Review Paper

THE INCREASING CONSUMPTION OF GROOMING PRODUCTS AND COSMETICS AMONG THE MALES

Tan Sok Leng
KDU University College Penang
32, Jalan Anson, 10400 Penang, Malaysia.
soklengtan94@gmail.com

Abstract

Understanding the behaviour of consumers is of utmost importance for marketers and retailers in segmenting and thus targeting and positioning their products to specific group of consumers. There are various aspects that play an important role in shaping consumer behaviour and one of them is gender. In a society, there are certain behavior and expectations that are deemed appropriate for different gender. Men and women tend to differ greatly in their behaviors as consumers. For instance, females are often associated with beauty-related products such as fashion apparels and grooming products. Most previous researches about the consumption of grooming products have largely been focused on female consumers whereas males are being marginalized in this issue. However, there seems to be a shift in the male behaviour towards purchasing and the usage of grooming products in recent years. Therefore, this review intends to identify some factors that trigger the changes in the male behaviour regarding grooming products and cosmetics. In studying these changes in consumer behaviour, the behaviours of the French and Canadian males would be analysed to see if there are differences in motivation behind their growing consumption of grooming products and cosmetics. The study suggests there are some differences in the factors that motivate the men in both countries in the usage of grooming products and cosmetics where French males are mostly affected by the purchase situation while in the context of Canadian males, self-image, the effects of ageing and lifestyles motivate them to resort to using grooming products. Nevertheless, the men in both countries share some similarities in the sense that advertisements and the desire to be attractive lead them to the consumption of cosmetics.

Key Terms: Gender, Men, Consumer behavior, Grooming products, Segmentation, Motivation

1. Introduction

Consumer behaviour concerns with the process of selecting, using and disposing of certain products or services by consumers (Bakshi, 2012). In the course of understanding the behaviour of consumers, one of the main factors that had often been taken into consideration is gender. Gender is also one of the most common characteristics used by marketers in segmenting their consumers. Gender and sex are often being used interchangeably but there are actually differences in these terms. Gender is defined as roles which are constructed culturally or socially unlike the term sex which is biological (Herter, dos Santos and Pinto, 2014). The consumer market is becoming more diverse with the presence of genders which are non-biological such as the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. However, male and female are two main terms which could not be left out when it comes to gender. Many people believe that the
consumption behaviours of different genders are fundamentally different because they have different needs, personalities and roles. For example, females are often being affiliated with beauty-related products such as fashion apparels and grooming products (Zayer and Neier, 2011). Most previous researches about the consumption of grooming products have largely been focused on female consumers whereas males are being marginalized in this issue (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2006). However, there seems to be a shift in the male behaviour towards purchasing and the usage of grooming products in recent years. The market of grooming products for the males is indeed an opportunity for manufacturers as it is expanding at a rapid pace. This review thus intends to identify some factors that trigger the changes in the male behaviour regarding cosmetics and grooming products. The behaviours of the French and Canadian males would be analysed to see if there are differences in motivation behind their growing consumption of cosmetics.

The review paper is divided into three sections. The first sections would be about the background of the market for male grooming products. The second section deals with the analysis of the different factors that affects the consumption of grooming products among the males, particularly in France and Canada. The different factors are then being compared and contrasted. Finally, in the third section, a conclusion is being drawn and the suggestion for further research is being presented.

2. Literature Review

Background of the male grooming products market

In the world today, it is no longer a surprise to see a man at the store, shopping for grooming products and cosmetics. More times are spent by men on enhancing their self-image by purchasing grooming products for themselves (Weber and de Villebonne, 2002). Some men even post tutorial videos about the usage of cosmetics on the social media (Hall, Gough and Seymour-Smith, 2012). There are several factors which are said to be the motivations behind the increased consumption of grooming products by the males. Grooming products and cosmetics have always been seen as sex-typed products which are in favour of the females. A product is known as sex-typed when it has either a highly feminine or masculine characteristic (Bakshi, 2012). The first thing that comes to mind for most people when it comes to cosmetics is the makeups, perfumes and other things which are intended for the females (Kumar, Massie and Dumonceaux, 2006). However, grooming products and cosmetics are not limited to these but consist of a wider range of products mainly for the purpose of beautifying such as body wash, lotion and deodorant. Since these are often related to females, the male consumers who are increasingly interested in cosmetics might encounter motivational conflict especially the approach-avoidance conflict. They have the desire to enhance their image through cosmetics but at the same time, they are afraid that they might be considered as gays (Hall, Gough and Seymour-Smith, 2013).

Since grooming products and cosmetics are getting more attention from the males, marketers are trying their best to satisfy their needs. The first cosmetic company which initially targets women that created and launched a product line specifically for the men is Estée Lauder (Kumar, Massie and Dumonceaux, 2006). There are other various companies which cater to the increasing demand of males for grooming products such as L'Oreal, Procter & Gamble and Unilever. One of the main factors that encouraged males to use cosmetics is related to their self-concepts (Sturrock and Pioch, 1998). However, the males from different backgrounds could be motivated differently in purchasing and consuming cosmetics. For example, the males in France and Canada might have their own reasons for using cosmetics and other products to groom themselves. According to Souiden and Diagne (2009), the research carried out on the males in Paris and Montreal which are metropolitan in France and Canada respectively was done quantitatively using questionnaires on the attitudes of men regarding the consumption of cosmetics which are conventionally seen as something effeminate. It is more likely that the males in metropolitan cities would spend on cosmetics designated for men and they are known
as metrosexual men (Souiden and Diagne, 2009). Although metrosexual men are more conscious about their appearances, they are neither homosexual nor are they androgynous (Hall, Gough and Seymour-Smith, 2012). While they put great emphasis on their images by shopping and using cosmetics, they maintain their masculine identity at the same time (Thota, et al, 2014).

Factors affecting the male consumption of grooming products

There are many factors that might affect the behaviours of the males towards the buying and usage of cosmetics whether it is due to personal factors, socio-cultural factors or the impact of marketing (Souiden and Diagne, 2009). The modern society is placing more emphasis on the image as well as appearance of a person (McNeill and Douglas, 2011) and men are not excluded from it. Thus, males are getting more concerned about their images which encourage them to start grooming themselves. The creation and maintenance of self-image is one of the biggest personal motivations for males to consume grooming products (Sturrock and Pioch, 1998). By grooming and using cosmetics, a male is not only able to enhance his image physically but his psychological image is elevated as well (Souiden and Diagne, 2009) because he is more confident about his appearance. For example, some people tend to shun or shy away from those who has body odours and this could have impact negatively on a person's confidence. By using grooming products like deodorant, this issue could be overcome and their morale could be greatly boosted. However, it is found that this does not apply to the French males because the idea of improving self-image does not have a significant influence regarding the change of the male behaviour towards grooming products. On the other hand, the behaviour of the Canadian males towards grooming and cosmetic products is driven by the factor of self-image.

Age is also one of the factors that encouraged males to turn to grooming products. The signs of ageing which are visible such as wrinkles and greying hair could be overcame or modified by using products such as anti-ageing creams and hair dye (Hall, Gough and Seymour-Smith, 2013). The ageing factor does not seem to have significant effect on the consumption of cosmetics by the French males but has impacts on the Canadian males in a positive manner (Souiden and Diagne, 2009). This finding regarding Canadian males is supported by Sturrock and Pioch (1998) as well as Coupland (2007) who claim that the change in behaviour of men towards grooming and cosmetics is due to the awareness of men about the effects of ageing. Based on the qualitative research through interviews done by Sturrock and Pioch (1998), it is found that some men resort to cosmetics because they want to maintain their youthful looks in order to suit their partners.

Besides that, the desire to become more attractive also motivates men to increase the consumption of grooming products (Sturrock and Pioch, 1998). This factor yields positive results from the males in both France and Canada (Souiden and Diagne, 2009) which proves that attractiveness indeed has a great influence on the consumption of cosmetics among the males in both countries as well as males in general. Men want to be physically attractive especially to the members of the opposite gender because a good physical profile such as clean-shaven and nice smelling could be appealing to their partners or potential partners. This is further proven by the study conducted by van Paasschen et al. (2015) which shows that the use of fragrance cosmetics such as deodorants and perfumes could enhance the body image as well as the confidence of a person. It is also found that besides the looks of a man, women tend to be attracted and give a higher rating to a man who has a pleasant odour.

According to Sturrock and Pioch (1998), the concern about health stimulates the males to resort to using grooming products. As men start to grow older, they tend to become more mindful about their health. They become more conscious about everything such as the condition of their skin which could be an indicator of the health of a person. When they notice changes in their skin such as spotting, pale and dry skin, they are motivated to find remedy such as by using lotions and moisturizers to restore its condition. However, the findings of Sturrock and Pioch (1998) about the positive relation between health concerns and the behavioural change of the males towards cosmetics contradict with the results from the research of Souiden and...
Diagne (2009) on the French and Canadian males. Based on the research results, it is found that the health factor have insignificant impact on the consumption of cosmetics of both the French and Canadian males.

From the socio-cultural viewpoint, the grooming products and cosmetics consumption by the males is also heavily influenced by their beliefs and cultures. Each society tends to have their own cultures which could be analysed in accordance to different cultural dimensions such as power distance, uncertainty avoidance as well as masculinity and femininity that could distinguish them from one another (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010). Grooming products and cosmetics have always been associated with women (Zayer and Neier, 2011). With regards to the issue of the usage of cosmetics and grooming products, one of the most significant cultural dimensions that play an important role is the masculinity and femininity dimension. Different countries have their own unique cultures which might have impact on the behaviour of males regarding cosmetics. This view is supported by Weber and de Villebonne (2002) who said that the behaviour of consumers is related to the culture that they embraced. For example, in a highly masculine country like New Zealand, although it is undeniable that the cosmetics market for the males are expanding, most of the males are still not really comfortable with the usage of grooming products which are specialized for men because it is feared that their masculine identity would be threatened by the usage of products which have traditionally been for the females (McNeill and Douglas, 2011). In a highly masculine society, there are certain expectations that men must uphold and since the usage of cosmetics and grooming products are seen as highly effeminate, men are afraid that their masculinity would be challenged if they use cosmetics and grooming products. However, beliefs and culture seem to have no clear impact on the cosmetics consumption patterns of the males in France and Canada (Souiden and Diagne, 2009).

The consumer behaviour towards the consumption of certain products is said to be influenced by the lifestyle of a person (Coley and Burgess, 2003). In the modern world, the consumption of material goods such as clothes and grooming products are not solely because of the functional benefits obtained from them but they are also seen as an indicator of taste and lifestyle of a person (Thota et al., 2014). Therefore, the lifestyle that a person leads has significant impact on the consumption of grooming products and cosmetics. For example, it is found that couples who are married tend to spend the least time in grooming themselves (van Paasschen et al., 2015) which might be due to the fact that since they are already used to their lifestyles around each other, they do not find it necessary for them to groom. According to Sturrock and Pioch (1998), the category of males who are most likely to groom and use cosmetics to maintain or enhance their self-images are those in the professional and managerial jobs because they have both the time as well as money to spare. Due to their lifestyles, men who are career-oriented would be more concern about their appearances because of the nature of their jobs where they need to constantly socialize and meet new people and first impressions are vital. The lifestyle factor has a major influence on the Canadian males when they choose to consume grooming products and cosmetics but it is found that the usage of these products among the French males are not significantly influenced by this factor (Souiden and Diagne, 2009).

The strategy used by marketers to promote their products such as advertisements could also be a factor for the increase in males who are fascinated with the use of grooming products. Based on the findings of Souiden and Diagne (2009), both the French and Canadian males show positive attitudes and are influenced to use cosmetics because of advertisements on televisions or magazines which are directed to men such as Men’s Health. As the market of cosmetics for men is gaining momentum, advertisements are not only focused on the female consumers but more advertisements are being directed to the males as well. Advertisements help in creating awareness of the males regarding the importance of their appearances (McNeill and Douglas, 2011) and the portrayal of masculine men in cosmetics advertisements could influence the buying decisions of the males (Feasey, 2009). This could be related to the expectancy theory where a person is motivated to use certain product because of the positive outcomes which is said to result from it. When the males are exposed to advertisements of cosmetics such as face
wash which feature attractive men with beautiful, clean faces, they tend to be interested in using the product because they expect the results from the consumption would be the same as shown. Furthermore, some marketers use popular celebrities to endorse their cosmetic products in advertisements which help to modify the perception of men towards cosmetics (Souiden and Diagne, 2009) and they feel more comfortable with the idea of the consumption of grooming products and cosmetics by males.

The purchase situation such as the environment of the store and its location is also found to have impacts on the decisions of men when they purchase cosmetics (Weber and de Villebonne, 2002). This is proven to be true in the context of the French males whereas the Canadian males are not influenced by the situation when they purchase cosmetics for themselves (Souiden and Diagne, 2009). In France, men cosmetics could only be found in selected outlets such as the pharmacies and department stores (Weber and de Villebonne, 2002) whereas in Canada, men grooming products and cosmetics are distributed through places like supermarkets and even the internet (Souiden and Diagne, 2009). Some men like to remain discreet about their consumption of cosmetics and purchasing through online might be a good way for them. Thus, this might be the reason why purchasing situations do not have significant impact on the consumption of cosmetics by the Canadian males. The purchasing situation could generally be related to the shopping behaviour of men. From the perspective of the males, shopping is seen as a mission which is best to be completed using the least effort and time compared to females who enjoy the process of shopping and treat it as a valuable overall experience (Herter, dos Santos and Pinto, 2014). This is in line with the findings of Thota et al. (2014) which state that when shopping for cosmetics, men prioritize convenience. They would prefer to shop at a place located near them and it is unlikely for them to travel to a location just to buy cosmetics on purpose.

In conclusion, grooming and the use of cosmetics by the males are getting more acceptable. It is no doubt that cosmetics are often being associated with the females but the situation is changing with the flow of time. In the modern society, males are getting more interested and fascinated with the consumption of these products to enhance their appearance because with the use of cosmetics, flaws could be concealed which could boost their self-confidence. There are different sources of motivation that encourage males into purchasing and using grooming products and cosmetics. With regards to the French and Canadian males, they got their own reasons that lead to the increase in the consumption of cosmetics which could be

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Figure 1: The factors that affect the consumption of cosmetics and grooming products of the French and Canadian males respectively.

3. Conclusion
seen in Figure 1. The males in France take the purchasing situation into consideration when they buy cosmetics. On the other hand, the Canadian males mostly resort to using grooming products and cosmetics due to the increase in awareness about their self-image, the effects of ageing and their lifestyles. The men in both countries share some similarities in the sense that advertisements and the desire to be attractive lead them to the consumption of cosmetics. In both countries, their beliefs or cultures and the concern about health seem to have little impact on their behaviours towards cosmetics. Overall, the males in both France and Canada seem to be positive regarding the purchasing and using of grooming products and cosmetics. This review about the behaviour of males towards cosmetics consumption is only with reference to the males in two Western countries, France and Canada. Further research about the change in male behaviour about cosmetics could be carried out in other places such as Asian countries. With difference in cultures, the motivating factors that drive the males in Asian countries to use cosmetics could be different from Western countries. The rise of the Korean pop culture which features some boy bands with well-groomed appearance that is taking the world by storm could also have effects on the perception of men towards cosmetics and grooming products. Other factors that might have impact on the male consumption of cosmetics such as the colour of products or packaging could also be investigated.

Reference


