

Canadian and French men's consumption of cosmetics: a comparison of their attitudes and motivations

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to investigate the attitude of males toward the consumption and purchase of men's cosmetic products. More specifically, the research intends to clarify the impact of personal variables (i.e. self-image consciousness, ageing effects, physical attractiveness, state of health), socio-cultural variables (i.e. beliefs, lifestyle), and marketing variables (i.e. advertising, purchase situation) on the attitude of Canadian and French males toward the purchase and consumption of men's cosmetics.

Design/methodology/approach – A questionnaire was distributed to men living in two metropolitan cities: Paris (France) and Montreal (Canada). The total sample consists of 223 respondents of which 53.8 per cent are Canadian and 46.2 per cent French.

Findings – French and Canadian men were found to have different motivations and drives when considering the consumption and purchase of men's grooming products.

Research limitations/implications – The convenience sampling technique used in the present research does not indicate a fully representative profile of the population in Canada and France. Also, it is important to extend the research to some "conservative" societies. Men's cosmetic products in both countries are at different stages of the life cycle and accordingly consumers' attitudes and motivations to buy cosmetics are found to vary between the two countries.

Originality/value – Despite the fact that the cosmetic market is traditionally associated with women, the current paper contributes to shedding light on the importance of the men's grooming segment, revealing the major variables that affect men's behavior and attitude toward the consumption of cosmetic products and pointing out that consumers' motivations and attitudes differ among markets when the product is at different stages of the life cycle.

Keywords Cosmetics, Cross-cultural studies, Lifestyles, Advertising, Motivation (psychology), Consumer behaviour

Paper type Research paper

An executive summary for managers and executive readers can be found at the end of this article.

Introduction

Despite the fact that the cosmetic industry is traditionally associated with women; there is an increasing demand for cosmetics by men. The male niche cosmetic market is growing at a fast pace and is gradually representing an important opportunity for all manufacturers in the industry. According to a survey conducted by L'Oreal; a key player in the cosmetic business; in 1990, only four per cent of men claim to regularly use a facial care product, compared to 21 per cent in 2001. In 2015, this percentage is expected to increase to 50 per cent. Recent figures also show that in Western countries, skin care products for men represent more than 30 per cent of the whole cosmetic market. More specifically, about 40 per cent of men in France use high-end skin care products, in the UK, they spend £100 million a year on cosmetics; while their counterparts in the US spend as much as US\$2.3 billion on

skin care each year (Euromonitor International, 2007). Sales are predicted to grow by 18 per cent globally between 2006 and 2011, when the market is expected to be worth \$25 billion. Another market research estimated that the US and European men's cosmetic markets will grow from \$31.5 billion in 2003 to \$37.6 billion in 2008 (Datamonitor, 2005). All these figures indicate the increasing importance that male grooming products currently have in the cosmetic industry. Following this trend, several cosmetic corporations have switched their focus to the male consumer in order to increase their market shares. Furthermore, companies are no longer opting to produce the stereotypical male toiletries products, such as shaving foam and razors, but are now focusing increasingly on developing niche products. Indeed, major cosmetic companies have created dedicated products for men such as face creams, anti-wrinkle creams, bronzing products, hair coloring and toning gels. However, despite the increasing importance of the male cosmetic segment, little attention is given to research on the attitude of males toward the consumption of grooming products. The lack of studies in this domain has triggered our interest to shed the light on this particular market segment by identifying men's motivation and attitude towards the consumption of cosmetics.

The paper is divided into five sections. The first section deals with the literature on male consumption behavior, particularly in regard to cosmetic products. The discussion in this section leads to the formulation of the research hypotheses. The second section is empirically based and

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intends to analyze the results and test our research hypotheses in two countries – France and Canada. The third section highlights the study's theoretical and managerial implications. Finally, conclusion and research limits are presented.

Theoretical background and hypotheses

Are cosmetics a gender related product?

Research on gender differences has been quite extensive in the context of consumption-related behavior. More specifically, several studies have focused on the effect of gender on appearance-related attitudes and behaviors (Burton *et al.*, 1995). It has been found that men and women process information differently with regard of their consumption of products (Coley and Burgess, 2003). Also, men were found to approach their shopping task differently (Chiger, 2001). Additionally, women have historically been found to be more likely to shop for aesthetic products, while men are more likely to shop for functional products (Dittmar *et al.*, 1996; Rook and Hoch, 1985). Women's behavior is generally thought as being more emotionally and psychologically rooted than men, suggesting that men are less susceptible to impulse purchasing. However, other researchers have suggested that, if the number of purchases is held constant, men and women have the same degree of susceptibility to impulse purchases (Kollat and Willett, 1967).

When examining the consumption of cosmetics, one cannot ignore that it has traditionally been confined to female consumers (Dano *et al.*, 2003; Nixon, 1992) since grooming products are considered as a pervasive element of women's culture (Coulter *et al.*, 2003). Additionally, there is copious academic research on female consumption behavior in relation to cosmetic products. On the other hand, men's shopping behavior of grooming products has received scant attention (Woodruffe-Burton, 1998). However, changes have occurred in the cosmetic market to the extent that men have become key consumers for several cosmetic companies. Indeed, despite that it has been the woman's job to shop for men (cosmetic products), now, more than ever, men are more likely to purchase their own personal care items. They are increasingly involved in shopping activities while maintaining their masculine identity (Loo-Lee *et al.*, 2005). Thus, they are becoming more and more comfortable with the idea of purchasing their own toiletries, fragrances and skin care products (Sturrock and Pioch, 1998). These changes in men's behaviors are partially caused by sociocultural pressures. For instance, in current Western societies, people live in a period of transition from the modern to the postmodern period. Social and technological changes create postmodern conditions which are reflected in consumer behavior (Van Raaij, 1993). Probably one of the most relevant features of the postmodern approach to consumption is that women and men are equally involved in the practices of consumption (Sturrock and Pioch, 1998). To further boost this change in men's attitude and behavior, the cosmetic industry has undertaken different studies and developed different strategies to answer men's needs (Weber and de Villebonne, 2002). Recent studies show that men aged between 18–34 shop considerably more than older men in retail channels and that those aged 16–24 are more openly shopping for health and beauty aids than in the past years (Coley and Burgess, 2003). For some researchers, the increase in men's consumption of cosmetic products is an evidence of gender-

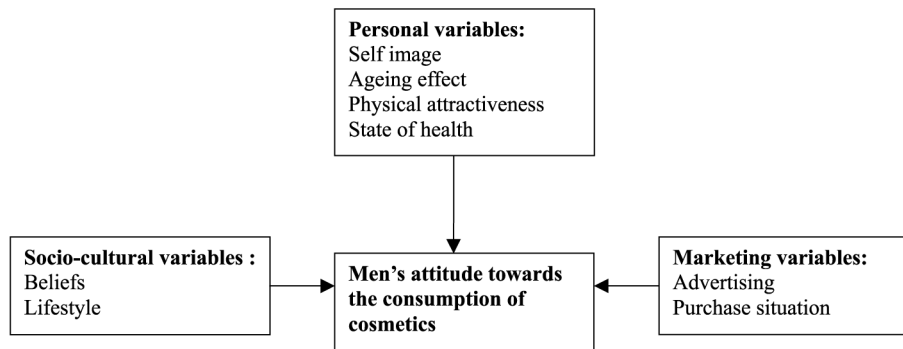
blurring (Kacen, 2000). The emergence of aesthetically conscious young men is considered a phenomenal change in the society to the extent that nowadays we talk about "feminization of masculinity" (Iida, 2004) and "metrosexual" generation (e.g. Clarkson, 2005). Metrosexual men are those who live in big cities (i.e. metropolitan cities), attribute high importance to their aesthetic appearance and spend a considerable amount of money and efforts to boost their self images and lifestyles. It is important to note, however, that metrosexual people are neither homosexual nor androgynous. They consider themselves as virile people who challenge conventional masculine values (e.g. machismo) by having a new and trendy lifestyle (e.g. they pay a lot of attention to their look and spend their time and money on products such as fitness clubs, healthy food, fashion, etc.). Despite that male consumers increasingly represent a potentially lucrative market for cosmetic marketers; there has been limited number of cases reflecting male-targeted strategies in the cosmetic industry. Perhaps the most recognized ones are the media strategies that are directly targeting men and which are partially responsible for the increase of men's consumption of cosmetic products.

Our review of the few published studies focusing on men's behavior and attitude when considering the purchase of grooming products reveals that there is a range of variables that might have an impact on men's consumption of cosmetics. We regrouped these variables into three major categories (Figure 1). The first category can be referred to as personal variables. These concern men's self-image, ageing effects, state of health, and physical attractiveness. The second category of variables can be referred to as socio-cultural variables. These concern societal beliefs and consumers' lifestyle. Finally, the third category of variables can be referred to as marketing variables and are represented by factors such as advertising and purchase situation. The following sections will shed light on the importance of these different variables and their corresponding impact on men's consumption of grooming products.

Personal variables

Male self-image concerns as a stimulus for cosmetics consumption

According to Kellner (1992), consumption is not exclusively and purely concerned with the act of consuming itself, but more importantly, with the creation of identities through the complex process of consumption activity. Consumption in the postmodern world serves as a determinant in the construction of a fragmented identity (Kellner, 1992) and individuals define their self-image through the consumption of products (Firat *et al.*, 1995). Also, in the postmodern approach to consumption, the self is conceptualized neither as an outcome of a social system nor as a static and fixed entity which the individual can simply adopt, but as something the person constantly creates, partially through consumption (Giddens, 1993). Components of the self-concept include physical, psychological, and social attributes, which can be influenced by the individual's attitudes, habits, beliefs and ideas. Due to their nature, cosmetics may be considered as one of the tools that men may use to boost their self-concept and image. For instance, according to Cash and Pruzinsky (2002), a stain on the skin can lead to a discomfort situation, which in turn can diminish self-esteem. The use of cosmetics in such situations might be the quick and proper remedy to manage the self-image. In fact, cosmetics may improve not only the physical

Figure 1 Major variables affecting men's consumption of cosmetic products

appearance of the man but also his psychological image by increasing his confidence level about his appearance. In many cultures and societies (such as Western societies), the body-image is an important component of the self-concept and has stimulated the demand of certain products and services, such as dietary, slimming, exercise and cosmetic items (Sturrock and Pioch, 1998). Featherstone (1991) also noticed that the self-preservation of the body pushes individuals to adopt instrumental strategies to combat its deterioration and combine them with the notion that the body is a vehicle of pleasure and self-expression. Hence, the construction of the man's identity is now achieved as much through body care; image and the right "look" (Bocock, 1993). The rising number of men beautifying themselves or customizing their bodies clearly shows men's increasing awareness of their look (Firat, 1993). As a matter of fact, appearance and narcissism have become major attributes of the "new man" who is actively in pursuit of his sense of self (Craik, 1994). Consequently, cosmetics are increasingly being marketed to men by conjuring up the notion that the use of such products will make them more presentable and attractive to potential sexual partners, mostly defined as women (Firat, 1993). Featherstone (1991) supported this opinion and reported that one of the main stimuli for the consumption of male grooming products is the creation, development and maintenance of a self-image. The use of such particular products is dependent on the image which a man wishes to present. Confirming this view, Sturrock and Pioch (1998) stipulated that male consumption of grooming products contributes to the production of a desired identity and self-image. Men's increasing interest in their self image is further stimulated by the increase in the number of men's magazines (Bakewell *et al.*, 2006; Mintel, 2000) that portray a quite attractive image of the "new man". On the basis of the previous discussion, we put forward the following hypothesis:

H1. There is a positive relationship between the self-image concerns of men and their consumption of cosmetic products. In other words, the more the man is willing to boost his self-image, the more positive is his attitude towards the consumption of cosmetics.

Ageing effect and physical attractiveness

Very little research has focused on the effect of aging on men's (body) image concerns (Halliwell and Dittmar, 2003). The few studies report that, in contrast to women, men view age-related changes in their appearance as less threatening to their self-esteem (Halliwell and Dittmar, 2003). This might

indicate that men have less concern than women about the aging of their bodies, particularly with reference to appearance. However, men's perception of age is changing drastically. According to an ACNielsen report published in 2006, the attitude of men towards age has changed across the globe (ACNielsen, 2006). The research revealed that 51 per cent of North American, 49 per cent of European and 56 per cent of men in Asia Pacific believe that their 30s are the new 20s. Also, almost half of the men respondents (57 per cent in North America, 54 per cent in Asia Pacific and 47 per cent in Europe) consider that their 60s are the new middle age. In Western countries where the population is ageing, consumers have started to perceive the body as the crucial indicator of the self and hence apparent physical ageing is perceived as problematic. To counter external signs of ageing, consumers in Western cultures increasingly attribute high importance to the youthfulness of the body (Coupland, 2007). Thus, they do whatever they can to slow down the ageing process and project a youthful appearance. Coupland (2007) has also identified that the desire to maintain a youthful appearance is a culture of idealization of the body which requires a strict set of demands for the preservation of youthfulness. According to Sturrock and Pioch (1998), men prefer to stay young in order to have certain desired situations. Consequently, their concern about the effects of ageing and the maintenance of a youthful appearance are prevalent motives for their consumption of grooming products. The changing in men's perception of age resulted in body transformation, expressing the man's desire to hold on to time (Dano *et al.*, 2003). To further emphasize the youthfulness aspect, men are constantly persuaded by advertisements which use fear appeals and convey the message that it is undesirable for a person to be ageing and that he must assume responsibility to stay young-looking or to disguise his physical ageing (Coupland, 2007). This discussion leads us to propose the following hypothesis:

H2. Ageing has a positive impact on men's consumption of cosmetic products. Stated differently, males' consumption of cosmetics is highly motivated by their desire to maintain a youthful appearance.

Another factor that is related to ageing and self-image is the physical attractiveness of the man. The meanings of physical beauty are dominated by what can be seen externally; these includes visible features such as face, body proportions, body shape and visible traits such as poise, grace, and presence. In their study, Solomon *et al.* (1992) have revealed six distinct types of good looks (i.e. six categories of physical

attractiveness). They investigated multiple types of physical beauty (e.g. cute, trendy, sex kitten) and demonstrated that beauty is not a one-dimensional construct. Although studies on women body image and physical attractiveness are abundant, little research has focused on these attributes among men (Halliwell and Dittmar, 2003). Additionally, women's and men's attitudes toward cultural ideals of attractiveness seem to be different. The former are reported to be strongly motivated to conform to these ideals (Halliwell, 2002), while the latter are found to attribute less concern to attractiveness (Grogan, 1999). However, an increase in physical attractiveness among men is likely to occur as a response to sociocultural pressures (Grogan, 1999). Mort (1988) identified a distinct change between the young men of the 1950s and the 1980s. He noticed an increase in young men's individuality; articulated through the use of clothes, hair, body decoration and body movement. Likewise, Wienke (1998) argued that men increasingly tend to revamp their appearance and conform themselves to beauty models by buying grooming products. She also noticed the extensive use of idealized images of bodies which are used to promote the products and services throughout consumer culture, emphasizing images of a beautiful body, and stressing the importance of the appearance and the look. Hence, we propose the following hypothesis:

- H3.* Physical attractiveness has a positive impact on men's consumption of cosmetic products. Thus, the more they attribute high importance to their physical attractiveness, the more they are interested in consuming cosmetics.

Health concerns

Richardson (2004) concluded that there is a general lack of a sense of health-consciousness among men. He also observed that those who neglected or paid little attention to their health are men in the age range of 30 to 49, less well-off men and men with less formal education. However, other studies reported that there is an increased level of health-awareness and that men as they grow older are likely to become more health-conscious (Aoun *et al.*, 2002). Men's health consciousness is further boosted by certain media such as *Men's Health* magazine. These media consistently convey messages that emphasize the importance of health and suggest to men an array of products, including cosmetics. The link between beauty and health is evident throughout our daily lives. For instance, a radiant and healthy skin is a reflection of good health. Also, cosmetics are often used to cover up the symptomatic health conditions, such as those of the hair and skin. Hence, a general feeling of ill health (e.g. a poor skin condition) stimulates men to purchase cosmetic products (Sturrock and Pioch, 1998) that may help them counteract and prevent certain types of health problems. This leads us to suggest the following hypothesis:

- H4.* Men's health concerns have a positive relationship with their consumption of cosmetic products. In other words, men use cosmetics to prevent or cure certain health problems.

Socio-cultural variables

Societal beliefs and lifestyle

International marketing literature reveals numerous studies concerning behavioral differences in consumers across cultures (Hofstede, 2001). When consumers buy a product;

they usually tend to fulfill some type of needs which are influenced by their own cultures and beliefs. Additionally, the cultural environment affects how and why people live and behave the way they do. Supporting this view, Weber and de Villebonne (2002) argued that culture has a significant impact on consumer behavior because the components of culture (e.g. beliefs) dictate individuals' behavior. One of the cultural aspects that distinguish certain societies and have an influence on consumers' behavior is the machismo beliefs. Machismo is still prevalent in many part of the world, including Western societies (Härkönen, 2007). In such societies, men are supposed to be macho and hence the use of cosmetic products might be seen as a threat for their masculinity. In other words, machismo suggests that men should not consume cosmetics. Confirming this view, the market research company Datamonitor pointed out in a 2005 survey that a lot of old macho attitudes still exist. However, as people get more influenced by an open-minded environment, make-up is seen more for the benefit of taking care of the skin than an effeminate practice. To counteract the consideration of the loss of masculinity if men use cosmetic products, advertisements are endorsed by macho celebrities. Also, most of these ads tend to teach societies that men's cosmetic products are designed to treat and enhance the face and body while maintaining their masculinity. By being frequently exposed to these ads and messages, people tend to gradually accept that cosmetics are not only for women. As a result, there is an increasing social acceptance for males to use cosmetic products. So, by setting beauty standards, the social order pushes consumers to get a satisfactory image that is in harmony with the one boosted by their cultures (Dano *et al.*, 2003). On the basis of the previous discussion, we put forward the following hypothesis:

- H5.* Men's purchase of cosmetics is strongly influenced by their societal beliefs about men's grooming products. In other words, societies which believe that cosmetics are exclusive for women tend to affect negatively men's consumption of cosmetics.

With respect to lifestyle, several authors agree that it has a major impact on the purchase and consumption behavior of consumers. For instance, Coley and Burgess (2003) argued that lifestyle determinants (such as social class, values and personality) have a huge impact on how individuals behave toward the consumption of products. Thus, they determine consumers' attitude in a particular purchase situation. Also, Featherstone suggested that post-modern consumers "make lifestyle a life project and display their individuality and sense of style in the assemblage of goods, clothes, practices, experiences and bodily dispositions" (Featherstone, 1991, p. 63). The author also shows that the tendency towards narcissism and self-image is most notable in the professional-managerial class who has both the time and the money to engage in lifestyle activities and the cultivation of persona. Career oriented men tend to be more concerned with their appearances because of their lifestyles. They are turning to cosmetics and beauty treatments to improve their looks (Liu, 2006). Additionally, those who live in urban areas and big cities are likely to use more cosmetics than those living in smaller cities (or rural areas) where there is less need to look good (Liu, 2006). The previous discussion suggests the following hypothesis:

- H6.* Men's consumption of cosmetics is strongly influenced by their lifestyles.

Marketing variables

The effect of advertising and purchase situation on male consumption of cosmetics

Compared to the female target market, people do not hear much about men's cosmetic advertising. In the last 20 years, men are increasingly targeted by and exposed to communication messages disseminated by various forms of media (e.g. *Mr. Magazine*, *Men's Health*). In these media ads related to men's beauty product and images of physically appealing men are omnipresent (Iida, 2004). As a consequence, the number and sales of media targeted to men has grown. For instance, the readership of *FHM* magazine has increased of more than 36 per cent per year since its launching in 1995. On the other hand, the increase of advertisements for men's cosmetics has allowed more men to get comfortable with the idea of using grooming products. It should be noticed, however, that many of these ads convey messages that do not necessarily portray or reflect the traditional icon of men's masculinity (Mort, 1988). The use of popular icons who receive a great deal of coverage in the media has positively changed men's attitude towards the consumption of cosmetics. Indeed, having a celebrity endorser for cosmetic products is a good strategy to reach the male target market, because he can convey a uniform image in people's minds. The goal is to be able to get people to think of cosmetic products not as a girly routine, instead as an enhancement product that even a macho man can use. Many companies successfully used famous male actors or sportsmen to sell their cosmetic products through positive imagery. These icons exert a form of cultural leadership by promoting and reinforcing subconsciously certain attributes. For instance, some sportsmen who are seen as fashion models are reported to have a huge impact on male attitudes toward beauty care products. They have been successful ambassadors for a number of grooming products ranging from shaving foams to skin care creams. Therefore, we put forward the following hypothesis:

H7. Men's cosmetic advertisements have a positive effect on men's consumption of grooming products.

When purchasing cosmetics, the decision making process of the male customer is influenced by multiple situational factors such as the store environment, the type of distribution, the purchase location, and knowledgeable salespersons (Weber and de Villebonne, 2002). The store environment can provide significant cues and may be critical to developing positive purchase intentions (Chao and Schor, 1998). Different distribution channels are used for men's cosmetics. For instance, they can be found in pharmacies or spas. In such cases, cosmetic companies tend to reduce the feminine icon, usually associated with its products, by giving its cosmetic items the image of medical care products. In other situation, men's cosmetics are sold in mega stores or on the internet. In doing so, the products are targeted to men who seek discretion, anonymity (at the purchase time) and reasonably priced products. On the other extreme, some men's cosmetic products are sold through dedicated men's cosmetic counters (or stores) and perfumeries. This type of distribution channel tends to differentiate the positioning of certain brands by conveying an image of luxuriousness and quality.

It is also important to note that distribution channels of cosmetics may differ from country to country. According to Weber and de Villebonne (2002), the distribution of

cosmetics in France is more selective and it is mainly done through outlets, such as perfumeries and department stores. In Canada, however, distribution of men cosmetics is mostly realized through supermarkets, convenient stores and on the internet. Besides the distribution system, several studies reveal that the store environment is critical to develop positive purchase intentions (Chao and Schor, 1998). Studies have focused on elements such as the effects of music, colors, brightness, size, shape, and scent on consumers' perceptions and behaviors (Loo-Lee *et al.*, 2005). Baker *et al.* (1992) found that visual elements of retail stores, such as architecture, layout and signage, have important effects on store patronage decisions and quality inferences. Taking into consideration these facts, several companies and retailers decided to dedicate special corners for men's cosmetics. Furthermore, in some places in the world, you can nowadays find cosmetic shops exclusively for men. All these strategies are intended to make the shoppers (i.e. men) feel comfortable and contented when considering the purchase of cosmetics. Based on the previous discussion, we propose the following hypothesis:

H8. The purchase situation has a significant impact on men's purchase of cosmetics.

Research methodology

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was originally written in English and then translated into French. To assure the equivalency between the two versions, the back translation method was used. Measures were developed based on pre-existing scales. To measure the attitude of men towards the purchase and consumption of cosmetics, we used nine items that were adopted from Bakewell *et al.* (2006), Coley and Burgess (2003), Coulter *et al.* (2002); and also adapted from Lastovicka and Gardner (1979). Self-image concerns/consciousness was measured by six items which were extracted from Coulter *et al.*'s (2002), Sturrock and Pioch's (1998) and Jamal *et al.*'s (2001) studies. Three items from Sturrock and Pioch's (1998) study were considered to measure the variable ageing and nine items were adopted from Bakewell *et al.* (2006), Sturrock and Pioch (1998) and Netemeyer *et al.* (1995) to measure physical attractiveness. With respect to the health variable, we used 12 items that were derived from Sturrock and Pioch (1998) and Gould (1988). To examine the effect of culture on men's consumption of cosmetics, we used four items that were adopted from Weber and de Villebonne (2002) and Sturrock and Pioch (1998). Lifestyle was assessed by seven items which were mainly derived from Sturrock and Pioch (1998) and Coulter *et al.* (2002). Regarding the effect of advertising on men's attitude towards the consumption of grooming products, we used nine items which were adopted from Bakewell *et al.* (2006), Seitz (1998) and Wells (1964). To delineate the extent to which the purchase situation may affect men's purchase decision of cosmetics, we considered four items that were used by Loo-Lee *et al.* (2005). All the items of the above-mentioned variables were measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "1" (strongly disagree) to "5" (strongly agree). Finally, the questionnaire dealt with demographic variables of the respondents. Variables such as age, education, income, marital status and occupation were considered.

The sample

According to Reynolds *et al.* (2003), in the international context, non-probability sampling is acceptable in the case of theory application research. Also, researchers may often face tradeoffs between the need for “within country representativeness” of each national sample and “between-country comparability” of the samples (Craig and Douglas, 2000). Since we had the intention to collect data in Canada and France, we could not achieve a probability sampling owing to our limited research budget (Cavusgil and Das, 1997). Also, since we believe that French and Canadians are different in terms of certain socio-demographic variables (e.g. income), we were not confident about having two samples of similar profile. For all these reasons, we opted for a convenience sampling method by using drop-off/pick-up technique, which enables us to solicit an acceptable response rate. Hence, the data were collected in two metropolitan cities: Paris (France) and Montreal (Canada). These two cities were selected based on the belief that men living in metropolitan areas are more likely to use men's cosmetic products (i.e. metrosexual men). Also, we had the intention to compare between two markets where sales of cosmetics are likely to be at different stages of the product life cycle. In 2000, Western Europe, and particularly France, was considered the leading region of the cosmetic industry (Weber and de Villebonne, 2002). This particularity is also extended to the niche segment of men's cosmetics. The expenditure per capita for personal care items of French men is reported to be twice as high as that of American men (Chemical Market Reporter, 1998). Almost the same pattern is observed when comparing between French and Canadian men's cosmetic markets. Recent figures show that sales of men's cosmetics in France are far higher than those in Canada. Indeed and according to the industry experts, the sales growth rate of men's cosmetics in France is about 60 per cent in 2003. Additionally, the male cosmetic market in France reached 800 million Euros in 2005 (about US\$1,136 million). This market is expected to see further growth over the next years and to be the most dynamic subsector of the men's grooming sector between 2005 and 2010 (Datamonitor). On the other hand, in Canada, men's beauty segment was expected to grow from USD 747 million to USD 945 million (+27 per cent) between 2004 and 2008 (Euromonitor). This difference in market scale between the two countries might be caused by the difference in the attitude of Canadian and French men towards the purchase of men's cosmetics. Also, the type of distribution characterizing each of the two markets may contribute to the differences between them (Weber and de Villebonne, 2002).

As the objective of the study was targeted to male consumers, only men who appeared to be between 20 years old and 50 were approached. Respondents were contacted or intercepted at their workplace, on the street or at their home and asked to complete the questionnaire. If the respondents did not have enough time, arrangements were then made to pick up the completed questionnaires at a specified time, generally one day later. To minimize sampling errors, the Canadian and French samples were designed as similar as possible (Craig and Douglas, 2000; Noordhoff *et al.*, 2004). According to Reynolds *et al.* (2003), between-country comparability can be reached by making the samples from different countries or cultures as similar as possible in terms of their socio-demographic characteristics. The criteria on which

country samples are matched should be, however, logically and theoretically defensible. Our total sample consists of 223 respondents of which 53.8 per cent are Canadian and 46.2 per cent French. The profile of our two samples (Table I) shows that the majority of the Canadian (58.4 per cent) and the French respondents (71.2 per cent) were single. Also, most of the Canadian and French respondents were aged between 24 and 45 years old (65.3 and 68.2 per cent respectively) and employed in the private sector (45.1 and 59 per cent respectively). The majority of Canadian respondents (90 per cent) and almost three quarters (74.6 per cent) of French had at least a college level education. The main difference between the two groups was recorded in their yearly income. The majority of the Canadian respondents had revenues less than CAN\$20,000 or above CAN\$50,000, whereas the French respondents had revenues ranging from less than €14,500 (about CAN\$22,000) to €38,500 (about CAN\$58,000). This difference in incomes between the two samples might be attributed to the difference in their income structure and income distribution (e.g. working hours, wage per hour, income taxes, etc.).

Data analysis and discussion

For the data analysis, the survey results were processed by using SAS 9.1 and SPSS 13.0. Before carrying out any statistical tests, certain computations were made and the data were prepared for the rest of the analysis. For each variable, we examined the Cronbach's alpha. Items that were identified as non-relevant were excluded. Hence, all the variables

Table I Samples' characteristics

Characteristics	France (%)	Canada (%)
Age		
Below 23 years old	25.6	15.9
Between 24 and 45	68.2	65.3
Over 45	6.2	18.8
Marital status		
Single	71.2	58.4
Married (or cohabiting)	26.1	31.7
Divorced (or separated)	2.7	9.9
Education		
Less than high school	14.0	2.0
High school	11.4	8.0
College or above	74.6	90.0
Occupation		
Unemployed	2.0	1.0
Retired	1.0	2.9
Government or public sector	1.0	14.7
Private sector	59.0	45.1
Own private business	4.0	8.8
Others (student, have part time job, etc.)	33.0	27.5
Yearly income		
Less than €14,500/less than \$20,000	45.4	27.7
€14,501-€23,500/\$20,001-\$30,000	25.0	13.9
€23,501-€38,500/\$30,001-\$40,000	24.1	11.9
€38,501-€47,000/\$40,001-\$50,000	4.6	15.8
Over €47,000/over \$50,000	0.9	30.7

(except for lifestyle which has an alpha equal to 0.786) have a Cronbach's alpha superior to 0.8. Consequently, our dependent variable is represented by the average of the retained items measuring the attitude of males towards the consumption of men's cosmetics (Matt). Likewise, the independent variables are represented by the average of the retained items measuring each of them: advertising (Mads), situation (Msit), ageing (Magi), attractiveness (Mattr), health (Mhealth), image (Mimg), beliefs (Mbelf) and lifestyle (Msty). These computations led us to test whether or not the overall attitude towards the consumption of cosmetics is similar between French and Canadian men. We also used *t*-tests to compare the two samples' means of each of the research variables. As shown in Table II, French and Canadian men have an overall positive attitude towards the consumption of men's cosmetics ($M = 2.869$). However, we could identify that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean attitude score for French and Canadian men ($t = 2.616$, $p = 0.01$). French have a statistically significant higher mean score on attitude towards the consumption of men's cosmetics (3.026) than Canadian (2.685). When asked about the type of cosmetics they use, 40.4 per cent of the total sample reported using hair gel, 35 per cent use facial cream, 28.7 per cent use skin care products, 25.1 per cent use moisturizer, 10.3 per cent use pore exfoliates, and 3.1 per cent use lift treatment products. These results show that men have not only a positive attitude towards the use of cosmetics but also attribute a high importance to their look and appearance. Further analysis of the results displayed in Table II shows that the mean score of Mhealth and Msit significantly differ between the two samples. On the other hand, the two samples show no significant difference in terms of the mean score of Mimg, Magi, Mattr, Mbelf, Msty and Mads.

In order to measure the impact of each of the latent variables on consumers' attitude towards the consumption of men's cosmetics, we decided to undertake regression analyses by market. Our decision to undertake analyses by market is mainly due to the fact that the French market and the Canadian market are at different levels of maturity (i.e. the French market of men's cosmetics is much more developed than the Canadian one) and that both samples have relatively different profiles. Initially, we attempted to estimate the regressions using ordinary least squares (OLS). However, when examining the correlation matrices of both samples, we noticed that for most of the latent variables, the correlations coefficients were significant at 0.05 level; relatively low in the

French sample but rather high in the Canadian sample (Table III). The high correlations in the Canadian sample might indicate that some independent variables were to some extent related to each other.

In order to test the impact of multicollinearity, we considered two tests. First, we calculated the tolerance and VIF (the variance inflation factor) values. A low tolerance value and a large VIF value (i.e. superior to 10) indicate high degree of multicollinearity (Hair *et al.*, 1998; Neter *et al.*, 1990). Second, we used the condition index test. A condition index of a value ranging between 5 and 10 indicates a weak dependency between the latent variables, whereas a condition index ranging between 30 and 100 indicates a moderate to strong dependency between the latent variables (Belsey *et al.*, 2004). All the tolerance and VIF values in our models were reported to be within the accepted range of low collinearity. Indeed, VIF scores ranged between 1.232 and 1.683 for the French sample and between 1.420 and 2.913 for the Canadian sample (See the OLS results in Tables IV and V). Also, the condition index value was 23.813 for the French and 22.336 for the Canadian. These results may suggest that our regression results are not severely affected by multicollinearity (Hair *et al.*, 1998). However and in spite of satisfactory condition index values and VIF scores (e.g. Hair *et al.*, 1998, 2006), the relatively small sample size, combined with the relatively high correlation between the explanatory variables, might still raise suspicion about whether or not multicollinearity affected our results by producing inflated and unstable parameter estimates (Mason and Perrault, 1991; Verhoef *et al.*, 2004). To remedy this issue, we used ridge regression (Hair *et al.* 1998; Mahajan *et al.*, 1977) which has been shown to be a suitable solution when the predictor variables are (or thought to be) highly correlated. This procedure enables us to not only overcome the problem of inflated and unstable estimates, but also to learn more about the interrelationships between the predictor variables in the model. An important decision in ridge regression is the choice of the biasing parameter k . For this purpose, we applied the iteration procedure for computing optimal k as proposed by Kasarda and Shih (1977). The obtained values of k indicate that the estimate regression coefficients became more stable after a k value of 0.211 for the French sample and 0.234 for the Canadian sample. The ridge regression analyses (Tables IV and V) show a relatively high explanatory power, since the R^2 is 0.473 for the French sample and 0.648 for the Canadian sample. When we compare these results with those of the OLS regression, we notice that the value of the R^2 remains constant for the French sample ($R^2 = 0.473$). On the other hand and with respect to the Canadian sample, a slight decrease in the R^2 value of the ridge regression is noticed when compared to the OLS regression model ($R^2 = 0.653$). This might be due to the fact that ridge regression models accounted for multicollinearity.

With respect to the French sample, the OLS results show that the variable Mhealth has a negative and significant impact on Matt ($t = -1.15$, $p = 0.034$). However, its impact is only marginally significant in the ridge regression ($t = -1.860$, $p = 0.066$). On the other hand, in the ridge regression, the variable Mattr shows a significant and positive impact on Matt ($t = 2.064$, $p = 0.041$), yet, its impact is only marginally significant in the OLS regression ($t = 1.72$, $p = 0.089$). This discrepancy between the results of OLS and ridge regression might be explained by the fact that Mattr has

Table II Descriptive statistics and *t*-tests results

	France		Canada		Total		<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Matt	3.026	0.821	2.685	1.119	2.869	0.983	2.616	0.010
Mimg	2.440	0.809	2.642	1.046	2.533	0.930	-1.624	0.106
Magi	2.154	1.008	2.026	1.183	2.095	1.092	0.870	0.385
Mattr	3.128	0.680	3.041	0.960	3.088	0.821	0.782	0.435
Mhealth	3.359	0.704	3.865	0.820	3.593	0.799	-4.960	0.000
Mbelf	3.339	0.772	3.382	0.836	3.359	0.800	-0.399	0.690
Msty	3.444	0.598	3.459	0.839	3.451	0.718	-0.159	0.874
Mads	2.395	0.750	2.510	0.966	2.448	0.857	-0.996	0.320
Msit	2.980	1.001	3.266	1.136	3.112	1.077	-1.990	0.048

Table III Pearson correlation coefficients

	Magi	Mattr	Mhealth	Mimg	Mbelf	Msty	Mads
Magi	1 (1)						
Mattr	0.312* (0.302*)	1 (1)					
Mhealth	0.185** (0.062)	0.511* (0.498*)	1 (1)				
Mimg	0.485** (0.509*)	0.275* (0.581*)	0.211** (0.330*)	1 (1)			
Mbelf	0.312* (0.182)	0.224** (0.577*)	0.241* (0.495*)	0.166 (0.394*)	1 (1)		
Msty	0.118 (0.327*)	0.456* (0.542*)	0.573* (0.531*)	0.098 (0.558*)	0.207** (0.587*)	1 (1)	
Mads	0.327* (0.413*)	0.326* (0.499*)	0.172 (0.212**)	0.308* (0.715*)	0.153 (0.320*)	0.130 (0.433*)	1 (1)
Msit	0.266* (0.418*)	0.428* (0.471*)	0.333* (0.233**)	0.342* (0.663*)	0.334* (0.429*)	0.244* (0.455*)	0.482* (0.747*)

Notes: * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.001$. Correlation coefficients for Canada are presented between parentheses

Table IV Results of the OLS and ridge regressions for the French sample

	OLS regression results				Ridge regression results			
	beta	t	p	VIF	beta	t	p	VIF
Intercept	0.660	1.65	0.101		0.794	2.195	0.030	
Mads	0.225	2.77	0.006	1.414	0.207	3.417	0.000	0.782
Magi	0.056	0.80	0.427	1.499	0.066	1.216	0.227	0.794
Mattr	0.163	1.72	0.089	1.683	0.140	2.064	0.041	0.845
Mbelf	0.139	1.60	0.112	1.233	0.127	1.875	0.064	0.743
Mhealth	-0.222	-1.15	0.034	1.742	-0.134	-1.860	0.066	0.837
Mimg	0.106	1.40	0.164	1.425	0.10	1.764	0.081	0.784
Msit	0.307	4.01	0.000	1.635	0.255	4.654	0.000	0.827
Msty	0.102	0.96	0.337	1.593	0.069	0.904	0.368	0.807
R ²		0.473				0.473		
Adj. R ²		0.435				0.435		
F		12.439*				12.436*		

Notes: * $p \leq 0.000$

relatively high correlation with Mhealth ($r = 0.511$). Regarding the Canadian sample, the ridge regression shows that Matt is significantly affected by the variables Magi ($t = 2.064$, $p = 0.042$) and Mimg ($t = 2.626$, $p = 0.010$). These effects does not show up in OLS because Magi has relatively high correlation with Mimg ($r = 0.509$) and Mimg has relatively high correlation with Mads ($r = 0.715$), Mattr ($r = 0.581$), Msit ($r = 0.663$) and Msty ($r = 0.558$).

Based on the ridge regression results, self-image did not show statistical significance ($t = 1.764$; $p = 0.081$) in the case of French consumers, indicating that in France, the self-image variable has no significant impact on the consumption of male grooming products. In contrast, the self image variable has a significant and positive effect on Canadian male attitudes

Table V Results of the OLS and ridge regressions for the Canadian sample

	OLS regression results				Ridge regression results			
	beta	t	p	VIF	beta	t	p	VIF
Intercept	-0.449	-1.21	0.231		-0.404	-1.236	0.220	
Mads	0.243	2.15	0.034	2.895	0.199	3.253	0.002	0.839
Magi	0.105	1.53	0.130	1.420	0.103	2.064	0.042	0.749
Mattr	0.280	2.91	0.005	2.124	0.223	3.26	0.001	0.852
Mbelf	0.067	0.59	0.556	1.950	0.092	1.251	0.214	0.811
Mhealth	-0.054	-0.51	0.611	1.652	0.002	0.023	0.982	0.776
Mimg	0.138	1.35	0.181	2.913	0.148	2.626	0.010	0.881
Msit	0.060	0.62	0.539	2.651	0.091	1.648	0.103	0.848
Msty	0.265	2.67	0.009	2.124	0.209	3.297	0.001	0.849
R ²		0.653				0.648		
Adj. R ²		0.624				0.618		
F		22.152*				22.150*		

Note: * $p \leq 0.000$

towards the use of men's cosmetics ($t = 2.626$; $p = 0.010$). This is in line with Featherstone's (1991) opinion stipulating that the consumption of cosmetic products is triggered by the self-image consciousness. According to her, the self-image consciousness is one of the main stimuli for the consumption of male grooming. This conclusion, however, is not supported in the case of French male consumers. Therefore, H1 is strongly supported in Canada but not in France. With respect to the ageing effect, it appears to have a significant and positive impact on Canadian male attitudes towards the use of men's cosmetics ($t = 2.064$; $p = 0.042$). This is in line with the findings of Coupland (2007) and Sturrock and Pioch (1998) who reported that the ageing effects have a positive impact on the consumption of men's cosmetic products.

However, the variable ageing is reported to have no significant impact on French male consumers ($t = 1.216$; $p = 0.227$). Therefore, $H2$ is substantiated for Canada but not for France. Regarding the impact of attractiveness on consumers' consumption of men's cosmetics, the results show that it has a positive and significant impact on both Canadian ($t = 3.26$; $p = 0.001$) and French ($t = 2.064$; $p = .041$). Our findings support those of Wienke (1998), for whom, physical attractiveness is a reason to increase individual's appearance. Therefore, $H3$ is strongly supported in both Canada and France. As for health, the results show that it has no significant impact on both Canadian ($t = 0.023$; $p = 0.982$) and French male consumers ($t = -1.860$; $p = 0.066$). This result contradicts Sturrock and Pioch (1998), for whom the state of health, specially the general feeling of ill health and a poor skin condition, stimulate the purchase of men's cosmetic products. Therefore, $H4$ is rejected for both Canada and France. With respect to the effect of consumers' belief, results reveal that it has no significant impact on Canadian ($t = 1.251$; $p = 0.214$) and French ($t = 1.875$; $p = 0.064$) males' attitude towards the consumption of grooming products. Therefore, $H5$ is rejected in Canada and in France.

Considering the variable lifestyle, results show that it has a great and significant impact on Canadian male consumers ($t = 3.297$; $p = 0.001$) but no significant impact on French male consumers ($t = 0.904$; $p = 0.368$). Consequently, our research results are partially in line with those of Featherstone (1991) for whom; lifestyle has a major impact on the purchase and consumption behavior of consumers. Hence, our hypothesis $H6$ is strongly supported in Canada but not validated in France. As for the variable advertising, results show that it displays a positive and significant impact on both Canadian ($t = 3.253$; $p = 0.002$) and French ($t = 3.417$; $p = 0.000$). Men's positive imagery in advertisements seems to have a strong impact on their consumption of cosmetics. Therefore, $H7$ is substantiated for both Canada and France. Finally, with regard to the variable purchase situation, our findings reveal that it has a positive and significant impact on French male consumers ($t = 4.654$; $p = 0.000$) but not on Canadian ($t = 1.648$; $p = 0.103$). This result partially confirms the findings of Chao and Schor (1998) and Loo-Lee *et al.* (2005) for whom the store environment is critical to develop positive purchase intentions and that the purchase situation strongly affects consumer behaviors. Thus, our hypothesis $H8$ is rejected in the case of Canadian consumers but accepted in the case of French consumers.

Theoretical and managerial implications

This study investigated the attitude of males toward the consumption and purchase of men's cosmetic products. More specifically, the research clarified the impact of personal variables (i.e. self-image consciousness, ageing effects, physical attractiveness, state of health), socio-cultural variables (i.e. beliefs, lifestyle), and marketing variables (i.e. advertising, purchase situation) on the attitude of males toward the purchase of men's cosmetic products.

In terms of similarity between the two groups of consumers, advertising and attractiveness were found to have a significant and positive effect on the male attitude toward the purchase of cosmetic products in both countries. On the other hand, the current research found that in both countries, state of health and societal beliefs tend to have no significant impact on

men's attitude toward the purchase of men's cosmetics. This contradicts the findings of Sturrock and Pioch (1998) who claims that the state of health stimulates the purchase of men's cosmetic products. Also, the present study shows that societal beliefs and consumers' cultural setting do not play a significant role in stimulating or hindering the purchase of cosmetics. In other words, Canadian and French males do not perceive that their consumption (or non-consumption) of cosmetics is influenced by their cultural setting and beliefs.

With respect to Canadian male consumers and in addition to the effect of advertising and attractiveness, the current study demonstrated that self-image, ageing and lifestyle all have a strong impact on the male attitude toward the consumption and purchase of cosmetic products. The effect of these variables was confirmed by previous research. For instance, Featherstone (1991) reported that the consumption of cosmetic products is partially due to consumers' self-image consciousness and lifestyle. Additionally, these results are in line with those of Coupland (2007) and Sturrock and Pioch (1998) who argued that the effects of ageing are prevalent motives for the consumption of grooming products. As for French male consumers and in addition to the effect of advertising and attractiveness, the current study demonstrated that, in contrast to Canadians, they attribute high importance to purchase situation. This latter was found to have a strong and positive impact on French male attitude towards the purchase of cosmetic products. This is in line with Chao and Schor's (1998) and Loo-Lee *et al.*'s (2005) opinion which stipulates that the store environment is critical to develop positive purchase intentions and may affect consumers' perceptions and behaviors.

The present study also generates some insights for marketing managers. Men's cosmetic markets in France and Canada are flourishing and managers should be very careful when designing their marketing strategies in both countries. Men's cosmetic products in both markets are at different stages of life cycle and accordingly consumers' motivations to buy cosmetics are found to vary between the two countries. Indeed, it has been shown in the current study that the main personal motives behind the purchase of men's cosmetics in Canada are the desire of men to increase their self-images, be physically attractive and convey a youthful appearance. Also, Canadians believe that the consumption of men's cosmetics is a way to reflect their lifestyle. Since advertising is reported to have a strong impact on Canadian male consumers, marketers should take into consideration the previous mentioned factors when formulating their advertising program. For instance, an advertising message that emphasizes youthful appearance might attract Canadian male consumers. Regarding the French market, the results show that the main personal motive of French men when purchasing men's cosmetics is to be physically attractive. Additionally, the results show that French men are more responsive to and affected by advertisements and the purchase situation. As a consequence, it is recommended that marketing managers put further stress on values that are important into the eyes of their French consumers (i.e. reflecting good physical appearance) when advertising or selling men's cosmetics. Additionally, the research results suggest that marketers in France should continue to sell their products through dedicated spaces for men's cosmetics.

Research limitations

Some limitations of the current research should be considered when interpreting the results. The convenience sampling technique used in the present research does not indicate a fully representative profile of the population in Canada and France. From a statistical standpoint, samples may lack generalization power. To overcome this drawback, it would be interesting to expand this research in other cities in France and Canada and obtain a sample of respondents who better represent the population of the two countries. Also, it may be important to extend the research to some "conservative" societies in order to further shed light on the importance of the men's cosmetic market and examine the behavior and attitude of consumers belonging to those societies. For instance, replicating this research in some Latin American countries (e.g. Mexico) or in the Middle East region may lead to different results.

Conclusion

This study provides insights into the attitude of men towards the purchase and consumption of cosmetic products in Canada and France. French and Canadian men are found to have different motivations. Advertising and attractiveness are identified to have a strong positive impact on men's consumption of grooming products in both countries. On the other hand, social beliefs and health concerns are reported not to have a significant impact on men's consumption of cosmetics in both countries. As for ageing, image consciousness, purchase situation and lifestyle all were found to have a varying impact. Thus each group of consumers has different motives and drives when considering the consumption and purchase of men's grooming products.

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Further reading

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Executive summary and implications for managers and executives

This summary has been provided to allow managers and executives a rapid appreciation of the content of this article. Those with a particular interest in the topic covered may then read the article in toto to take advantage of the more comprehensive description of the research undertaken and its results to get the full benefits of the material present.

In the post-modern world, men are more actively involved in consumption and purchase decisions. Many have become comfortable with buying their own toiletries, perfumes and skin-care products. Their self-perception has changed and they no longer consider it effeminate to invest time and money on improving their looks and appearance.

Men's demand for cosmetic products is increasing to the extent that analysts predict an 18 per cent growth in worldwide sales in the five years to 2011. By that time the market could reach £25 billion. Cosmetic organizations aiming to boost market share are now focusing more closely on male consumers and are developing niche products alongside conventional male toiletries. But despite this growing demand, study into male attitudes towards the consumption of these products is scarce.

Factors to consider

Nevertheless, the limited research has enabled Souiden and Diagne to identify a range of variables that potentially influences male consumption of beauty products. They have organized these variables into three main categories.

Personal variables

Self image. The premise here is that consumption plays a role in creating the self, which is comprised of physical, psychological and social aspects. Belief exists that the use of certain products can enhance an individual's confidence and well-being in all these areas and has stirred demand for items associated with fitness, diet, weight and beauty. Men choose products to achieve a desired image, like those portrayed in the growing number of magazines aimed at males.

Ageing effects. Limited research suggests that men typically worry less than women about the effects of ageing. Particularly in Western nations, this perception is altering. Consumers regard the body as the "crucial indicator of the self" and physical ageing is viewed negatively. Advertising reinforces the message to males that it is essential to remain young looking.

Physical attractiveness. Changes are again evident in this respect and evidence suggests that male concern with their own physical attractiveness has risen due to socio-cultural pressures and widespread use of idealized body images in advertising.

Health concerns. Some studies have concluded that men pay little attention to their health. Others claim that health-consciousness among men is increasing, particularly as they get older. This awareness is further stimulated by media messages that reinforce the importance of good health reflected through such as a radiant or glowing complexion. The assumption is that use of certain cosmetics can help achieve this healthy glow while protecting against certain health problems.

Socio-cultural variables

Societal beliefs. Many analysts claim that purchase behavior is influenced by needs that vary across cultural boundaries. In many societies, for instance, men are expected to convey their masculinity and the use of cosmetic products does not fit that schema. However, growing broadmindedness means that the consumption of such products is becoming more accepted. Advertisements commonly feature macho celebrities with the message being that product use and masculinity are not mutually exclusive.

Lifestyle. There is widespread accord that lifestyle attributes such as social class, values and personality significantly influence consumer purchase behavior and consumption. Status is likewise a factor and evidence indicates a greater concern about looks and image among males at managerial level or its equivalent. Others suggest that those who inhabit larger cities are likelier to consume more beauty products than their counterparts in smaller cities or rural areas.

Marketing variables

Advertising. An increasing number of media have promoted cosmetic products to men in the last two decades. That sales of media like men's magazines have increased has furthered exposure to these advertisements, many of which feature sportsmen or other male celebrities to ensure that the target market is reached. Such icons are perceived as cultural leaders and this ensures that men become more accustomed to the idea of using beauty products.

Purchase situation. Store environment, distribution type, purchase location and knowledge levels of salespeople are known to influence the decision making of men buying cosmetics. The notion is that when making these purchases men like to feel comfortable and many will value discretion or even anonymity. Studies have shown that distribution of cosmetics varies by country. In France, for instance, specialized outlets like perfumeries and department stores are normal channels. On the other hand, Canadian men typically buy their cosmetics in supermarkets, department stores or online.

Study and findings

The present study aims to examine the impact of these variables on men's use of cosmetic products. Data was collected in Paris and Montreal, so Souiden and Diagne could compare the impact within two markets at different stages of development. Figures indicate that sales of men's cosmetics are considerably higher in France than Canada. Of the 223 respondents who completed the questionnaire, 53.8 per cent were Canadian and 46.2 per cent French. Most respondents were aged between 24 and 45 years old.

Results showed that:

- men in both countries are positive overall about using male cosmetics, though the mean attitude was higher among French respondents; and
- the most commonly used items are hair gel, facial cream, skin care products and moisturizer. This illustrates men's concern for their appearance.

In relation to the impact on male attitude toward the purchase of cosmetic products, data analysis indicated:

- physical attractiveness and advertising had a strong positive effect for both sets of respondents;
- health concerns, societal beliefs or cultural settings do not really influence Canadian or French males either way;
- Canadian men are significantly influenced by self image, ageing effects and lifestyle; and
- the purchase situation is highly important to French men but not to those from Canada.

Marketing implications

In view of these findings, Souiden and Diagne advise a cautious approach to the creation of marketing strategies. While the two countries report thriving sales of male cosmetics, marketers should acknowledge that both similar and different motivations exist between French and Canadian consumers. Since advertising is important to Canadian men, marketers are urged to maximize its effect by incorporating into it the other variables also revealed as significant. An emphasis on youthful appearance is one suggestion that may prove effective in this market. Advertisements aimed at French males should likewise focus on relevant values, such as accentuating a product's positive impact on physical appearance. In France, marketers are also advised to carry on distributing their products through outlets used currently.

The authors acknowledge the convenience sample used may prevent any generalization of findings. Further study in different French and Canadian cities may therefore provide a more representative profile. They likewise suggest that conducting research within societies considered more traditional in nature may extend the present findings.

(A précis of the article "Canadian and French men's consumption of cosmetics: a comparison of their attitudes and motivations". Supplied by Marketing Consultants for Emerald.)