self-efficacy. Nine items assessed cues to action. The questionnaire for the survey is available upon request from the lead researcher/author. The dependent variable (PI) for five different product types was also measured on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Questions about demographics, lifestyle, and knowledge about natural and organic beauty products were also included to measure modifying variables. Demographic questions included in the survey asked participants to indicate their age, socioeconomic status, level of education, parental status and hair type (natural, relaxed or transitioning). Psychosocial or lifestyle questions on the survey captured information about the participants' access to cosmetics for their

skin tone, general use of cosmetics and level of participation in a natural or holistic lifestyle. Sixteen questions were asked about the participant's general use of cosmetics. Thirteen items assessed lifestyle factors. All questions were created by the lead author and reviewed and approved by all co-authors. The survey included 11 items that assessed knowledge. Knowledge construct questions assessed the level of participants' awareness about natural and organic beauty products. The strength of participants' PI to buy natural and organic beauty products was assessed with five items, one for each beauty product type (hair, make-up, skin, body, and nails). To assess the unidimensionality of each construct in the model, an explanatory factor analysis was conducted to see if any questions should be eliminated. No questions were eliminated. The mean value of each scale was calculated to create a cumulative score for each construct of the HBM.

A pilot study was conducted to establish the reliability of the survey questions. Twenty-six participants completed the pilot study. The internal consistency of the total HBM scale was assessed by measuring Cronbach's alpha. The HBM factors had an acceptable level of reliability with Cronbach's alpha of 0.76. The final online survey was initiated by 174 participants, 161 of whom had complete responses. Thirteen of the surveys were excluded from the final analysis due to incomplete responses. In addition, previous studies using quantitative research methods in the area of organic beauty merchandising were reviewed. Statistics from six recently published articles (Dragan & Petrescu, 2013; Kim & Chung, 2011; Kim & Seock, 2009; Mombeini et al., 2015; Rybowska, 2014) guided the sample size calculation for this study. A power-based sample size calculation was performed, resulting in 111 participants as the minimum sample size for this study. In light of this, 161 completed surveys were deemed to be adequate sample size for this study. Survey responses were analyzed using SPSS by running

descriptive statistics, Pearson Correlation and Simple Linear Regression to determine statistical significance between variables in the HBM and test the hypotheses to determine if they were supported. Multiple Forward Regression analysis was then performed to determine the best model fit (with independent predictors) for each product type.

Results

Description of Participant Characteristics

The average age of the participants was 35.5 years. Seventy-six percent self-reported as middle-class income. The average years of education completed by the participants were 14.75 years, which corresponds to completing some college. Twenty-five percent of the participants had completed high school (12 years), 59% had some college or had completed college (13-16 years), and 16% had some or had completed graduate school (17+ years). In terms of parental status, 56.5% had one or more children, 41% had no children, and 2.5% were currently pregnant or trying to become pregnant. From the three types of hair types included in this study, 72% had natural hair, 20% had relaxed hair, and 8% were currently transitioning from relaxed to natural hair. Only 5% of the participants reported to be vegans and 7% reported that their vegetarian status influenced their beauty product purchase decisions. Fifty-five percent of the participants strongly agreed that they used black natural beauty products on a daily basis and 52.8% strongly agreed that healthy beauty products were important to them. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree, total mean scores for purchase intentions towards natural beauty products (all categories) ranged from 3.88 to 4.38, with the highest mean score for natural hair products. The second-highest mean score was for natural skin care products at 4.34, followed by natural body care at 4.28, natural make-up at 4.13, and natural nail products at the lowest mean at 3.88. The total mean score for each construct of the HBM is provided in Table

4.1. Knowledge and perceived susceptibility had the lowest mean scores and were the only constructs whose scores measured within the disagree ranges.

Table 4.1
Descriptive Statistics
Results include: Sample Size, Medians, Standard Errors, Cumulative Means and Standard Deviations

HBM Construct	N	Median	Standard Error	Mean	Std. Deviation
Knowledge	161	2.55	0.089	2.75	1.135
Lifestyle	161	4.14	0.053	4.09	0.67531
Perceived Seriousness	161	3.67	0.046	3.69	0.58229
Perceived Susceptibility	161	2.78	0.061	2.73	0.77228
Perceived Benefits	161	4.14	0.064	4.01	0.80762
Perceived Barriers*	161	2.00	0.069	2.11	0.88052
Self-Efficacy	161	3.60	0.082	3.49	1.04066
Cues to Action	161	3.29	0.066	3.27	0.8469

*Reverse scoring, meaning the lower the barriers the better

Correlation results

Pearson's correlation analyses were used to examine the relationship between the dependent and independent variables (Table 4.2). The results revealed that the moderating variables (knowledge and lifestyle) and the following HBM-construct independent variables (perceived seriousness, perceived susceptibility, perceived benefits, self-efficacy, and cues to action) were positively and significantly correlated with PI toward natural and organic beauty products for every product type (hair, make-up, skin, body and nails). Perceived barriers had a significant inverse relation to PI toward natural and organic beauty products for every product type (hair, make-up, skin, body and nails). Pearson's correlation coefficients (r) are reported in Table 4.2 for each pair of variables.

Table 4.2
Correlation Analysis Results
Correlation analysis between predictor variables and dependent variables

	Knowledge	Lifestyle	PSer	PSusc	Benefits	Barriers	Self-Efficacy	Cues to Action
PI – N/O Hair	.204**	.486**	.250**	.193*	.583**	-.246**	.393**	.474**
PI – N/O Make-up	.240**	.532**	.299**	.262**	.563**	-.265**	.356**	.473**
PI – N/O Skin Care	.192*	.550**	.253**	.283**	.605**	-.253**	.337**	.519**
PI – N/O Body Care	.198*	.582**	.271**	.274**	.585**	-.246**	.335**	.519**
PI- N/O Nail	.341**	.615**	.293**	.257**	.507**	-.263**	.484**	.544**

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).
Note: Rows represent the five dependent variables - PI for each product category.
Columns represent predictors.
N/O: Natural and Organic

Regression results

First, to test the relationship between Knowledge and Lifestyle on Self-Efficacy, simple linear regression analysis was performed. The regression model was statistically significant, F (2, 158) = 48.85 $p<.05$, R square = .38, p =.000, thereby supporting H1. Secondly, to test the relationship between each predictor variable and purchase intention toward natural and organic beauty products, simple linear regression analysis was performed (see Tables 4.3 and 4.4). Every predictor variable (Knowledge, Lifestyle, Perceived Seriousness, Perceived Susceptibility, Perceived Benefits, Perceived Barriers, Self-Efficacy, and Cues to Action) was statistically significant. Thus, all hypotheses, H2, H3, and H4, are supported.

Table 4.3
Linear regression Analysis

Predicting purchase intention toward natural and organic beauty products (hair product type)

HBM Construct	SE	r	t	β	Sig.
Knowledge	0.06	0.204	2.631	0.204	.009**
Lifestyle	0.098	0.486	7.021	0.486	.000**
Perceived Seriousness	0.126	0.25	3.261	0.25	.001**
Perceived Susceptibility	0.096	0.193	2.476	0.193	.014**
Perceived Benefits	0.076	0.583	9.044	0.583	.000**
Perceived Barriers*	0.083	0.246	-3.205	-0.246	.002**
Self-Efficacy	0.067	0.393	5.388	0.393	.000**
Cues to Action	0.079	0.474	6.790	0.474	.000**

Table 4.4
Linear regression Significance Levels
Product types other than hair

Product Type	Make-up	Skin Care	Body Care	Nails
	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.
Knowledge	.002**	.015**	.012**	.000**
Lifestyle	.000**	.000**	.000**	.000**
Perceived Seriousness	.000**	.001**	.001**	.000**
Perceived Susceptibility	.001**	.000**	.000**	.001**
Perceived Benefits	.000**	.000**	.000**	.000**
Perceived Barriers*	.001**	.001**	.002**	.001**
Self-Efficacy	.000**	.000**	.000**	.000**
Cues to Action	.000**	.000**	.000**	.000**

The final model to independently predict each product type is presented in Table 4.5. The regression models that predicted PI toward natural and organic hair products and PI toward natural and organic make-up from Lifestyle and Perceived Benefits were statistically significant, $F(2, 158) = 45.49$ and $F(2, 158) = 46.77$, respectively. The models explain 36% and 37% of the variances, respectively. In addition to the independent predictors for PI for the hair and make-up

product categories, Knowledge and Cues to Action also were included as best predictors for skin care and body care and improved the variance explained, $F(4, 156) = 32.35$ and $F(4, 156) = 33.26$ respectively. The models explain 45% and 46% of the variances, respectively. The regression model that predicted PI toward natural and organic nail products from Lifestyle, Perceived Barriers, Self-Efficacy and Cues to Action was statistically significant, $F (4, 156) =36.99$. The model explains 49% of the variance in PI. Knowledge and Perceived Benefits were no longer included in the model fit for nail products.

Table 4.5
Multiple Regression Analysis
Predicting purchase intention toward natural and organic products

Product Type	Hair				Make-up				Skin Care				Body Care				Nails			
Model R	0.604				0.61				0.673				0.678				0.698			
Predictor	β	SE	t	Sig.	β	SE	t	Sig.	β	SE	t	Sig.	β	SE	t	Sig.	β	SE	t	Sig.
Knowledge									-0.17	0.06	-2.47	.014**	-0.18	0.059	-2.56	.011**				
Lifestyle	0.2	0.114	2.531	.012**	0.3	0.13	3.71	.000**	0.290	0.106	3.613	000**	0.362	0.115	4539	.000**	0.372	0.13	5.167	.000*
Perceived Benefits	0.46	0.095	5.661	.000**	0.4	0.11	4.73	.000**	0.349	0.09	4.157	.000**	0.283	0.101	3.398	.001**				
Perceived Barriers*																	-0.14	0.09	-2.29	.023**
Self-Efficacy																	0.159	0.08	2.314	.022**
Cues to Action									0.224	0.09	2.740	.007**	0.229	0.094	2.822	.005**	0.266	0.11	3.736	.000**

Notes: R square = .365 (hair) R square = .372 (make-up), R square = .453 (skin care), R square = .460 (body care), R square = .487 (nails) **p < .05

Discussion

The findings of this study are important because the lifestyle and beauty consumption choices of black women represent billions of dollars in the global beauty industry. Understanding how to segment black women by demographics and lifestyle is key to appropriate product development and merchandising to address the needs and desires of this consumer base. Understanding product merchandising, tribal marketing, appropriate cues to action, as well as improving consumer education, are vital to brands that desire brand loyalty from black female consumers. This data is useful for successfully creating and marketing beauty products that address the needs and desires of black women and their health.

This investigation was an exploration of the extent to which black women consider health in their beauty product purchase decisions and whether those decisions lead them to the use of natural and organic products. The purpose of this study was to understand how the natural beauty movement had equipped black women with education on healthier beauty consumption practices and whether that knowledge further influenced beliefs and purchase intentions toward healthier beauty products. The study results report whether health and consumption behavior towards beauty products are linked for black women.

To the authors' knowledge, to date, black women have never been studied as a sample group in eco-beauty merchandising research. Black women's consumer behavior toward eco-cosmetics has never been studied or published in environmental health journals either. None of the previous research has investigated the relationship of health beliefs and barriers to health-promoting purchase behavior toward natural and organic beauty products by black women. To date, no studies have been conducted on what drives black women to engage in health-promoting behaviors toward beauty products. Therefore, this study fills a void in the literature by using the

Health Belief Model to investigate black women's perceptions and health-promoting behaviors toward beauty products that are merchandised as natural and organic.

The results from Pearson's correlation and linear regression support H1, H2, H3 and H4. The results show that all the HBM predictors are significantly correlated to and positively influence purchase intentions for natural and organic beauty products for all product types. Knowledge and Lifestyle also positively influenced consumer self-efficacy. Based on these findings, black women are likely to purchase more natural and organic beauty products when their health beliefs and level of knowledge about the impact of beauty products on their body are increased. Additionally, when the level of their self-efficacy is increased through health and product knowledge, they are likely to purchase more natural and organic beauty products. When black women are more aware of product benefits, and those benefits outweigh market barriers that prevent access to products, they are more likely to purchase natural and organic beauty products. Black women are also more likely to purchase natural and organic products when they experience internal bodily cues to action, prompting them to switch to natural products to heal or solve skin or health conditions or receive relatable and lifestyle driven cues to action from retailers.

Black women who have already begun a journey toward a more holistic, natural or chemical-free lifestyle are more confident and able to select healthier products for themselves and their families due to the enhanced knowledge they have acquired through their first experiences with natural products. Since knowledge and perceived susceptibility had the lowest mean scores in the study, the likelihood of purchasing natural and organic products will also be enhanced as knowledge continues to increase and perceived susceptibility to negative health

outcomes is proven in the short-term. There is also a need to ensure that facts about the susceptibility of negative health outcomes are communicated to the masses of black women.

The findings of the multiple regression analysis show that lifestyle and perceived benefits are, across the board for most product types, the best predictors of purchase intention for black women toward natural and organic beauty products. This finding provides evidence that black women who have already begun to live a natural or organic lifestyle in other areas, such as having natural hair or maintaining their health in a holistic manner, are more likely to purchase natural and organic products of other product types. Having a perception of positive personal appearance, bodily benefits or health benefits from using natural products also increases the likelihood of purchasing natural and organic beauty products across all categories except nails. The replacement of knowledge and perceived benefits for perceived barriers in the nail category shows that participants are not as knowledgeable about how nail products can benefit their health and are more prone to allow various barriers to stop them from purchasing natural nail products. This makes sense, since nail products are still mostly chemical-based and are not applied directly to the skin or scalp either. In addition, a larger learning curve exists to understand the need for natural nail products.

For skin care and body care segments, knowledge and cues to action predictors are also included in the model to best predict purchase intentions. Results show that once black beauty consumers have already begun their natural hair or environmental health journey and are interested in expanding their purchase behavior to the next logical and available products, they listen to their bodies. They take cues from what is going on with their skin and cues prompting them from retailers, such as product tutorials. They also use tribal influencers to recommend products, and/or financial incentives to try the next line of products. An enhanced level of

knowledge and even possible consultation with professional beauty advisers is required to solve skin and body care (acne, eczema, endocrine disorders, hyperpigmentation, proper skin tone match, etc.) issues. Therefore, it makes sense that higher levels of knowledge and cues to action would directly influence purchase intentions toward skin care and body care product categories.

Some aspects of our findings are inconsistent with findings from other eco-beauty studies and suggest that the needs of black women may be different from other ethnic groups. At the same time, some of our findings are consistent with other studies. For instance, Rybowska (2014) found that less availability in the market and perceived high price were the two largest barriers of access to natural and organic products. Although these are the same barriers faced by black women, in the case of women in Rybowska's study, the barriers were higher than the benefits or factors that led to eco-cosmetic purchases in her study. The factors that led to the purchase of eco-cosmetics included rectifying problems with skin (internal cues), an eco-lifestyle, and recommendations by a familiar person (similar to recommendations through other naturals in the Natural Hair Movement in this study). Barriers in Rybowska's (2014) study, unlike in our study, were not likely to be overcome by the stated benefits without marketing innovation to provide participants with further understanding of product or health benefits. Only 36% of the participants in Rybowska's (2014) study were reported to lead an intensively healthy lifestyle, whereas in our study, as noted above, 52.8% strongly agreed that healthy beauty products were important to them. In addition, 72% have natural hair so they are already intensively leading a natural lifestyle. In terms of knowledge about eco-cosmetics and the benefits of using healthier cosmetics, 94% stated they were knowledgeable about eco-cosmetics and 68% defined the products as having no preservatives or fragrances. However, in terms of product usage, participants did not pay attention to pro-health aspects of product usage, unlike in

our study, where the pro-health aspects were proven to be a strong influence on knowledge. Product category usage in Rybowska's (2014) study was highest for facial care and body care and lowest for hair care, which is again the opposite of the findings of our study, in which black women have led their natural product journey with haircare.

In another study, Kim and Chung (2011) found that health consciousness did not significantly predict purchase intentions for organic products when environmental and appearance consciousness were considered. This is again a different finding than ours because our study suggests that the more health conscious black women are, the more likely they are to purchase natural and organic products, regardless of the environmental impact. Our participants also found natural products to assist them in the maintenance of their appearance (such as caring for natural hair).

In terms of similar findings, a study by Mombeini et al. (2015) examined perceived behavioral control's impact on purchase intentions, which is a similar variable to the self-efficacy construct included in our study, and found a positive and direct relationship, as was the case in our study. This means that the more confidence the participant has in determining aspects of and using natural and organic cosmetics, the more likely they are to purchase them. Kim and Seock (2009) found that their "high-health" group of participants put a higher significance on using no chemical ingredients and no preservatives in products. They also held the belief that natural beauty products were better for their health. The "high-health" group of participants also had a higher level of perceived self-competence. These findings are similar to our study, which shows the influence of lifestyle on health beliefs and self-efficacy. Kim and Chung (2011) stressed how an overall organic or healthy lifestyle was important in consumption patterns. Their study also stated that participants' positive experiences with some organic

products significantly impacted purchase intentions for other natural and organic products. We also found this to be true, as in our study, a positive experience with natural hair products had prompted participants to begin to experience and purchase skin and body products, and, lastly, move onto natural make-up and nail products.

In terms of health-promoting behavior studies of black women, some findings are also similar, while others are dissimilar. Sadler et al. (2007), found that black women with higher levels of self-efficacy and participants who had internal cues to action (e.g., prior personal exposure to illness) were all significantly more motivated to engage in higher levels of health-promoting behavior toward breast cancer prevention in a health program promoted by black cosmetologists. They also found that perceived susceptibility and knowledge about prevention of the disease were low, as in our study, although in the breast cancer study these constructs were not significantly related to health-promoting behavior. Even though participants believed they could influence their health, they did not believe they had sufficient knowledge about the potential illness. Therefore, although participants were aware of perceived benefits of prevention screenings, they did not report higher levels of preventative or health-promoting care. One of the primary differences in the outcomes of the Sadler et al. (2007) study and our study may be that participants reported low support from family and friends for engaging in health-promoting activities, whereas in our beauty study, the natural hair movement has provided a massive amount of immediately accessible community or tribal support for the transition to natural products and a natural lifestyle. Other reasons for the findings and recommendations in the review of health-promoting behavior literature suggest a lack of trust in the medical community and use of media to gain information to reduce barriers to healthcare (Sadler et al., 2007). This reasoning also relates to health in terms of beauty because there is a high level of mistrust toward

the mainstream beauty industry by black women. The media, including YouTube, Facebook and black beauty conferences, have been the most widely used sources of information about avoiding toxic chemicals and health problems from the use of beauty products.

This research provides valuable insights for natural and organic beauty product manufacturers and retailers interested in serving or desiring evidence about ethnic consumer interest in and purchase intentions toward expanded categories of natural and organic beauty products. The findings of this study suggest that brands should consider creating more health-focused products and implement more knowledge-enhancing product merchandising strategies to specifically meet the hair, skin care, and skin tone needs of black women. This study suggests that a healthy lifestyle is important to black women. However, benefits must outweigh the historical and modern day barriers that typically prevent access to healthier products, such as geographic availability, limited retailer stock, price, and colorism. Furthermore, although among the research participants health was deemed to be perceived as a serious concern, participants agreed that their level of perceived susceptibility was lower. Since impact on health is typically not proven in the short-term, this assessment was expected.

Managerial Implications

Effective marketing strategies emphasizing health benefits and product safety with tribal concepts, ethnic imagery, trustworthy branding, and brand communications should be implemented to satisfy black women, who are proven to consume beauty products at a high level. Retailers that sell natural and organic products should expand their shelf space allotted for natural and organic beauty care beyond the ethnic hair section and include appropriate products for black women in other beauty product categories as well. Manufacturers should expand their product development to include more natural and organic products in deeper skin tone ranges for

make-up products and more skin care and body care products that meet the specific needs of black women (for example, different types of acne treatments, moisturizers and hyperpigmentation solutions). Retailers might try to change the perception of high prices for natural and organic products to affordable pricing through the use of cues to action, higher quality/less usage claims and highlighting proven long-term health benefits with product use. This research adds new findings to the already well documented natural hair movement, which caused the explosion of ethnic natural hair product sales. It suggests that additional natural and organic beauty products in other categories than hair should be created and marketed to black female consumers. This can be accomplished by using the natural hair movement platform that originally caused the heightened sense of environmental health within the black community as a springboard to launch these new products.

Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research

Along with the above insights and recommendations for the beauty industry, the authors have several suggestions for future research. First, although this survey was completed by a geographically dispersed community, a limitation of this study is that only people who received the electronic message or saw the internet posts were able to complete the survey. The internet, although a popular place to recruit participants, is an environment that is naturally very large, full of noise and very complex in terms of algorithm and search functions (Barbier & Liu, 2011). Therefore, internet posts must become popular to stay in social media newsfeeds long enough to be visible among a large number of postings. Response to postings also depends on a large amount of sharing, and algorithms within social media sites many times block or limit the number of people who see unpopular posts. This can cause limited views and clicks, making online research more challenging. However, since netnography can combine both online and

offline methods (Kozinets, 2010), future research could be conducted with both online and offline/in-person surveys such as mall, church, or campus intercept methods to gain a larger sample size. Second, because more participants had natural hair, the survey may have been completed by participants who are more passionate about natural beauty and natural and organic beauty methods, which may have introduced a bias toward increasing purchases in that segment of the industry. Future research could use purposeful sampling methods instead of criterion-based methods to intentionally select a cross-sectional representation of participants with both natural and relaxed hair, even though natural hair participants do use synthetic beauty products as well. Thirdly, experimental design studies could be performed to assist retailers with appropriate tribal marketing techniques and product claims, product benefit statements, and packaging and labeling visuals for natural and organic products that would appeal most to this target audience.

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CHAPTER 5

HEALTH DISPARITIES, ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM AND BEAUTY PRODUCT USAGE: EXAMINING HEALTH BELIEFS AND LIKELIHOOD OF HEALTH-PROMOTING BEHAVIORS OF BLACK WOMEN TOWARD NATURAL PRODUCTS[3]

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the likelihood of black women's purchase intention toward natural and organic products as a health-promoting behavior. The study offers a critical analysis of the beauty industry as a racialized space that offers fewer options to black women in the green beauty sector. Qualitative methods were used to examine the influence of Health Belief Model (HBM) constructs on purchase intentions toward natural beauty products. Two focus group sessions were conducted with 11 female African-American participants. The results indicate that each construct of the HBM relates to the participants' lived experience and a common theme of "blackness" influences consumer behavior. The severity of and susceptibility to various health issues do impact participants' desire for healthier products. However, various barriers, such as environmental racism often block access to a healthier lifestyle. This study suggests that beauty product manufacturers and retailers should address the specific needs and be mindful of skin tones of black women. The findings provide valuable insight into black women's consumer behavior and offer tribal marketing recommendations to the beauty industry that could impact the level of health disparities of black women.

Keywords beauty, natural products, organic products, health, focus group, African-American women, green cosmetics, eco-beauty

Introduction

The global going-green and mainstream eco-beauty movement (also called clean beauty movement) just as the realm of the mainstream beauty industry is a highly racialized and segregated space. The very existence of varying levels of cleanness or greenness in the beauty industry coexisting and conflicting with class and race issues speaks to the fact that eco-equity is yet to be achieved for black women. Eco-equity is achieved when communities of color are locked into the clean, green economy (Ella Baker Center.org, 2016). Eco-equity is the opposite of eco-apartheid. Eco-apartheid in the green movement means that the benefits derived from the green economy only serve wealthy and white communities and fail to solve both environmental and social justice issues (Alkon, 2012). The clean beauty movement, a reminder of eco-apartheid within the beauty space, inspired black women to create their own space to discuss how they could go green by "going natural." The well-documented Natural Hair Movement, a chemical free beauty movement, has laid a global foundation for black women to become educated about natural and organic products and embrace personal and environmental health and education (Byrd & Tharps, 2014; Davis V., 2013; Nimocks, 2015).

Black women, through the education they received through the Natural Hair Movement, have learned that the most harmful products, such as hair straighteners, skin lighteners, and highly pigmented color cosmetics, are mostly marketed to them (Malkan, 2007). Recent findings from several studies have linked beauty products marketed to black women to serious health conditions including cancer, fibroids, respiratory illnesses, neurological damage, learning disabilities, and reproductive harm from chemical exposure (Ball, 2016; Black Women for Wellness, 2016b; Chang, 2015). Although the above health concerns are important for all women, many cosmetic products are created specifically for, marketed to and used more often by black women causing disproportionate harm to them effectively making toxic beauty a clear

indicator of environmental racism. The natural hair movement, now a platform for black women's involvement in beauty as lifestyle environmentalists, has represented a starting point that prompts heavier consumption of green products and becoming overall enlightened consumers.

Through a demonstration of their collective purchasing power, black women as a beauty community have created the natural hair movement. Because they changed the landscape of 21st century beauty product development (Bryant, 2016), it is crucial that we understand black female consumers beliefs and attitudes toward the natural beauty industry after the lessons from the natural hair movement. This study, which is a part of a larger multiple methods netnography of the online black beauty tribe, sought to understand the beliefs, perceptions, knowledge and cues to action that influence health-promoting behaviors of black women toward beauty products as a possible solution to overcoming health disparities and eradicating environmental racism within the realm of beauty.

The Black Beauty Tribe & Tribal Marketing

A tribe is a group of contemporary consumers that experience a sense of community through their shared involvement in a phenomenon (Richardson, 2013). This study explored black beauty tribes, groups of black women who share their love for racialized beauty. In black beauty tribes, members gather to learn, share, discuss, inspire and influence one another's purchasing behavior toward beauty products primarily online. Black beauty tribes consist of black women involved in online black beauty groups, which may focus on hair, natural hair, makeup and other beauty products of interest to black women. Since a great deal of the tribes' activities and discussions involve purchasing products, they are considered a consumer tribe.

Many of these consumer tribes formed because black women were inspired by the natural hair movement.

Many brands that successfully sell ethnic beauty products use tribal marketing techniques. Tribal marketing is "a form of marketing that seeks to establish what it is that holds meaning for consumers and seeks to support those things and the tribe's agenda thus becoming part of the fabric of the tribe" (Richardson, 2013, p. 14). During the natural hair movement, cosmetic companies were successful because they practiced tribal marketing at an unprecedented rate. Many brands, founded by members of the tribe, were small businesses that specialized in the sale of natural products. They were also black-owned. Therefore, these brands had an immediate connection with the tribe, were accepted quickly into the fold, and established successful businesses that now compete with mainstream beauty brands.

Many socially supportive communities of thousands of black women talking about beauty have been built online. These tribal spaces have become a home and even a place of refuge or acceptance for their participants because they know the other members of the group understand their beauty needs and can recommend appropriate solutions. Beck (2005) states "through the internet's flexibility in communication channels in social support, the empowerment of marginalized women can be facilitated" (p. 413). Through the member's online actions in the black beauty community, women redefine their identity, values, and priorities. They also redirect their spending power, bond and debate with each other. These virtual spaces are where cosmetic needs and health concerns of black women are prioritized and are at the center of discussion.

Cosmetic Health Concerns: A Race Issue

Skin of color is susceptible to unique problems (various forms of acne, hyperpigmentation, and photo-aging diseases) that cause cosmetic and health concerns. Products (treatment products, cosmetic products and protection products such as sunscreens) that address these issues are needed (Taylor, 1999). Although we look to the cosmetics industry to develop products to address the cosmetic concerns of black women, black women should also be aware of the harm that can be caused by using potentially toxic beauty products. Black women also need to be educated on how to select products with healthy ingredients to avoid health disparities. Kotschwar (2014) states that we also need to understand the spectrum or different levels of "greenness" that black women have in their relationship to beauty products, beauty marketing, lifestyle and environmental practices. This understanding will allow researchers and consumers to better communicate the needs of black women to the beauty industry and regulatory agencies that control the level of environmental toxins introduced in cosmetic formulas. Black women, are at an alarming rate, disproportionately exposed to toxic cosmetic formulas as the review of literature shows.

Black Haircare. Currently, hair care products for black women are the most toxic beauty products available (Solomon, 2016). Hair relaxer, a creamy solution made to permanently change the structure (by breaking bonds) of curly/kinky hair, is applied to make hair straight. Hair relaxers include the ingredients sodium hydroxide (lye) or calcium hydroxide (no lye) chemicals, which can cause hair loss, hair breakage, scalp burns, blindness, fibroids, and early puberty in girls (Gathers & Mahan, 2014; Nimocks, 2015; Uhlenhake & Mehregan, 2013). A recent study published in the *American Journal of Epidemiology* found a link between hair relaxers and fibroids, a condition that affects 80% of black women over their lifetime (Ball, 2016).

Malkan (2007) reported in her book, *Not Just a Pretty Face*, that when the most popular brands of African-American hair products were lab tested for toxic chemicals the results showed that relaxers, perms, hair pomades, conditioners and dyes had the most toxic ingredients. These products that contain endocrine disrupting chemicals are directly linked to the high rates of breast cancer in young African-American women, who have a 41% greater rate of invasive breast cancer than white women. Due to the early onset of puberty in some young black girls, they have a higher likelihood of death from the disease as well (Malkan, 2007). Brazilian keratin, a hair treatment formulated with up to 11% formaldehyde, a carcinogen linked to cancer (Andrews et al., 2011; Malkan, 2016; Nimocks, 2015; O'Connor & Spunt, 2010), has been used by many black women with natural hair, who were unaware of the health hazards of the product to straighten or loosen their curl pattern. Many women who had the Brazilian treatment experienced and reported to the FDA large amounts of hair loss, flu symptoms, severe burns and rashes on the scalp and face. Although the manufacturers stated the product did not contain formaldehyde, the product was tested and the amount of formaldehyde detected in the keratin treatment was higher than what the Cosmetic Ingredient Review board deems safe (Andrews et al., 2011). Detanglers, necessary for black women to easily comb through and style their hair, include hydantoin DMDM and diazolidinyl urea, preservatives that are also formaldehyde releasers. These ingredients are known carcinogens and are linked to the early onset of puberty in black girls (Black Women for Wellness, 2016; Nimocks, 2015). Black women are also exposed to phthalates at a higher rate than white women because more black women use relaxers (Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, 2009; Velez et al., 2015). Phthalates are a group of synthetic endocrine-disrupting chemicals used in plasticizers to impart flexibility (Velez et al., 2015). In a

study where seven phthalates chemicals were tested, four were widely found to be higher in blacks (Glave, 2010).

Black Skin Care. In addition to hair products, black women also buy and use skin and face products to solve their unique cosmetic needs. Black women have different skincare challenges than women of other races and are affected by product ingredients differently as well. For example, many facial topical products are not tolerated well by African-American skin (Taylor, 1999) and produce excessive dryness and irritation. Taylor (1999) states that African-Americans experience pomade acne, a different type of acne that does not trouble white skin. Acne on black skin frequently and dramatically inflames, causing post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation which are deep and darkly pigmented spots or lesions on the skin. Hyperpigmentation is removed by the use of skin-lightening products, many times formulated with hydroquinone (Taylor, 1999), a toxic ingredient that is banned in the EU in cosmetic products, but is still regularly used in parts of Africa (Fatimata et al., 2007) and the United States. Studies show adverse effects from the use of topical corticosteroids and higher concentrations of hydroquinone in skin-lightening products. Skin bleaching creams are known to cause more discoloration, acne and skin lesions (Nimocks, 2015). Since ultraviolet light hinders the lightening effect of some skin-lightening products, it is very important to use sunscreen in conjunction with skin-lightening products to prevent further darkening of the skin. However, most sunscreens and products that include sunscreen are formulated with oxybenzone, also a toxic ingredient linked to cancer, allergies, hormone disruption, cell damage, developmental and reproductive toxicity (Black Women for Wellness, 2016a; Larson, 2010; Padgett, 2015; Palliser, 2010). Researchers at the University of Pittsburgh Center for Environmental Oncology found that personal care products that contain hormone disruptors are

used more often by African-American women than other races (Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, 2009).

Color Cosmetics for Black Skin. In addition to facial skincare products, color cosmetics are harmful as well. Color cosmetics must be highly pigmented (usually artificially dyed) in order to show up against deeper skin tones. Highly pigmented lipsticks may contain coal tar, a harmful chemical found in many synthetic colors in cosmetics (O'Connor & Spunt, 2010). Coal tar is linked to cancer, mental disabilities and infertility. FD&C dyes, colorants used to create bright colors in lipstick, eyeshadow and blush, are linked to autism and ADHD (Miller, 2016). Many brands of lipstick (especially brighter red lipsticks that deeper skin tones would gravitate toward purchasing) also have been found to be contaminated with lead (Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, 2007). Lead is a substance linked to ADHD in children (Larsen, 2010), reproductive problems, high blood pressure, and brain and nervous system problems in children (Palliser, 2010). Cosmetics are a significant source of lead in humans. Precautionary approaches need to be taken so that black women can opt for safer alternatives to reduce their exposure to heavy metals including lead (Ayenimo et al., 2010).

In addition to lipstick, there are also health disparities associated with makeup for black skin. Synthetic makeup has been found to have significant levels of toxic heavy metals including lead, arsenic, cadmium, mercury and nickel that pose threats to human health and the environment (Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, 2011a; Nnorom et al., 2005). Makeup, including facial (foundation, concealer, powder, and blush) and eye products (eye liner, mascara and eye pencils) have been linked to diseases in black women in Nigeria and account for high levels of heavy metals in the milk of nursing women (Ayenimo et al., 2010; Parry & Eaton, 1991; Sprinkle, 1995). Most makeup for black women is also formulated with talc, a known

carcinogen linked to ovarian cancer and lung tumors (O'Connor & Spunt, 2010; Padgett, 2015). Taylor (1999) proclaims that we cannot underemphasize the level of irritation that can result from skin products for skin of color.

Beauty: The Overlooked Component of Environmental Racism

It is well-documented that racial disparities exist in terms of exposure to environmental hazards (Glave, 2010; Larson, 2010; Velez et al., 2015). The significant gap between black and white health conditions caused by environmental racism is a historical problem that perpetuates from the institution of slavery (Harris & Johnson, 2000). Environmental racism, the inequitable exposure of people of color to hazardous air, water, and other pollutions significant enough to trigger cancer, birth defects, reproductive issues and emotionally based stress-related illnesses, has been documented since the 1980s (Glave, 2010). Environmental racism also exists when the persistence of discrimination causes the lack of policy making and enforcement of laws to the detriment of people of color, exposing them to toxicity and life-threatening poisons. Exposure to toxic beauty products, their marketing claims and lack of regulations within the beauty industry results in a racist climate that fails to protect black women.

It appears that solving the toxic beauty product issue is a necessary step in solving other environmental hazards. The use of toxic beauty products begins a trickle-down effect to our environment, water and food supply. Black Women for Wellness (2016), an advocacy organization, states that very little research has been done on the impact of toxic chemicals on the environment within communities of color and more research, specifically aimed at black women, is needed in order to facilitate education and environmental policy. Research on black women and the green economy is necessary in order for the going green movement to change from eco-apartheid to eco-equity. Throughout the 20th and early 21st centuries, the reasons and

urgency to go green have not resonated with the black community even in terms of improving health (Ali, 2009). Yet, the mid-21st century natural hair movement has been successful by providing a foundation of environmental education (Nimocks, 2015). This study uses the Health Belief Model to explore black women's beliefs about health disparities that positively benefit or negatively influence (barriers) their health-promoting behaviors in the area of beauty.

Conceptual Model

The Health Belief Model (HBM) is the conceptual model used to study the level of influence between constructs in the model (perceived seriousness, perceived susceptibility, perceived benefits, perceived barriers, self-efficacy and cues to action) on the likelihood of health-promoting behavior. The Health Belief Model specifies that health-promoting behaviors are more likely to be adopted if individuals perceive a negative health outcome to be severe, perceive themselves to be susceptible to the negative health outcome, perceive the benefits of adopting the behaviors that reduce the likelihood of negative health to be high, and perceive the barriers to adopting those behaviors to be low (Carpenter, 2010; Rosenstock, 1974). The health-promoting behavior in this study is purchasing intention (PI) toward natural and organic beauty products. Based on the HBM, the following research questions guided this study:

1. To what extent (if at all) do black women believe using beauty products can threaten their health?
2. To what extent are black women knowledgeable about environmental toxins in ethnic beauty products?
3. How does black women's level of self-efficacy to avoid health hazards influence their purchase intention toward natural and organic beauty products?

4. To what extent are black women's purchase intentions toward natural and organic beauty products influenced by product benefits, market barriers or consumer and retailer cues to action?

Participants

The participants for this study included 11 middle class black women as focus group participants. Participants opted into this study by providing their email in an online survey that was performed for the larger study. Participants for the survey were selected by utilizing criterion-based sampling (Patton, 2002). The sample selection criteria for participants were as follows: (1) self-identify as black, (2) female, (3) over the age of 18, (4) an active online black beauty tribe member. The opt-in method guaranteed that all focus group members were a subset of survey participants. Participants were recruited by using the IRB-approved recruitment tool. The recruitment visual was posted and shared on social media within black beauty groups as well as sent to prospective participants by e-mail. Focus group participants were provided an incentive to participate in the study. The incentive, a $100 retail value of natural beauty products, was approved by IRB. Participants who opted-in were emailed follow-up information to schedule the day and time of focus group sessions. Out of 50 emails received, 14 participants responded to the scheduling email and 11 officially joined a focus group.

Method

In order to understand in-depth the health beliefs, knowledge and lifestyle of black female consumers regarding natural and organic beauty products, the lead researcher (MDB) used a qualitative approach consisting of two online focus groups. Online focus groups were appropriate for this study as participants were geographically dispersed and accustomed to communicating regularly online. For this study, the sessions were held synchronously and were

used to help collect information that is representative of a group (Liamputto, 2011; Poynter, 2010). The goal of conducting online focus groups in this study was to probe (Patton, 2002) deeply within each area of the HBM and ask participants to tell their personal natural journey stories.

Data Collection

The focus group questions were designed ahead of time and were approved by the Institutional Review Board. Questions were adapted from the HBM and were structured as open-ended to explore the participants' beliefs about the intersection of health and beauty product use. The focus group guide is provided in the Appendix. During the sessions, participants responded to questions during two different sessions that lasted approximately two hours in length each during the month of November 2016. After the two formal sessions concluded, member checks (Kozinets, 2010) were completed to ask follow-up questions and gain additional comments on an as-needed basis via email.

Startmeeting.com, an online focus group software with audio recording and video conferencing, was used for the sessions. The software allowed participants to communicate with each other and with the moderator. Participants were able to read chat discussions and create responses, but the majority of replies were provided verbally. A note-taker also participated in the focus group sessions as a backup to the audio technology and to capture notes on participant non-verbal reactions and group dynamics. The note-taker also wrote a reflection after the session to contribute to data collection.

During the sessions, the lead researcher had a consistent presence in the group. That presence was not an attempt to steer the conversation, but rather to allow room for data to emerge and to lead the sessions with enthusiasm (Deggs, Glover & Kacirek, 2010). As

moderator, the lead researcher stated the interview questions to guide the group discussion as the session progressed through the research questions, adding new questions as they became necessary. When the time came to close the group discussion, the participants were asked to send a private email with their physical mailing address so that the incentive could be distributed to participants. After closing each session, the lead researcher downloaded the audio file from Startmeeting.com, imported the audio recording into MAXQDA and transcribed the focus group sessions to begin data analysis.

Data Analysis

The transcript data was systematically analyzed by coding (Poynter, 2010), a process that results in grounded theory. Grounded theory analysis is a technique where theory is generated from the data itself (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Repeating ideas were identified by gathering quotes and assigning codes using a technology-based code book within the MAXQDA research software.

After an initial immersion in the data, first and second order coding was performed on the focus group transcripts to identify themes (Richardson, 2013). First, the data were coded guided by the HBM model constructs. Then, additional codes, not directly connected to a HBM construct, were added resulting in additional themes that emerged from the data. First and second order coding were manually assigned in the MAXQDA software. During this process, subthemes of several of the HBM constructs were also created. The coding sessions established internal consistency (within each focus group) and across-group consistency of the themes. Frequencies for each code within each focus group transcript and across both focus groups were calculated. The resulting code system which reports total frequencies is included in the Appendix.

Results

Each focus group session began with gathering demographic data from the participants. Table 5.1 (located in the Appendix) shows a summary of participant information. Next, each participant was asked to discuss the following: their involvement in the natural beauty movement and black beauty groups, their natural lifestyle choices or lifestyle in general; their personal story about their personal health beliefs (health challenges were offered by participants voluntarily; their definition of a healthy beauty product; and whether they consider their overall health when selecting beauty products. Table 5.2 (provided in the Appendix) provides a synopsis of each participant and her health, lifestyle and beauty story.

Table 5.3 (provided in the appendix) shows the frequency results from the coding process of mapping transcript data to themes. The first section of the code frequency table shows the HBM construct codes. The second section of the table shows the themes that emerged from the transcript data that are not related to the HBM.

The focus group transcripts included rich data that addressed each of the research questions. Each section below outlines each research question and provides quotes from the transcripts for further insight into the sessions with the participants.

Perceived Seriousness & Perceived Susceptibility

The first research question asked to what extent black women believe using beauty products can threaten their health. During the focus groups, participants spoke about how seriously they take their health and the impact beauty products may have on their health. Several participants stated that health was their "main concern" or a "priority" and that they are "very careful" when selecting products because it is a serious issue. When asked on a scale of 1-10 how serious of an issue they perceive it to be, each participant said 10, except for one who scored

it as a 9. Participant thoughts about perceived seriousness are evident in the following statements:

> "My number is 10. This is extremely serious. Maybe some of these studies are false but when it comes to your health, I would rather trust the fact that everything that is natural was naturally put on this earth. Anything outside of that is synthetic." (Ashley)

> "It is not worth it to me to use synthetic products as my health is too important. My number is 10. I agree with Ashley 100%. I think that it is extremely serious and I would rather take my chances that the studies are true rather than gamble that they are false." (Marian)

Other participant comments explain that they take using natural and organic products as a serious issue because of the impact that health issues have already had on themselves or a member of their family or that they realize they need to take it more seriously because they want their hair health to improve.

> "I should take [using more natural products] into consideration because I really do care about my hair being healthy." (Hannah)

In regards to perceived susceptibility, meaning participants think they could likely be impacted by a negative health outcome, participants spoke about how they believe they are more susceptible to health issues or damaged hair because of their use of beauty products, or how they try to prevent further damage to health issues they already have because they believe the use of the beauty products could cause more harm.

> "I have an endocrine disorder and traditional cosmetics or even some cosmetics labeled as natural contain chemicals that are endocrine disruptors and so that is very important for me because I don't want to use anything to decline my health." (Chelsea)

> "I have had locs since 2001 and have been using natural hair products and skin products but wasn't conscious about what was in it until I started to encounter health issues like breathing issues. I had my hair colored and I stopped doing that because of all the chemicals and fumes of breathing it. It was affecting my own breathing as well and a few months later I was diagnosed with asthma and I never had that before. Also other health issues like high blood pressure and high cholesterol so I said it is time to get natural with totally everything." (Nicole)

Although some of the focus group participants personally agreed they have a heightened level of perceived susceptibility some did not and some expressed that black women as a whole may not agree with their sentiments. The participants spoke about how other black women do not believe they are necessarily susceptible to poor health. They also stated that the direct linkage to damaging health effects cannot be "proven" easily in the short term or the products would not be able to be sold in the marketplace if they caused poor health. This is seen in the following statements by the participants:

> **[**When trying to explain toxicity in beauty products] "You will hear people say...'oh well if it was that bad then the FDA would not have approved it' or 'if it was really that bad it wouldn't be on the market'." (Chelsea)

> "The more you use them the higher the chance you have of getting cancer. I don't necessarily think that is true though. I think that it is serious but I don't think that you will be able to fully prove disease and the issues you are going to have over time….but you can't guarantee it just because you use only organic or natural products." (Shenell)

Participants were asked on a scale of 1-10 to score the level of susceptibility for poor health for themselves or their children from the use of beauty and personal care products. Participant scores for perceived susceptibility were lower than perceived seriousness. Only one participant scored a 10, two 9 and the rest were 7 and 8. The score of 10 was from a participant who was aware of the recent legal case against Johnson & Johnson. The case proved the cause of death of ovarian cancer was due to the use of Johnson & Johnson talcum powder, a product that the participant had also used faithfully for her personal care needs.

Knowledge of Environmental Toxins in Ethnic Beauty Products

The second research question of this study was meant to determine to what extent black women are knowledgeable about environmental toxins in ethnic beauty products. From the data that was obtained, comments about knowledge were divided into two reoccurring subthemes. The first subtheme was about the level of knowledge the participants or women they spoke about

had regarding toxins and/or natural beauty. The second was how participants went about obtaining knowledge about toxins or how to select healthier beauty products. The following quote is an example that shows the participants' "Level of Knowledge":

> "Many of the products have chemicals in them, especially if it is something you can't pronounce. What you put in or even on the skin goes into the body and it affects the blood stream and other organs so it is no sense of eating right and still putting lotions with fragrance, scents or fumes or [using synthetic] soaps and still encountering the same issues. So the point is it is a process of natural from head to toe knowing what you eat, how you think, everything goes into effect with the process overall." (Nicole)

However, when Chelsea spoke about other black women heavily involved in online black beauty groups she felt the knowledge gap is wider and Jeehan agreed with her sentiments.

> "They don't really understand the product so there is a knowledge gap." (Chelsea)

> "I feel like with that question they haven't educated themselves on it or if they haven't had someone to help them it is hard." (Jeehan)

The women in this study obtained knowledge about natural products in different ways, such as personal research, beauty tribe discussion and sharing of information, reading books, asking natural lifestyle mentors or participating in black natural hair expos and workshops. Information about how participants go about "Obtaining Knowledge" was evident in the following quotes:

> "I had someone helping me with that process. Someone who was already natural and she was the one who kind of told me it's not just about natural hair but also about the ingredients that you are using in your hair that will impact the growth and give you the look that you want." (Chelsea)

> "One lady handed me some black African soap so I learned about that and then I went to a natural hair convention in Nashville back in July and that was a great experience. I learned a lot from natural hair vendors. I feel like the only way for black women to really learn about these up and coming products would be through the community through conventions." (Christian)

Self-Efficacy

Since information about natural products is cited as being "everywhere" by some of the participants, some of them stated that it is not knowledge that is the problem but all of the various barriers and lack of self-efficacy that stop many black women from being committed to a healthier lifestyle including natural and organic beauty products. Although knowledge can be acquired, barriers are still difficult to overcome and additional tools or personal assistance are needed to enhance self-efficacy. To address the third research question, the moderator asked participants if they were confident in their ability to differentiate a natural and healthy beauty product from a synthetic beauty product and to talk about themselves as well as other black women they know. Some participants are feeling more confident because of the online natural hair movement. Most participants agreed that self-efficacy is very low and the process of shopping becomes a struggle due to a lack of confidence of being able to select healthy products. Participants stated:

> **"**I have taken the information [from various You Tubers] and I've tried the things [natural products] and now I've got my own legs [confidence] in terms of what works for me and my family." (Maggie)

> "Absolutely not. Even though I have been doing this for so long, every time I buy something I have such a hard time to determine whether it is healthy or not. I do have a couple of things that I look for like paraben-free or sulfate-free, but aside from that it is so exhausting trying to determine whether it is healthy or not so I rely on apps such as EWG, or Think Dirty, um, and I like punch it into there but off of first glance it is really hard to determine whether it is a clean beauty product or not." (Marian)

Perceived Benefits, Barriers & Cues to Action

The fourth research question in this study sought to understand to what extent black women's purchase intentions toward natural and organic beauty products are influenced by product benefits, market barriers or consumer and retailer cues to action. The benefits of adopting the behavior or using the product would reduce the likelihood of negative health effects. Barriers are obstacles that prevent consumers from adopting health-promoting

behaviors. Consumer cues to action are prompts from the consumer's personal skin or body. Retailer cues to action are prompts offered to consumers to increase sales of products. Focus group data revealed perceived benefits, including appearance benefits, health benefits, better ingredients and multipurpose use. Participants stated that they believe the use of natural and organic products helps them look the way they desire and achieve better health, that the products have better ingredients than other beauty products, and that they like to use them because natural products can be used for more than one purpose (for example, both hair and skin or skincare and cooking). Additional appearance and health benefits cited by participants include shortened menstrual cycles, benefits to the body from organic ingredients, and natural products being better for sensitive skin. Some of these sentiments may be seen in the following quotes extracted from the data.

> **"**I like multipurpose from your hair to your skin to your face." (Nicole)

> "…it's not just about natural hair but the ingredients you are using in your hair that will impact the growth and give you the look that you want…I think that natural products have really improved, they help me achieve the makeup look that I want to achieve and have helped improve my skin. So using natural products, I feel there is less hyperpigmentation. I think that one benefit is better overall health and less breakouts and I do see with me using products with less fragrance and less synthetic fragrances I have seen an improvement in my endocrine disorder because I don't get the headaches etc." (Chelsea)

Participants spoke about many more barriers to buying natural and organic products than benefits. The perceived barriers include price (the highest coded), low accessibility to products/inconvenience due to shopping online or healthy products not being available in their communities (second highest coded), racism/colorism (third highest coded), lack of proof of health benefits in the short-term, lack of time to shop, uncomfortable with changing from current products and business practices of retailers (they do not want to support). Quotes from the most significant subthemes are included below:

Price and Accessibility:

> "The price point, I hear that from a lot of women that are natural cosmetics are too expensive." (Chelsea)

> "We have to look at economically where are these women. What do they have access to in their neighborhoods versus what African-Americans have in their neighborhoods? The younger generations, it is hard to say because economically it will depend on what the person can afford to buy. So a person who can't really afford to buy or can't even afford to think outside of the box about what is natural will only care about what is in my budget. I know the long-term effects, I do care about it being natural and even if it doesn't fit into my budget. Those people will be the ones to be apt to change." (Ashley)

Racism/Colorism:

> "Concerning the makeup, because I am darker (colorism), whenever I was looking into getting certain products, it is harder to find." (Hannah)

> "I think there is some form of racism going on and also too I think it depends on um the business too. I have had an interaction with a green beauty company, um, out in California and I told them that I recognize that I am fair skin and I represent the lighter end of the spectrum of black women but if you want me to share this product with my audience there is not a large range of shades and I want to be inclusive and I told them have you considered expanding the shade range and they responded basically said that no that it would be a profit loss for them because black women are not interested in healthy cosmetics, black women can't afford these cosmetics and they are looking for a certain type of black woman right and I was like what does that even mean? So I do think that I tried to explain to them systematic racism and it's our job to be inclusive and they were not open to that at all." (Chelsea)

> "It basically comes down to nothing but racism because it has always been engrained since day one that the European white standard of beauty is the most beautiful. The long hair, the lighter shades and that is what was catered to so that's what started the whole black women are not beautiful, they are ugly and they have terrible features. That was engrained in us and we look at ourselves less than and causes us to have low self-esteem so to look at the cosmetic beauty industry for that is almost to validate who they say we are." (Nicole)

In regards to cues to action, the HBM construct may pertain to either internal (personal consumer cues) or external cues (retailer actions) that prompt consumers to make purchases. Participant use of and purchase intention toward natural cosmetics that address internal cues to action were focused on actions or beliefs about health issues personal to the participants, as seen

in the following participant quotes. In addition, participant self-initiated research into the natural cosmetics marketplace is also considered an internal cue to action.

> "Unfortunately, I think it will be more internal just because in my experience I was diagnosed with PCOS, an endocrine disorder, which had my hair and skin all out of whack and it made me more cognizant of what I put in and on my body and fortunately that is what got me to take care of my natural hair more." (Jeehan)

> "[I] became natural when I was pregnant with my son. Also, for me it was internal. I have a neurological illness so when I was diagnosed I started looking at ok how can I make my life cleaner so I don't put things into my body or on my body that would exacerbate my illness." (Marian)

Participant data that addresses external cues to action was focused on retailer communications, retailer marketing claims, and ways participants have been influenced to use and purchase natural cosmetics outside of their own research or bodily health issues, such as the natural hair movement. These are seen in the following participant quotes:

> "So I think as more information and as more black women overall or black people are getting into themselves the information is out there. It is not like it is hidden. It is out there. People can go to YouTube, the internet, they can get on social media, they can go to the library there are different teachers and scholars out there giving that information so I don't think there is more that can be done." (Nicole)

> "I feel like the first time I wanted to look for a product that was marketed for sensitive skin it was the Simple products, I got a free sample in the mail with a coupon. It didn't work for me because it really dried out my skin but that day helped launch me to go look for other products." (Shenell)

Additional Themes that Emerged from the Data

In addition to themes inherent in the data that answered research questions of this study based on the HBM, analyzing the focus group transcripts revealed additional repeating ideas that were coded into additional themes. Six additional themes were created from the coding process. The themes included: Blackness, Natural ≠ Healthy, Generational Differences, Self-Discovery, Self-Love and Mindful Growth, Product Preferences, and Buying and Making Products. The most significant theme of the six, Blackness, was further divided into four subcategories

including: Class within the Black Community, Tribal Marketing, The Black Awakening/Spirituality, and Supporting Black Businesses. Blackness was the most significant theme not only because of the breadth and depth of discussion participants had on this topic but also because the other subthemes at many times would overlap with Blackness. For instance, product preferences were noting products that are not currently produced specifically for black skin, natural ≠ healthy addresses black beauty products or beauty products sold primarily to black women or in black neighborhoods falsely labeled as natural and the self-discovery and self-love subtheme entails overcoming the history of self-hatred engrained in black women about their personal beauty. The major subtheme, Blackness, and how "Blackness" was related to other subthemes is highlighted below:

Blackness. Participants note in the comments below their reactions to how they feel the mainstream and clean beauty movements have treated them. The level of eco-apartheid is obvious and now black women are seeking to support brands that have a tribal focus and wish to eliminate class as a barrier of access to healthier products.

> "I am conflicted because I don't know if I want the other manufacturers to include me in their line-up. I don't know if I want them to see me as a benefit because I want to support black businesses. I don't want to continually feel we have to force ourselves on someone, like they don't want you. If they don't want you, they don't see you, they don't embrace you, they don't nurture you, and why do we continually as black people force ourselves into a place instead of just doing it for ourselves? Like what Nichelle has been saying it is a journey, a process, an awakening in the way that we treat ourselves and each other as black people. I am trying to reconcile where I am and where I want to put my dollars." (Maggie: addressing black awakening and supporting black-owned businesses)

> "It was basically getting into learning who I am as far as a black person. The whole natural hair movement is more than natural hair but basically once again it is getting back to who we are as black people. I usually buy my hair care products wholesale through a black-owned business." (Nicole: addressing the black awakening and supporting black-owned businesses)

> "Seeing more natural hair types in the commercials. Seeing more skin tones in commercials." (Shenell: addressing tribal marketing)

Blackness also impacts Natural ≠ Healthy. Participants expressed with passion their level of disappointment with manufacturers who mislabel products, participate in greenwashing and make it difficult to tell which naturally labeled products are healthy. They have noticed that not only are many products mislabeled or greenwashed but many black beauty products and manufacturers that supply local beauty supply stores in black neighborhoods are deceitful in their marketing claims at a higher rate than mainstream beauty.

> "It is almost like they are insulting our intelligence sometimes. I feel offended. I can see that you did the label change thing. I really want to implore the beauty industry to be honest with consumers because obviously if you have something to hide, obviously, um, I don't want to buy your products and stop trying to deceive people into thinking that you are a green company and you are really not." (Marian)

> "For me just don't slap a new label saying it has Argan Oil in it or some oil you know black people like trying to get us but your ingredients are still sucky! I see that a lot! I see those brands that we have used in the past and um beauty supply stores and I have seen those brands buy into the natural hair movement by just slapping a new label on it… It is not that you can't be in the tribe but if you are going to be in the tribe do it right! Don't just try to remake Lottabody and it still the same thing. That is why I don't buy any of those products. I DIY because I'm like you guys have changed nothing about your products that haven't historically been not helping out hair to grow, had mineral oil in it, and had all this other crap in it that was really bad for our hair." (Ashley: addressing tribal marketing)

Generational differences relating to Blackness. Participants discussed the generational differences between themselves and their mothers. This understanding of age demographics would be helpful to product marketers of black beauty products seeking to understand generational differences within black culture.

> "I guess I will speak on behalf of relaxed black women. I was actually forced to get a relaxer at 5 years old. My mom said my hair was way too frizzy and thick. Let's go ahead and put a relaxer in your hair. So I never had a choice in regards to being relaxed or natural." (Christian)

> "I did have a relaxer when I was younger. The home relaxer thing. I'm 46 and it was just a different time with my mother. She didn't really embrace natural hair so I had all the issues that came with having relaxed hair, the breaking off and what not. The real move

> for me was becoming a parent and wanting to keep the hair natural and wanting to use natural products on my children so I think that is what it was for me." (Maggie)

Self-discovery, self-love and mindful growth of your Blackness. A new journey of self-discovery and self-love began with the natural hair movement and, as was emphasized by several participant comments, is still moving in the direction of a total commitment to naturalness on an individual basis. It is clear that the participants believe this is not a trend but a long-term process of growth and change, but one that is unfortunately linked to class, economics and the tainted history of race issues associated with black beauty.

Product Preferences of Black Women. Participants spoke directly about their preferences for more healthy products. They discussed products they are currently looking to purchase, products they would purchase if they were available and which products they believe black women will gravitate toward buying in the future when or if the green beauty movement becomes more inclusive. For example, participants mentioned products "for frizzy thick hair and products that simultaneously work for my adult acne" (Christian) and listed various product desires such as "sulfate-free, paraben-free, no lake-dyes, no GMO, essential oil for fragrance and preferably organics" (Chelsea).

Buying and Making Products relates to Blackness. The participants commented that they shop at a mixture of online and offline locations because in most cases natural beauty products for black women other than haircare cannot be found in their local communities. They mentioned their intent to purchase from both large and small retailers to bridge the gap between convenience and support for small black-owned businesses in addition to trusting smaller businesses more. The level of accessibility, trust and tribal marketing greatly dictate shopping venues and whether DIY ingredients or complete products may be purchased. DIY ingredients are frequently purchased because of the high cost of natural and organic products, lack of trust in

ingredient labels on ethnic beauty products and studies that show current black beauty products are linked to serious health problems.

Discussion

When participants were asked if they feel the beauty industry provides equally healthy beauty products for black women as other races, every participant answered no. That is the basis of the findings of this study. Black women are trying to change their lifestyles to be more health-centered. This study shows that perceived seriousness of health beliefs are high amongst participants and that use of natural and organic products is deemed a healthier and desired option. Although the beliefs of these participants cannot be generalized, this study found that black women, once enlightened to the harm beauty products can have on their bodies, desire to expand their use of natural and organic products particularly to avoid health disparities. A growing number of those who have begun their natural journey desire to embrace health-promoting behaviors if they can navigate around racism, colorism and eco-apartheid which form societal and market barriers to bettering their health.

Although no previous research has studied black women's health beliefs and intentions toward natural and organic beauty products specifically, the findings in this study corroborate previous research in the areas of health-promoting behaviors and race and environmentalism studies (Ahijevych, 1994; Brown et al., 2006; Corral & Landrine, 2012; Edmonds, 2006). One of the themes embedded in the data of this study was self-discovery. Self- discovery was enabled by the natural hair movement, a supportive, tribal-cultured movement. The theme of self-discovery and the supportive nature of the tribe corroborate Ahijevych's (1994) study on health-promoting behaviors of African-American women. Ahijevych's (1994) study showed that in comparison to other groups the highest score of antecedents of health-promoting behavior for

black women on the Health-Promoting Lifestyle Profile instrument were interpersonal support and self-actualization. This means that interpersonal support and the process of a self-discovery journey are critical components of implementing healthy behaviors. In terms of knowledge, black women have exhibited a high level of knowledge about disease, risk factors and health behaviors in another health study (Brown et al., 2006). However, similar to the Brown et al. (2006) study, a large percentage of African-American women still engage in high-risk behaviors because they face barriers to practicing preventive behaviors when attempting to integrate healthy behaviors into their daily lives. Another study by Edmonds (2006) found a positive relationship between self-efficacy and health-promoting behaviors of college-educated African-American women, who show intent to engage in health-promoting behaviors when confidence and ability levels are high. As shown in this study, the participants noted the difficulties they face when trying to determine which beauty products are healthy. They recommended honesty in product labeling so they could increase their level of self-efficacy and purchase more truly natural and organic beauty products. Whereas most health studies that have been performed to date focus on heart, breast or respiratory health, the same findings are applicable to this study because the use of toxic beauty products causes the same health dangers.

Racial stress is evident in the lives of black women as they try to make choices about their beauty regimens and product purchases. Racism/Colorism was one of the barrier themes found in the data. Edmonds (2006) and Corral and Landrine (2012) both found that stress and racial discrimination negatively influence health-promoting behaviors of African-American women. Landrine (2016) went further to describe how African-American women use a variety of adaptive and maladaptive strategies to cope with the stress of racial discrimination. Both adaptive (e.g., seeking social support from the online tribe about how to select better products)

and maladaptive strategies (e.g., use of relaxers, weaves and skin bleach to fit in) were witnessed within the context of this study. The tainted history of black beauty continues to be a source of racial stress. Beauty standards continue to contribute to health-damaging behavior for black women as they are forced to use toxic products on a daily basis. They are also constrained by societal and cultural factors such as limited access to healthier products. Access is limited typically because healthy products are not available in black neighborhoods. Due to racial stress as a barrier to health-promoting behaviors, Edmonds (2006) recommended culturally sensitive interventions be designed for black women that aim to achieve and maintain healthier lifestyles. The researchers of this study agree with that recommendation and offer others in the section below.

Recommendations and Implications

The focus group transcript revealed participant desires which the lead researcher coded as "Recommendations to Industry." The first recommendation would be to increase the development of toxin-free beauty products that solve the specific needs of black women. Secondly, companies should create products that have as few ingredients as possible. Thirdly, companies must understand and research the skincare needs and health issues that impact black women the most and address how their product meets those needs in clear, honest language on the packaging. Brands should implement a tribal marketing approach to enhance inclusiveness, including, but not limited to, using images of black women and cultural understanding in their selling approach. Development of trustworthy (third-party or government imposed) industry-wide regulations or certifications for product testing, product labeling and marketing are also recommended to eliminate unsafe products from store shelves or as a basis for differentiating natural and organic product on store shelves. Above all, participants in this study recommended

honesty and wished for brands to incorporate corporate core values that enhance the treatment of black women as fully human, worthy of respect and good health.

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Appendix

Table 5.1
Focus Group Sample (n=11)

Age (mean)	31
Age (range)	18-49
Parental Status	
No Children	8
Has Children	3
Years of Education (mean)	15.6 years
Hair Type	
Natural	9
Relaxed	1
Transitioning	1
Length of time natural (mean)	10.4 years

Table 5.2
Focus Group Participant Overview

Name/ Pseudonym	Age	Parental Status (Y/N)	Level of Education	Hair Type	Length of Time Natural	Lifestyle, Health & Beauty Story
1. Sasha	20	NO	Some college	Transitioning	11 months	Transitioning after relaxing her hair every 6 months, using protective styles, cites the natural hair movement, especially YouTube tutorials, for her loving her hair and learning about going natural, embracing clean eating without processed foods for her diet, suffers from eczema, desires to limit chemicals in hair and skincare products but has not changed to natural or organic makeup

2. Shenell	29	NO	Some college	Natural	10 years	Relaxed her hair in the past every 6 months due to mother's influence, cites the natural hair movement and YouTube as an influencing factor but she was already on that path because of damage caused by relaxers and her own research, has sensitive skin but currently does not use natural or organic makeup or skin products as she does for her hair
3. Ashley	27	NO	College graduate	Natural	10 years	Has experienced damage from relaxers, straightened her hair after ceasing the use of relaxers and going natural with heat styling, cites the natural hair movement as the educational platform for learning about toxicity and ingredients, also cites YouTube and books about the science of natural hair, is vegetarian and considers herself as transitioned into a complete natural lifestyle in all areas and product categories with the exception of makeup as it is infrequently used
4. Marian	37	YES	College graduate	Natural	12 years	Main cause of going natural with her total lifestyle and all product categories was becoming pregnant with her child, was natural before the movement or popularity of naturalness however was using toxic products due to lack of availability so cites the natural hair movement as educational platform for learning about toxic products and enhancing more natural products to become available, much more concerned with green and toxic free living and products, straightened hair with heat but no chemicals, also transitioned her food and skin routines to natural 4 years ago

5. Hannah	18	NO	High School	Natural	3 years	Currently has no special diet, researches and reads information online about natural hair often but information has not impacted her purchasing behavior as products were working for her, her ability to acquire natural products will grow as she gets older and has revenue source but until then sticks with local beauty supply and drug stores in her neighborhood, has noticed lack of natural products for her deeper skin tone
6. Nicky	49	YES	College graduate	Natural	8 years	Currently tries to eat healthy but has no dietary restrictions, is slowly transitioning her makeup and skincare products over to natural ingredients, too many ingredients on the packaging is an immediate turn-off, interest lies in making sure herself and her children are healthier overall
7. Christian	24	NO	College graduate	Relaxed	N/A	Currently has no dietary restrictions, is currently researching what natural makeup would actually entail, currently researching how to transition to natural what ingredients she would put in her hair since she is currently still relaxing, relaxing in the past was "forced" due to mother taking care of her hair growing up, is interested in products that would also work on adult acne and multipurpose natural products, she has a rare skin disorder which is prompting more changes, Facebook and the natural hair movement are key platforms for her education about healthier beauty

8. Chelsea	29	NO	Graduate Degree (masters)	Natural	4 years	Lives on a plant-based diet and started her natural journey with food prior to her hair or other products, serious and totally committed to a healthier lifestyle overall and in all product categories, has an endocrine disorder and hyperthyroidism which prompted some lifestyle changes and is the basis for selection of products, is a blogger and uses her platform to educate others about healthier living, cites assistance from someone already natural as a key source in her journey and not specifically the movement in general
9. Maggie	46	YES	Some college	Natural	15 years	Currently has no dietary restrictions, describes herself as on a journey as she is looking into more natural cosmetics, is settled with natural hair routine for her and her family, uses more natural lotions, moisturizers, skin and body care than color cosmetics, sees naturalness as an all-inclusive phenomenon including agribusiness, clothing and even home decor and is slowly but surely embracing all natural product categories
10. Nicole	35	NO	College graduate	Natural	15 years	Currently a healthy eater with no restrictions; worn locs hairstyle since 2001, considers naturalness a deeply spiritual journey, health is upmost concern and leads a natural lifestyle including all product categories, started her natural journey with learning about herbs and natural healing, started to have health issues such as asthma and other respiratory issues so eliminated chemicals in hair dyes and other chemical products, also concerned about other health issues

						such as high cholesterol and high blood pressure
11. Jeehan	29	NO	Graduate Degree (masters)	Natural	26 years	Currently has no dietary restrictions, concerned with ingredients in makeup and skin products, has an endocrine disorder called PCOS which has prompted her lifestyle changes, cites online research as a way to find products with healthy ingredients, had a period in time where she admits to not taking care of her hair and skin the way she should have and it on a journey to improve

Table 5.3
Code Frequencies

Theme	Subtheme	Frequency	Total Frequency
Health Belief Model Codes			
Likelihood of Buying (PI)		29	29
Parental Status			20
	Family Status	13	
	Caring for Family	7	
Lifestyle			56
	Natural Hair Journey	13	
	Healthy Ingredients & Overall Lifestyle	23	
	Healthy Eating	20	
Knowledge			44
	Level of Knowledge	30	

	Obtaining Knowledge	14	
Cues to Action			70
	External to Individual	34	
	Internal to Individual	36	
Self-Efficacy		11	11
Perceived Barriers			88
	Business Practices of the Retailer	2	
	Uncomfortable with Change	4	
	Lack of time or priority	8	
	Lack of short-term proof	7	
	Racism/Colorism/Lack of Acceptance	12	
	Accessibility/ Convenience	18	
	Price/Affordability	37	
Perceived Benefits			36
	Multipurpose & Less Expensive	4	
	Appearance Benefits	11	
	Health Benefits	15	
	Better Ingredients	6	
Perceived Susceptibility		19	19
Perceived Seriousness		20	20
Grounded Theory Codes			
Blackness			38
	Class with Black Community	4	
	Tribal Marketing	22	
	The Black Awakening (Spiritual)	5	
	Supporting Black Businesses	7	
Natural ≠ Healthy		26	26

Age/ Generational Differences		23	23
Self-Discovery, Self-Love & Mindful Growth		20	20
Product Preferences		40	40
Recommendations to Industry		28	28
Buying & Making Products			104
	Feelings toward the beauty industry	29	
	Feelings toward beauty shopping environment	12	
	Likelihood to buy natural/organic	29	
	How to Buy: Channels - Online vs. In-Store	5	
	Policies & Business Practices	4	
	DIY	8	
	Where to Buy: Brands & Retailers	17	
Total Coded Segments			**657**

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND SUPPLEMENTAL RESEARCH

Reflecting on the results of the survey and focus group sessions, several main points are evident. The first thing is that black women are still fighting against the historical issues of colorism and racism in their desire to enhance their appearance in a healthy manner. This history has had a lasting and damaging effect on the mindset of black women. Therefore, many black women continue to distrust mainstream cosmetic brands and marketing claims. The clean/green beauty movement has further engrained this damaged mindset because the green beauty industry intentionally ignored them as consumers. Black women feel purposefully misinformed, used and abused in a system that economically prospers off of their demise. They desire honest companies that truly care about their beauty and skin tone needs and will fully utilize and study tribal marketing strategies to earn their loyalty as consumers. They desire to be healthy regardless of class or economic status, and they want products that are affordable, accessible and immediately available. They wish to shorten the timeframe in their journey from purchasing only one natural product category to purchasing natural products in multiple product categories. Black women also desire industry and environmental health regulations that will protect them. An increase in product development across all beauty categories and clear education and information about the health benefits of those products is a must. Participants expressed their desire for more retailers to stock healthier beauty products for black women. They want research studies that prove those health benefits to be widely communicated through trustworthy tribal media sources to enhance the knowledge of other black women, who may not be readily affected

by internal bodily cues to action but still need access to this important information. Implementation of these desires throughout the beauty industry will enhance consumer self-efficacy and brand trust. It will also reduce barriers caused by racial injustice (including availability, accessibility and affordability) and enhance the likelihood of more black women purchasing safe, natural and organic products from all beauty product categories.

Limitations and Future Research

Although the findings of this netnography answered all the research questions posed in this study and tell the stories of the participants, there are several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the quantitative and qualitative results. First, this study used a criterion-based sample. This means that participants were limited and most likely constitute the segment of black women that are most passionate about natural beauty. Therefore, the results of this study cannot be generalized to all black women or all black women with natural hair. Second, in terms of the qualitative portion, because participants had already completed the survey instrument that was a prerequisite to participating in the focus group, they had some previous knowledge about what the deeper study was about, including the objective of understanding purchase intentions of products. This could mean that when participants were asked questions in the beginning of the focus group session about health in general, their responses may have been biased to include some language about products. Based on these limitations, future research could include participants who are purposefully selected. The researcher should purposefully include black women who do not have natural hair in order to understand the difference between groups. Future research could also entail experimental research to further explore successful tribal marketing practices performed by brands sensitive to the themes of blackness found in this study. In addition to these possible methods, future

research could also explore additional methods to broaden this netnographic research including utilizing methods and sites beyond online survey, focus groups and using Facebook groups and email as recruitment sites. Additional online spaces can be explored and other social media platforms could be used to gain broader information. The lead researcher offers one additional method that may be explored in the following section. Social media mining was performed to gather supplemental data for this study.

Supplemental Research

Supplemental data was collected during this netnography to include a wider purview of online data from indirect participants. The purpose of collecting the data was to compare the comments of online black beauty tribe members who did not participate in the study directly to those of the participants who completed the online survey or focus group sessions. The supplemental data was collected by performing social media mining.

Social Media Mining

Researchers conducting netnographic research may choose from blogging, microblogging, social networking sites, and mining spaces to study online communities (Bowler & Gary, 2010). Unlike focus groups, where the researcher questions participants, social media mining allows researchers to observe and listen to the tribes' members to determine what is important to them in their own words and what influences their consumption decisions. As Poynter (2010) states, in regards to blog and buzz mining, "why ask some of us when you can listen to all of us" (p. 221). Incorporating social media mining enhances other methods, such as surveys and focus groups, because participant comments allow for the agenda of the community members and not just the researcher to be incorporated into the study. Mining adds consumer-generated media to research studies and allows the tracking of electronic word-of-mouth (Xun &

Reynolds, 2009). The method also allows researchers to listen to what consumers are telling each other, not just what they would tell a researcher, allowing the "emphasis to shift from questioning to listening" to group members (Poynter, 2010, p. 221). Since 2006, there has been an explosion of using social media mining for market research, including in netnography (Poynter, 2010).

Sites and Participants

The supplemental data for this study was collected via social media mining on Facebook and Twitter. Facebook mining took place within two of the online private black beauty groups that were recruitment sites for the online survey: Black Women Who Love Makeup and Natural Hair Chat. The benefit of using private groups and their associated social media pages includes an extensive opportunity to gain access to substantial amounts of low-cost and instant tribal data without the resource intensiveness of audio recording and transcription (Hookway, 2008). Twitter mining was performed using the MAXQDA software. This process involved connecting through the researcher's Twitter account to conduct searches within black beauty tribe tweets. The participants in this portion of the research are considered indirect participants. Although the participants are not selected using criterion methods, as was done in the survey and focus group sessions, all indirect participants are within the black beauty tribe because they were granted permission to be a part of the private group and/or self-opted into the group by using common black beauty tribe hashtags in their online communications.

Method

The observational technique of data mining was used in order to collect relevant and insightful social media content that addresses the research questions. For this study, the data collected from the private Facebook groups was maintained in an electronic data mining logbook

for future content analysis. The purpose was to log black beauty discussions taking place in the groups that also included the topic of health or natural and organic beauty products. Direct quotes posted to the Facebook groups between January and December of 2016 were extracted for analysis. Twitter data was imported into MAXQDA during the months of September-December 2016. Although a shorter timeframe was devoted to Twitter than to Facebook, because thousands of tweets are posted on Twitter every minute, sufficient data was still collected for analysis.

A systematic process for social media mining was followed. The first step was to find information. This was done on both platforms by searching via relevant keywords (health, eco-beauty, organic and natural beauty) to find data. On Twitter, the keyword search was combined with black beauty tribe hashtags, including #teamnatural, #naturalhair, #blackbeauty, #greenblackbeauty, #melanin, #naturalista, #blackmakeuptwitter, #browngirlbeauty, #blackgirlmagic, #makeupforblackwomen, and #makeupformelaningirls. The hashtags were combined with keywords to see interrelated posts about black beauty and health in Twitter history.

The second step was to extract the data from the chosen sites. Data was extracted from posts in the Facebook groups and added to the logbook maintained in Microsoft Word. The MS Word document was then imported into MAXQDA for coding. For Twitter, the resulting tweets from the search described above were imported directly into MAXQDA. This electronic process copied the data from Twitter accounts into the database in an organized fashion for coding.

The third step was to analyze the data. To analyze the data, the lead researcher performed an electronically enhanced content analysis. Content analysis is a way of clustering data from texts to discover patterns, reveal interests, and identify attitudes (Krippendorff, 2004 as

cited in Beck, 2005). Facebook logbooks were manually and systematically coded within MAXQDA. After an initial immersion in the data, first- and second-order coding was performed on Facebook mined data to identify themes (Richardson, 2013). First-order coding included manually coding the data in the Facebook logbook to each construct of the Health Belief Model (HBM). The purpose of this process was to see which of the HBM model constructs was inherent in the data and corresponded to the independent variables being studied. Second-order coding entailed reviewing the data again and assigning codes to the data that emerged in the review process but were unrelated to the Health Belief Model. This is called grounded theory analysis (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Data that is systematically analyzed using grounded theory analysis identifies repeated ideas by gathering quotes and assigning codes (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). A codebook was created to present resulting themes from the MAXQDA content analysis process.

Twitter data was analyzed by coding the data but also by visual analysis. First-order coding for Twitter was done electronically through the MAXQDA auto-code process. This process resulted in a separate tweet theme and frequency codebook. Second-order coding to constructs of the Health Belief Model was also attempted; however, the attempt was unsuccessful for several reasons. The first reason was due to tweet length. Tweets by definition may not be longer than 140 characters, which automatically shortens the amount of context allowable in any given post. Many tweets pointed to or were shared from other social media platforms such as Instagram. Importing tweets through MAXQDA did not grant the researcher access to the content on the original or secondary social media platform. Sometimes tweets contained only hashtags without any additional written context. Therefore, a visual system of analyzing the tweets was conducted by creating a tag cloud of the Twitter data. Tag clouds are

commonly used visuals produced based on the frequency of word occurrence and can be created within MAXQDA and other qualitative software. This process is a way to visually understand theme frequency amongst a large amount of data developed in consumer-generated media.

Results

Overall, the topic of health and purchasing natural and organic products is not discussed heavily as a topic within private black beauty Facebook groups. The topic of health appeared infrequently over the course of the year in comparison to synthetic products or other beauty topics. The results of the Facebook content analysis are presented in Table 6.1. Both HBM constructs and grounded theory themes that emerged from the data are included in the table. In terms of HBM constructs, knowledge was by far the most frequent theme within the Facebook private groups. The knowledge theme was oriented toward asking for knowledge and recommendations for products, promoting the feeling of sharing throughout the online community. Members of the community seemed to check in often for the purpose of getting information from other members. Within the HBM construct themes, perceived benefits was second to knowledge, in terms of theme frequency. Members of the groups discussed appearance benefits in the natural hair group. In this group, appearance was mostly linked to the ability or desire to grow their natural hair to a long length. Members who needed help, advice or recommendations with their hair or make-up routines posted that they were interested in buying natural products but did not know which products to buy. This theme of "needs help with routine" was the most prominent barrier to purchase intention found in the Facebook groups when discussing healthy products. There were several instances of discussion about possible contaminated make-up, consumer behavior such as returning make-up products to retailers, and using natural make-up. In these discussions, participants debated whether health impact was a

serious issue and whether consumers would be susceptible to poor health in given situations. There were not many conversations that discussed health beliefs in depth. There were also few conversations that addressed whether members' health beliefs would impact their purchase behavior. Instead, an overriding theme of trying to get and share knowledge about available products and recommendations on which products work best for black hair care and match black skin tones emerged as a persistent theme from the data mining process.

In addition to the HBM constructs, there were several themes that emerged from the Facebook group data. The most prominent theme was "Hair Health." Health was a topic of discussion to a greater extent in the natural hair group than the make-up group, and the topic of health was greatest when tied to the perception of participants' hair and not to their overall healthy lifestyle. Secondly, within the Facebook groups, members widely saw the groups as places to promote their natural product businesses to a receptive audience. Thirdly, product preferences and recommendations were widely made to other members of the group. As stated earlier, this environment promotes a tribal sharing community even outside of the purpose of gaining knowledge about health, healthier products or specifically natural and organic products. Closely tied to those recommendations for products, the "where to buy" information was often provided, including naming specific brands or retailers. Overall, social media content within the black beauty tribe is highly focused on sharing information with other members and participating in commerce. Recommending, buying and selling of products within the tribe are prevalent.

Table 6.1
Facebook Themes

Theme	**Frequency**
Health Belief Model Construct Themes	
Parental Status	1
Lifestyle	3
Natural Hair Journey	1
Healthy Eating	1

Knowledge/ Sharing Knowledge	17
Cues to Action	1
Self-Efficacy	2
Perceived Barriers	
Oversaturation of natural hair products	1
Needs help with routine	4
Racism/Colorism/Lack of Acceptance	1
Price/Affordability	1
Perceived Benefits	
Multipurpose & Less Expensive	1
Appearance Benefits/Long hair	6
Health Benefits	3
Better Ingredients	1
Perceived Susceptibility	6
Perceived Seriousness	4
Grounded Theory Themes	
Advertising a Business	13
Networking/Events	3
Hair Health	18
Natural is NOT always healthy or green	2
Self-Discovery & Mindful Growth	2
Product Preferences, Requests or Recommendation	10
Buying & Making Products	
Feelings towards the beauty industry	1
Policies & Business Practices	1
DIY	2
Where to buy: Brands & Retailers	6

The results from the Twitter content analysis are shown in Table 6.2. The themes were created from repeating ideas coded from 1,117 tweets that linked health to hashtags from the black beauty tribe. This number of tweets remained after the researcher removed irrelevant data, retweets and duplicate tweets. Examples of irrelevant data included tweets outside the immediate topic of beauty, including mental health, organic farming, and foods/nutrition without a beauty context. The remaining tweets were aggregated into the themes depicted in the table. Within the tweets, there were 1,123 hashtags corresponding to health and organic beauty. Each hashtag was analyzed, grouped and assigned to a theme. Overall, within the intersection of

health and black beauty, the theme of "naturalness" was prevalent. Naturalness includes the general topic of going natural, being a naturalista, participating in team natural or living a natural lifestyle. The second most prevalent theme was "chemical-free." Chemical-free primarily speaks to life without hair relaxers and hair products without harmful chemicals, but also includes overall discussions on no-toxins, paraben-free, and sulfate-free language. Thirdly, discussions specifically focused on hair health were prominent on Twitter. Out of the five product categories tested in this study, hair and skin were the only categories found on Twitter that linked health to natural and organic products. Make-up, nails and body care were excluded from black beauty tribe communications with the hashtags used in this study. An overall lifestyle of health and wellness was next in prominence amongst Twitter discussions. Those tweets included mentions of healthy beauty, staying healthy, healthy scalp and overall healthy living. Organic products, both haircare and skincare, in addition to a general inclusion of organic lifestyle within the black beauty tweets, outweighed all other references to veganism, vegetarianism, cruelty-free and plant-based beauty routines and lifestyles. Lastly, promoting the buying and selling of natural products was prominent on Twitter, as it was on Facebook. The Twitter tag cloud for this study is shown in Figure 6.1. The tag cloud goes beyond codes and hashtags by including all words in the tweets for a total analysis of word frequency. The tag cloud visually highlights, just as the code content analysis did, the importance of the themes of naturalness and health in connection to hair over other product categories. The topics of green beauty, organics, and black awareness are relevant, but less prominent as topics of discussion on Twitter at the intersection of health keywords and black beauty tribe hashtags. This was expected because green, clean or eco-beauty has its own separate tribe that is not connected to black culture on Twitter. There is also the "tribe within a tribe" concept within the black beauty

community. That tribe that is more committed to green and organic beauty in all product categories does not have its own dedicated popular hashtag on Twitter.

Table 6.2
Twitter Themes

Theme	Frequency
Naturalness	404
Dietary Lifestyle : Veganism, Vegetarianism & Plant-Based	46
Organic	81
Animal Friendly	3
Green/Eco Beauty & Fashion	6
Black Culture	1
Hair Health	158
General Beauty	2
Sales and Purchasing	68
Health & Wellness Lifestyle	142
Chemical-Free	209
Self-Love	3
Total Frequency	1123

Figure 6.1. Twitter Tag Cloud.

Discussion

The results of the social media mining sessions also contribute to the exploration of the research questions in this study. In regards to what extent (if at all) do black women believe that using beauty products can threaten their health, the answer is that the larger population of members within the two Facebook black beauty groups mined in this study are still debating that issue. There were several instances in which members would state their opinions and argue about whether or not they believed the findings of recent studies that say black women's health is at risk from the use of beauty products. Other times, they would debate as to whether their consumer behavior should change to lessen their susceptibility to health risks. In order for a threat to be posed, black women would have to believe that the health issue is both serious and that they are personally susceptible to being exposed to negative health consequences. There is no definitive and generalizable answer to this question. However, social media data support the conclusion that both topics are currently under consideration by members who have become quite passionate about their side of the debate.

The second research question posed was to what extent are black women knowledgeable about environmental toxins in ethnic beauty products? Facebook data, as stated above, shows that knowledge is a top priority to black beauty tribe members in the selected forums. There were many instances in which members would ask other members about which natural, organic, healthy or vegan products work best. Members wanted to know which products were used or recommended and where to buy them. In other instances, participants wanted to know about specific ingredients or how the use of those ingredients has impacted other members' health and wellness, especially in terms of hair growth or retention of length. Unfortunately, even within

the natural hair community, black women have not escaped the obsession with hair length that has oppressed them through the European beauty ideals documented in the literature review of this study. Even when naturals decide not to straighten their hair to physically resemble European straight hair, much of the discussion is still about being able to grow long hair.

In regards to the level of black women's self-efficacy influencing their purchase intentions toward natural and organic beauty products, there was no evidence that their level of confidence would cause them to change their purchase behavior. However, the data did show that one member had a lack of confidence in her hair's ability to grow before she went natural and she expressed joy in the fact she knew hair growth was now a reality. Another member expressed that her hair, even after two years of being natural, has stopped growing and she was seeking advice and assistance on what to do in terms of moisturizing and styling. It is assumed that if she received recommendations for a product that can be purchased, instead of DIY ingredients or services, her purchase intentions toward those natural or organic beauty products would increase. However, mining would need to be combined with interviews, focus groups or a survey to come to that definitive answer.

Lastly, in regards to what extent black women's purchase intentions toward natural and organic beauty products are influenced by product benefits, market barriers or consumer and retailer cues to action, it was found that healthy hair is the benefit that most black women have at the forefront of their minds. They consider the prevalence of chemicals in products (including relaxers) and needing significant help with hair maintenance as barriers to having healthy hair and purchasing healthy products. Internal cues to action, such as hair breakage and damage to the scalp, influence change in behavior. Social media data did not provide any evidence of successful retailer influence through consumer cues to action. Instead, external cues to action

that are of prime importance to this group are trustworthy recommendations from other women in the tribe.

Data mined from Facebook posts provided more in-depth information on the constructs of the HBM and research questions of this study. However, Twitter data was still helpful in verifying that hair care products is still the leading product category to a generalizable audience and that going natural and chemical-free is of primary concern. Twitter data also revealed that higher levels of an overall healthy lifestyle, including organics and other lifestyle changes such as purchasing other beauty product categories (starting with skin care), are lurking in the background and coming to the surface slowly within this community.

Facebook and Twitter mining were able to offer insight into the research questions for the study. However, there were limitations inherent in utilizing mining as a method for data collection and analysis. The first limitation evident in this study was that there was no clear way to access black beauty tribe members who were specifically interested in green beauty or natural and organic products through Twitter or Facebook. Hashtags and Facebook private groups are populated with black women who love natural hair or black beauty products of both natural and synthetic origin. But to date, no group or popular hashtag could be identified outside the larger groups that further divided black women into a subgroup that prioritized green beauty or organics. If there was a way to mine social media using a popular hashtag, results might more closely resemble the depth of information that emerged within the focus group sessions.

Other limitations, specifically with Twitter, include that it was difficult to delete repetitive tweets or retweets in a very large and noisy data set. Extracting data by use of hashtags results in some irrelevant data when tweeters use hashtags for purposes other than beauty. In addition, different spellings of hashtags created multiple codes for items that should

be grouped together. It was also problematic that tweets imported into the qualitative software did not include additional information that may have been originally placed on other social media platforms.

Due to the challenges of mining Twitter data, it is recommended to mine blog content, blog comments and Instagram pages along with Facebook posts in future research. All of these other social media platforms offer more context and a better ability to code based on a conceptual model in addition to auto-coding. However, for this study, the research findings from all three methods are useful. Each method helps us understand how the extent of black women's health beliefs influence purchase intention toward natural and organic beauty products and how this issue may be solved by merchandising products as health interventions or using tribal marketing techniques.

Comparison of Findings

The results from mined data, focus groups and the online survey had similarities and differences. The researcher realized that every construct of the HBM that significantly influenced purchase intention in the online survey results may or may not have aligned with mining and focus group themes. The analysis and subsequent results varied based on the research method.

Netnography is considered a qualitative research method even though quantitative methods such as surveys may be included in the multiple methods approach. Glesne (2006) describes qualitative data analysis as a process of organizing data, breaking data into manageable units, synthesizing the data through categories, and finding patterns and irregularities among all data collected. The purpose of generating themes was to see if a substantial consensus amongst the group of participants existed in the data collected by using three different methods. It was

found that qualitative data, by nature, was able to tell a deeper story and provide richer explanations than quantitative data. It was also established that social media mining comments provide data from the participants' perspective without direct questioning of what researchers are looking to learn. However, whether the resulting themes match amongst methods is dictated by the level of detail provided and the channel through which data is extracted.

Data from all methods was analyzed as a whole and triangulated to gain an understanding of black beauty tribe health beliefs and buying behavior toward natural and organic beauty products. At the widest level of generalization that included the largest indirect participant group, social media mining results show that natural products, the natural lifestyle in regards to maintaining their hair, and changing from chemical-based products of hair care to natural products are primary ways in which black women display their concerns about bettering their health. Purchase intentions toward natural and organic beauty products as a health-promoting behavior is influenced by health beliefs in regards to hair products and hair care.

At the next level of participant involvement in this study, the online survey allowed us to ask specific questions about health beliefs that was not possible in social media mining. Although data from the 161 survey responses cannot be generalized, the survey verified the social media data on hair care and health-promoting behaviors toward hair products. Data also showed that the subset of women surveyed also had high levels of health beliefs that significantly influenced their purchase behavior toward all other natural and organic beauty product categories. Survey data, which corroborated with the social media Facebook content analysis, also demonstrated that knowledge and lifestyle were primary influencers of self-efficacy.

The method with the fewest participants was the focus group sessions. Although the number of participants was reduced from 161 in the survey to 11 for the combined participants in both focus groups, the amount of data the participants provided was much richer due to the nature of focus group inquiry. Focus group participants allowed data from a tribe within a tribe to emerge. The tribe within the larger black beauty tribe constituted a segment of the community that is focused on healthy beauty, including green beauty, organics, and complete lifestyle alterations that encompass holistic beauty routines. Results at this deeper level within the black beauty tribe expand upon the mere influence of health beliefs on purchase intentions proven by the online survey. Through conversation and questioning of the participants, the researcher was able to extract stories, meanings, explanations as well as some non-HBM themes that explained in detail what hindered a health-promoting behavior change. They also communicated the high level of knowledge that has been acquired by the tribe and analyzed the type of cues to action that were most relevant to the group. They explained the sociological mindset shift within the group toward tribal affiliation. In addition, they provided recommendations to the beauty industry on how to better serve the ethnic market in terms of offering eco-equity to black women in the beauty industry.

Assessing Data Quality

The use of these three methods within netnography enriched this research project and produced quality data through a rigorous process. To address the need for rigor in qualitative studies, Lincoln & Guba (1986) suggest using criteria of trustworthiness (credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability) to determine the quality of qualitative data. In this study, three different methods were used to establish trustworthiness and analyze the quality of the data collected in this study (Preissle, 1992). In addition to using a multiple-methods

approach, member checks with focus group participants were used to enhance the credibility of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Kozinets, 2010). Members were able to offer responses and reactions to informally test information provided by other respondents.

A main concern of the researcher was to produce a quality netnography. Kozinets (2010) outlines criteria to evaluate a quality netnography. Kozinets (2010) recommends that the netnographer base criteria for evaluation of the study on his or her own philosophical foundations. Following this recommendation, this research was concerned with meeting quality standards for rigor, groundedness, innovation, and praxis.

The study adhered to the rigorous procedural standards for netnographic research. It was grounded in theory and its conclusions were supported by data. The HBM provided a framework to study black beauty in an innovative and original way. Through this research, praxis was also accomplished because the study inspires and empowers social action. The study was able to highlight that there are black women who have high levels of health beliefs and exercise health-promoting behaviors in regards to their beauty routine. It also resulted in recommendations for ways in which researchers, retailers, the legal environment and the wider beauty industry can support black women in their efforts to achieve better health.

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APPENDIX A

Survey Questionnaire – Adapted from Health Belief Model Scales (IRB Approved)
Items (other than demographics or where otherwise stated) were scored on a five point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

1. Modifying Variables
    a. Demographics
        i. What is your race/ethnic group?
        ii. What is your age?
        iii. What is your gender?
        iv. What socioeconomic status do you associate yourself with?
        v. How many years of formal education have you completed?
        vi. What is your parental status? Trying to become pregnant, currently pregnant, No kids, have 1 child, have multiple children
        vii. I consider my hair to be: natural, transitioning, relaxed
    b. Psychosocial - Lifestyle
        i. I feel pressure from other black women online to buy certain beauty products.
        ii. I feel pressure to buy popular or trending beauty products.
        iii. I am pregnant or desire to be pregnant so that influences my beauty product purchase decisions.
        iv. I am vegetarian so that influences my beauty product purchase decisions.
        v. I am vegan so that influences my beauty product purchase decisions.
        vi. I am on a gluten-free or clean eating diet so that influences my beauty product purchase decisions.
        vii. In addition to being a consumer, I am also a beauty entrepreneur so that influenced my use of beauty products and purchase decisions.
        viii. I consider myself to be light in skin complexion and feel that impacts beauty products available to me.
        ix. I consider myself to be dark in skin complexion and feel that impacts beauty products available to me.
        x. I feel my skin tone dictates my cosmetic options.
        xi. I feel there are less cosmetic options for my skin tone.
        xii. I feel that there are cosmetic options for my skin tone in synthetic brands but not enough in natural and organic brands.
        xiii. I feel that safer and/or healthier cosmetic brands recognize my needs as a beauty consumer.
    c. Structural- Knowledge
        i. I am knowledgeable about beauty products made from natural and organic ingredients.

ii. I am aware that natural and/or organic beauty products are typically healthier options than synthetic beauty products.
iii. I am aware that scientific studies show black beauty products are linked to health concerns such as breast cancer, fibroids, reproductive, neurological problems in women and unborn children.
iv. I am aware that the cosmetics industry does not regulate product safety.
v. I am aware that the FDA does not regulate cosmetic safety.
vi. I am aware that brands are not required to have their products tested for safety before selling to consumers in the United States.
vii. I am knowledgeable of gluten free beauty products and know where to get them.
viii. I am knowledgeable about toxin free and preservative free beauty products.
ix. I am knowledgeable about vegan beauty products.
x. I am knowledgeable about how to avoid fragrance in products or determine synthetic vs. natural fragrance.
xi. I am knowledgeable about how beauty products impact the environment and that natural products are more environmentally friendly.

2. General Cosmetics Use
    a. I use hair products on a daily basis.
    b. I typically use natural hair products.
    c. I use makeup products on a daily basis.
    d. I typically use natural or organic makeup products.
    e. I use skin care products on a daily basis.
    f. I typically use natural or organic skin care products.
    g. I use body care products on a daily basis.
    h. I typically use natural or organic body care products.
    i. Using beauty products that are more environmentally friendly is important to me.
    j. Using beauty products that are animal friendly is important to me.
    k. Using beauty products that are as healthy as possible is important to me.
    l. When searching for beauty products I look for: paraben/talc/sulfate/mineral oil free?
    m. When searching for beauty products I look for: no animal by products?
    n. When searching for beauty products I look for: fragrance free?
    o. When searching for beauty products I look for: cruelty free?
    p. When searching for beauty products I look for: none of the above
3. Perceived Seriousness
    a. It would bother me if I developed health problems from the use of my beauty products.
    b. I believe the studies that report black hair products are linked to serious health problems.
    c. It would bother me if lead, mercury or other toxic chemicals were in my beauty products.

    d. I believe that unhealthy beauty products are a more serious issue for me, as a black woman.
    e. Everyone I know uses the popular synthetic cosmetic brands so I don't think changing to natural products is that serious of an issue.
4. Perceived Susceptibility
    a. If I relax my hair it could cause me to develop health problems.
    b. If I use synthetic or toxic cosmetics it could cause me to develop health problems.
    c. It is likely that I will develop health problems from using non-natural beauty products.
    d. My chances of developing health problems from beauty product use is great.
    e. I feel I could get sick from toxic beauty products during my life.
    f. I have never used natural beauty products so I may develop health problems.
    g. I have had scalp burns from relaxers so I may develop health problems from the use of hair straighteners.
    h. I use synthetic makeup frequently so I may develop health problems from the use of non-natural makeup.
    i. I used chemical based hair and beauty products while pregnant so my child or children may have had health problems or learning disabilities due to use of toxic beauty products.
    j. I believe that I, as a black woman, am more susceptible to health problems from beauty product use.
    k. Everyone I know uses the popular synthetic cosmetic brands and since they are not sick I don't think I will get sick either.
5. Perceived Benefits
    a. Natural beauty products help black women avoid health problems.
    b. My hairstyles look just as beautiful when I use natural beauty products.
    c. My hair is longer and healthier when I use natural beauty products.
    d. My skin and makeup look just as beautiful when I use natural beauty products as with synthetic makeup and skincare.
    e. Reducing my level of exposure to chemical or synthetic beauty products will help me lead a healthier life.
    f. Buying natural and organic cosmetics is the best way for me to avoid toxic build up in my body.
    g. Buying natural and organic cosmetics decreases my chances of getting breast cancer, fibroids and other reproductive and neurological illnesses linked to toxic beauty products.
    h. I believe that natural and organic products are effective in styling my hair and face.
6. Perceived Barriers
    a. I do not use natural and organic beauty products because they are too expensive.
    b. I do not use natural and organic beauty products because it takes too much time to select the right products.

c. I do not use natural and organic beauty products because they are not made to match or complement my skin tone.
d. I do not use natural and organic beauty products because I think they are made only for white women.
e. I do not use natural and organic beauty products because they are not readily available where I shop.
f. I do not use natural and organic beauty products because I don't believe they are safer than regular beauty products.
g. I do not use natural and organic beauty products because I don't believe they work as good as other products.
h. I do not use natural and organic beauty products because they do not give me the look I desire.
i. I do not use natural and organic beauty products because I do not trust brand marketing.
j. I have other problems more important than worrying about changing my beauty products.
k. I have been using chemical products for many years so it is too late for me to care about switching to natural beauty products now.
l. I do not buy natural and organic beauty products because I have to depend on brand "free from" descriptions which may be misleading.
m. I do not purchase natural and organic beauty products because I can make them (DIY) at home cheaper.

7. Self-Efficacy
    a. I feel confident in my ability to read and understand cosmetic ingredient labels.
    b. I feel confident in my ability to decipher synthetic from natural beauty products.
    c. I feel confident in my ability to select beauty products that are non-toxic and safe to use.
    d. If I was to seek natural products to buy, I know how to avoid greenwashing techniques to make my purchase.
    e. If I had to buy natural or organic makeup for my skin tone tomorrow it would be easy to do so.
    f. I can confidently select healthy beauty products for myself.
8. Cues to Action
    a. If I received retailer emails asking me to buy natural and organic beauty products I would do so.
    b. If I received coupons from brands to give me discounts on natural and organic beauty products I would use them.
    c. I have heard messages about avoiding toxic chemicals in beauty products from any of the following sources: books, blogs, natural hair influencers, social media, or other black women in Facebook groups, beauty expo workshops.
    d. Having known other black women who went natural made me change to natural products.

    e. I am influenced by packaging on products that communicate it is a natural product.
    f. I am influenced by eco-certifications on products that communicate it was a natural product.
    g. I am interested in natural beauty products because I have allergies, break outs or sensitive skin.
    h. I am concerned that the health concerns I have noticed or been diagnosed with are related to the beauty products I have been using.
    i. I am concerned that the health concerns that my children have been diagnosed with are related to the beauty products I have been using.
9. Likelihood of Purchasing Natural & Organic Beauty Products (Health- Promoting Behavior)
    a. I am likely to buy natural and organic hair products.
    b. I am likely to buy natural and organic makeup products.
    c. I am likely to buy natural and organic skincare products.
    d. I am likely to buy natural and organic body care products.
    e. I am likely to buy natural and organic nail care products.
10. Would you like to be contacted for our virtual focus group? The group will discuss these same topics in greater detail. Please leave your email address here to be contacted. Focus group participants will receive $100 retail of natural beauty products.

APPENDIX B

Focus Group Questionnaire
(IRB Approved)

Demographics:
Demographics- What is your age, race, highest level of education completed, parental status and family income range?

Cosmetic Group Participation:

Why do you participate in online beauty groups and how are your purchasing decisions affected by the group?

General Health:
How do you define a healthy beauty product?

Lifestyle:
How do you consider health for yourself, the environment, animals or your children in your selection and use of beauty products?

Structured Knowledge:

Are you aware of any health issues or problematic ingredients concerning beauty products? Which ones (hair, cosmetics, skincare etc.) and (what health issues)?

Perceived Seriousness:

From your knowledge about health and beauty products, how serious do you think the issue is?

Perceived Susceptibility:
Do you feel you (or your children) are susceptible to poor health, disease or illness from your use of beauty products? How so?

Perceived Benefits:
What do you think are some of the benefits of buying natural and organic beauty products?

Perceived Barriers:
What stops you from buying natural and organic beauty products?

Self-Efficacy:
Are you confident in your ability to differentiate a natural product from a synthetic beauty product?

Cues to Action:
What types of cues to action have you received or noticed at or from retailers about buying natural or organic beauty products? What if any personal beauty challenges or needs do you have that prompt you to buy natural or organic beauty products?

Likelihood of Health-Promoting Behavior:

How likely are you in the future to purchase natural and organic beauty products and what impacts your decision?

Recommendations:
What recommendations or wishes do you have for the beauty industry to better meet your needs as a black beauty consumer? As a black natural beauty consumer? What can the industry, consumer agencies or consumers themselves do to better educate or promote health for black women in terms of the beauty products they use?

APPENDIX C

E-mail Recruitment Tool

(IRB Approved)

BEAUTY STUDY – RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

Dear (Potential Participant):

I am a Ph.D. Candidate at the University of Georgia, College of Family and Consumer Sciences. I am seeking RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS for studying purchase intentions of natural beauty products. I seek **Black** females of **age 18 and over (adults)** that are interested in beauty products, health, natural hair, beauty or lifestyles and who participate in makeup, hair or beauty online communities/Facebook groups or black beauty related social media pages or blogs.

Participants in this study will dedicate **approximately 2 hours** (or less) of their time in a focus group interview setting answering questions about beauty products and health. Participants will receive as an incentive a box of natural beauty products valued at approximately $100 retail.

If you are interested in this study please respond to **mrdb@uga.edu** **by June 31, 2016**. Please use **BEAUTY STUDY** as the subject line. Once you agree to the study you will be sent a formal consent form.

Thank you,

Melodie Davis-Bundrage
Ph.D. Candidate
University of Georgia
Dawson Room 313

APPENDIX D

Recruitment Visual

(IRB Approved)

APPENDIX E

Survey Screening Questions

(Email recruits only)

1. Do you identify as Black or African-American for your race?

2. Do you use ethnic beauty products (hair, makeup or skin care) on a daily basis?

3. Are you a member, participant in or follow at least one online Black or African-American beauty group (hair or makeup) or page on Facebook or Instagram?

Participants had to answer YES to all three questions before being directed to the survey.

APPENDIX F

Survey Consent Form
(IRB approved)

5/6/16

Dear Online Beauty Community Participant:

I am a PhD Candidate in the Department of Textiles, Merchandising and Interiors at The University of Georgia. I invite you to participate in a research study entitled Merchandising Health Interventions: Black Women's Beliefs and Intentions toward Natural and Organic Beauty Products. The purpose of this study is to understand and analyze whether beauty consumption behavior of black women who participate in online beauty communities can be linked to health promoting behavior.

In order to participate in this study, participants must be at least 18 years of age or older, and be female and identify as Black (of African descent including Afro-American, Afro-Carib, Black-British etc.).

Your participation will involve completing an online survey expected to take approximately 20 minutes of your time. Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to withdraw from the study, the information that can be identified as yours will be kept as part of the study and may continue to be analyzed, unless you make a written request to remove, return, or destroy the information. The survey will be completed entirely online. Internet communications are insecure and there is a limit to the confidentiality that can be guaranteed due to the technology itself. However, once the materials are received by the researcher, standard confidentiality procedures will be employed.

The findings from this project may provide information on sustainable beauty consumption intention, products and education needs, provide insight to the beauty industry on how to meet the needs of Black beauty consumers better, and information on how the merchandising of beauty products is linked to health and wellness for Black women. There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research. Survey participants (or non-participants) who provide an email address (for prize notification purposes only) will be entered into a random drawing to receive an incentive of a box of natural beauty products valued at approximately $100 for their participation in the study. Non-participants are persons who see the recruitment materials but do not complete the survey however desire to be entered into the drawing. Those persons should send an email with their email address and a statement that they desire to enter the drawing to mrdb@uga.edu.

If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to email Melodie Davis-Bundrage at mrdb@uga.edu or Dr. Katalin Medvedev at medvedev@uga.edu. Questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant should be directed to The Chairperson, University of Georgia Institutional Review Board, 629 Boyd GSRC, Athens, Georgia 30602; telephone (706) 542-3199; email address irb@uga.edu.

By providing your initials below or completing the survey responses and returning them to the researcher, you are agreeing to participate in the above described research project.

Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Melodie Davis-Bundrage

APPENDIX G

Focus Group Consent Form

(IRB approved)

11/5/16

Dear Online Beauty Community Participant:

I am a Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of Textiles, Merchandising and Interiors at The University of Georgia. I invite you to participate in a research study entitled Merchandising Health Interventions: Black Women's Beliefs and Intentions toward Natural and Organic Beauty Products. The purpose of this study is to understand and analyze whether beauty consumption behavior of black women who participate in online beauty communities can be linked to health promoting behavior.

In order to participate in this study, participants must be at least 18 years of age or older, be female, identify as Black (of African descent including Afro-American, Afro-Carib, Black-British etc.) and have already completed the online survey during Summer 2016.

Your participation will involve completing interview questions in an online focus group setting and could take approximately 2 hours of your time. Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to withdraw from the study, the information that can be identified as yours will be kept as part of the study and may continue to be analyzed, unless you make a written request to remove, return, or destroy the information.

Individually identifiable information will be kept confidential to the extent possible. Even though the investigator will emphasize to all participants that comments made during the focus group session should be kept confidential, it is possible that participants may repeat comments outside of the group at some time in the future. Internet communications are insecure and there is a limit to the confidentiality that can be guaranteed due to the technology itself. Blog posts and comments from the internet public domain and online community may be used in this research. However, once the materials are received by the researcher, standard confidentiality procedures will be employed. The results of the research study may be published, but your name or any identifying information will not be used. In fact, the published results will be presented in summary form only.

The findings from this project may provide information on sustainable beauty consumption intention, products and education needs, provide insight to the beauty industry on how to meet the needs of African-American beauty consumers better, and information on how the

merchandising of beauty products is linked to health and wellness for Black women. There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research. Focus group participants will receive an incentive of a box of natural beauty products valued at approximately $100 for their participation in the study.

The focus group sessions will be audio taped so the researcher can later transcribe the data for analysis or will be received in written format through focus group chat data. Audio data will be transcribed and then destroyed. The data from the recordings and text may be used in future publications and presentations.

If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to email Melodie Davis-Bundrage at mrdb@uga.edu or Dr. Katalin Medvedev at medvedev@uga.edu. Questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant should be directed to The Chairperson, University of Georgia Institutional Review Board, 629 Boyd GSRC, Athens, Georgia 30602; telephone (706) 542-3199; email address irb@uga.edu.

By signing the consent form below, you are agreeing to participate in the focus group for the above described research project and you will be contacted with details on scheduling focus group sessions. Signing into the focus group session with your name and/or email address is also an agreement to consent and once on the recording you will also be asked to provide a verbal affirmation as consent.

Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Melodie Davis-Bundrage

Research Subject's Consent to Participate in Research:
To voluntarily agree to take part in this study, you must sign on the line below. Your signature below indicates that you have read or had read to you this entire consent form, and have had all of your questions answered.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Signature	Date

Please sign and return to the researcher via email to mrdb@uga.edu.

APPENDIX H

Code System

Code System		
Theme	**Subtheme**	**Memo/Description**
Health Belief Model Codes		
Likelihood of Buying (PI)		Dependent variable to this study
Parental Status		Whether or not the participant is a parent or not or is currently pregnant
	Family Status	
	Caring for Family	
Hair Type		Natural, relaxed or transitioning are the options
Lifestyle		Level of commitment to a healthy or natural lifestyle. Whether or not the participant is currently leading any type of natural or holistic lifestyle. This includes diet or dietary restrictions, exercise, herbals etc. including but not limited to vegan, vegetarian, plant-based, DIY etc.
	Natural Hair Journey	
	Healthy Ingredients & Overall Lifestyle	
	Healthy Eating	
Knowledge		Level of knowledge about healthy beauty products or toxicity level in beauty products. How that knowledge was obtained.
	Level of Knowledge	
	Obtaining Knowledge	
Cues to Action		What cues prompt action to change to healthier product use. Internal or external?
	External to Individual	
	Internal to Individual	

Self-Efficacy		Level of confidence in ability to select healthy beauty products
Perceived Barriers		What barriers prevent black women from having higher PI
	Business Practices of the Retailer	Participants cite examples of when the retailers business practices stop them from buying natural products from them even when they are the only ones that carry a product line
	Uncomfortable with Change	Happiness with current products or desire to not change them
	Lack of time or priority	
	Lack of short-term proof	Health benefits are long-term so when not realized or thought about in the short-term that lack of proof becomes a barrier to buying natural now
	Racism/Colorism/Lack of Acceptance	
	Accessibility/ Convenience	
	Price/Affordability	
Perceived Benefits		The belief that use of natural product benefit the participant in some form - they are healthier, they have better ingredients etc.
	Multipurpose & Less Expensive	Using natural products or ingredients means to participants that they can use the products for more than one purpose (beauty and cooking like coconut oil) or that kitchen ingredients are less expensive than branded products or that natural ingredients are less than getting relaxers every 6 weeks
	Appearance Benefits	How the participant looks or they have been told they look.
	Health Benefits	
	Better Ingredients	Better ingredients is a perceived benefit of using natural or organic products. Perceptions as well as statement looking for these better ingredients due to the perception
Perceived Susceptibility		Participant belief that they are susceptible to poor health by use of synthetic beauty products or better health by using natural products
Perceived Seriousness		Participant belief that health issues or illnesses connected to beauty product use is a serious issue
Grounded Theory Codes		
Blackness		Participant comments about their experience as consumers of beauty products relating to their blackness or desires for retailers to

		include diversity in their marketing techniques
	Class with Black Community	
	Tribal Marketing	
	The Black Awakening (Spiritual)	
	Supporting Black Businesses	Buying from black companies or black cosmetic companies having the ability to serve black consumers better
Natural ≠ Healthy		Comments by the participants that natural has a loose meaning and is different to different people. Natural may mean no chemical treatments but does not take into consideration using toxin free products for overall health. To get to that point is a journey than some have begun or are dedicated to but many do not. It will be important to know how to differentiate consumers that go further into naturalness.
Age/ Generational Differences		Age of participants but also their comments about which age groups or generations prefer or are impacted in different ways about natural and organics
Self-Discovery, Self-Love & Mindful Growth		
Product Preferences		What types of products do the participants prefer to be natural or organic - which categories (example: lipsticks) as well as what product marketing claims (example: hypoallergenic)?
Recommendations to Industry		Both direct and indirect statements participants made as recommendations to industry
Feelings toward the beauty industry		The participants expression of how they feel about the beauty industry
Feelings about shopping for beauty products		The participants expression of how they feel about navigating the stores or shopping for beauty products for themselves
Buying & Making Products		Where and how participants stated they do shop for beauty products including specific brands named
	Channels - Online vs. In-Store	
	Policies & Business Practices	
	DIY	
	Brands & Retailers	