

Factors Affecting Consumption Behavior Of Metrosexual Toward Male Grooming Products

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This study investigates the effect of self image, social expectation and celebrity endorsement on the consumption of metrosexuals toward male grooming products in Malaysia. It also attempts to determine the moderating impacts of perceptions on the relationship between the variables and consumption behavior. A questionnaire was distributed to men living in the Klang Valley. The total sample consists of 281 respondents. Reliability test, hierarchical moderated regression and multiple regressions was used to test the hypotheses. Perception does affect the interaction between self image, celebrity endorsement and social expectation on the consumption behavior of metrosexuals toward male grooming products. The result of this study provides evidence and insights about the relationship between self-image, celebrity endorsement and social expectation, and the consumption behavior.: The study reveals the major variables that affect metrosexuals' consumption behavior and attitude toward male grooming products. Apart from that, the study also provides valuable insight toward the understanding on how perception moderates the relationships between the variables studied and its influence on the consumption behavior of metrosexual toward male grooming products.

Keywords: metrosexual, consumption, male grooming products, self image, social expectation, celebrity endorsement, perception

1.0 Introduction

The worldwide business of male grooming products is expanding at a rapid pace. Datamonitor survey revealed that more European and United States men (73%) than women (72%) – 1% difference – felt that it is 'important' and 'very important' for them to spend time on personal appearance (Datamonitor, 2005). The market potential of this trend had led the cosmetic and health clubs industries to enter this opportunistic male grooming industry, as men become more image-conscious and concerned toward social expectation on the basis of their increase exposure to the current highly popularized emergence of metrosexual celebrity endorsement (AMA, 2007). According to Souiden and Diagne, 2009, Metrosexual men are those who live in big cities (i.e. metropolitan cities), places high importance to their appearance and spend a considerable amount of money and efforts to boost their self images and lifestyles.

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Although this rapid growing male grooming market trend presents a huge opportunity to companies, there is little finding on the underlying motivations that lead to the increase in the consumption of male grooming products (Nizar & Mariam, 2009). Therefore, it is of critical importance to discover and understand the motivation that stimulate the consumption behaviors and harness the knowledge to better serve the market. Therefore, the objectives of this study are to:

1. Examine the influence of self image, social expectation and celebrity endorsement of the metrosexual and its relationship with the consumption of male grooming products.
2. Investigate the moderating effects of perception toward the consumption of male grooming products.

2.0 Literature review

2.1 Self image and consumption

Consumption of a product is not only simply about the tangible benefits that the products offer but the main motivation behind the consumption of male grooming products is to create, develop and maintain a person's identity (Featherstone, 1991). Men seek to change their self-image through products due to the need to adapt to the different roles in their lives (Aaker, 1999). Men uses products to enhance their self-image through the transfer of the symbolic meanings from the use of the product, to the image that the consumers' wanted to present (Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967). Sirgy (1982) argue that consumers will be motivated by positively valued products that promote a positive self-image. Men purchase the ideas and images that are associated with the products, to produce a desired identity and self-image (Fiona & Elke, 1998). Kellner (1992) proposes that the various meaning associated with the products are used to imitate the "fragmented self-image of individuals who want to display and experience situational images felt to be appropriate at a particular time". Based on the above arguments, the first hypothesis proposed in the study is related to men's concern toward self-image influences consumption of male grooming products.

H1: There is a positive relationship between men's concern toward self-image and their consumption of male grooming products

2.2 Celebrity endorsement and consumption

Metrosexual celebrities are endorsed to offset the negative attributions that are associated with metrosexual (Nizar & Mariam, 2009). Increasing endorsement of metrosexual celebrities opinion-former such as David Beckham and Brad Pitt who

openly admits to using skincare product and publicizing that men can make themselves look better with the product had contributed to making men more comfortable and positively changed men's attitude toward the idea of consuming male grooming products (Cole, 2008). Young men select brand through the imitation of celebrity endorser such as Brad Pitt and David Beckham because they are known for their looks and style which resonate well with the metrosexuals tastes (McCracken, 2003; Gray, 2004). David (2004), further affirmed the influence metrosexuals celebrity endorsement have on the current male, as celebrity endorser such as Beckhams are acknowledge to have drastically changed the male grooming product consumption landscape as they alter male perception on the consumption of moisturizer and facial care from an activity that is once consider to be feminine as the accepted norm of the current society. The signal that celebrities like Beckham and Pitt send out about grooming products have more than slight impact, to a new kind of male (Economist, 2003). Hence, the discussion above clearly indicates that celebrity endorsements influence the consumption of men on male grooming products. As a result, the second hypothesis is:

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

2.3 Social expectation and consumption

"Social others" is seen as important interpreters of the meaning of consumption choices to consumers (Margaret et al., 1998). Social expectation is pressuring contemporary men to want to look better and stay vibrant (Nickel, 2004). Men are seeking to improve their appearance, through body movement, body decoration, hair and clothes (Wienke, 1998). In Japan, it is a social norm to be fashionable (McCracken, 2003). When consumers buy a product, social environment does have influence over the type of products that they purchase (Nizar & Mariam, 2009). Changing attitudes and dress-down casual Friday in social setting also contributes to men's consumption of grooming products (Cardona, 2000). As women are becoming more empowered, in the competitive workplace, men are concerned and consume grooming products to keep up with the expectation (Saurabh, 2008). Furthermore, Caroline (2005) observes that men consume grooming products to fit themselves in with their social friends. Therefore, the third hypothesis for this study is:

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

2.4 Perception

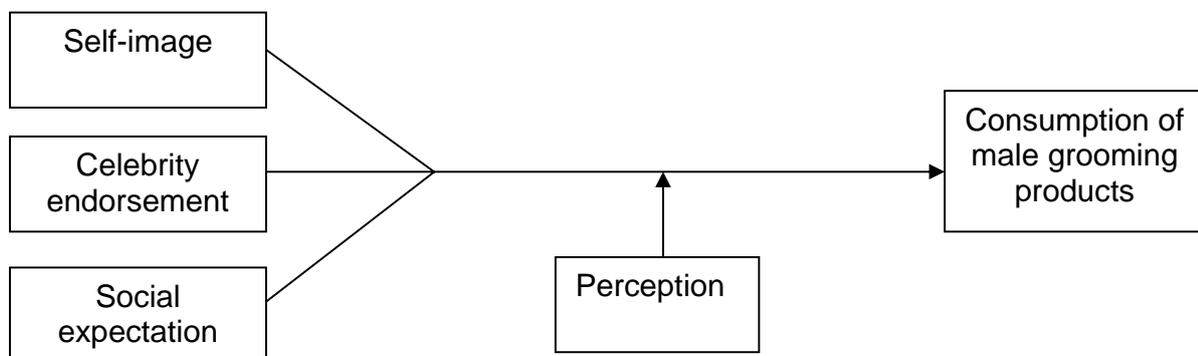
People's perception towards the term "metrosexual" differs greatly. Some people view metrosexual as men who are fashion-style sensitive, mirror-obsessed, and also pampers and moisturizes themselves through the consumption of grooming products (Donna, 2004; Brune, 2004). Others perceive metrosexual as urban men who have high income and spend a great deal of time on his appearance and lifestyle, and engage to the feminine side (Donoghue, 2005). Furthermore, there are also people who categorize

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men as metrosexual with the simple act of only applying hair gel to style their hair (Gregory, 2004). On the other extreme, people simply refer metrosexual as gay men (Warren, 2003). Lastly, metrosexual is also perceived as s-i-s-s-y (Murray, 2005). Although some perceive metrosexual as gay or feminine, Nizar and Mariam (2009) assert that metrosexual is not homosexual or androgynous. The various perception of metrosexual indicates that the term is limiting and confusing because “it doesn’t describe how men are and how men are felling today” (Fenley, 2004). Coles (2008) proposes the launch male-only lines as men are afraid of being associated with undesirable self-image such as femininity, when purchasing male grooming product. Men personal care sections are created to avoid unwanted social expectation such as gayness as the traditional personal care section in stores are mainly targeted at women (KMI, 2005). Furthermore, celebrity endorsements are also associated with confusion between masculinity/femininity (Gray, 2004). Perception, therefore are seen to influence how people perceive the metrosexuals. The following hypothesis is developed from the above discussions.

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

Figure 1 Research Framework



3.0 Methodology

Survey method was carried out to collect primary quantitative data. Quantitative method is useful for this research as it affectively answers the research questions and is in line with the research strategies. The sampling frame for this study is limited to men aged 18-40 (one of the highest income spender) in Kuala Lumpur and the Klang Valley which is a satellite town of the country’s capital that mainly comprises of urban and suburban community, hence making it a strategic location to gather large amount of data without much traveling needed (Miller & Roo, 2004). Specifically, the mall intercept method is

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used where several shopping centers in these areas are intercepted. These malls include Subang Parade, Sunway Pyramid, KLCC; Pavilion; Mid Valley, One Utama; The Curve and Bangsar Village. Intercept survey was reported as a prominent sampling mode due to its speed, economical means and convenience (Lau and Lee, 1999). Furthermore, it allows for instant feedback and quality control (Groves et al., 2004).

A sample size of 281 was defined to obtain a broad set of data. To achieve the objectives of the research, the snowballing sampling methods were used. The main factor of conducting nonprobability sampling is the need of respondents with specific characteristics and requirements.

4.0 Data analysis and Findings

Factor analysis was carried out to reduce the density of the total questionnaire, on top of minimizing the occurrence of shared variance of measured variables used. Whilst, reliability test that utilized Cronbach's alpha coefficient test is carried out in order to remove any cross-loading of items that were present in the questionnaires, with the objective of ensuring the internal consistency of the questionnaire. The results of the two tests are assembled and presented in table 1 below.

As shown in table 1, the cronbach alpha value for all the variable tested in the study were concluded to have a value of at least 0.65 or higher, indicating a strong correlations of the data used in the study. Furthermore, it is observed that apart from perception and societal expectation, which display a cronbach alpha value of 0.656 and 0.705 respectively, all the variables carry out in the studies exhibit alpha value of exceeding 0.85, particularly with self image which achieve a cronbach alpha value of 0.874 followed by celebrity endorsement with a value of 0.858, while lastly consumption attaining a value of 0.850.

Table 1- Factor matrix loadings and cronbach alpha value for

Variables	Variables	Cronbach Alpha
Self-image	Q7. I am willing to spend time in front of the mirror to get the ideal hairstyle Q8. I use grooming products to construct an image that makes me more presentable Q11. I frequently check my appearance in the mirror Q12. I usually buy clothes that would make me look my best Q13. I try different products to create the image in my mind of what I wanted Q15. I am very concerned about my appearance Q16. I would feel embarrassed if I was around people and didn't look my best Q17. Looking my best is worth the effort	0.874
Celebrity	Q18. I am a fan of male celebrities that look good Q19. I think I look good just like the celebrity who endorses my current facial product Q20. I used to think bejeweled products are girlish, but not anymore after I saw my favorite celebrity used it Q21. I start keeping long hair once the English designer, John Galliano featured it in his spring show Q22. I would imitate and buy a new product if my favorite celebrity endorses it Q23. I like to look younger than my actual age Q24. I feel proud when people associate/compare me with my favorite celebrity.	0.858
Societal Expectation	Q9. I use different grooming products to distinguish my image between the social and professional fields Q10. When I am fit groom and cleaned, I would look more attractive Q32. I want to look better and young in the eye of others Q33. I purchase skin care products (to solve acne problems), because people around me have flawless skin Q34. I purchase skin care products (to solve acne problems), because people around me have flawless skin Q35. I used fragrance, because my partner thinks the smell is sexy	0.705
Perception	Q63. I am proud of being labeled as metrosexual and show no shame in front of my family members Q64. I feel comfortable with being looked at by gay men and women as desirable because it reflects my new found confidence and strength Q65. Having people question my sexuality is all part of the game, it makes me stand out	0.656
Consumption	Q81. Increasing consumption of grooming products gives me satisfaction Q82. I have an urge to be updated with the latest trends in male cosmetics products Q83. I usually purchase and try new type of consumption products	0.850

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The hierarchical moderated regression analysis was carried out to test the effect of self image, celebrity endorsement and social expectation on the consumption behavior of metrosexuals toward male grooming products and the moderating effect of perception. 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:

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

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

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

Where

Y = customer loyalty

X1 = customer satisfaction

X2 = perceived product quality

W1 = values and lifestyles

e = error term

The following table (table 2) shows the summary results of the hierarchical moderated regressions that seek to measure the relationship between the variables.

Table 3 The moderating effects of perception

	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

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

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

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

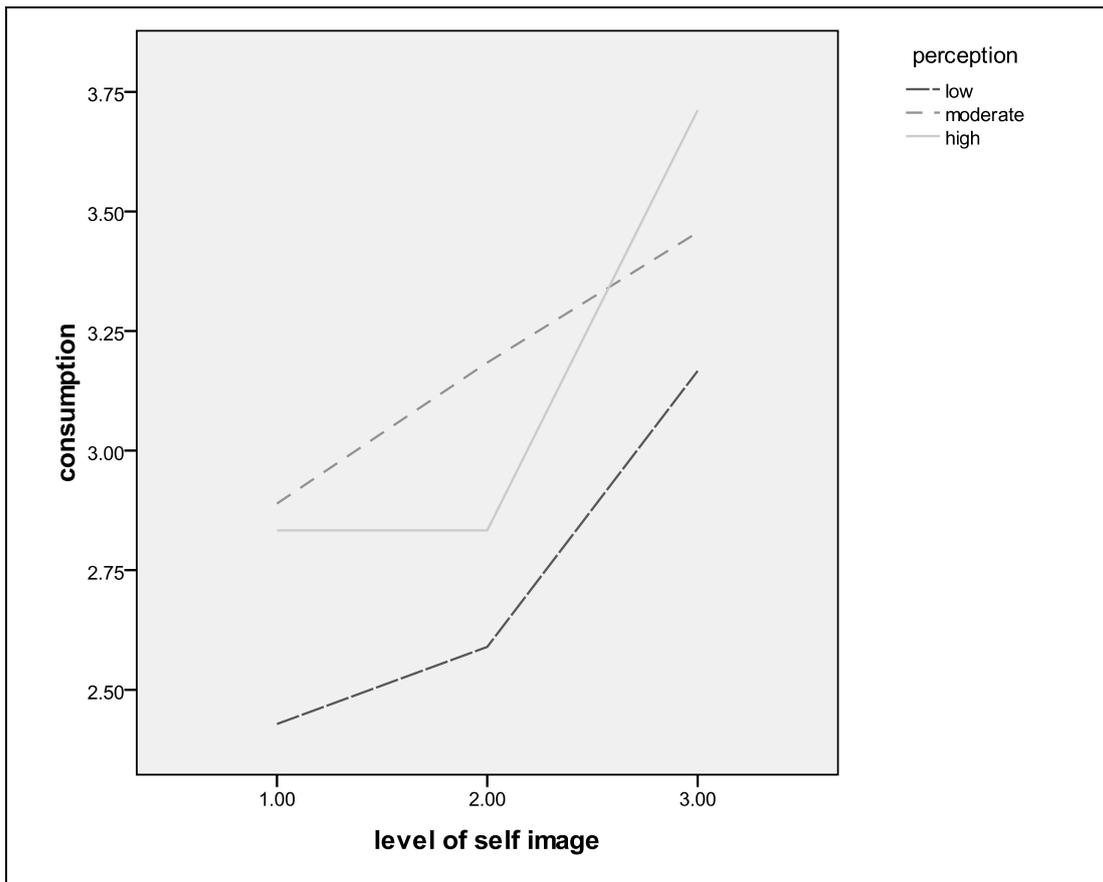
$$Y = 0.877 - 0.050X_1 + 0.420X_2 + 0.169X_3 + 0.024Z + 0.026X_1Z - 0.027X_2Z + 0.033X_3Z \quad (3)$$

The regression analysis – as shown in equation 1, 2 and 3 shows – indicates that celebrity endorsement, social expectation and perception are positively related at p < 0.01 level. The interaction terms which are *self image*perception*, *celebrity endorsement*perception* and *social expectation*perception* also significantly contribute to consumption behaviour of metrosexuals toward male grooming products (F = 53.64; p = 0.000). Table 2 shows that the adjusted R square is at 0.515. The inclusion of the moderating effect of perception explains greater variation in the consumption behaviour of metrosexuals. Adjusted R square indicates that 51.5% of the variation in consumption behaviour is explained by the self image, celebrity endorsement, social expectation and

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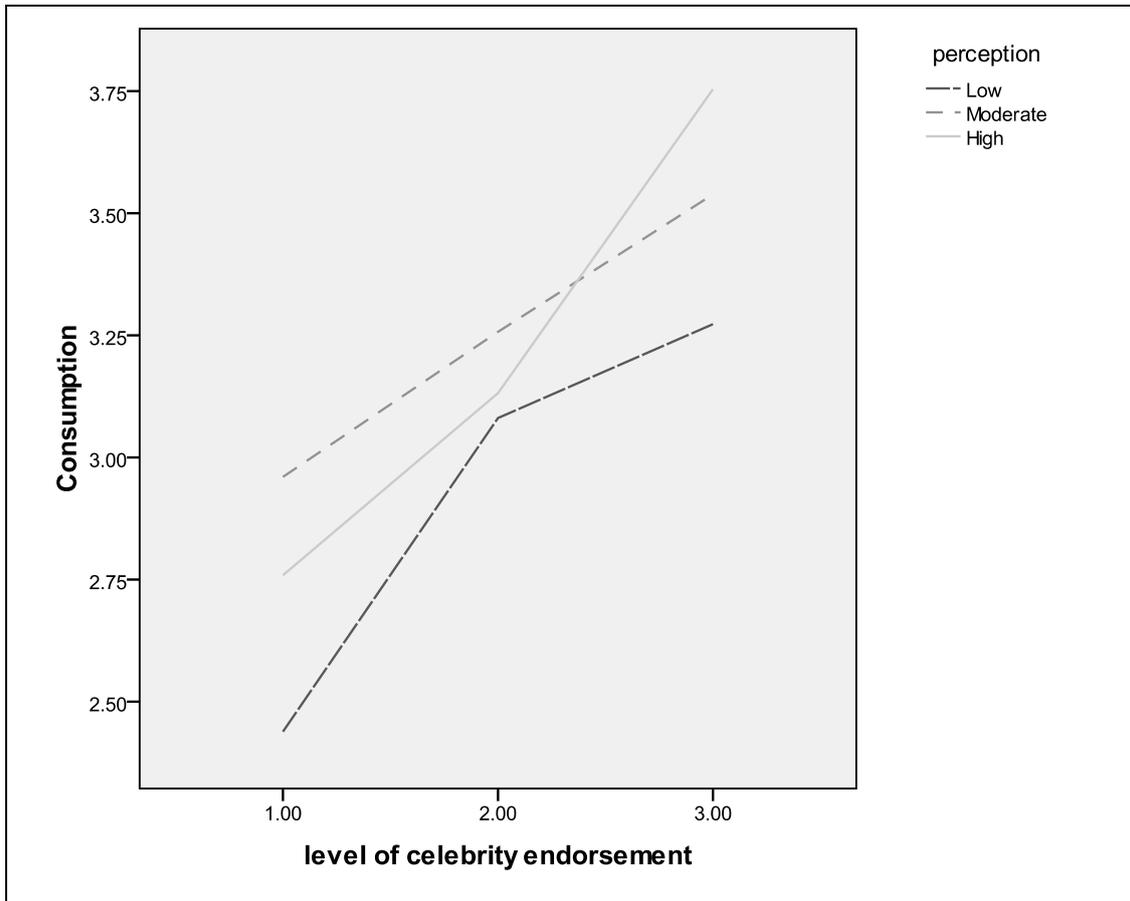
perception. This evidence supports the interaction effect of perception on the relationship between consumption and the variables – self image, celebrity endorsement and social expectation. Hence, hypothesis 4 is supported.

Figure 2: The moderating effect of perception on the relationship between self image and consumption behavior



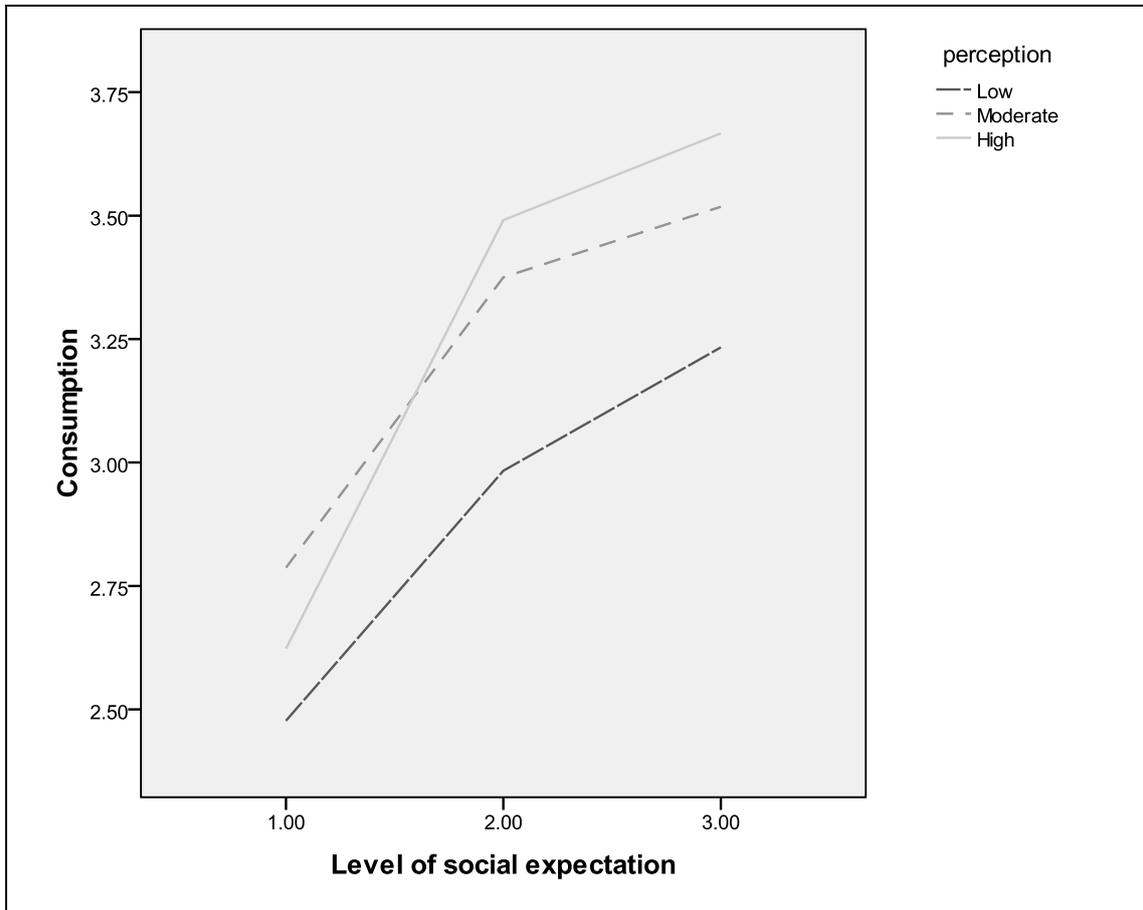
Based on figure 1, it is observed that during low level of perception, the level of consumption increases as the level of self image move from low to moderate. The consumption behavior is stronger as the level of self image moves from moderate to high. As for the moderate level of perception, the level of consumption of males grooming products is not much affected as the level of self image moves from low to moderate. The reading remains the same as the level of self image increase from moderate to high. However, for high level of perception, as the level of self image moves from low to moderate, the level of consumption remain constant. As the level of self image move from moderate to high, the level of consumption increases at a dramatic rate.

Figure 3: The moderating effect of perception on the relationship between celebrity endorsement and consumption behavior



Next, figure 3 shows that for low level of perception, the level of consumption increases dramatically as the level of celebrity endorsement moves from low to moderate. However, as the level of celebrity endorsement increases from moderate to high, the level of consumption is seen as increasing at a declining rate. For the moderate level of perception, the level of consumption does not have much impact on the level of consumption. Whilst for high level of perception, as the level of celebrity endorsement moves from low to moderate, the level of consumption increases. However, as the level of celebrity endorsement move from moderate to high, the level of consumption increases at an even rapid rate.

Figure 4: The moderating effect of perception on the relationship between social expectation and consumption behavior



On the other hand, figure 4 shows that for low level of perception, as the level of social expectation moves from low to moderate, the level of consumption increases. However, as the level of social expectation moves from moderate to high, the level of consumption increases at a declining rate. For the moderate level of perception, the consumption increases as the level of social expectation moves from low to moderate. However, the consumption increases at a much lower declining rate compared to low perception as the level of social expectation moves from moderate to high. Nonetheless, for the high level of perception, as the level of social expectation moves from low to moderate, the consumption of male grooming products increases too. However, as the level of social expectation moves from moderate to high, the consumption behavior shows the similarity to low and moderate perception whereby the consumption increases at a declining rate

5.0 Discussions and managerial implications

This study investigated and clarified the impact of self-image, celebrity endorsement and social expectation on the consumption of metrosexuals toward male grooming product.

The findings of the research show that there is a significant and positive relationship between metrosexuals' concern toward self-image and their consumption of male grooming products at $p < 0.05$ level. Therefore, the first hypothesis (H1) is supported. This corresponds to the findings of Featherstone (1991) who states that the men's desire to create, develop and maintain their self-image will stimulate their consumption of male grooming products. This indicates that metrosexuals who are concern about their self-image are more likely to have the intention to consume male grooming products. This study had revealed an important implication that metrosexuals do thought about the representativeness of their self-image when consuming male grooming products. Therefore, it is critical for the male grooming product providers to associate their product with the ability to enhance self-image. Nizar and Miriam (2009) suggest marketers to emphasize on how the consumption of the male grooming products can enhance the values that are important in the eye of men (i.e. self image) when formulating the advertising message. In addition, with the intention to further attract metrosexuals' consumption of male grooming products, marketers can stress the unique self-image characteristic of the product in comparison to the images held by its competitors, thus making their products stand out in the crowd (Michelle, Hye-Shin & Jaehee, 2008).

The study also indicates that there is a significant and positive relationship between celebrity endorsements and consumption of metrosexuals toward male grooming products at $p < 0.05$ level. Thus, the second hypothesis (H2) is supported. This supports the findings of Cole (2008) in which endorsement of celebrities contributes to positive change in metrosexuals' attitude toward the consumption of male grooming products. This signifies that celebrity endorsement is also evaluated when metrosexuals make the decision on the consumption of male grooming products. The relevant implication for this finding is that the role celebrity endorsement is associated with the consumption of male grooming products. Male grooming product providers should design the store environment that integrates the association of celebrity endorser to develop positive purchase intentions and thus the consumption of the male grooming products (Loo-Lee, Ibrahim & Chong, 2005). Furthermore, with the aim to utilize the influences of celebrity endorsement, male grooming product providers should employ suitable and matching celebrities as endorser to the male grooming products, as it will have an effect on the celebrity and the product he endorses will be an accepted truism to men (Lynn & Matthew, 1994).

Nonetheless, the study also found that there is a significant and positive relationship between metrosexuals' susceptibility of social expectation and their consumption of male grooming products at $p < 0.05$ level. Hence, the third hypothesis (H3) is supported.

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This is aligned with the findings of Caroline (2005) that metrosexuals consume male grooming products in the notion to fit themselves with their social friends. Social expectation is taken into consideration in metrosexuals' consumption of male grooming products. This indicates that the disagreement and poor impression received from the societal members have a positive impact on metrosexuals' consumption of male grooming products. An important implication from this is that the level of social expectation affects metrosexuals' consumption of male grooming products. Marketers need to understand the need for the marketing strategies (i.e. segmentation, targeting and promotional strategies) to recognize that not all customers are equally susceptible to social cues when formulating marketing strategy (Margaret et al., 1998). Lon-Lee et al. (2005) suggested servicing the consumers with the assistance of experts that are trained with relevant information on social expectation to guide the purchase and consumption of male grooming products.

According to the findings, perception poses a significant moderating effect on the relationship between the independent variables (self-image, social expectation and celebrity endorsement) and the dependent variable (consumption of male grooming products), at $p < 0.05$ level. The hierarchical test indicates that the percentage of variance as shown by the variables has increased when perception is included as the moderator for this model and it is significant at $p < 0.05$. This shows that perception moderates the effect of self-image, social expectation and celebrity endorsement on men's consumption of male grooming products. Thus, the fourth hypothesis (H4) is supported.

From figure 2, the findings suggest that the level of consumption for metrosexuals with low and high level of perception will tend to increase as the level of self image is increasing. This may be because the low and high perception level metrosexuals tend to pay more attention to the latest fashion trend (Wienke, 1998). In addition, they are more likely to make purchases of male grooming products from retailers who offer the latest styles. Hence, their level of consumption is increasing more rapidly. However, metrosexuals who possess moderate level of perception; they are easier to be satisfied, as they are less concerned about the styles and fashion trends. As a result, their level of consumption increases at a constant when their level of self image increases.

From figure 3, the findings suggest that the level of customer consumption for metrosexuals with low level of perception will increase as the level of celebrity endorsement increases but it increases at a declining rate after exposure to moderate level of celebrity endorsement. This may be because as the presence of celebrity is greater, low perception metrosexuals are more comfortable with the product and therefore increases the consumption of male grooming products. However, as massive exposure to the presence of celebrity will lead to inability to fully trust in the celebrity and therefore lead to increasing consumption in a declining rate. As for the moderate level of perception, the consumption behavior was not much affected by the level of celebrity endorsement. This may be due to the constant exposure to the presence of celebrity endorsement and thus the effect was not very desirable. Lastly, for the high level of perception, the consumption increases as the level of celebrity increases. They are more able to trust and get comfortable to the product as the presence of celebrity

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increases. Nonetheless, the level of trust and comfort-ability is higher as the presence of celebrity increases from moderate to high

From figure 4, the findings suggest that the level of consumption for metrosexuals with low, moderate and high level of perception will tend to diminish even if the level of social expectation is increasing. This may be because all three level of perception had already achieved their desirable grooming level when the level of social expectation reaches moderate. The metrosexuals had consumed enough variety of grooming products to improve on any level of deficiency. Therefore, as the level of social expectation continues to increase, they are only consuming products to better fine line their basic grooming. Therefore there is a diminishing consumption of grooming products after the moderate level of social expectation

This study gives an insight that perception is an important element that will influence the consumption behaviors of the metrosexuals. Based on the study, marketers will understand the importance of identifying the different levels of perception among the consumers and their consumption behavior will also change accordingly. Hence, marketers should include the perception of metrosexuals in developing the marketing strategies to meet the needs of the consumers. In addition, this study stresses the important of self-image, celebrity endorsement and social expectation on the consumption behavior of metrosexuals' toward male grooming products. Therefore, the marketers should deliver the values that are important to the consumers in their product attributes to encourage the consumption of metrosexuals toward male grooming products.

6.0 Limitation and future research direction

Some limitations of this study should be considered when interpreting the obtained results. There are other unexamined issues and limitations that can be translated into future research direction to further improve and enhance the understanding of metrosexuals' consumption behaviors toward male grooming products. The majority of the respondents drawn for this study are the Chinese counterparts rather than an equal distribution of respondents from different races and occupations that would better represent the population in its entirety. From a statistical standpoint, the samples may lack generalization power (Nizar and Miriam, 2009). The information gathered from only a particular race will jeopardize the findings as different races might have a different perception over the variables presented in the study (Lynn & Matthew, 1994). To overcome this limitation, it would be great to expand the scope of this research to include all the main cities in Malaysia and obtain a sample of respondents who are better able to represent the population of Malaysia. Hence, future studies should be conducted in larger scale to reflect different socioeconomic background, which would more accurately for the comparison among the different consumption behavior. A large sample of respondents would improve the generalizability of the result and provide more accurate results (Lynn & Matthew, 1994).

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Another limitation of this study is the use of snowballing effect to gather the data for analysis. Snowballing effect is used in this study because it is difficult to find the metrosexual members. The assistance of peers can improve the communication with these members. However, the data collected from the snowballing may be skewed due to the different perception that of each snowballer. The recommended respondents may not entirely fall under the category as a true metrosexual. Future research should use probability sampling methods to gather the data to more accurately represent the population and measures of behaviors. With the development of better measurements for identifying self-image, celebrity endorsement and social expectation would help researchers to avoid making assumptions of certain nature of objects under study (Brian, 2009). As argued by Sirgy et al. (1997), the technique for calculating congruity scores by using the same scales as measure for self-image are influenced by methodological flaws. Further studies should use a refined version of the scale to evaluate the variables (Lynn & Matthew, 1994).

In addition, this study only researches on the consumption of male grooming products as a whole. Therefore, the study may not be applicable to all the male grooming product categories available in the market. There are many categories of male grooming products which include aftershave, cosmetic, gel etc (Nickel, 2004). Future research should use specific product categories (i.e. cosmetic) as this will help to more accurately gain the insights into the knowledge about consumers' perception toward the product categories. The different product categories may cause the consumers to have a different set of view towards the consumption of male grooming products. With a specific category in place, the relationship between self-image, celebrity endorsement and social expectation, and the consumption behaviour of metrosexuals can more accurately be analysed and thus providing a more beneficial results to the marketers. The moderating effect of perception can also be better presented with clear product categories. Hence, a more comprehensive research approach should be undertaken to better understand the consumption behaviour of the metrosexuals toward the different categories of male grooming products that are available in the marketplace. In general, more research should be conducted to gain more insightful information that would be useful for the marketers during the formulating of marketing strategies.

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