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MALE GROOMING IN PORTUGAL:
THE ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOUR OF GENERATION Y MEN

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Abstract

Nowadays, an always growing number of men is engaging in the purchase and consumption of male grooming products. However, consumers appear to hold different degrees of acceptance and behaviours towards this activity. As the men's grooming market in Portugal has yet to boom, the key aim of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the attitude and behaviour of Portuguese males and to explore the barriers to consumption of men's grooming products in a culture that is still said to largely hold typical notions of masculinity in relation to gender roles. Through a qualitative analysis consisting of eleven in-depth interviews, five major hindering factors are unveiled: stigma, lack of information, image, price and inertia. These insights and the proposed practical recommendations might be of interest to men's grooming brands operating in Portugal and in other similar cultures, which should adopt strategies focused on encouraging the consumption of beauty and personal care products and on decreasing these barriers. Overall, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of male consumer attitude and behaviour in the men's grooming market by exploring the Portuguese context.

Keywords: Male Grooming; Portugal; Attitudes; Consumer Behaviour.

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1. Introduction

The public gaze has turned on men, and men's gaze has turned toward the mirror.

(Coupland, 2007, p.42)

The male grooming market is currently experiencing a global growth. More and more men are now consuming an increasing number of products that were once exclusive to female consumption (McNeill & Douglas, 2011), since the range of grooming items considered socially acceptable for men has become wider (Gordon, 2014). This has partly come as a consequence of the blurring of gender roles and of the culture of consumption, which has demolished any feminine-masculine difference by turning everyone into a consumer (Kacen, 2000). Therefore, if the cosmetic industry was once traditionally associated with women, there is now an undeniable growing demand for cosmetics by males (Souiden & Diagne, 2009). According to Euromonitor (as cited in Weinswig, 2017), the global men's grooming market was estimated at US\$47.2 billion in 2015 and is projected to grow at a CAGR of 5.2% to reach US\$60.7 billion by 2020. Several are the factors that have been attributed to this growth: an increasing focus of society on appearance (Salzman et al., 2005), an expanding number of men's style magazines (Bakewell, Mitchell, & Rothwell, 2006), and the global health and wellness trend of taking care of oneself (Thompson & Hirschman, 1995). However, the degree of acceptance that men's grooming holds with male consumers remains questioned (McNeill & Douglas, 2011). Although Gordon (2014) reports that "one third of men spend more than thirty minutes a day grooming", cross-cultural differences in the dedication and approach to this activity still exist.

In a country such as Portugal, where evolving gender roles co-exist with more traditional stereotyped ideas associated with femininity and masculinity (Duane, 2012), the men's grooming market has yet to reach its full potential. According to Euromonitor International (2018), in 2017 men's grooming grew by 2% to reach sales of €237 million. The biggest

categories in value terms continued to be men's shaving, men's fragrances and men's toiletries respectively. The market is expected to register a further growth at a constant CAGR of 2% and to reach €256 million of sales in 2022. Despite this positive trend, men's grooming in Portugal has been waiting for a boom which has yet to happen: even though an increasing number of men are paying greater attention to their appearance and are willing to buy skin-care products, sales in many other male grooming categories are likely to remain low (Euromonitor International, 2018). Interesting are the findings of a study conducted by L'Oréal Portugal: 75% of Portuguese men make use of beauty and personal care products, but 64% of them prefer unisex brands (Marketeer, 2018). As men are generally said to prefer brands producing male-only grooming products (McNeill & Douglas, 2011), this raises a striking paradox worth being researched further and clearly shows that there is still room for improvement in the Portuguese men's grooming market.

To effectively exploit the lucrative opportunity that this industry can represent, it becomes pivotal for businesses to understand the driving forces of male grooming consumers. Surprisingly, research on this matter is still scarce and has never clearly focused on Portugal. For this reason, the main purpose of this paper is to shed additional light on Portuguese men's attitude and behaviour towards the consumption of male grooming products and to explore barriers to purchase. Furthermore, it is intended to provide valuable insights for brands to successfully tap into this nationally underexploited market segment. Therefore, we seek to address the following research question:

RQ: *“What factors are preventing Portuguese men from purchasing and consuming male grooming brands?”*.

The paper is organized as follows: first, a literature review of male consumption behaviour with a focus on cosmetic products is carried out. Then, the applied methodology is

outlined, and the analysed data of the interviews are unveiled. Finally, the findings are discussed and the limitations, recommendations for further research and conclusion are presented.

2. Literature review

2.1 The evolution of male shopping behaviour

Men have been found to be different from women on several levels when it comes to their shopping behaviour: they process information differently with regard to the consumption of products and have a different approach to their shopping task (Coley & Burgess, 2003). Female consumers see shopping in an inter-personal way, whereas men think of it as more instrumental (Knowledge@Wharton, 2007). Moreover, women are considered to be more likely to shop for aesthetic products, while men for functional ones (Souiden & Diagne, 2009). Although male shoppers are traditionally pictured as “recalcitrant or unenthusiastic consumers” (Lee, Ibrahim, & Hsueh-Shan, 2005, p. 325), they are now increasingly participating in shopping-related activities (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2006) as they are assuming a more egalitarian role even related to shopping duties (Kuruvilla, Joshi, & Shah, 2009). Accordingly, marketers are increasingly recognizing that it is old-fashioned to view men as “producers” and women as “consumers” (Bakewell et al., 2006). This behavioural shift is mirrored in the increased focus of research on the male consumer in recent years. When it comes to the consumption of cosmetics, it is however indubitable that it has traditionally been exclusive to women. For this reason, if on the one hand female consumption behaviour related to cosmetics has received wide attention, on the other hand male shopping behaviour of grooming products still needs to be researched further.

2.2 Men and the male grooming industry

As men have started to become more comfortable with the idea of purchasing cosmetic products for themselves (Sturrock & Pioch, 1998), they have become key consumers for many beauty and personal care companies (Souiden & Diagne, 2009). As Lee, Ibrahim and Hsueh-

Shan (2005) explain, it is now “possible for a man to simultaneously engage in consumer behaviour and maintain his masculine identity” (p. 325). Moreover, research shows that male shoppers aged 18-34 are far more active than older men in every retail channel and that those aged 16-24 are more openly shopping for beauty products than in the past (Coley & Burgess, 2003). This shift in men’s behaviour has been attributed to several factors: a societal emphasis on appearance (Salzman et al., 2005), the rise of men’s style magazines (Bakewell et al., 2006) and the global trend of increased self-care and health practices (Thompson & Hirschman, 1995). It has even been suggested that also the blurring of traditional gender roles has widely contributed to a change of today’s ideas about masculinity, which has affected not only how men think and behave but even how they look (Salzman et al., 2005). In an attempt to mirror these social changes and tap into a broader market, marketers have been encouraging this gender-blurring by promoting new products that consciously ignore and subvert traditional notions of gender (Kacen, 2000).

A clear evidence of the rise of appearance-conscious men is the emergence of terms such as “metrosexual” (Salzman et al., 2005). Metrosexuals are men who live in big cities, care about their own appearances and devote considerable amount of time and money to enhance their self-image and lifestyles (Souiden and Diagne, 2009). They are sufficiently confident in their masculinity to publicly embrace their feminine side (Salzman et al., 2005). More recently, it has even been noted the rise of the more-macho “übersexual” (Salzman et al., 2005), who exhibits more traditional masculine qualities while continuing to enjoy some kind of appearance-related products and services. However, the notions of masculinity are not universal as their construction is strongly influenced by culture. This partly explains why many men around the world still hold negative attitudes towards the intensive consumption of grooming products, seeing this activity as a pampering feminine indulgence (Salzman et al., 2005). Moreover, there still seems to be an issue even for some of those men that consume male

grooming products to enhance their appearance as they want to ensure maintaining appropriate manliness and avoid being considered narcissistic (Coupland, 2007).

2.3 Men's behaviour toward consumption of grooming products

Only a few recent studies have investigated the factors of influence on men's attitude and behaviour towards the consumption of grooming products. By investigating differences in purchase behaviour in the cosmetics industry between France and the USA, Weber and Capitant de Villebonne (2002) have identified some major factors that affect consumer's choice: price, quality, packaging, advertising, promotion, local recognition, opinion towards particular firms or products and the knowledgeable salesperson. Similarly, by comparing the Canadian and the French male consumption of grooming products, Souiden and Diagne (2009) have clarified the impact of three major categories of determinants influencing men's attitude and behaviour: personal variables (e.g. men's self-image preoccupations, ageing concerns, health and physical attractiveness), socio-cultural variables (e.g. societal beliefs and lifestyle) and marketing variables (e.g. advertising and purchase intention). The results of their study show that advertising and physical attractiveness have a strong positive impact on men's consumption of grooming products in both countries. Regarding ageing, image consciousness, purchase situation and lifestyle, they are all found to have a different degree of influence. More interesting is to note how social beliefs and health concerns are reported not to have a relevant impact on men's consumption of cosmetics in both countries. However, McNeill and Douglas's (2011) research focused on New Zealand young males reveals that individuals appear highly influenced by the traditional notions of masculinity entrenched in national culture. Indeed, individuals are found to see grooming as a largely feminine activity and to justify their consumption of this type of products with a functional approach. Moreover, they appear to apply an unwritten rule regarding a limited accepted number of beauty and personal care products that a male can own as a further justification.

These as well as some other available studies (e.g. Maulina, Chan, & Ridwan, 2017; Khan et al., 2017) that have researched or compared variables in different countries clearly show how the attitude and behaviour of men towards the consumption of beauty and personal care products can differ geographically. This view is supported by Tungate (2008), who clearly states that approaches to grooming vary by country. Therefore, marketers can not ignore that male consumers of grooming products can differ from geography to geography.

When it comes to Portugal, it is described as a traditional country with a masculine ideology (Costa Pereira, Verissimo, Castillo Diaz, & Correia, 2013). Although recently changing gender roles have led an increasing number of women to enter the labour force and have shaped a desire for a greater participation of men in domestic and childcare responsibilities, a male breadwinner culture seems to persist together with contradictory values on gender roles (Vedes et al., 2016). Research on men's attitude and behaviour towards the consumption of beauty and personal care products in this type of culture and specifically in this country is still very scant. Thus, this study aims to address this gap in the literature by providing a deeper understanding of those variables that guide and hinder Portuguese male consumers' use of men's grooming products.

3. Methodology

3.1 Sample and procedure

For the data collection of this research, both a judgmental and snowball sampling technique were used: after a small pool of initial interviewees was gathered based on the judgment of the researcher, subsequent participants in the study were recruited via the respondents' social network. A total of eleven Portuguese men participated in the research. The average age of the interviewees was 25.5 years, ranging from 22 to 34. From a demographic point of view, the selected sample was rather heterogeneous, with participants having different levels of education and occupations. Indeed, three respondents completed high-school, one held

a bachelor's degree, two already held a master's degree and five were currently pursuing one. In terms of occupation, five of the interviewees were students, another five were already working in different occupational fields, and one respondent was currently unemployed. A detailed overview of the sample is provided in Table 1.

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of participants

Name	Gender	Age	Education	Occupation	Area of residence
Miguel	M	26	High-school	Unemployed	Carnaxide, Oeiras
Ricardo	M	34	Bachelor	Actuarial Analyst	Benfica, Lisbon
João	M	22	Master	Student	Alverca, Lisbon
Rui	M	22	Master	Student	Almada
Rodrigo	M	23	Master	Freelance writer	Sintra
Tomás A.	M	22	Master	Student	Belém, Lisbon
Filipe	M	24	Master	Student	Algés, Oeiras
Tomás L.	M	23	Master	Student	Benfica, Lisbon
Tiago	M	24	High-school	Call centre employee	Benfica, Lisbon
Pedro	M	31	Master	Accountant	Estefânia, Lisbon
Vitor	M	29	High-school	Military	Benfica, Lisbon

The nature of the problem and the little information available about it deemed exploratory research and the adoption of a qualitative research design in order to develop rich insights regarding the subject of study. Data for this research were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with an open-ended format. A pre-recruiting questionnaire helped to ensure that an appropriate sample was identified, meaning Portuguese men that made at least a basic consumption of male grooming products. Appendix 1 provides the four pre-recruiting filters that were applied. Beginning with the presentation of the purpose of the study and its declaration of consent, the in-depth interviews then addressed the following major topics: consumer behaviour in the men's grooming category; category knowledge and satisfaction; image and perception of men's grooming products and brands; spontaneous consumers'

expectations (in terms of male grooming brands and products); and obstacles and incentives to consumption. Appendix 2 presents the complete interview guide, which was used as a guideline. The eleven interviews were conducted either face to face or via Skype in a quiet and pleasant environment. Each interview had a duration that ranged from 45 minutes to 1.5 hours, was audio-recorded with the permission of participants and transcribed verbatim for subsequent in-depth analysis. The final number of eleven interviews resulted from reaching a point of data saturation, meaning a stage at which further interviews would have not provided any further knowledge (Flick, 2009).

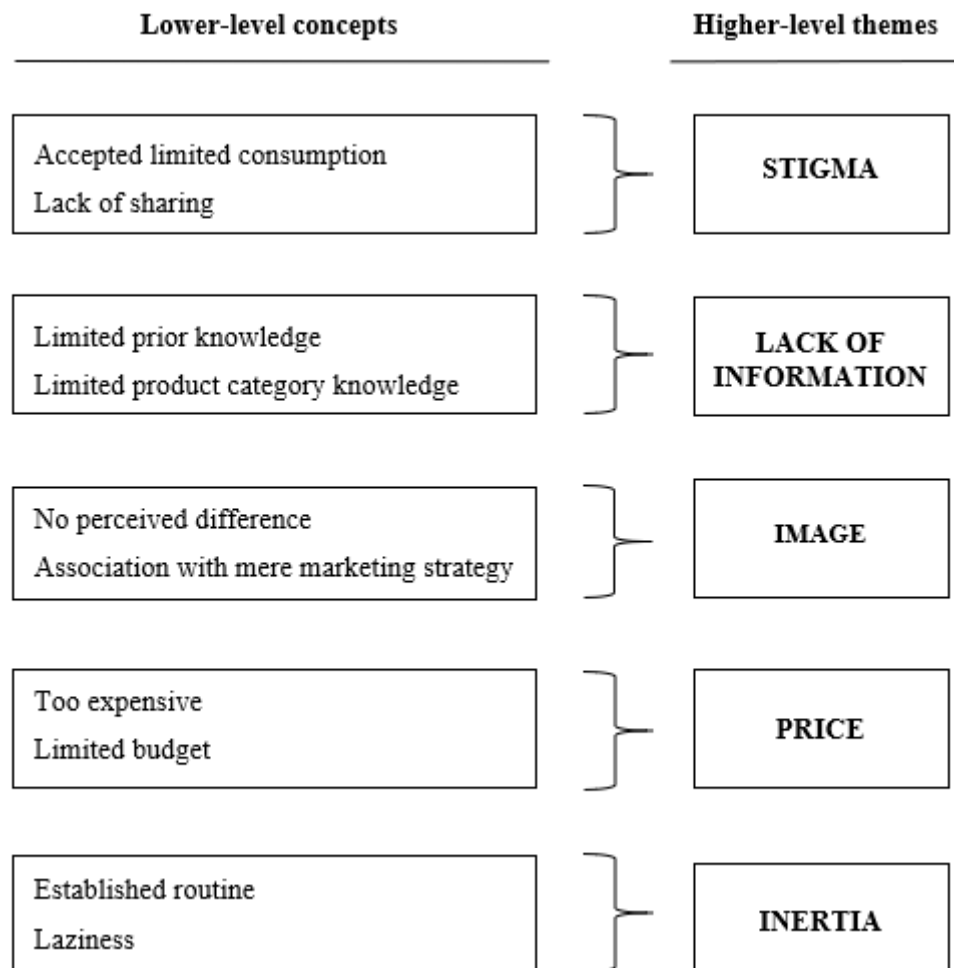
3.2 Data analysis

The interviews were analysed using both open and axial coding, as they go hand in hand (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Following the recommendations of the literature, the analysis started by questioning and comparing the data constantly to effectively code them. This initial stage of open coding allowed to identify lower-level concepts within the data. The next step consisted in identifying higher-order theoretical themes in order to bring the data to a higher level of generalization. Therefore, the previously identified lower-level concepts were related one to another and then grouped into major higher-level themes through a process called axial coding.

4. Results

In this section, the insights obtained with this study are presented. Several variables were identified as influencing Portuguese men's attitude and behaviour towards the consumption of grooming products. Figure 1 provides a detailed overview of the key themes that emerged from the analysed data of this study: the left-side column presents the lower-level concepts, whereas the right-side column illustrates the higher-level identified themes. Following, the main insights are accurately outlined.

Figure 1 Factors influencing Portuguese men's attitude and consumption behaviour towards grooming products



4.1 Stigma

A major factor influencing Portuguese men's attitude and behaviour towards the consumption of grooming products is the existence of a stigma. The participants agree that this does not interest anymore the idea that consuming beauty and personal care products might mean losing one's masculinity: *"I don't think that masculinity is lost or gained by using these products. I think that hygiene and beauty are two fundamental things in our society nowadays. And I believe that other Portuguese men feel the same. I think that nowadays the internet and other things like this have already changed the perception that using beauty and personal care*

products means losing one's masculinity. I think this is not the case anymore" (Interview XI). Nevertheless, the consumption of multiple grooming products is still largely seen as a classically feminine behaviour. Only owning a limited number of these items seems to be considered acceptable among men, as it clearly emerges from the words of this interviewee: *"I don't think men go to that extent because we associate women being preoccupied with smaller stuff and more detailed stuff on their skin than men. Selling to a man a product that does three things at the same time is much better than selling a product that solves only one issue, because being preoccupied with too many things and owning too many of these products can still be seen as not masculine"* (Interview VI). This translates for some participants in the preconceived idea that people who have a more extensive consumption behaviour towards grooming products are homosexual: *"Gay men take care of themselves better than we do. We straight guys. They're more in touch with their feminine side. [...] I'm not in touch with my feminine side to the point that they are. [...] Men could use body lotion. But what I mean is that gay men tend to use it more, they tend to use more of these products"* (Interview I).

Interesting is the fact that the existing stigma particularly concerns the sharing of this activity among males, even more than regarding the consumption act itself. If on the one hand the usage of grooming products is accepted among men by justifying it with a problem-solving approach as well as by applying an unspoken judgment regarding the number of items one owns, on the other hand there is still a hurdle when it comes to openly talk about this topic with other men: *"We don't really talk about this stuff among men. I think it would be weird if I said, 'By the way, I'm using this new deodorant or this new skin care product'. Why would they want to know that?"* (Interview VI). Another respondent clearly addresses this stigma by explaining it with the following words: *"I would say that most men don't ask other men for advice because they're still ashamed to talk about the fact that they take care of themselves, there's still a stigma probably"* (Interview II). However, many justify this lack of sharing with the fact that

the topic simply does not come up in men's conversations rather than with a question of embarrassment: *"I think it's just something that never comes up during conversations. [...] I know that some friends of mine don't use these products, but it's not like we have a problem discussing them. It's just that the topic never comes up, as for the body lotion or the after-shave. The perfume, as you feel it more from the other persons, I think it happens more to come up during our conversations. I just think we don't have lots of conversations about beauty and personal care. But it's not that we feel bad about it"* (Interview III).

4.2 Lack of information

As an answer to the question why they would not make use of more beauty and personal care products, the interviewees referred to their limited prior knowledge on the topic. This seems to be related to the lack of sharing advice, recommendations and information about these products that exists among men from a very young age: *"Since they are young, I think that girls know exactly what all these products are meant for, when to use them and how often. I don't think boys talk about these things, so you don't create that knowledge that stays in your head since the beginning"* (Interview II). More specifically, men do not feel informed about what many of the products on offer are meant for and if they are appropriate for their needs: *"I think my friends don't use more products than the ones that I use. I think because sometimes, just like me, they don't know what a product is meant for"* (Interview V). Moreover, they are often not aware of how they are supposed to effectively use them to obtain the desired results, which leaves them with a feeling of uncertainty and dissatisfaction. This is indirectly stated by the following respondent: *"Regarding the face moisturizer, maybe I didn't like the effects of it because I was using it in the wrong way. Maybe I was not using it enough or maybe too much. I have no idea"* (Interview XI). The main cause for this is identified in the lack of exhaustive available information. Male grooming brands are found not to communicate clearly their products to consumers. This leads men not to have a complete awareness and clear

understanding of the men's grooming offer and makes them limit their consumption of these products. In some cases, they even migrate to the women's market because its communication is often much clearer, as highlighted by the following respondent: *"I think it's easier to understand in the women's market the effects and purposes of each product than in the men's market"* (Interview VI). Additionally, another respondent even clarifies that there is no attempt of educating men that find themselves at a beginning level of male grooming products consumption: *"If you're a beginner, the information that you get online is already for someone that has some more expertise. [...] And you look at several products that you don't know, you don't know how to use them and what to do with them, and you would just think, 'Ok, forget it, I will use them the way I think I should use them'. And, you know, I feel bad. I don't know if this is something that other people feel, but this is what I feel. [...] For this kind of products, you even need to know the usage frequency, if you just need to use one product or more. I think this information is not available"* (Interview II). The same barrier is even recognized by another interviewee, who additionally unveils a lack of detailed information about grooming products in the market given to men by men: *"I would appreciate the advice of men if it would be much more descriptive and not just focused on performance. Women tend to give more details, like 'I use this product with this', 'you can try this for this'... If men would do the same type of schematic and give the same explanations, I would for sure trust them as well. I think that there's a lack of explanation in the market given by men to men"* (Interview VI).

4.3 Image

Another major obstacle for men in the consumption of male grooming products is the image they associate with them. Due to the lack of information in the men's market, the respondents perceive no difference in terms of benefits between products targeted specifically to them and unisex or even women's ones: *"I'm not sure if they're better because I might not have tried enough men's products to know if there's a difference. I'm just saying that if a*

product works for a woman, then it works for me” (Interview X). This is especially true for skin-care products and it seems to come as a consequence of men’s belief that female and male skin is the same. According to the respondents, there is no need to have male-only products to meet their needs in this case: “I think that skin is skin, that there are no differences between men’s and women’s skin. Regarding other specific products, I can believe that there are some differences and that having a distinction between men’s and women’s brands makes sense. But when it comes to skin care products, I think it doesn’t, because I perceive that the skin of men is the same as the skin of women nowadays” (Interview XI). More than that, many interviewees believe that the skin-care offer of the women’s market is even better and much more trustworthy because of its longer heritage and more demanding consumers: “I think that the fact that women have always cared so much for their skin and men not gives more trust to the women’s market because women have used skin care products for a longer time. Men can use after-shave and stuff like this, but it doesn’t go beyond that, I think. Now probably it does. But the fact that women have always trial tested more products makes me trust more the women’s market than the men’s one” (Interview VI). The same counts for shower gels and hair shampoos, a product category about which men do not seem to care much. Indeed, it is generally perceived as a low-involvement category fulfilling a mere hygienic need which has been served very well by unisex or women’s brands since they were young and used to share these products with the rest of the family: “For shampoo and shower gel, I don’t need a men’s brand, as long as they do what they’re supposed to do” (Interview IV). Even in the case where a respondent believes that men’s brands are better in satisfying male consumers’ grooming needs, the lack of information from them leaves him unable to thoroughly explain the reason why: “But if you ask me what’s the difference between a men’s brand and another one, I don’t know. [...] I’m not a person with the knowledge to understand how a men’s brand is better for men compared to a more general brand. But I trust the men’s brand and assume it’s better for some products. I might have seen

a commercial or read something about it, but often I have no idea why a product is for men” (Interview II). The only exception is represented by deodorants, for which men’s brands are unanimously perceived as more effective.

Due to the fact that the respondents perceive no difference between men’s, unisex and women’s brands in several product categories, in many cases they associate male grooming brands with a mere marketing strategy. This is clearly explained by the following respondent: *“But sometimes I also ask myself if it’s really necessary to have specific products for men or if it’s not just a marketing strategy to make men feel like they can buy those products because they’re for men. There are some products where I can understand that they are different for men, but others where I don’t understand the point and where I think that maybe it’s just a marketing thing created for making men feel more comfortable”* (Interview II).

4.4 Price

Even the high prices of men’s grooming brands have been indicated as a hurdle by the respondents. Since price has been identified as one of the most relevant drivers in the choice and purchase of beauty and personal care products, the participants often do not end up choosing items targeted specifically to men because they perceive them as too expensive and unjustifiably pricier than unisex ones: *“I’m thinking what it would take to make me choose not a unisex brand but a male brand for the same product. I think that the deciding factor would be the fragrance or the price. I would not be willing to pay double the price for a male product if the unisex one does the same thing”* (Interview X). Furthermore, when specifically explaining the main reason for not purchasing men’s grooming brands, an interviewee stated: *“For me it’s price [...]. The price is a big part of it. If these products were cheaper, maybe I could get used to them and use more of them. Because if they are out there, they supposedly do something to your skin that’s good. But not for the standard price, they need to be cheap”* (Interview I). This

clearly shows how the respondents wish that men's grooming products would come with a cheaper price tag.

Moreover, the interviewees revealed how a limited budget makes them heavily rely on discounts and promotions. It has even been mentioned as the factor that might lead them to limit the consumption to only those specific products that they prioritize: *"[...] I'm not going to spend more money on these products. I prioritize something else. For instance, I prioritize shower gel before something like a face moisturizer, or something similar. Price matters to me. Just the price."* (Interview I). In some cases, the limited budget is even indirectly identified as a reason for cutting out the consumption of these products since they are still perceived as not being essential: *"I think I could easily start a routine that includes new products that I'm not using yet, but if I felt that I'm wasting my money on that, I would stop, because it's something unnecessary. I mean, if I saw at the end of the month that I'm wasting too much money, then I would not even buy the body lotion that I'm currently using since it's not an essential"* (Interview XI). However, a minority of the interviewees underline how they would be willing to pay the higher price for those products that they think are worth it: *"Perfumes are always too expensive, but they're worth it. The face moisturizer is not. 5 euros for a small package is too much. I prefer to prioritize something else"* (Interview I).

4.5 Inertia

An established beauty and personal care routine has been found as another explanation for the interviewees not to consume men's grooming products in a more extensive way. Many participants clarify that they simply forget using or purchasing them since they do not come automatically to their mind if they are not part of their routine: *"I don't use face scrub often, but since I have tried it out before and apparently it removes the dead skin, I do have one at home. But I never really remember using it because it's not part of my routine. Sometimes when I see it, I think, 'Ok, let me use it'. [...] On average I would say that I use it once or twice a*

month. [...] I like the product, but I forget to use it because I think that it's something that was never part of my routine. Whereas the other products that I use come automatic" (Interview II). Some interviewees even clearly state that they are not willing to change their routines to adopt new products. In many cases, laziness is indicated as the major reason for this inertia: *"I'm also lazy. I don't like to try a lot of things, spend money, research about it"* (Interview IX).

5. Discussion

5.1 Theoretical implications

By exploring the variables influencing Portuguese men's consumption of grooming products and their decision-making drivers for beauty and personal care items, this paper contributes to bridging an existing gap in the literature.

First of all, this study revealed how the existence of a cultural stigma within the Portuguese society influences the attitude and behaviour of men in the consumption of grooming products. This insight is in contrast with the results of Souiden et al.'s research (2009), which did not identify societal beliefs as a relevant variable for male consumers in France and in Canada. However, it is in line with the findings of other studies, since even Khan et al. (2017) identified socio-cultural variables as a factor of influence on the attitude and behaviour of male consumers. Moreover, this paper reinforced the claim of McNeill and Douglas (2011) that the number of grooming products a man owns counts as a more relevant determinant of acceptability than the type of beauty and personal care item itself. Furthermore, this study contributed to unveiling how the present stigma extends at a higher degree to the sharing of the grooming activity, as men were found not to openly talk about it with other males.

The lack of information identified in this study as one of the major hurdles in the consumption of male grooming products has never been clearly highlighted in literature. Participants complained about their limited prior knowledge about the topic, the lack of an

educational attempt from the men's grooming industry and the incomplete information provided by brands about their offer. It was even unveiled how their current knowledge of beauty and personal care products appeared to have come from other sources, such as the Internet, social networks and the influence of a female presence in their lives. This matches the finding of Galilee (2002) as well as McNeill and Douglas (2011), according to which women act as a driving force for grooming product knowledge and usage. However, within this study it became clear that the consumers desired to be better informed about the additional benefits and details of male grooming products, perceiving it as a responsibility of brands to provide men with this knowledge in order to allow them to become more independent consumers.

Furthermore, Weber and Capitant de Villebonne (2002) identified price as an important variable in the consumers' choice of grooming products. This could be confirmed by this study, since the participants mentioned the high price tags of male grooming products as an important barrier to consumption. Moreover, the insights gained through this research allowed to clarify that the price sensitivity is related to a limited budget and to the perception of the product category as not essential.

The associated image of male grooming brands was uncovered in this study as a further influencing factor. Contrary to the findings of the literature which state that men prefer brands entirely dedicated to male-only products (McNeill & Douglas, 2002), participants were found to generally perceive no difference in terms of benefits between a men's only brand and a unisex one with regards to most of the product categories. Therefore, in many cases they negatively associated men's grooming products with a mere marketing strategy. This was found to represent a relevant barrier to the purchase of male grooming brands.

Finally, a new contribution of this study was the identified inertia. Participants were found to have established grooming routines and to show some degree of resistance in the adoption of new products that might mean changing their habits of consumption. Indeed, men

appeared to perceive them as advantageous in the sense that they felt reassured about a positive shopping outcome and grooming experience. However, the fact that this was noted to be related to a sentiment of laziness clearly shows how it can be understood as an evidence of personal convenience, representing an important factor that impedes the adoption of a more exploratory and extensive consumption behaviour.

5.2 Practical implications

This study provides a deeper understanding of Portuguese male consumers' attitude and behaviour towards the consumption of grooming products by uncovering some major hindering factors. The outlined insights might be of interest to men's grooming brands which are wishing to entice a wider number of consumers.

Since the participants of this study were found to be mainly driven by price, fragrance and effectiveness for their product choice, male grooming brands should tackle the issue of being perceived as overpriced and as not offering any additional benefit compared to unisex products. For this purpose, it is suggested to adopt a clearer and more extensive product communication. Moreover, brands need to support men in dealing with the expanding grooming market. To reach these objectives, it is recommended to create an environment where male grooming products can be displayed, marketed and discussed in detail from a level suitable to beginners. Partnering with male bloggers or influencers that do not represent a stereotyped idea of masculinity, but with whom Portuguese men could identify with, could represent a good starting point. Supporting men in acquiring a more extensive knowledge of the available offer and providing a clearer communication of its added value might lead to a trade-up from the side of consumers.

Furthermore, this study shows that consumers deal with a major problem of inertia when it comes to adopting a more sophisticated grooming routine. Therefore, it could be desirable to make multipurpose products more available in the Portuguese men's grooming market in order

to allow consumers to minimize their efforts by making them save time and energy. This could represent a more appealing offer since it is focused on optimizing male consumers' grooming routines by solving contemporarily more than one beauty and personal care need that men might be experiencing. This solution would even overcome the problem of the existing stigma related to the consumption of an extended number of grooming products.

5.3 Limitations and future research

This research intended to explore the variables influencing the attitude, consumer and purchase behaviour of Portuguese men towards the consumption of male grooming products. As in any study, some limitations should be considered when interpreting the insights provided and should be addressed in future research.

The combination of a judgmental and snowball sampling technique used in the present study narrowed the diversity of the participants. To overcome this limitation, the research should be expanded to other cities of Portugal by applying a random sampling technique in order to obtain a sample of respondents who would represent more thoroughly the population of the country. Furthermore, as younger males are said to be more open to beauty and personal care, it would be interesting to conduct a similar study with an older generation of participants to see if the presented insights would remain valid.

Additionally, the applied qualitative research methodology allowed the researcher to explore the investigated problem and to gain a deeper understanding of the respondents' attitude and behaviour. However, future research is suggested to combine qualitative and quantitative methods in order to further develop and validate the obtained findings.

Moreover, since the exploratory nature of the present research deemed a broader scope, future studies should focus on specific segments of the men's grooming market, for instance the skin-care category, in order to get more detailed consumers' insights. Indeed, the attitude,

motivations and behaviour towards the different product categories were found to largely vary accordingly.

Nevertheless, the insights presented within this study provide interesting topics for future research. First, it could be explored further the logic behind the fact that the number of grooming products a man possesses represents a more important determinant of acceptability than the type of beauty and personal care item itself. Secondly, it could be assessed whether a more focused communication strategy aimed at delivering a clearer message of the additional benefits of male-only branded products and at educating men on the category would help male grooming brands to justify their higher prices. Thus, it remains clear that future contributions to research are needed to shed additional light on the still underexplored men's grooming world.

6. Conclusion

The key aim of the present study was to understand the major factors influencing the attitude and behaviour of men towards the purchase and consumption of male grooming products in Portugal. Through a qualitative analysis, five major forces impeding men's consumption of male grooming brands were identified and a complex and fragmented scenario was uncovered. Although Portuguese society is not pressuring men for becoming increasingly appearance-focused and traditional notions of masculinity persist, males are found to have diversified degrees of self-care and to hold a common stigma related to the sharing of this activity. However, they appear not to be looking for a vibe of masculinity when it comes to grooming products and to frequently prefer unisex brands over male-only ones during their decision-making due to a lack of information in the market, the association of them with a mere marketing strategy and a general price sensitivity. These insights could represent a valuable starting point in the understanding of the still underexplored male consumer behaviour towards the consumption of grooming products in Portugal and in other similar cultures. All-in-all, this

study outlined relevant implications for the men's grooming industry and suggested valuable approaches to be adopted in future strategies.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Pre-recruiting questionnaire

Filter 1	Respondents must be male.
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Filter 2	Respondents must be Portuguese.
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Filter 3	Respondents must use at least one of these products daily: after-shave, deodorant or perfume.
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Filter 4	Respondents must have used at least one men's grooming brand in the last 6 months.
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Appendix 2 – Interview guide

Warm-up:

Good morning/afternoon/evening, I am a student at Nova School of Business and Economics and I am currently conducting a research about men's grooming in Portugal as part of my Master Work Project. Therefore, I would like to interview you for approximately 60 minutes. I will not ask you specific questions as in a standard questionnaire. After a first broad question, you will be free to tell me whatever comes to your mind about the topic. For the purpose of analysing the interviews later, I would like to record our conversation. Do you mind? It will remain anonymous and you will not be contacted further after this interview. Shall we start?

[Briefly explain what the men's grooming market includes:]

- Men's shaving
- Fragrances/perfumes
- Toiletries

Initial question:

Could you please describe what beauty and personal care products do you usually use and how do you use them in your routine?

Topics to be developed:

CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

- Beauty & personal care routine description: routine vs sporadic use
- Product usage frequency
- Product type & usage occasion
- Motivations behind consumption: pleasure vs necessity
- Consumer decision journey
- Buyer's role
- Buying drivers
- Purchase decision:
 - individual vs influenced
 - loyalty vs experimentation/change
 - motivators/influencers

- Comparison between respondents' own motives/drivers & the ones of other Portuguese men
- Buying habits

CATEGORY KNOWLEDGE & SATISFACTION LEVEL

- Knowledge of various product categories in the male grooming market
- Opinion and satisfaction level with the current category offer

IMAGE AND PERCEPTION OF MEN'S GROOMING PRODUCTS & BRANDS

- Associations regarding the use of the products
- Unisex vs men's grooming brands
- Importance of vibe of masculinity & what does "being a man" mean to them

SPONTANEOUS CONSUMERS' EXPECTATIONS (in terms of male grooming brands and their products)

- Men's expectations when it comes to male grooming brands and products

OBSTACLES & INCENTIVES FOR CONSUMPTION

- Obstacles and incentives for consumption

Respondent's profile:

- Age
 - Education
 - Occupation
 - Area of residence
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