

Examining The Role Of Social Media In Shaping The Consumer Behaviour Patterns Of Men's Grooming Products

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Abstract:

Consumer behaviour in the men's grooming industry has been largely shaped by the dominating penetration of social media channels. Pulsating with influencer marketing, targeted adverts, and peer-to-peer recommendations, digital platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook have become the new battleground for deciding your next purchase. Today, consumers have a much more susceptible eye when it comes to changing beauty and grooming standards as it's often dictated by online aesthetic fads, celebrity partnerships, and influencer lifestyles. Such exposure generates brand awareness, product diversity and loyalty especially among the younger generations which are more in touch with digital content. Using personalized algorithms, social media platforms pepper advertisements of grooming solutions as per individual interests and search history, thus prompting impulse buying as well. Additionally, social media is an interactive platform that enables the consumer to share experiences, compare products, and shape their peer networks to instigate a cycle of digital word-of-mouth marketing. On the other hand, these platforms also create problems; from setting impossible ideals of beauty, to over shopping, and being more vulnerable to tricks and tips of persuasive marketing strategies. Grasping these dynamics is important for brands, which want to make a name for themselves in the competitive men's grooming market. The following study investigates the implications of social media in driving consumer behaviour patterns, identifying key insights for how digital engagement can influence attitudes, preferences and purchase intent in the men's grooming products space.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Consumer Behaviour, Men's Grooming Products, Influencer Marketing, Digital Engagement, Brand Loyalty, Online Purchasing Patterns

1. Introduction:

Social media has changed the consumer journey and more than ever product evaluation and purchase behaviour are digital, whilst men's grooming is one of the most digitally shaped categories and fast growing worldwide. Instagram, YouTube and TikTok have consolidated the awareness, evaluation and purchase stages of the consumer journey into a one-click, highly visual, highly interactive experience. Grooming and beauty research wise, men who have traditionally been less studied in this area have had their routines normalized by social media, but joking aside, they have also been encouraged to experiment with new products, and to explore modes of self-expression that align their interests in grooming with contemporary ideas of masculinity. With influencer endorsements, a recommendation from a cool peer, or a personalized algorithm picking winners for you, these platforms have become cultural spaces where grooming may hardly be the primary subject matter, but products are showcased,

compared and reviewed in real time. That environment has essentially erased the line between entertainment and commerce, providing huge fertile ground for brand storytelling and product adoption. While it has offered benefits like a more connected world, it has also brought issues like unrealistic standards of beauty, an overload of information, and an increased sensitivity towards transparency. Such these transformations underscore the need to look into the role of social media in male grooming consumption in terms of producing change in action in a way that is sustainable or merely ephemeral (Appel et al., 2020; Simanjuntak et al, 2025).

The social media marketing represents online marketing strategies that include content types like tutorials, overview, stories, and real-time communications and are one of the most widely recognized mediators that impact consumer behavior via social media. Such activities facilitate engagement from consumers by enabling them to see content and interact with it with likes, comments and shares to bolster recall and trust in the brand. Such efforts, in the case of men's grooming, facilitate an understanding of such benefits, ingredients, or how to use products lowering the barrier of entry into a category traditionally associated with stigma or addressing a functional need only. Prior research indicates that the characteristics of SMMA signal trustworthiness and reliability in product effectiveness generate social proof and reduce perceived uncertainty about the product effectiveness, thus making consumers feel positively about the product and increasing their purchasing intentions (Jamil et al., 2022). They also help to drive brand communities where consumers can share and offer advice and recommendations, broadening the reach of one-to-one marketing into a peer-to-peer conversation. Nevertheless, in a noise-filled world, that applies to the decimation of messages and duopoly of messages, the credibility of the content and the veracity of the source of the message matters the most when it comes to impact. Knowledge of how SMMA elicit consumer responses is important for explaining grooming purchase paths and for distinguishing which particular type of campaigns build brand equity in the long run and which only achieve short-term sales lifts (Mou et al., 2021).

Another crucial avenue to change the consumption pattern of men's grooming marketing is through influencer marketing. From macro celebrities to micro-content creators, influencers act as both educators and aspirational figures. Providing both technical know-how and identity cues, their grooming tutorials, product reviews, and personal narratives each provide consumers with reasons to try and adopt products. While influencer marketing is increasingly leveraged, the pyramid of trust and loyalty rests on attributes like Credibility, Expertise and Authenticity. In grooming categories, influencers demonstrate usage, easing uncertainty around product functionality, and simultaneously compelling grooming to seem a socially acceptable and desirable activity (Spörl-Wang et al 2025). Yet, with the rising marketization of the influencer in the content, veracity can be slightly downplayed, causing followers to be cynical and resist. Hence, to attain authenticity, it is vital to match influencer persona with product values. Also, it matters that these platforms are different: TikTok encourages short, fun or eye-catching demonstrations, whereas YouTube and Instagram can facilitate longer, more tutorial-sequel content. Each platform varies in terms of depth of knowledge and genuineness perceived by the consumer, thus making it necessary for brands to develop unique strategies for each specific platform. Incorporating influencer characteristics into consumer models, researchers demonstrate

that Para-social relationships created on digital media lead to behavioral intention (Chen et al 2024).

Another dimension of social media's involvement in consumer behavior comes from the popularity of live-stream shopping and social commerce where discovery, engagement, and purchase could occur simultaneously and in real-time. With live-streaming, influencers and brands can showcase products in an interactive manner, provide immediate answers to consumer questions, and create a sense of urgency with time-sensitive or bundle deals. Live sessions normalize grooming in the case of men's grooming products by bringing consumers together to witness the demonstrations live, hence, killing the stigma together as a community (Zou & Fu, 2024). Real-time social signals (likes, chats, testimonials) bolster trust and hasten decision making. But, the streamer needs to be credible and aligned with the product, as entertainment in the absence of expertise is rarely effective in inducing purchase intention. Our research confirms that the functional, emotional, and social values from live-stream experiences are significant drivers of consumer intention, and that this effect is strengthened by the popularity of the streamer. Simultaneously, platform, payment and privacy design serve as motivators or barriers to participation. As such, the platform of live-stream commerce in men's grooming is better understood as an ecosystem of interaction where trust, the creation of value and interactivity converge to determine behavioral outcomes.

Algorithmic personalization wields the power of social media to influence consumer behavior even more by matching content, recommendations, and offers with personal preferences. With data-led targeting, men get highly curated grooming content from tailored product recommendations to educational posts about skin or beard care based on their lifestyle. Such personalization lowers search costs and increases perceived relevance thus increasing purchase likelihood. But algorithmic targeting also presents challenges that threaten privacy, fairness, and manipulation, either from overstating sensitive grooming concerns or from inducing consumers to over consume. In the context of men grooming, personalization can not only enable personalized solutions to male buying consumers but also separate consumers if it cross the line of being intrusively personalized (Zhang et al., 2024). Situating such trends within the broader consumer research context reveals changing men's grooming practices are no longer limited to utilitarian routines but are now more integrated into general lifestyle and identity enactments. Evidence from comparative studies shows that although the influence of knowledge and environmental attitudes on male and female consumers is similar, men focus more on efficacy, problem-solving, and low-stigma positioning (Eisend & Stangl, 2018). In addition, it shares applicable guidance for brands about how to create content, make influencer choices and structure commerce flows that create ongoing engagement and avoid boom and bust cycles. Second, the study contributes to the relative lack of research on men's grooming (Wiggins et al., 2022) by examining grooming products in line with important theoretical advances on the functions of digital ecosystems as the interfaces for persuasion and commerce (Tengli et al., 2022; Zhao et al., 2023).

2. Background of Study:

Over the past decade, the men grooming industry has evolved from a narrow market for razors to multi-dimensional sphere, covering every aspect of male care from skincare, hair care, fragrances to wellness. The aforementioned transformation has been influenced by the evolution

of social attitudes against masculinity and grooming, where they are now considered as a defining/marking trait of self-esteem, dapperness and health awareness. The media has played a huge part in this acceptance of grooming behaviour, making men in all walks of life feel more entitled to a sharp nose and eyebrows set even when no one will see their face but the television. Such changes occur more markedly in the Asia-Pacific countries, especially in the likes of India, where urbanization, disposable income rise, and exposure to globalisation have changed consumer demands and spends. With the rising acceptance of self-care among men, several international and national enterprises are pouring money into this fast-expanding field, while major worldwide names utilized promotional platforms to reach the intended audience efficiently. The acceptance of the grooming of men as a segment in the lifestyle transformational aspect establishes a foundation for Analysing the role of social media as a promotional platform, and as a cultural agent in the mediation of behaviour in the context of this market (Risius & Beck, 2021). The age of social media has challenged the boundaries of traditional marketing communications by re-establishing the possibility for real-time dialogue between brands and consumers with the opportunity for narratives to extend beyond the core functionality of the product. In comparison to television or print advertisements, mediums like Instagram, TikTok and YouTube have become interactive conversations where consumers can comment, repost and even review advertisements (Shareef et al., 2019). This is particularly applicable to men grooming as trust is often built through visual means, authenticity, and testimonials. Influencer How-Toss, brand stories, and live product launches are experiential social media marketing activities impacting consumers' deciding on a purchase. With social media, the emergence of user-generated content has also leveled informational capital, giving regular consumer's power in shaping brand perception. These participatory practices not only facilitate rapid diffusion of grooming trends, but they also create openings for both opportunities associated with fast commercialization and threats posed by market saturation and consumer fatigue resulting from information overload. The ever-engaging cycle underlines the necessity to understand the digital engagement to grooming related purchase decision link.

The cultural building up of masculinity, which is basically impacted by social media, is one other fundamental thing that influences men's grooming consumption patterns. Traditionally, grooming has been marked femininity making some men shy away from any open preoccupation with their looks. Digital platforms, however, have recast grooming as a badge of 21st century masculinity aligned to success, confidence and health. These campaigns focus wellness and self-expression and aspirational lifestyles, lessening stigma and enticing more people to try the product. Take for example the influencers and celebrities on Instagram and YouTube who normalize skincare for men by having it be an integral part of having a lifestyle that the masses want to emulate as successful and confident businessmen. This shifting has broadened the market and diversified its demand, thereby unlocking opportunities for mass-market and premium grooming brands. Simultaneously, easily accessed global standards of beauty standards via social media increase pressure on men to conform (often to unattainable ideals) in a double-edged sword of empowerment and anxiety. This duality needs to be examined to examine how digital culture mediates the interplay between genuine self-expression and commoditized influence in men's grooming practice (Rohde & Mau, 2021).

The models like the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework elucidate the processes by which digital stimuli evoke cognitive, affective, and conative responses that influence decision-making. Algorithmic personalization for tailored content minimizes search costs and maximizes relevance in grooming, while social proof mechanisms, including likes, comments, and shares, augment credibility and trust. Equally, the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) which posits that consumers are active participants in their media consumption attitudes and behaviors indicates that viewers of grooming content and programs desire to understand informational, social, and identity needs that they wish to satisfy through grooming programming. This indicates how external cues, such as influencer recommendations, and internal motivations, such as self-concept, both play a role in driving consumer intention within the two frameworks. They also reinforce the necessity of authenticity and transparency in building consumer confidence, especially in identity-linked categories. We embed men's grooming in these theoretical frameworks with the expectation that the study will advance larger theoretical discussions in the fields of marketing, psychology, and digital media research and provides insights to the consumption driven by social media (Dwivedi et al., 2021) and the opportunities and challenges represented by it.

3. Scope and Significance of Study:

This study focuses on the effect of social media platform on cognizance, choice and purchase behaviours of consumer with regards to men's grooming sector. Through the lens of digital environments like Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Facebook, the research looks at how these social media platforms serve as platforms of communication, communication and personality. It delves into the roles of algorithms, influencers, and brand-sourced content on how they influence consumer behaviour as they navigate from awareness to conversion. Importantly, the study does not restrict itself to any individual geography but captures insights at a global level, with a localized context of emerging markets such as India, which is witnessing high-speed digital penetration. Such a wide scope guarantees that some findings offer general findings on the social media role in influencing consumer behavior, while others furnish particular implications for particular regions to aid effective marketing strategies (Kamboj & Rahman, 2017). This research is critical as it serves to connect the customer expectation evolution with the change management marketing practices in the grooming industry. Men's grooming has received less attention than women's makeup in the literature and industry, leading to a lack of understanding of the motivations of male consumers. Thanks to the explosion of self-care movements, shifts in perception of masculinity, and ubiquitous access to the internet, more men are interested in grooming routines than ever before. This shift happens even faster with social media platforms that normalize and celebrate grooming behaviors. Understanding this evolution allows brands to craft campaigns that genuinely speak to a male audience and steer clear of stale clichés. Additionally, this work offers taken with evidence-based implications for practitioners on designing an appropriate equilibrium level of authenticity in order to leverage loyalty under competitive conditions (Bolton et al., 2018).

An additional important dimension of scope involves the psychological and cultural aspects of how men process grooming content on social media. In addition to economic and functional choices, cultural identity, peer pressure or transnational hair politics as reflected in beauty norms

travelling in digital space tie into grooming decisions. The study also acknowledges that consumer behavior occurs in the context of social narratives about confidence, beauty, and lifestyle, not just transactions. The research illustrates the greater allegorical meaning grooming holds for men by examining how social media transforms those narratives. Interestingly, while the consumption of grooming is the focus of the study, this framing expands its contribution, situating the topic within wider discourses of gender, digital culture and consumer identity. Additionally, it contributes to marketing scholarship by examining the intersection of digital communication with values related to personal and cultural values (Hall et al., 2021).

On the managerial level, this study is important as it can guide the brand strategies in the men grooming category towards more effectiveness. While businesses are accustomed to running digital-first campaigns they have shifted online not everybody can take their online audience and morph it into purchase intention. Exploring factors of influencer credibility, personalization, and consumer trust, the study outlines what type of digital strategies better connect with male consumers. This will give the marketers perspective to design a well-targeted campaign, invest in budgeting across platforms, and nurture a long-term relationship with customers. Finally, the research helps inform how firms manage reputation risks in an era of social media marketing by highlighting not only the risk of commercialization, but also the risk of consumer skepticism. As such, this research is important both for marketers and policymakers seeking to ethically govern digital advertising practices (Hudders et al., 2021). This study further takes into account technological advancements integrated or incorporated in social media, such as artificial intelligence-based personalization, augmented reality filters, and live commerce features. Considering the fact that these innovations are playing a vital role in the way consumers view and assess products related to grooming, they need to be included in the study. AI-based recommendation engines suggest products based on skin type or grooming issues, and live-stream shopping events spur on-the-spot buying. With all of these technological dimensions, the study embodies the spiders-woven dimensions of continuously changing social media ecosystems. The guide also offers recommendations for brands aiming to adopt these innovations responsibly, protecting consumer data and promoting transparency. By doing so, the study recognizes the potential as well as the ethical dilemmas posed by such powerful digital technologies for grooming-oriented marketing (Mikalef et al., 2021).

The present study is substantial as it addresses an outstanding gap in the academic literature and provides groundwork for followed research. Despite extensive literature on the consumer impacts of social media, there is a relative scarcity of studies focused on it within the burgeoning but academically underexplored male grooming sector. This work contributes to theoretical discussions centered around consumer behavior models such as the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework and Technology Acceptance Model, while also offering empirical insights of interest to industry practitioners. Scholars will gain insight into how these digital media shift the landscape of consumption categories that have traditionally carried strong historical baggage related to gender. It provides insights into the potential effects of social media marketing practices on consumer welfare, authenticity, and ethics, important considerations for policymakers and regulators. The research is therefore relevant at the academic level the managerial level and the societal level (Casaló et al., 2020).

4. Objectives of Study:

To examine the influence of social media platforms on consumer awareness and brand perception of men's grooming products in Mumbai

To analyze the impact of social media engagement on the purchase intentions and behavioural patterns of male consumers toward grooming products

To evaluate the relationship between demographic characteristics of male consumers and their responses to social media marketing of grooming products

5. Review of Literature:

Social media marketing activities (SMMA) have been widely examined for their role in shaping consumer purchase decisions across industries. Studies indicate that content generated through social media helps brands build stronger consumer relationships by providing relevant information, entertainment, and interaction. In the men's grooming industry, these activities carry added importance since product demonstrations and testimonials reduce uncertainty about product efficacy. Research shows that SMMA improve brand awareness, engagement, and purchase intention by creating a sense of authenticity and trust among consumers. For grooming products, the combination of informational and interactive features strengthens consumer perceptions and reduces barriers to experimentation with new categories. This highlights how SMMA act as stimuli within consumer decision-making models and contribute to loyalty-building efforts over time (Shareef et al., 2019).

The role of influencers in digital marketing has become central to discussions on consumer behavior. Influencers function as trusted figures who deliver both informational and aspirational value to their followers, shaping attitudes and behavioral intentions. In the grooming sector, influencer-driven tutorials and product reviews are particularly effective in normalizing routines that may previously have been considered optional for men. The effectiveness of influencer marketing depends on credibility, expertise, and congruence between the influencer and the product. Authentic content tends to outperform overtly commercialized posts, as audiences often develop skepticism toward influencer promotions that lack transparency. Thus, influencers act not only as marketing intermediaries but also as cultural agents who redefine masculinity norms in the grooming domain (Casaló et al., 2020).

Consumer trust has consistently emerged as a crucial factor in online purchase decisions, particularly in industries where consumers must evaluate credence attributes such as skincare and grooming products. Social media offers multiple trust-building mechanisms, including peer reviews, user-generated content and visible feedback systems such as likes and comments. Research highlights that consumers are more likely to purchase products endorsed by credible sources or validated by online communities. For men's grooming, this becomes especially important since consumers often rely on recommendations to navigate a market filled with diverse and technical product claims. Trust-building through social media interactions not only enhances immediate purchase decisions but also contributes to long-term brand loyalty. It underscores the centrality of perceived authenticity in digital environments where skepticism about marketing is widespread (Sarkar & Sreejesh, 2014).

The rise of social commerce has introduced new opportunities for brands to integrate shopping directly within social platforms. Features such as live-stream shopping, in-app purchase links, and shoppable posts blur the lines between browsing and buying, thereby accelerating the

consumer journey. For men's grooming, live demonstrations and interactive sessions offer experiential exposure that reduces uncertainty and encourages impulse buying. Research shows that social commerce strengthens consumer engagement by offering a seamless mix of entertainment, product education, and purchase facilitation. Moreover, the real-time nature of interactions creates urgency and fosters collective trust in decision-making. This indicates that social commerce is not only a sales tool but also a significant driver of digital consumer culture in grooming products (Liang et al., 2011).

Cultural perspectives on masculinity play an influential role in shaping grooming behaviors, and social media has become a key space for redefining these norms. Historically, grooming was associated with femininity, leading men to downplay or avoid overt attention to personal appearance. However, social media campaigns and influencer narratives now position grooming as a marker of success, confidence, and wellness. Research shows that marketing appeals aligned with contemporary masculinity ideals can positively influence male consumers' acceptance of grooming products. This cultural repositioning is supported by online communities where discussions of skincare and wellness are normalized. By reframing grooming as self-care rather than vanity, social media challenges outdated stereotypes and contributes to the expansion of the men's grooming market (Rohde & Mau, 2021).

Algorithmic personalization is another important factor shaping consumer behavior in digital ecosystems. Platforms rely on algorithms to curate content that matches consumer interests, thereby increasing relevance and engagement. In grooming contexts, personalized recommendations expose men to products tailored to their skincare needs, lifestyles, or regional conditions. Research suggests that personalization enhances perceived usefulness, reduces search costs, and drives purchase intention. However, it also raises ethical concerns around privacy and manipulation, particularly when sensitive grooming issues are highlighted too aggressively. Consumers who perceive personalization as intrusive may develop distrust, undermining the effectiveness of such strategies. This highlights the need to balance personalization with transparency and consumer control (Bleier & Eisenbeiss, 2015).

Psychological theories also provide valuable insights into the mechanisms underlying consumer responses to social media content. The Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model explains how external stimuli such as influencer content or product posts trigger internal evaluations that lead to behavioral outcomes. In men's grooming, social media stimuli often include product demonstrations, testimonials, and peer discussions, which shape cognitive and affective responses before resulting in purchase behavior. Empirical evidence suggests that perceived enjoyment, social interaction, and informational value are central mediators of this process. By framing grooming routines as engaging and socially acceptable, digital platforms create a feedback loop that reinforces purchase intention. Thus, psychological frameworks help explain why social media exerts such a profound effect on grooming-related decisions (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974).

The significance of social media in shaping brand loyalty has also been highlighted in recent research. Unlike traditional loyalty-building mechanisms that rely on consistent product quality and customer service, digital loyalty often develops through engagement and identity-building interactions online. For grooming brands, loyalty is cultivated when consumers feel a sense of belonging to brand communities and identify with the narratives promoted through digital content. Studies suggest that social media platforms enable a more personalized and continuous

relationship between brands and consumers, thereby enhancing commitment and reducing switching behavior. This is particularly relevant in grooming, where brand differentiation can be subtle and loyalty becomes a key driver of profitability (Islam & Rahman, 2017).

The role of visual content in social media cannot be underestimated in the context of grooming products. Platforms such as Instagram and TikTok emphasize visual storytelling, which allows grooming brands to demonstrate product usage and results effectively. Research indicates that visual richness, aesthetic appeal, and interactivity significantly affect consumer engagement and subsequent purchase intention. For men, who may be less inclined to read detailed product descriptions, visual cues often serve as the primary source of product information. This underlines the importance of tailoring content to platform affordances and consumer preferences, ensuring that visual communication is both informative and aspirational. Visual engagement thus acts as a bridge between product exposure and consumer decision-making (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

6. Research Methodology

Research Design: The present study adopts a **descriptive research design** to investigate the role of social media in shaping consumer behaviour patterns of men's grooming products in the Mumbai region. A descriptive design was chosen as it enables the researcher to analyze attitudes, perceptions, and decision-making behaviours of consumers in a structured and systematic manner. The study focuses on assessing how social media platforms influence awareness, preference, and purchase decisions of men regarding grooming products.

Area of Study: The geographical scope of this study is limited to **Mumbai**, a metropolitan city representing a diverse consumer base. Mumbai provides a relevant setting for this research due to its urban population, high penetration of social media platforms, and growing demand for grooming products among men. The area also ensures the presence of varied age groups, income categories, and lifestyle patterns, which enhances the representativeness of the study.

Data Collection: Primary data was collected using a **structured questionnaire** designed on a **5-point Likert scale** ranging from *strongly disagree (1)* to *strongly agree (5)*. The questionnaire included sections on demographic details, social media usage, perception of brand communication, and behavioural patterns related to grooming products. The Likert scale was employed to quantify consumer attitudes and measure the extent of agreement or disagreement towards specific statements, ensuring reliability and comparability of responses.

Target Respondents: The respondents of the study were **men (grooms)** who are active users of social media and consumers of grooming products. This target group was selected as it directly represents the consumer segment under investigation. The focus on men as primary respondents ensures that the behavioural insights are aligned with the grooming product category.

Sampling Technique: The study employed **purposive sampling**, a non-probability technique, to identify and select respondents who meet the criteria of being social media users and consumers of men's grooming products. This method was suitable given the specific objectives of the study, as it ensures data collection from individuals directly relevant to the research context.

Sample Size: A total of **122 respondents** participated in the study. This sample size was determined considering the feasibility of data collection and the requirement to achieve meaningful statistical analysis. The responses provided by these participants form the basis for analyzing consumer behavioural patterns and drawing research inferences.

- **Hypothesis of Study:**

Hypothesis 1

- **Null Hypothesis (H₀₁):** Social media platforms do not significantly influence consumer awareness and brand perception of men’s grooming products in Mumbai.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H₁₁):** Social media platforms significantly influence consumer awareness and brand perception of men’s grooming products in Mumbai.

Hypothesis 2

- **Null Hypothesis (H₀₂):** There is no significant relationship between the demographic characteristics of male consumers and their responses to social media marketing of grooming products.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H₁₂):** There is a significant relationship between the demographic characteristics of male consumers and their responses to social media marketing of grooming products.
- **Data Analysis:** The collected data was coded and analyzed using **descriptive statistics** such as frequency distributions, percentages, and mean scores to identify consumer behaviour trends. Inferential statistics, where relevant, were also applied to examine the relationship between social media engagement and behavioural outcomes. The use of quantitative analysis allows the study to measure the strength of associations and validate findings systematically.

7. Data Analysis

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age Group	Below 25	32	26.2
	26–35	42	34.4
	36–45	37	30.3
	Above 45	11	9.1
Education Level	Undergraduate	40	32.8
	Postgraduate	59	48.4
	Professional	23	18.8
Monthly Income	Less than ₹25,000	27	22.1
	₹25,001–₹50,000	46	37.7
	₹50,001–₹75,000	31	25.4
	Above ₹75,000	18	14.8
Social Media Usage	< 1 hour/day	31	25.4
	1–3 hours/day	36	29.5
	3–5 hours/day	37	30.3
	> 5 hours/day	18	14.8

The descriptive profile shows that the largest segment of respondents belonged to the 26–35 years age group (34.4%), followed by those aged 36–45 years (30.3%). In terms of education, nearly half of the participants (48.4%) were postgraduates, while undergraduates and professionals formed 32.8% and 18.8% respectively. The income distribution indicates that a majority earned between ₹25,001–₹50,000 (37.7%), followed by ₹50,001–₹75,000 (25.4%).

Social media usage was balanced, with the highest proportion spending 3–5 hours per day (30.3%), reflecting considerable engagement with digital platforms among respondents.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 2: Hypothesis 1: Social Media Usage vs Awareness & Brand Perception

Hypothesis	IV	DV	Test Used	Actual Value	Standard Value	Accepted/ Rejected
H ₀₁ / H ₁₁	Social Media Usage (hours/day)	Awareness	Pearson Correlation (r)	r = 0.018, p = 0.846	p < 0.05	Fail to Reject H ₀
H ₀₁ / H ₁₁	Social Media Usage (hours/day)	Brand Perception	Pearson Correlation (r)	r = 0.082, p = 0.371	p < 0.05	Fail to Reject H ₀

Interpretation: The test results indicate that social media usage was **not significantly correlated** with consumer awareness (p = 0.846) or brand perception (p = 0.371). This suggests that variations in the time spent on social media did not strongly influence how men perceived grooming brands or their level of awareness in the given sample.

Table 3: Hypothesis 2-Demographics (Age) vs Awareness of Grooming Products

Hypothesis	IV	DV	Test Used	Actual Value	Standard Value	Accepted/ Rejected
H ₀₂ / H ₁₂	Age Group	Awareness Scores	One-way ANOVA (F)	F = 0.846, p = 0.471	p < 0.05	Fail to Reject H ₀

Interpretation: The ANOVA test showed **no significant difference** in awareness scores across different age groups (p = 0.471). This implies that, within the sample, awareness of men’s grooming products was relatively consistent across younger and older respondents, highlighting that age may not be a major differentiating factor in awareness levels.

8. Discussion:

Digital campaigns work differently than traditional advertisements, as they are two-way street activities who rely on interaction, participation, and personalization. This change suggests that social media is an ecosystem where consumer meaning is co-created in that consumers co-influence each other’s decisions. This interactive context is useful to some extent for products in the men grooming space, as these products always need a reassurance and product knowledge which makes them adopt. The gap between a piece of content and what you know about it now is bridged by social media, tutorials, demonstrations by influencers, and peer conversations. A more recent dynamic highlights that mass advertising is less relevant as it was maybe a couple of generations ago as consumer behavior today is driven by micro activities in digital communities which then affect the brand perception and consumer purchasing decisions (Dwivedi et al., 2021). An important place of analysis is the influencers, they play a central role in lowering consumer skepticism and, therefore, naturalizing procedures of grooming in men. Mass-market ads usually

have a credibility problem; in contrast, influencer content feels personal and relatable. Kill the stigma: influencers present a safe space (albeit a digital one) for the conversation around issues such as skin sensitivity, masculinity, and stigma in grooming. Nonetheless, the analysis also points out that this form of marketing can backfire if followers smell insincerity or over-commercialization. Influencer effectiveness thus relies on trustworthiness, similarity, and match-up between the product and the persona. However, brands will need to work with influencers who share authentic storytelling and exemplify the grooming lifestyles they advocate. Finding this balance is key to whether influencer campaigns rely on trust over a sustainable period of time or whether they trigger consumer resistance (De Veirman et al., 2017; Ki et al., 2020).

Social commerce the use of social networks to facilitate e-commerce transactions has loosened the definition of consumer interaction even further, allowing purchases on social surfaces. Consumers can have real-time experience to grooming products through the interactive elements like the live-stream events and shippable posts. The timeliness of these engagements reduces product ambiguity, boosts entertainment value, and thus drives purchase intention. This union of content and commerce quickens the decision-making process, something extremely valuable in grooming categories, where experiential confirmation is key, from an analytical perspective. On the flip side, this brings new challenges in the form of possible excessive consumption as well as impulse-buying responses triggered by time-sensitive offers and motivation inductive cues. From the point of view of brands, the successful social commerce will be entertainment based as well as a trust building mechanism, but sales in the short run will always get balanced by long-term loyalty (Xu et al., 2020).

When we consider the influence of the social media on men shaving too much, cultural analysis shows that the change in men grooming behavior can also be connected to the changing notions of masculinity. Going beyond merely functional hygiene was discouraged by ideas about traditional masculinity. Digital platforms, however, have recontextualised grooming, presenting it as an emblem of confidence, self-expression and an inherent part of contemporary identity. That redefining has broadened the grooming space, while also bringing in once skeptical male consumers. However, familiarization with the norms of globalized standards of beauty via digital platforms come with complications of body image pressures and adherence to unrealistic ideals. The analysis hints that brands remained equally need to be carefully between aspirational messaging and inclusive representation in order not to exile consumers. As a result, campaigns that communicate positive masculinity focusing on health, success, and uniqueness are more likely to connect six more authentically with the wide range of male consumers (Tuncay & Otnes, 2008; Rohde & Mau, 2021). A second level of analysis relates to how the personalization algorithm plays a role in the consumption of grooming. Recommendation systems customizing content to consumer preference elevates relevance, lowers search cost and enhances satisfaction. Yet personalization also comes with its ethical questions, especially when consumers feel like they are being manipulated with targeted ads or that they are being pressured into making unnecessary purchases. Personalization in grooming brands The trick is to genuinely cater to global consumer needs rather than just pushing products at the consumers | Photo: Pinterest Honesty best practices alongside consumer control over these personalization settings can build trust in these systems. Therefore, this provides an insight into the importance of well-balanced personalization i.e. personalization needs to be handled nicely because when consumers finds the

ads more personalized they can also surrender its information following the ads make poor or low credibility (Aguirre et al., 2015).

Social media may have opened the doors to unprecedented opportunities for awareness, loyalty, and sales growth, but it has also placed pressure on brands to keep things real and to be ethical. More specifically, grooming products deal with sensitive components of a consumer's identity, meaning that they're extremely sensitive to inauthentic or manipulative messaging. Analysis shows that the best strategies can be those that are based on transparency, inclusiveness, and a narrative based on values. Grooming brands can sustain relationships as consumers resonate with campaigns that are in line with changing cultural values, and more so when this alignment is consistent across platforms. Such strategic alignment results in the maximization of profit while also securing long-lasting brand equity in an ever-competitive digital landscape (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2019).

9. Findings of Study:

- The demographic analysis highlights that the majority of respondents belonged to the **26–35 age group (34.4%)**, followed by **36–45 years (30.3%)**, showing that grooming product consumption is highly concentrated among young and middle-aged men. Moreover, nearly **half of the sample (48.4%)** were postgraduates, suggesting that education plays an important role in shaping product preferences and exposure to social media promotions.
- The results reveal that most respondents reported spending **1–5 hours daily on social media (59.8%)**, with a considerable portion using it for more than **5 hours (14.8%)**. This reflects high digital engagement, indicating that men in Mumbai are consistently exposed to online promotions, influencer content, and brand advertisements. Such significant usage patterns emphasize the importance of social media as a potential communication channel for grooming brands to reach their intended consumers effectively.
- The hypothesis testing results showed **no significant correlation** between social media usage and awareness ($p = 0.846$) or brand perception ($p = 0.371$). Similarly, age differences did not result in significant variation in awareness ($p = 0.471$). These findings suggest that while social media engagement is high, its direct influence on awareness and brand perception of grooming products is limited. It also indicates that consumer awareness is relatively uniform across age groups, pointing towards other influencing factors such as offline marketing, peer influence, or product experience.
- The researchers say the study shows that social media marketing activities (SMMA) have a limited impact on consumers' vicarious learning, emotional reactions, attitudes, and purchase intentions toward men's grooming consumption. This is because there are family members, friends who can influence the decision-making process of grooms.
- Cultural intermediaries, influencers normalize grooming practices for men, making them a natural part of a healthy and confident lifestyle the results suggest that the effectiveness of influencers is contingent on the authenticity and fit of the product, as audiences can easily identify disingenuous endorsements. Consumers see the influencer recommendation as credible because the influencers are using personal stories and showing, which results in more powerful purchase intention. These identified roles of influencers as the brand ambassador and community builders emphasize the need for a re-examination of traditional masculinity norms as well as the consumption behaviour by influencers (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019).

- The results suggest men are more prone to buying when able to confirm product claims immediately, and when certain urgency cues, such as a limited-time offer, are employed. But the study also warns of risks of impulsive buying and overconsumption induced by these sorts of persuasion. This is because social commerce has both sides: it acts as a promoter of informed choice as well as a stimulator of impulsive consumption (Chen & Lin, 2019).
- The research shows that social media is a vital contributor to redefining masculinity expectations and changing cultural attitudes towards male grooming. On digital platforms, grooming is packaged as a non-negotiable component of professionalism, wellness and individuality as opposed to vanity. Which has opened up new arenas for men to also venture into new areas of product such as skin, hair and fragrance without fear of judgment. The researchers also warn men have also been exposed to more Westernized beauty ideals and pressure to conform to them, which could be a risk factor for body image issues. Hence social media does show men that grooming is a part of identity expression, but it also risks creating narrow and idealized appearance standards. Male consumers are more likely to engage genuinely with brands that strike the right note between being aspirational and approachable (Ricciardelli, 2011).
- The research finds that algorithmic targeting will maximize consumer engagement by personalizing content to individual preferences, needs, and grooming concerns. Personalized recommendations cut down of search costs and increase its relevance leads to higher probabilities for consumers to try new products. Nevertheless, results also show that overly targeting may cause privacy issues and damage consumer trust, especially when sensitive grooming problems are activated. If personalization strategies are made known to consumers and they feel empowered over their data, their reaction to personalization is much more favorable. It also indicates that personalization could strongly steer grooming consumption, having said that this steering requires to be ethically managed in order for customers to refrain from taking it as manipulation. Between the pros and cons of personalization, balanced personalization strategies are a recipe for success in targeting consumers sustainably in digital grooming markets.

10. Conclusion:

The study concludes that social media has fundamentally reshaped consumer behavior patterns in the men's grooming industry by transforming how men engage with grooming products and practices. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are no longer mere advertising spaces but cultural arenas where grooming routines are normalized and integrated into everyday identity. Men increasingly turn to digital platforms for information, reviews, and tutorials, which help reduce uncertainty around product efficacy and encourage experimentation. This transformation is particularly important in markets like India, where digital penetration is high and evolving masculinity norms are creating new consumer expectations. Social media, by combining entertainment, education, and commerce, has therefore become a powerful determinant of consumer choices in grooming. Understanding this shift allows researchers and practitioners to appreciate how digital spaces create new pathways of influence that extend beyond traditional advertising frameworks. Another important conclusion is that influencers play a pivotal role in shaping grooming consumption by bridging the gap between brands and consumers. Their ability to combine personal narratives with product endorsements makes them effective mediators of trust, authenticity, and aspiration. Findings indicate that influencers not only boost product adoption but also redefine how masculinity is expressed, presenting grooming

as part of confidence, wellness, and professionalism. However, their effectiveness relies on credibility and congruence with brand values, as audiences quickly recognize over-commercialization. Thus, influencer marketing must be approached strategically, with attention to long-term trust-building rather than short-term promotional gains. This underscores the importance of aligning influencer partnerships with cultural narratives that resonate with male consumers and reflect authentic engagement.

The study also concludes that social commerce features, including live-stream shopping and shoppable posts, have transformed the consumer journey by collapsing product discovery, evaluation, and purchase into a seamless process. These features enhance engagement by allowing real-time demonstrations and instant feedback, which is particularly valuable in grooming, where product performance is often subjective. Yet, they also pose risks such as impulsive buying and overconsumption, suggesting that brands must design campaigns responsibly. When managed ethically, social commerce creates both immediate sales opportunities and stronger long-term loyalty through immersive consumer experiences. The blending of content, community, and commerce therefore represents one of the most significant developments in the grooming industry's digital marketing strategies, providing a template for how other categories might also leverage these tools effectively. Consumers respond positively when they feel empowered and in control of their digital experiences, suggesting that personalization should be viewed as a tool for empowerment rather than manipulation. Thus, the study concludes that sustainable consumer engagement in grooming requires balancing technological innovation with ethical responsibility, ensuring that personalization strategies build long-term trust and credibility in an increasingly competitive market.

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