

Cognitive Dissonance and Purchase Involvement of Male Youth for Cosmetics: An Empirical Study in Delhi/NCR

Anagha Shukre*

This paper highlights the cognitive dissonance of male consumers for cosmetic products. Cosmetic products have been the biggest facilitator in helping the aspiring youth to make them look better and attractive. The male cosmetic industry is already in growing stage and is sure to rise by leaps and bounds. The macho and robust image of a young boy has now been replaced by sweet, chocolate and gentleman like image. Thanks to the use of varied forms of cosmetics manufactured nowadays especially for males. The male consumers have different personal reasons to use them. The empirical study conducted in Delhi/NCR with a sample size of 150 respondents tries to find out the purchase behaviors of young males towards cosmetics, their attitudes and opinions, and also to discover factors that influence their buying decisions. The study also makes an attempt to find out the impact of cognitive dissonance on males while purchasing cosmetics for themselves.

Introduction and Need of the Study

The general concern for appearance is not just a phenomenon of today. Every period of history has had its own standards for the ideal physical attractiveness of people. Throughout ages, women have used different kinds of beauty products. Since the beginning of the twentieth-century, the cosmetics industry, together with advertising, aims at selling ideal self-images. A cosmetic was not a famous word amongst males till last decade. They believed in being projected as masculine or as a macho man. But with the advent of time, with changing fads and fashions, men have started investing their time and money on their looks. Getting conscious, the men were initially driven to consume female cosmetic products. The marketers very much identified this change and responded by developing products specifically targeted at males. These products were very much appreciated and received by the male society. This led to the advent of the whole new market for male cosmetics. Male cosmetics consumption has been on the rise in recent years with extremely strong growth in the area of skin and personal care products.

L'Oréal had the courage to launch itself in this segment in 1985 with Biotherm Homme. In fact, Biotherm was almost alone for more than 15 years, and it was the first brand which dared to proclaim that men also needed to take care of themselves, to clean their skin, combining the pleasure and the wellness by using creams, lotions, even anti-wrinkle creams. In the 90s, Nickel, an exclusive brand for

men, launched an offensive campaign by creating masculine beauty institutes which in 1996, was followed by the launch of different brands in men's cosmetic care. But, the real revolution occurred in 2001 with the arrival of Vichy for men and Clarins in 2002. A lot of brands begin to be seriously interested in this growing segment and real competition appears. A new potential is detected by the big cosmetologist firms. (11)(12)

Literature Review

By nature or nurture, human beings appear to prefer cognitions that are in consonance to those that are not. Cognitive dissonance is a psychological phenomenon that occurs when there is a discrepancy between what a person believes and information that calls this into question (Festinger, 1957) (1). It is psychologically uncomfortable to hold contradictory cognitions. The psychological discomfort triggers a mental recovery process in the affected individual that can lead to: 1) search for information supportive of the held belief coupled with constant attempts to downplay the cognitions that resulted in the phenomenon of dissonance 2) to a change in belief reflective of the new condition. Later researchers of cognitive dissonance took leads from the original work by Festinger (1957)(1) and proposed more sophisticated dissonance models: self-consistency model(2), self-affirmation model (Sherman)(3) and the new look perspective (Cooper and Fazio, 1984). Although cognitive dissonance has had a long tradition in marketing theory, interest dedicated to empirical research involving cognitive dissonance has been fluctuating, note Koller and Salzberger(2007)(5). The moments immediately after purchase trigger a series of thoughts in the minds of customers. The positive aspects of the lost

*Asst. Prof., Inst. of Management Studies, Delhi/NCR region.)

alternative and the negative aspects of the gained alternative join together and generate mental unsettledness, thus making the customer rethink the wisdom of the purchase, note Kassarian and Cohen (1965)(6). After a purchase, most purchasers tend to think that their cognitive consistencies have been compromised to the various marketing interventions made by the seller (7) (8). Dissonance theory by itself is a victim of sheer academic neglect (9). Involvement, another concept of interest to the present study refers to the study of how much time, thought, energy and other resources people devote to the purchase process (Beatty and Kahle, 1988) (13). Involvement is a cognitive response to overcome uncertainty. It is the extent of interest and concern that a consumer brings to bear on a purchase decision task Laurent and Kapferer (1985)(14) suggest that the consequences of involvement is dependent on the antecedents of involvement, such as the product's pleasure value, the product's sign or symbolic value, risk importance and the probability of purchase error. Increased involvement prior to consumption results in increased negative perception about the product if the performance of the product does not match up to expectations.

The "new man" may be more conscious of the way he looks, but this does not necessarily change the traditional codes of masculinity. The "new man" image may just be another variant of the old, macho, image of the man going it alone without/above women.(15) The "new man", nurturant and narcissist, was largely due to the style culture of the early 1980s, promoted by the style press. The culture legitimized men's concern with their bodies and the consumerism necessary to adopt the role. The "new man" is not a major deviation or expiration from the traditional, John Wayne-style macho man, but is simply an adaptation of the role which is better appropriate to survival in a culture that now rejects obvious machismo which is largely the result of feminism's power. The "new man" represents not so much a rebellion but an adaptation in masculinity. (16)

The continuous rise in the standards of living, the impact of the media and the more equal modern society between men and women, together have made the environment favorable for the growth in men's spending on grooming products. A research and markets report (10) has highlighted the growing trend for male grooming, detailing the particular increase in particular niche products. The use of the products has risen from a value of \$26.3 bn in 2005 to

\$29.7 in 2005, revealing the increasing importance that male grooming products currently have in the cosmetics industry. (11)(12)

The study will be useful to the marketers in comprehending the male youth market for buying cosmetics. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first time that the study pertaining to Indian male youth's buying behavior in cosmetics has been undertaken.

Research Methodology

Objectives of Study

- To understand male youth as consumers and customers of cosmetics; their current behavior, attitudes and opinions as well as their needs, wants and preferences
- To discover factors that influence male youth's purchase buying decisions for cosmetic products
- To find out the impact of cognition on males while purchasing cosmetics for themselves.

The research design followed for the study is a descriptive research design. A sample size of 150 male respondents, in the age group of 20-40 years, through convenience sampling was interrogated. A highly structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from Delhi/NCR region. Regression analysis and factor analysis have been employed to deduce findings.

Factor Analysis

Age of Respondents	No. of respondents
Below 20 yrs	8
20-25	64
26-30	34
31-35	24
36-40	16
Above 40	4
Occupation	No. of respondents
Student	86
govt. service	8
Private service	34
own business	19
Others	3
Annual income	No. of respondents
less than 2 lakhs	89
2-3 lakhs	8
3-4 lakhs	28
4-5 lakhs	14
more than 5 lakhs	11

Table 1: Demographic profile of Respondents

Out of 150 respondents, 42% i.e., 64 respondents fell in the age group of 20-25 as majority of primary data collection was done through college students residing in hostel. This segment of male population is smart, confident and bold enough to share their views on male cosmetic products. A very small size of respondents (3%) was in the age group of above 40. These are married people and not much concerned with fashions and fads. 57% of the respondents were students who are dependent on their pocket money for buying out male cosmetic products. Since the majority of the respondents were students, so the annual income group was lead by less than 2 lakhs p.a. group with 60% while more than 5 lakhs group accounted for just 7%. When it comes to purchasing of cosmetic products males prefer superstore because of variety of options to choose from and trustworthiness of the quality product being offered without any duplicity. Also there is a significant section which buys it from local retailer shop, simple reason being unplanned purchase and ease of availability. (Table 2). For table 3, respondents were free to tick as many options as they can. As expected, all the respondents ticked on shave foam/cream while face cream and after shave lotion were also found popular. Anti ageing cream had least number of respondents; reason might be that our sample audience was majority youths. In fact, deodorant and face wash were also very much popular because of increasing consciousness for hygiene and escape from bad body odor. As can be seen from table 4, the respondents have varied endurance for brands. There is very less difference in the share of Denim, Gillette and Garnier although L'Oreal being the most prominent cosmetic brand is having less share, reason may be due to high cost which students might not be able to afford. Male respondents have a huge range of purchasing advisors when it comes to buying cosmetic products for themselves. From table 5, it can be deduced that girlfriends / spouse are the biggest advisors followed by they themselves. Parents find the last spot in this category as purchase advisors. For some medical reasons even doctors are found to be purchasing advisors. Now for the most obvious question asked, what does a male customer see while buying a cosmetic product, price of the product and brand name came out to be the significant points of consideration. Celebrity endorsements have their influences but when compared to other points, they lagged behind (table 6).

Place of Purchase	No. of respondents
Superstore	56
perfumery/drugstore	28
Internet	8
local retailer shop	44
Others	14

Table 2: Place of Purchase

Products	No. of respondents
Deodorant	86
shower gel	51
shave foam/cream	150
after shave lotion	120
face wash	78
face cream/gel	131
after shave balsam	34
body lotion	68
Scrub	28
eye cream	22
treat for spots	48
anti ageing cream	28
Others	64

Table 3 Products used regularly

Most adored brand	No. of respondents
L'Oreal	16
Nivea	22
Garnier	32
Gillette	30
Denim	34
Others	16

Table 4 Most adored brand in male cosmetic segment

Purchasing advisor	No. of respondents
Female friends	20
male friends	25
Self	32
Doctor	12
Parents	4
girlfriend/spouse	41
Others	16

Table 5: The purchasing advisor

First thing that I look for while buying cosmetic product	No. of respondents
Price	40
Packaging	12
Brand	34
Features	28
Celebrity endorsements	16
Others	20

Table 6 The most influential factor for buying cosmetic product

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.592
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	468.948
	Degree of freedom	120
	Significance level	.000

Table 7 KMO Bartlett test

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
V1	.216	-.013	.617	-.013	.071
V2	-.074	.668	.220	-.407	-.016
V3	-.043	.733	.047	.210	-.081
V4	.739	-.210	.089	-.046	.008
V5	-.077	-.037	-.061	.813	-.095
V6	-.018	.132	-.108	-.133	.566
V7	.765	.016	.217	.082	.058
V8	.026	.158	.289	.743	.146
V9	-.219	.804	.084	.199	-.003
V10	.111	-.072	.005	-.114	.863
V11	.530	.072	.256	.240	.303
V12	.750	-.031	.052	.174	-.013
V13	-.035	.053	.035	.832	.146
V14	.701	-.074	.105	-.062	.039
V15	-.074	-.058	.064	.087	.884
V16	.066	.318	-.046	.773	-.084
V17	-.018	.132	.593	-.133	.132
V18	.256	.072	.530	.240	.303

Table 8: Communalities Matrix

For factor analysis, total 18 variables ranging from V1 to V18 were formed. They were clubbed into five homogeneous groups. The five factors are Perception, Self-Image, Societal Expectation, Consumption & Celebrity endorsement. (Tables 7,8,9).

Factors	Variables
1) Perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (V1)I feel proud being looked upon as stylish & fashionable (17)When I am fit groom and cleaned, I look more attractive (18)I feel more comfortable in women's company after applying cosmetic products
2) Self image	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (V2)I am willing to spend time in front of mirror to get ideal hairstyle (V3)I am very concerned about my appearance (V9)I try different products to create the image in my mind of what I wanted
3) Societal expectation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (V4)I use different grooming products to distinguish my image between the social and professional fields (V7)I want to look better and younger in the eye of others

Factors	Variables
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (V11)I purchase skin care products (to solve acne problems), because people around me have flawless skin (V12)Using cosmetic products help me to stand out at public place & social gatherings and become popular (V14)I used fragrance, because my partner thinks the smell makes me more attractive
4) Consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (V5)Increasing consumption of cosmetic products give me satisfaction (V8)I usually purchase and try new type of cosmetic products (V13)I usually purchase and try new type of cosmetic products (V16)I have an urge to be updated with the latest trends in male cosmetic products
5) Celebrity Endorsement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (V6)I feel happy when people associate /compare me with my favorite celebrity (V10)I used to think cosmetic products are girlish but not anymore after I saw my favorite celebrity endorsing it (V15)I would imitate and buy new product if my favorite celebrity endorses it

Table 9: Factor Naming

Regression Analysis

The hierarchical moderated regression analysis was carried out to test the effect of self image, celebrity endorsement and social expectation on the consumption behavior for male grooming products and the moderating effect of perception. Four hypotheses were set.

H1: There is a positive relationship between a man's concern towards self-image and his consumption of male grooming products.

H2: Celebrity endorsements positively influence the consumption of male grooming products.

H3: Men are positively susceptible to social expectation in the consumption of male grooming products.

H4: Better perception moderates the relationship between self-image, social expectation, celebrity endorsements the consumption of male grooming products.

This analysis has three different levels - the basic model (equation 1), the moderating effect (equation 2) and the interaction model (equation 3) as shown in the following equation.

The forms of the hierarchical moderated regression models are:

$$Y = a_1 + a_2X_1 + a_3X_2 + a_4X_3 + e \quad \text{Eqn 1}$$

$$Y = a_1 + a_2X_1 + a_3X_2 + a_4X_3 + a_5Z + e \quad \text{Eqn 2}$$

$$Y = a_1 + a_2X_1 + a_3X_2 + a_4X_3 + a_5Z + a_6X_1Z + a_7X_2Z + a_8X_3Z + e \quad \text{Eqn 3}$$

Where:

Y = customer loyalty

X1 = customer satisfaction

X2 = perceived product quality

W1 = values and lifestyles

e = error term

The table 10 shows the summary results of the hierarchical moderated regressions that seek to measure the relationship between the variables.

	step 1	step 2	step 3
constant	0.756**	0.368	.877
self image	0.065	0.041	-.050
celebrity endorsement	0.346**	0.32**	0.42
social expectation	0.311**	0.296**	0.169
perception		0.163*	0.024
image * post			0.026
celebrity * post			-0.027
social * post			0.033
R square	0.517	0.527	0.527
adjusted R square	0.512	0.52	0.515
p-value (F-test Statistics)	0.000	0.000	0.000

** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05

Table 10 The moderating effects of perception

Based on the equation coefficient of each variable that is listed on Table 2, the equations are:

$$Y^{\wedge} = 0.756^{**} + 0.065X_1 + 0.346X_2^{**} + 0.311X_3^{**} \quad (1)$$

$$Y^{\wedge} = 0.68 + 0.041X_1 + 0.320X_2^{**} + 0.296X_3^{**} + 0.163X_4^* \quad (2)$$

$$Y^{\wedge} = 0.877 - 0.050X_1 + 0.420X_2 + 0.169X_3 + 0.024Z + 0.026X_1Z - 0.027X_2Z + 0.033X_3Z \quad (3)$$

The regression analysis indicates that celebrity endorsement, social expectation and perception are positively related at p < 0.01 levels. The interaction terms which are self image * perception, celebrity endorsement * perception and social expectation * perception also significantly contribute to consumption behavior towards male grooming products (F = 53.64; p = 0.000). The adjusted R square is at 0.515. The inclusion of the moderating effect of perception explains greater variation in the consumption behavior of metrosexuals. Adjusted R square indicates that 51.5% of the variation in consumption behavior is explained by the self image, celebrity endorsement, social expectation and perception. This evidence supports the

interaction effect of perception on the relationship between consumption and the variables – self image, celebrity endorsement and social expectation. Hence, hypothesis 4 is supported.

The connection between the price and the quality is crucial. Indeed, it has been demonstrated that the most important factors are the price, the brand and the packaging. Thus, it helps to understand the reasons why the most popular distribution channel is the super stores where famous brand – synonym of quality in the people's mind – are represented with accessible prices. The emergence of this full market gave men a real autonomy when they buy cosmetics, though a woman has still a great influence on the way men purchased cosmetics. This tendency is certainly true nowadays but they are more independent that they used to be. Apart from hygiene reasons, men are mostly using cosmetics to improve their self image, which leads to the idea that the individualism is a core concept when talking about cosmetics. This statement sums up the two main streams: improving the self image and therefore the self esteem.

Limitations

It is tough to decipher any firm idea about the preferences and liking of males towards cosmetic products as they have varied opinions. Socio-cultural environment from place to place has its own impact. The sample size taken for the study is small, when compared to the total male youth population of the region.

Conclusion

Cosmetics are a full market and apparently, the individualism and the appearance power have overtaken the feminine connotations. It is important to consider the cosmetics' world in two distinct parts; the market for the men and the one for the women. Even if there are not big distinctions between the products, those two markets are quite different. In fact, the men have not the same demand concerning the product. That is why the offer cannot be the same for both. The ideal product for most men must have some properties and qualities such as being invisible, fast, pleasant to put, easy to use, without fragrance and with an efficient result. Thus, men do not search for a feminine product, otherwise, they will continue to use their wife's ones. They really look for a product adapted to them and to their needs and wants. Moreover, the demand is different from the women. Men will be

more attracted by products for shaving, for hair applications. But this current demand will probably change in the next years. The strength of a brand is to stay in a masculine tonality and use names with a masculine connotation.

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