

# **THE LITTLE MALE SECRET**

**Analysis about the male self-concept related to the  
consumption of beauty products**

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## 1) Abstract

This approach focuses on better understanding the male self-concept related to the consumption of beauty products. For this study, a qualitative research methodology, interview (semi-structured, with open and closed questions) and focus group was applied. A sample of sixteen men with diverse cultural backgrounds, European, Brazilian and Indian, were used for this study. According to Cuddy *et al.* (2015), gender stereotypes will vary accordingly to differences in cultural values. The choice of respondents from different nationalities was made with the objective of bringing different perspectives on the subject to the research.

The cosmetics industry is usually associated with makeup and feminine products, as seen in countries such as France and the United States of America who are major exporters of this segment. However, over the years this market has expanded and currently encompasses beauty, health, wellness and personal hygiene among others. In addition, the male audience has increasingly grown in this market every year (Khan *et al.*, 2017). Some of the relevant points addressed in the research were the different findings obtained during the analysis of the survey results and the lack of studies related to male consumption and behavior related to beauty products. The aesthetic view between men and women differ greatly. The analyses found that men directly associates beauty products that promote masculinity, for example: anti-aging products should be natural and exclude artificial aesthetic treatments (Ojala *et al.*, 2016).

The research can conclude that even throughout the study and by observing the bibliographic references demonstrating a higher consumption of men referring to beauty products, an evolution took place in the behavior and consumption of male audiences. Men still think of this subject as a taboo and their perception on the subject suffers directly with the influence of their social and cultural environment. Most respondents in this research, do not admit their consumption of beauty products publicly. One point to be made is that, the perspectives of consumption and self-concepts regarding the research subject is totally different between the heterosexual and LGBT male audience.

It is undeniable that this market is growing and that it should be studied further from a business and academic point of view. Male consumer behavior and perception regarding beauty products is a complex analysis that has many points to study and better understand. Companies in this segment should invest more in this type of research, as it will provide them with a better understanding of their consumers. This in turn can help them to identify better marketing strategies and market positions as well as leverage sales, develop products that meet consumer needs and expectations and increase customer satisfaction.

## 2) Declaration

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### **3) Acknowledgements**

I dedicate this work to my parents and grandparents, people who have always been by my side and supporting me unconditionally. My mother in particular, who always believed in my potential, throughout my life encouraged me to study, she never permitted me to give up in the midst of difficulties and made it possible to realize this dream.

## 4) Table of Content

<b>1) Abstract</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>2) Declaration</b> .....	<b>4</b>
2.1 Submission of thesis and dissertation .....	4
2.2 Submission of thesis to Norma Smurfit Library, National College of Ireland .....	5
<b>3) Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>4) Table of Content</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>5) Introduction</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>6) Literature Review</b> .....	<b>10</b>
6.1 Evolution of the new man .....	10
6.2 Consumption characteristics of contemporary man .....	13
6.2.1. Men and vanity .....	14
6.3 Self-perception of consumption .....	16
6.4 Beautiful products for men .....	19
<b>7) Research questions</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>8) Methodology</b> .....	<b>21</b>
8.1 Study sample .....	21
8.2 Qualitative research .....	23
8.3 Interview .....	24
8.4 Focus group method .....	24
<b>9) Research development</b> .....	<b>25</b>

9.1 Structuration of interviews .....	25
9.2 Structuration of focus group .....	27
<b>10) Findings .....</b>	<b>28</b>
10.1 Interview .....	28
10.1.1 Analysis based in the interviews .....	30
10.1.2 False modernity .....	32
10.1.3 Social patterns .....	33
10.2 Focus groups .....	35
10.2.1 Analysis based in the focus group.....	36
10.2.2 Jokes that hide different meanings .....	36
10.3 Comparison between individual interviews and focus group .....	38
<b>11) Data analysis .....</b>	<b>41</b>
11.1 Interview data analysis .....	41
11.2 Focus group data analysis .....	45
<b>12) Discussion .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>13) Conclusion .....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>14) Reference .....</b>	<b>52</b>

## 5) Introduction

The focus of this research will be the analysis of the male self-concept on the consumption of beauty products. The individuals to be analysed will be European, Brazilian and Indian, between 28 and 35 years old and belonging to social classes A or B. The research problem to be analysed is: what is the male self-concept on the consumption of beauty products. The vast majority of academic references about consumer behaviour related to gender, is focused on women. With all the social changes, the consumer behaviour has consecutively changed too, "Not surprisingly, men have increasingly been found to be interested in their appearance" (Ricciardelli, 2011, p. 186). Because of this aspect the market started to give more relevance to the consumption of the male audience.

In a traditional gender stereotype, the woman is considered to be more affectionate and caring. The man is characterized as stronger and a provider (Good and Sanchez, 2009). Traditionally, men could not demonstrate certain tastes or interests, especially in things that were considered to belong to the "feminine universe," such as interests in fashion, beauty products or services. Among other points, these interests could compromise the image of their masculinity. Based in the approach of Cuddy *et al.* (2015), gender stereotypes will vary accordingly to differences in cultural values. The male gender, in general terms, had built a predominance in the political and financial environment.

According to Saravanan and Kummar (2013), the consumers change their actions constantly, after the Internet and social media, the changes are happening more quickly. With technological advances and access to information, many social aspects have changed. Contemporary men are freer to participate in the "female world" and are more concerned about their appearance. Growing sales of men's hygiene products are the indicator that shows how the traditional notion of male identity is changing (Bano and Sharif, 2016).

According to Ye *et al.* (2017), thus, one finds an interesting spectrum of gender identification of brands along with tensions between brands that morph away from

stereotypical gender roles and those that believe in protecting the traditional gender role. With the changes in the behaviour and consumption of contemporary men, this study becomes relevant to the market, since compared to other categories of consumers, the male audience is only studied a little bit in the academic environment. It is important to study and understand the needs of these consumers to develop better products and services.

Another aspect that is very relevant in the marketing structure for any brand, is understanding the perception of consumption in relation to the product from the perspective of the consumer. According to Abel *et al.* (2013), self-concept can be defined as the self-perception of the individual in relation to oneself. This perception can be related to self-image, consumption, vanity, self-esteem, abilities and limitations, among other aspects.

The key words of this work are: male consumer behaviour, male vanity, contemporary man, self-concept and beauty product.

## **6) Literature Review**

### **6.1 Evolution of gender roles**

Over the years, the conservative stance of society and the media has changed in relation to various aspects of the male world. The stereotypes of the patriarchal and conservative man have given way to a more modern man, who transits much of the aspects previously allowed only for women. The new man has social and media openness to care more about the body, to be vainer, to participate directly in the raising of children and to understand more about fashion.

“The traditional bread-winner model, in which the domestic sphere (family, household and unpaid labour) was the domain of women, while the institutions of the public sphere (mainly politics, civil society and paid labour) were distinctly the “men’s sphere”, has in recent decades taken on a more egalitarian form with respect to

gender” (Valentova, 2016, p.153). The previous citation represents a model of patriarchal society, where man and woman had their roles very well defined in society. The feminine world was closed only to women, and the same happened with all aspects of the masculine world.

“Biological gender refers to how people are defined as female, male or intersex; it describes peoples’ internal and external bodies and is interchangeably used with sex. This approach considers that men and women in the society adhere to certain roles. Gender identity, on the other hand, refers to a person’s private sense, and subjective experience, of their own gender” (Koksal, 2014, p. 431).

Now society has understood that there is much more complexity in gender identity than only the traditional definition of feminine and masculine gender. Over the years there were countless social changes involving both genders, which has contributed to the men gaining more space in academic studies and research. The social changes also generated changes in the consumer behaviour and consequently changes in the market.

The authors present some differences related to the genders. Kolyesnikova *et al.* (2009) suggested that, some research has highlighted that some personality traits are associated with femininity and masculinity. “Web-related marketing research into gender processing differences has indicated that women tend to perform more comprehensive and intensive information searches, whereas men engage in more selective information searches” (Goodrich, 2014, p.38). The differences in relation to the genders are directly related to the behaviour of the consumer and it is of external importance for the marketer. These aspects will also interfere with the type of advertising messages that will be developed to have more effective communication with each type of audience. “Gender affects consumers’ approaches to decision making and the decision difficulty, while gender differences were also found for appearance-related attitudes and behaviour” (Beynon *et al.*, 2010, p. 270).

In a traditional and patriarchal society, there is always a stereotype to be followed in relation to the feminine and masculine gender. In this type of society, according to Higgins and Duxbury (1992), the traditional man is a person who works outside the

house, is the provider for his family, and is responsible for the finances of the household. Whereas the traditional woman should stay at home, take care of the household chores and cleaning, take care of the children and is responsible for their education and wellbeing. The men's brands can be measured with the following characteristics: aggressiveness, courage, adventure, daring, robust and dominant. The feminine brands have the following characteristics: expresses tender, graceful, fragile and sensitive feelings (Lieven and Hildebrand, 2016). These are traditional characteristics in relation to the feminine and masculine gender. Some social movements such as feminism, gender equality and others, have brought significant changes in the male stereotype within today's society.

One of the great social changes related to gender is the social acceptance for the transition of man to the world that was once considered "only belonging to women." Contemporary men can afford to take interests in beauty, culinary arts, become vain, and actively participate in the education of their children and domestic routines. "The combined effects of media and celebrities, marketing efforts and changing gender roles in households have led to the creation of the "new man" identity. The version of "new man", referred to as "metrosexual" puts more emphasis on appearance and fashion. The "metrosexual" places sexuality and the body at the centre of the identity, with appearance becoming vital to this new construction of masculinity" (Koksal, 2014, p. 432).

The market for beauty products and services is being acquired for the new consumption needs of contemporary man. More products and services has been developed exclusively for men, there are already aesthetic clinics only for the male public. "According to a survey conducted by L'Oreal, there has been an exponential increase in men claiming to use male cosmetic products over the past decade. This is supported by statistical evidence showing that only 4% of men used cosmetic products in 1990, but 21% in 2001, and a projected 50% growth. These results indicate an increasing importance in the development of male cosmetic products" (Thota *et al.*, 2014, p. 25). It could be concluded that, because of all the social and cultural changes that is being reinforced by the media, the contemporary man is more conceited and preoccupied with their appearance. As a result, they are consuming more products and beauty services.

## 6.2 Consumption characteristics of the contemporary man

The contemporary man started transitioning to the feminine world by consuming products and services previously considered in a traditional society to be made for women. The man consumes more domestic products, services related to aesthetics and beauty, is taking more care of his health, he actively participates in the education of his children and is more interested in fashion and lifestyle.

One example related to the new consumption habits of contemporary men is their relationship with fashion and self-image. According to Shephard, (2016), as more important and socially well-regarded men are rewarded for their good looks, style, and fashion consciousness, they become leaders who influence other men. This increases the relevance of the male relationship with looks and fashion. All these changes have opened new consumer markets and every day more new products are being developed, especially for the male audience. Based on Ostapenko (2015), men are more open to using beauty products, there is great potential in this market, which has not yet been fully exploited. The market for beauty products and services was one of the areas that were impacted by the social changes that occurred, resulting in a positive impact on new sales opportunities.

An important factor that affected these changes was social and media change in relation to the image of man and his masculinity. The use of beauty products in most social spheres, no longer affects the image of the individual masculinity. Garousi *et al.* (2017) suggested that, the behaviour of the male consumer has been changing over the years, mainly the aspects that involve the body image and the construction of masculinity (which has become more flexible). With all the evolutions of society and media, the term "metrosexual" emerged and became popular over the years. "Metrosexual is an affluent urban male, who spends a lot of their income on personal grooming. They are concerned about their appearance and are aware of all the latest trends and fashion" (Bano and Mohd, 2016, p. 114). The concept of metrosexual is

more popular and gave the opportunity for men to gain the freedom to worry more about their appearance without having their masculinity contested.

### **6.2.1 Men and vanity**

The cultural values and socialization can affect personal vanity and the pursuit of status and prestige. The consumption of products or services related to vanity can be based on materialism and social pressure (Workman and Lee, 2011). The men in advertising is a representation of the masculinity created by society. Over the years the male image in ads have been changing, as well as in society.

The advertisements of the 90s, which were focused on the male audience, sought to represent a classic model of masculinity. In the traditional model of masculinity, men are: strong, virile, they work outside, they are the financial providers of the family, do not care about vanity, do not show feelings nor cry. “The gender regime of pater families is increasingly undermined in advanced industrial societies due to the bureaucratic character of modern organisational work, the increasing entry of women into the workplace and the consequent renegotiation of gender roles within the household” (Cruz and Oliver, 2017, pp. 1377-1378). Over the years the traditional model of man has been modified.

According to research carried out by the authors Workman and Lee (2013), the concern with appearance and perception of appearance were correlated to the body and vanity is related to preoccupation and perception of physical appearance. The contemporary man is more concerned with the body, has attention to the physical aspects and consumes beauty products or services. Man moves through the feminine world without his masculinity being questioned by society and advertising and media reinforces this. “Increasing importance that male grooming products currently have in the cosmetic industry. Following this trend, several cosmetic corporations have switched their focus to the male consumer in order to increase their market shares. Furthermore, companies are no longer opting to produce the stereotypical male toiletries products, such as shaving foam and razors, but are now focusing increasingly on developing niche products. Indeed, major cosmetic companies have created

dedicated products for men such as face creams, anti-wrinkle creams, bronzing products, hair coloring and toning gels” (Souiden and Diagne, 2009, p. 97).

In many societies the perfect body stereotype for men consists of a body with well-defined muscles, no hair on the body and hair and beard (if any) is well taken care. If it is an older man they should take care of their expression lines and grey hair. The beauty rules of the feminine world have also passed into the masculine world. With all these changes in society, it has also changed the consumer behaviour and affected the market. Marketing had to adapt a new type of communication for this more modern man who is preoccupied with his image, body and vanity. Based on Lane *et al.* (2018), the ideal of a male body in contemporary society and in the media, is characterized by a muscular body, thin and toned waist. This stereotype of physical perfection is reinforced by advertising, magazines, television and media in general.

Durvasula and Lysonski (2008) suggested that, the consumer vanity can be defined as a concern with appearance. The present man feels freer to manifest his preoccupations with the body and aesthetics, making him vain. Advertising and marketing have exploited these characteristics of behaviour, expertly using the media and famous personalities. Reinforcing a stereotype of beauty where man should be more concerned with appearance. The media reinforces this aspects of modern man, for example: using in the ads a famous actor, singer, model and athletes.

In contemporary times, vanity is no longer just an aspect of the feminine world. With the influence of the media, using advertisements to reinforce the message through famous and influential personalities. This concept is being reflected in consumer behaviour.

“Men around the world spend 7.7 million US Dollars on body care products in a year. This is related to some cosmetic products such as Cleanser, Moisturizer, Sunscreens, Depilatories and body spray. This is especially true in Europe. In addition, with the emergence of various skin care products derived from famous cosmetic products, making it so the men can easily find products that fit their needs” (Ridwan *et al.*, 2017, p.177).

### 6.3 Self-perception of consumption

The self-perception of the individual in relation to their consumption is a perspective related to consumer behaviour and is very important for marketing. O`Shaughnessy (2013) suggested that, self-perception can be defined as a state of mind and behaviour, self-perception can directly influence the behaviour of the individual. In this approach, self-perception will be related to the consumption of beauty products and services. For a brand to understand the self-perception of their customers' consumption in relation to their product, it can be make a factor relevant to the success of an organization.

According to Grewal *et al.* (2019), self-perception can be based on the individual's perception and interpretation of their own behaviour. Self-perception of consumption can contribute to self-assertion, which involves personal and social values and beliefs. Self-perception of consumption is related to cultural, personal and social values. The social environment in which the individual is part of directly affects their self-acceptance of consumption. The reference groups directly influences the behaviour of the consumer, their decision making role and self- perception of consumption. "A reference group is a set of people with whom individuals compare themselves as a guide when developing their own attitudes, knowledge and behaviours" (Linehan, 2008, p. 201). The reference group for an individual can be formed by family members, relating people to social interaction in different areas and friends. Influence groups directly affects consumer attitude such as their self-perception of consumption. All these aspects interferes with the purchase decision of the individual as a consequence.

The individual worries about how their self-image will be seen and interpreted by the social environment where they are inserted (White *et al.*, 2014). According to McGowan *et al.* (2017), it is important for the consumer to create a relationship of identity with the society, this relationship can interfere with purchase intentions through emotional and social value. The consumer is more likely to consume something that will bring value to their social image and is accepted by the society they are part of.

“Reference groups are important for marketers as they serve as frames of reference for individual in their purchase or consumption decision. The degree of influence a reference group exerts on an individual`s behaviour usually depends on the nature of the individual and the product and on the specific social factor” (Linehan, 2008, p. 203). Both consumer self-perception and reference groups directly influence consumer behaviour and their purchasing decision. These will be important aspects to be analysed in the research that will be carried out, precisely because of its power of influence in the consumer making decision.

Vartanian (2009) suggested that, self-concept of women can be influenced in different aspects, in different ways, including social patterns. These influences occur in both genders (male and female), self-concept and self-perception can be influenced by media, family, friends, work environment and others. It can interfere directly in the purchase decision, as well as in other aspects, such as: self-image, self-esteem, self-confidence and among others. Many people feel the need to be accepted by the standards imposed on them by society and the media in order to feel socially accepted.

According to Strubel and Petrie (2018), men can be influenced by the media, in relation to the perception of the ideal body. Research indicates that the media proposes that the ideal body should be muscular, have a certain thinness, sensuality, and health. Self-perception of beauty today has been heavily influenced by the media and the industry of products and services. There is a continuous search for the perfect body and appearance. Most of the models (male) used in advertising campaigns, have muscular bodies, well defined muscles, are depilated, tall and thin. According to El Jurdi and Smith (2018), the media influence people the way they should look physically, dictating a pattern of beauty, which brings benefits of success, happiness, social acceptance and others.

“A substantial amount of research has suggested that both self-concept and consumption situation can influence consumers' brand choice” (Xue, 2008, p. 85). Understanding the self-concept related to consumer consumption contributes to the comprehension of their purchasing preferences, how the customer relate to brands

and their purchase decision criteria. The self-concept related to the consumer can be analysed as an indicator of buying behaviour. Consumers give preference to buy products or services that have symbolic value and have the capacity for self-improvement (Abel *et al.*, 2013).

Kim *et al.* (2018) found that, there is a mutual interference between self-concept and the effectiveness of advertising. The brand must know its consumer well, so that its advertising campaigns can meet the values, preferences and be in line with the consumers' self-concept. All of these aspects help the customer to create empathy with the brand and the advertisement becomes more effective. The relationship of self-concept between the consumer and the image that they have of themselves and the product is relevant. The customer is more likely to buy a product if their image relates positively to the product (Xue, 2008). In order for the consumer to prefer a particular product or service, it should contribute to reinforce the image that the consumer would like to have or to convey socially. By using a particular brand, the consumer ends up associating with the product image.

“Through regular exposure to traditional environments men internalize ideals and expectations of what it means to be “masculine” and develop reference points for self-evaluation, including their bodies and overall physical appearance” (Strubel and Petrie, 2018, pp. 114-115). The male self-perception in relation to his vanity, body image, consumption of products or services of beauty and preoccupation with his appearance, has been changing over the years, suffering interferences and being influenced by society and the media. Men are more critical of their appearance, are more open to consume beauty products and seek to follow a pattern of appearance dictated by the media.

## 6.4 Beauty products for men

Due to increased concern with their appearance, social acceptance and incentive of the media, men have consumed a lot more beauty products and services. The market in this sector has grown a lot in most countries. The beauty market is more popular and the information related to products and services are more accessible to consumers. People are more conscious about how beauty products are produced, what their benefits are and the price they will pay (Jothi, 2015). "People's concern with their appearance is not anything new, the history of cosmetics products spans at least 6,000 years of human history" (Moslehpour *et al.*, 2017, p. 569). The preoccupation with beauty is something very old, but more common among the feminine public. Over the years and social developments, men have gained the freedom to participate in this "beauty world", without having their masculinity questioned.

Some brands have already understood the growth potential of the beauty market, focused on products for the male audience. Some brands already have product lines developed especially for men, such as: Nivea, L'Oréal, Dove, Clinique, Garnier and others. "The global beauty market has been growing stably and has the ability to be continuously growing even in some unfavourable economic conditions" (Moslehpour *et al.*, 2017, p. 570). The area of beauty products is growing in most countries. "A KPMG Wellness Sector report indicates that India's beauty and wellness market would nearly double to Rs 80,370 crore by 2017/18 from Rs 41,224 crore in 2012/13. Business is so good that it has caught the attention of private equity firms as well. An AC Nielsen report estimates the hair-care market in India at Rs 3,630 crore, with average annual growth of about 20 per cent" (Jothi, 2015, p. 40).

"The growing sales of male grooming products are the indicators of how the traditional notion of men's identity is changing. This is a time where companies are spending money to cater to the needs of the growing demand of male" (Bano and Mohd, 2016, p. 114). With social support and the encouragement of media and advertising, men are more interested in the beauty market and investing more money in buying these

types of products and services. The advertising that involve celebrities affect the consumer buying decision, in the male cosmetics market some famous personalities are widely used, such as: David Beckham and Brad Pitt (Khan *et al.*, 2016). The use of celebrities such as David Beckham and Brad Pitt, in the advertising of beauty products helps to affirm that these types of products can and should be used by the male audience and will not interfere with the masculinity image of the target audience.

Jothi (2015) states that people are currently willing to pay large sums of money to take care of beauty, with this more and more companies are investing in this market. This makes the market more competitive and companies have to improve their communication with the consumer, understand the needs of their target audience and create competitive differentials. “The growth of male care products mainly came from big cities, where Semarang recorded the highest growth with more than 48 percent, followed by Surabaya with more than 44 percent, Makassar with more than 27 percent and Yogyakarta with more than 22 percent. While the other two big cities namely Jakarta and Bandung alone both recorded growth of more than 20 percent, while Medan was recorded as the city with the lowest share of male care products bought with more than 7 percent” (Ridwan *et al.*, 2017, p. 177).

The subjects related to the consumption of beauty, has received attention from marketing professionals. Research has been carried out in relation to the idealized image, influence of the media, satisfaction of the individual in relation to the physical, self-esteem and consumption of beauty (El Jurdi and Smith, 2018). This market has the potential to continue growing for a long time, which makes it attractive to many companies. Marketing has a mission to better understand the behaviour, needs, dynamics of influences by society, media, groups of friends and family in the purchase decision and how brands can develop campaigns and have a more effective form communication with this public.

## **7) Research questions**

Qualitative research can be identified as a phenomenon research questions or hypotheses. A hypothesis is a claim, derived from existing theory, which can be tested against empirical evidence (Willig, 2013). This research will explore the self-perception of man in relation to the consumption of beauty products. The research will seek to answer the following questions: What is the male perspective on beauty products? and what is the self- perception of men on consuming of beauty products?

Through the literature review, the evolution of male behaviour in relation to various aspects, such as: cultural, social, behavioural and consumption can be seen. These modifications are related to social and cultural evolutions. This is a relevant and growing market. According to Shaw and Tan (2014), men recently have been more interested in personal care products, being more self-conscious of their body and more concerned about their appearance. However, not a lot of academic literature is available yet regarding studies related to male self-perception about beauty products and studies that analysed the perspectives and opinions of the male audience regarding beauty products. This approach aims to bring new and relevant perspectives related to the consumption of beauty products, focusing on the male consumer.

## **8) Methodology**

### **8.1 Study Sample**

In order to better understand male self-perception related to the consumption of beauty products, field research will be conducted with semi-structured interviews, more appropriate to the subjective nature of the study object and the complexity of the subject and focus group. The interviews will be conducted with European, Brazilian and Indian men, between 28 and 35, living in different European countries and belonging to social classes A or B. It is believed that individuals belonging to social classes A and B, would be financially strong and be more propitious to invest in beauty products. They will be more likely to purchase cosmetic products that are not deemed as basic consumer need products. The age selected among the interviewees was

between 28 and 35, they are young adult men who are probably building their personal and professional lives. Their appearance is most likely a relevant factor in their personal or professional life.

Different nationalities were chosen so that the research could expose different perspectives of the subject researched. Sutter *et al.* (2015) suggested that, Brazil is a country where people care about appearances, sexuality and have a devotion to their body and health. These cultural perspectives of Brazilians can bring very interesting information to the research. "The Brazilian beauty market is the fourth largest in the world in this sector, after the United States, Japan, and China. This economic sector in Brazil represents 1.8% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2015. Moreover, this productive activity maintained a relevant growth despite the economic downturn of the country. Personal care and beauty are cultural characteristics of Brazilians, this factor corroborates to the sustainable growth of this economic area" (Nunes *et al.*, 2019, p. 576).

Similarly, the consumption of beauty products and services is increasing in India for both women and men. "India is a large and culturally diversified country with different religious beliefs and consumption patterns. The beauty and hygiene industry is currently estimated at \$8 billion, and it is expected to grow at a rate of 10 per cent to \$10 billion by 2021" (Shadma *et al.*, 2018, p. 485). In comparison, the cosmetics industry currently in Europe is highly dynamic and innovative, according to Fleaca (2016). The European Union includes several countries with different types of culture and consumption habits. Adding the different perspectives of consumers from these different countries, will make the research more complete and dynamic.

Each individual from different nationalities has its culture, values, beliefs and world view aspects that directly interfere with the consumption perception of any consumer. The research that will be carried out in this approach will challenge some of the findings in some of the literature reviews mentioned. Throughout the literature review, the evolution of man in different points (in the family context, social, consumption and behaviour) was indicated and all these aspects directly affected the consumption of the male audience. One of the relevant aspects in the literature is the way that the contemporary man circulates in the "feminine world", or what was previously

considered feminine. This resulted in an increase in the consumption of beauty products and services.

Beauty products could be categorized as essential when directed to the basics of personal hygiene, such as: shampoo, conditioner and deodorant. Other portions of the products are related to personal preferences, vanity and aesthetics, for example, sunscreen, anti-aging cream, perfume and body scrub. The research will explore what the individual perception of these products are. The analysis related to the consumption of this products, can contribute in the final perception regarding the self-perception of consumption related to beauty products. Analysing the literature review of this approach, it could be concluded that modern men are vain as they are consuming more beauty products and services. However, the research to be performed is open to find information that confirms or does not confirm this affirmation.

## **8.2 Qualitative research**

The research to be carried out will be focused on a qualitative research methodology. According to Mason (2002), qualitative research is important, through it, different points related to the social world, including daily life, experiences and imaginations can be explored. Using the methods of qualitative research, the researcher can investigate social processes, institutions, discourses and relationship meanings. Willig (2013) suggested that, qualitative researchers care about the meanings that surround their research, they are interested in how people make sense of the world and how they experience events.

To obtain data, exploratory research will be used in order to have a panoramic view of the object to be studied. Descriptive research will better characterize the subject of study in question. Oppenheim (1992) claimed that, the exploratory research contributes to the development of new ideas and hypotheses. It is concerned with understanding questions related to feeling and thinking based on the theme in question.

“Observation is no longer the key to some grand analysis of culture or society. Observational research now become a method that focuses on differences, on the lives of particular people in concrete, but constantly changing, human relationship” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 644). Observation research will be used in this approach, with the aim of bringing a broader view within an analysis related to behaviour and respondents' responses. Silverman (1993) suggested that, the observation method of social science is fundamental to the understanding of everyday routine. Based on observation, the researcher can better understand how the individual sees things by using common sense or a psychological perspective.

### **8.3 Interview**

According to Willig (2013), semi-structured interviewing is one of the most widely used methods of data collection in qualitative research. This data can be analysed in different ways, which means that semi-structured interviewing is a method of data collection that is compatible with several methods of data analysis and the interviews can be conducted with a small number of volunteers. One of the main sources of research data, will be the depth interview with semi-structured and open questions. “Qualitative interviewing is particularly useful as a research method for accessing individuals’ attitudes and values, things that cannot necessarily be observed or accommodated in a formal questionnaire” (Silverman, 2014, p. 171).

Interviews with open and semi-structured questions can help to explore the topic covered more broadly and to have as much information as possible. Oppenheim (1992) described the advantages of open questions: freedom and spontaneity of the answers, opportunity to probe and useful for testing hypotheses about ideas or awareness.

### **8.4 Focus group method**

A focus group will also contribute to the research methodologies, by adding more information and comparisons and make the analyses more dynamic, for this research. Barbour and Kitzinger (1999) believed that, the focus group can contribute to the exploration of mutual experiences and identities. During the process of this

methodology, all the responses, verbal and corporal expressions of the individuals, will be observed with details, because all these aspects will contribute in the final analysis of the data.

“Focus groups are distinguished from the broader category of group interviews by the explicit use of group interaction to generate data” (Barbour and Kitzinger, 1999, p. 4). The focus group will be made with four Brazilians from different regions of the country and different ages. The questions will be the same ones used in the individual interviews, with the intention to bring different perspectives to the subject that will be debated. The verbal and corporeal expressions of individuals will be analysed. The following will be observed: Whether they demonstrated any reactions or not. If they felt comfortable in discussing the subject. What were the social dynamics in debating this subject in front of other men and if they will be sincere with their answers. The information obtained from the focus group will be contrasted with those of the interviews and a final analysis will be conducted with all the data.

This approach will use sixteen respondents for the interviews and one focus group with five participants. This is a reasonable amount to determine an initial perception regarding the subject in question. After the interviews the data will be analysed and observed to establish common aspects found in the responses given in the interviews. The analysis of the data is open to any type of relevant aspects (positive or negative) found in the interviews. Through observation research, the relevant points will be reported during interviews. Especially if the observed aspects prove or disprove the responses given by individuals. The analyses of the data obtained in the interviews will be done subjectively, based on the review of the literature presented in the work.

## **9) Research development**

### **9.1 Structure of the interviews**

The individuals to be interviewed will be European, Brazilian and Indian men between the ages of 28 and 35. The interviews will have an expected duration of 20 minutes

each and will be held in different locations. The locations will be quiet and comfortable in order to put the respondents at ease and enable them to feel free to answer the questions.

The questionnaire used in the interviews was created to answer the questions addressed in this research. The questionnaire contains eight questions (semi structure and open).

1- How old are you?

( ) Between 28 - 29 years

( ) Between 30 - 31 years

( ) Between 32 - 35 years

2- What is your nationality?

3- What is your opinion about beauty products focus on male audience?

4- Do you use some beauty products of category A or B? If, use other types of products that were not listed below, describe which.

A - Shampoo, conditioner and deodorant.

B- Sunscreen, anti-aging cream, perfume and exfoliating body.

5- Do you select which beauty product and what brand will you buy?

6- Do you talk with your friends or family about any topic related to beauty products?

7- Do you consider yourself a vain person?

8- Would you recommend for a friend some beauty product that you use? Why?

The researcher will do observe the interviewees during the interviews and will make notes on all the relevant details during the process. It is relevant to compare the responses of the interviewees with the observations reported by the researcher. It

often happens that the answers may not be coherent with the respondent's behaviour, in these cases, the observation research can bring relevant perspectives to the approach.

## 9.2 Structure of the focus group

“Focus groups are ideal for exploring people’s experiences, opinions wishes and concerns. The method is particularly useful for allowing participants to generate their own questions, frames and concepts and to pursue their own priorities on their own terms, in their own vocabulary” (Barbour and Kitzinger, 1999, p. 5). The focus group of this research was developed to give participants freedom, they can express their ideas and opinions comfortably and quietly, without judgment.

All aspects during the process were taken into account, not only the respondents' answers. Their verbal and corporal expressions as well as their conversations between the questions and interaction between them. “Data used in content analysis include human speech, observations of behavior, and various forms of nonverbal communication” (Stewart *et al.*, 2007, p. 120).

The focus group was conducted with five Brazilian participants, from different regions of the country. Observing that the participants met in Dublin and are all friends. The group interview had an average duration of 30 minutes. The questions used were the same as those of the individual interviews and all participants in the focus group also answered the same questions individually. “The most common analyses of focus group results involve a transcript of the discussion and a summary of the conclusions that can be drawn” (Stewart *et al.*, 2007, p. 109), and these will be the methods used in the focus group of this research. It is important to note that the focus group consisted of Brazilians because the individuals from the other nationalities that were interviewed did not feel comfortable discussing this subject publicly and in front of other men.

## 10) Findings

### 10.1 Interview

The research was carried out with a total of sixteen respondents, the interviews had an average duration of 20 minutes each. The interviews were carried out in different places such as: cafeterias, National College of Ireland, restaurants and parks and at different times. The criterion of choice of location and schedules was realized, in a way that would provide convenience for the respondents. Observation that the place should be quiet to allow for good communication between the parties. It was important to prioritize the comfort and convenience of the interviewees, in order to reflect positive environment during the duration of interviews.

When the interviewees were invited to the interview, after knowing what the subject was about, most of them already said they would not have much to talk about, because they did not use a lot of beauty products. They were a bit shy and uncomfortable with the subject.

The interviewer started the conversation with a cordial subject (to put the respondent more at ease and make them more relaxed) and after a few minutes, the subject of the interview was explained and how it would develop. It was made clear that none of the respondents would be identified and then the questions were initiated. After a few minutes into the interviews, most respondents were more comfortable with the subject and it was observed that some were contradictory in their answers and comments. It was noted that there was a need to justify the use of beauty products and that individuals who had a positive self-perception of such consumption would not admit it socially.

Nationalities involved in the research: European (French, Austrian, Irish, Italian, English and Hungarian), Indian and Brazilian. Each nationality had its own culture, different points of view, values and concepts. This was clearly noticed in the interviews with different consumer behaviours and points of view on the subject. The Irish, English and Indians were the respondents who proved to be more uncomfortable with

the subject. They made it a point to say that they used more basic products and always justified their use of consumption.

“I do not care about beauty products. I use only the basic products, they are the most important ones” (Interviewee 11: Irish, 28 years old and financial executive).

“Some of the beauty products for men are useful, especially the basic products like: shampoo, shower gel and some beard products” (Interviewee 4: British, 28 years old and sales executive).

“I do not use much beauty products, I use simple products like: shower gel and shampoo. I often use the basic products for personal hygiene, which are the most important”. (Interviewee 6: Indian, 32 years old and student).

The Indians, especially, have shown themselves to be more traditionalists and considered this to be a more personal subject.

“We do not talk, it's a personal subject. We do not talk things like that with friends or family, this is not a subject for men”. (Interviewee 6: Indian, 32 years old and student).

“There are not many products specific for men and we do not need many products”. (Interviewee 7: Indian, 28 years old and student).

The Italian had good self-confidence in his appearance and was well settled with his consumption of beauty products. However, he did not comment on whether he discloses his use of beauty products socially and only commented on products that involved the beard. Probably because this is considered a "masculine" item.

“I consider myself a vain man. I consider myself a beautiful person and care to keep myself this way”. “Most men use some beauty products, but they prefer not to comment about it. They are ashamed to speak of this

kind of subject, because it belongs to the feminine world” (Interviewee 3: Italian, 35 years old and businessman).

Brazilians were more open to the subject and were the only participants who agreed to do the focus group. Mostly, they had a positive perspective of their self-concept related to their consumption of beauty products, however they would not disclose this publicly.

“I find interesting beauty products, however, I prefer normal beauty products (for women). I do not use beauty products specifically for men, I prefer the normal ones”. (Interviewee 12: Brazilian, 28 years old and student).

“I do not talk about this with my friends or family, I think it is something more intimate (personal)” (Interviewee 13: Brazilian, 28 years old and student).

### **10.1.1 Analysis based on the interviews**

During the process of interpretation of data the descriptions or explanations can be produced in qualitative research. The accounts can tend to be marginalized or discounted (Willig, 2013). In the analysis of the data in this research, all types of verbal and corporal expressions will be taken into account and all type of interactions among the participants in the focus group will be considered. An interpretive analysis will be used, in relation to the aspects mentioned above. “Editing is a quality control process applied mostly to paper-and-pencil survey. Its purpose is to ensure that the information on a questionnaire or interview schedule is ready to be transferred to the computer for analysis” (Singleton, and Straits, 2005, p. 447). All responses and observations during the interviews were carefully annotated and reproduced on the computer in an organized and accurate manner.

In numerous points during the literature review, it is possible to find assertion of the changes in different aspects in the behaviour of the contemporary man, whether it is in their personal or professional life. Throughout all the interviews conducted, it is

possible to notice that most of the affirmations of the literature review are correct, in that the contemporary man is more modern. They are more concerned with their appearance, are vain and have transitioned to the "feminine world".

There are, however, a few points in the research that the literature did not address, such as: even if the man is vain and consumed more beauty products, he still felt ashamed and was socially inclined to follow the traditional male behaviour. The behaviour of the contemporary man was still very influenced by his social, family, cultural and media environment. Men really do care more about their appearance and consumes more beauty products and services, however, the majority (based on interviews conducted in this research) still do not feel comfortable to admit their consumption socially.

“I would not recommend any product to a friend, even because we do not talk about these things. If someone uses this type of product, do not will tell for a friend, because they will make fun of it” (Interviewee 2: Austrian, 35 years old and businessman).

“Most men use some beauty product, but they prefer not to comment about. They are ashamed to speak of this kind of subject, because belongs to the feminine world”. (Interviewee 3: Italian, 35 years old and businessman).

“I do not talk about it with my friends, I do not think, that man cares much about this. When I have some questions about beauty products, I talk with my friends (girls) who understand more about it” (Interviewee 13: Brazilian, 28 years old and student).

The interviewees' comments confirm the aspects previously reported.

### 10.1.2 False modernity

Within many social cycles it may be interesting to say that the individual is modern, up to date and has no prejudices. In day-to-day practice, the reality can be different. Many of the social cycles among men (professional or personal), still seek to remain traditional in several aspects. Transmitting an image of "false modernity".

All the men interviewed uses some type of beauty product and most of them do not use only the basic products of personal hygiene. Some of the products mentioned in the interviews were: body cream, specific products for beard, hair oil, face cream, face soap, sunscreen, aftershave lotion, perfume and among others. Most of the basic products related to personal hygiene were: shower gel, shampoo and deodorant. These aspects can be noticed in the interviews where some of the respondents were contradictory in their responses.

There is probably a conflict between "what I should say" and "what I really think or do". Attending social and family expectations, being socially accepted and belonging to a group, are very important relationships for any individual. There is an individual preference among the men interviewed, but, most do not expose their true opinion or consumption habits to the social group in which they belong to. This could be because they fear to be excluded from their social group, or being too different from the majority, or they are too ashamed to express themselves honestly and becoming the laughing stock among their friends. Most of the interviewees said that men do not need many beauty products, that they do not care about their appearance and that they only use basic products. However, based on the interviews they do use oil for their hair and perfume (they are not using just the basic products) and have their brands of preference. Sometimes respondents contradict each other, some respondents claim to only use products related to personal hygiene, throughout the interviews they show to consume much more than just basic products.

"I do not care about beauty products. I use only the basic products, they are the most important ones" (Interviewee 11: Irish, 28 years old, financial executive).

“The products that I like more are: sunscreen, blackheads cream, perfume, shower gel and shampoo” (Interviewee 11: Irish, 28 years old, financial executive).

“I do not use much beauty products, I use simple products like shower gel and shampoo. I often use the basic products for personal hygiene, which are the most important” (Interviewee 6: Indian, 32 years old and student).

“I really like the shampoo of the brand Head & Shoulders, my perfume is Calvin Klein and for the other products can be any brand”. (Interviewee 6: Indian, 32 years old and student).

Respondent 6 has shown a concern in reaffirming that he only uses basic products, if basic products intended for personal hygiene, were allowed. Products that are more focused on vanity and statics (anti-aging cream, face cream, body scrub and others) are not allowed.

### **10.1.3 Social patterns**

The vast majority of respondents would only indicate a product if they were asked about it. Again showing that they do not feel comfortable, talking about this subject with friends or family. Many men still consider beauty products and services a subject for women, which research has indicated that, if this is a common sense between the groups, the individual who consumes this type of product will keep it confidential.

“I do not talk about beauty products and services with my friends. I believe that we do not feel comfortable about it, this kind of subject is common to women, not to us” (Interviewee 5: Hungarian, 30 years old, Chef).

“I would not recommend a beauty product to a friend, because we do not talk about these things. I would not feel comfortable recommending this

type of product, I do not think this kind of subject really matters” (Interviewee 4: British, 28 years old, Sales Executive).

During some interviews, whenever the respondent admitted to using beauty products they had a need to explain and justify their reason for using these products. Some respondents justified that they care about their appearance because it is an important factor in their personal and professional life and that it is linked in being accepted socially.

“I need to worry about the appearance, this is part of being well accepted socially” (Interviewee 1: French, 32 years old, businessman).

“I like to feel beautiful, so I need to worry about my appearance. In the old day’s men did not have to worry about being handsome, that changed. Society and the media press us to follow a pattern of beauty, this is part of being accepted socially. This affects social and professional life” (Interviewee 5: Hungarian, 30 years old, Chef).

“I worry a little about my appearance, how you present yourself socially is very important. The first impression must always be good” (Interviewee 5: Hungarian, 30 years old, Chef).

The interviewee who was most modern and well-resourced with his consumption and self-perception of beauty products, not only in the answers but in his attitude during the interview, is gay and is part of the LGBT social groups.

“Products for men are the best things in the world, they are extremely necessary”. “I have no problem in indicate these products or talking about it, I do not understand why a man would have a problem with that. Using these products makes our lives easier and more practical” (Interviewee 8: Brazilian, 30 years, barista).

“I consider myself a very vain person, I like to feel good, beautiful and healthy. I think it is not a big taboo related to beauty products anymore,

it's already broken. Today we have more information, we care more and this has no connection with sexual preference. A man will not stop being a man, just because he uses beauty products” (Interviewee 10: Brazilian, 32 years old and restaurant supervisor).

This individual is inserted in a social environment that is not traditional, where beauty products and services are no longer a taboo subject, and it is probably these aspects that directly interfere in the self-perception of his consumption of beauty products. In the social group where he is inserted, if he says that he uses beauty products, he will not suffer any repression and friends will not make fun of him. All of this makes him feel free and allows him to expose his consumption of beauty products without any fear of judgment.

Between the basic products (related to personal hygiene) some brands were mentioned such as: Dove, Nivea, Axe, Head & Shoulders and L'Oréal. For other types of products were mentioned: Asmo, Calvin Klein, Playboy and La Roche-Posay. Even the individuals who declared themselves not to be vain, had some remarks of preference.

“I love the La Roche-Posay brand and Nivea for the basic products” (Interviewee 8: Brazilian, 30 years, barista).

“I have preference for some brands, I really like Dove (products for men). My special beard oil is produced in Amsterdam (Asmo), I use some specific products for my beard” (Interviewee 3: Italian, 35 years old, businessman).

## **10.2 Focus groups**

The focus group happened during an afternoon, in a pub in the play area, in the center of Dublin. The pub was quiet and the atmosphere was good, which was one of the strategic reasons for choosing the place. For beauty products are still an

uncomfortable subject for most parts of men. Taking this factor into consideration, a more relaxed place was chosen so that the participants felt more comfortable. Their state of mind and environment can directly influence the development of the focus group and the respondents' responses and behaviour.

### **10.2.1 Analysis based on the focus group**

During the focus group process, important findings can be made, regarding consumer behaviour. One aspect that can be clearly perceived, is the difference in the participants' responses, when they were in a group and when they were responding individually. Participants had different answers when they were interviewed individually, they were more honest with their answers and provided more details than when they were speaking in the group. As a group they gave more direct and objective answers, without much detail of their personal consumption.

### **10.2.2 Jokes that hide different meanings**

During the focus group, between one question and another, they made a lot of jokes and ironies with the subject. It seemed that this was to take the tension away from the seriousness of the questions being asked. It could also have been a way to disguise their discomfort with the subject and for being asked personal questions in front of a group of friends. This behaviour can also be interpreted as their way of not having to expose their true opinion of the subject matter.

During the questions everyone took the subject nonchalantly and did not give any seriousness to the topic. Jokes and ironies can be seen not only as a way to make the environment more relaxed but a way of hiding the true opinion of the subject. However, when the jokes and ironies were analysed, there was an indication of the true opinion of the participants in relation to beauty products.

Many of the jokes made involved masculinity, such as "these things, of having many product is for gay", this phrase give the impression that, to use various types of beauty products was a female habit. "Who understand about this subject, is woman" and "woman is who likes beauty products", the affirmations demonstrated the opinion that

beauty products still belongs to the female world, and that women are the ones who really understand this.

Many of the jokes that were made among the participants indicated that men who like beauty products were gay because the people who were interested and had knowledge about this subject were women. Affirmations were made, such as: "this is a gay things", "real man, does not need all these products," "who really likes these things, is gay or woman". All these associations in using beauty products and being gay, resulted in creating a taboo in admitting the use of these products socially. It could be one of the reasons why male consumers, in the most part, have not admitted their consumption socially (primarily between their friendship cycle).

It was observed in many of the answers, that whenever they say that they use some products, the participants tried to justify the use and reaffirmed several times that they only used the basic products. Perhaps they were concerned that if they admitted using these products openly that their image and masculinity would be questioned. This form of thought and judgment, is part of a patriarchal and very traditionalist society. It is possible that not every part of society is modern and evolved as the literature review presented.

It was observed in the focus group that men were discouraged to be honest about the subject by the presence of the other men, even though they were all friends. It is clear that there is a concern, with the judgment of other men regarding the personal consumption of each. Throughout the conversation the participants were attentive as they spoke, watching their friends' reactions. It became apparent that each respondent would give their opinion based on what was been discussed and agreed upon in the focus group as the right things to say, even if it did contradict their personal opinion on the subject matter. This was a stark contrast to when they were interviewed individually and were more open and admitted their consumption of beauty products.

### 10.3 Comparison between individual interviews and focus group.

Participants in the presence of friends and because they were in a group, had a very different answer, if compared to the individual interviews (even though the same questions and subject was used). In one of the first questions, that was about consumption of beauty products, interviewees in the group gave completely different answers than the ones they gave during the individual interview.

Interviewee 1 (Brazilian, 28 years old, student)

Individual interview: "I find interesting beauty products, however, I prefer normal beauty products (for women). I do not use beauty products specifically for men, I prefer the normal ones".

Focus group: "I think it's ok, but I do not really care about that" and "I also use the products of category A, the basic products. I use the basics and perfume".

Interviewee 2 (Brazilian, 28 years old, student)

Individual interview: "I use the two categories, the products that I use most are: body cream, face soap and shampoo".

Focus group: "I use the most basic products, such as shampoo, shower gel and deodorant".

In the individual interviews, they were more detailed in their response. They gave details of what types of beauty products and brands they use and some interviewees disclosed that they used certain products every day. In the focus group, they were extremely objective. No one detailed what kind of products they were using and gave similar responses. In the individual interviews, the respondents expressed their opinion, in a more sincere way about the subject. In the focus group, they were superficial and with similar answers. This question was related to the opinion of the participants, regarding the beauty products aimed at men.

Interviewee 1 (Brazilian, 28 years old, student)

Individual interview: "I find interesting beauty products, however, I prefer normal beauty products (for women)".

Focus group: "I think it's ok, but I do not really care about that".

The question is related to inquiry if they talk about it with friends or family.

Interviewee 3 (Brazilian, 28 years old, IT support)

Individual interview: "I do not talk about it with my friends, I do not think, that man cares much about this. When I have some questions about beauty products, I talk with my friends (girls) who understand more about it".

Focus group: "I do not talk about it, I think this subject is not very relevant for men".

Interviewee 4 (Brazilian, 29 years old, student)

Individual interview: "I've talked a few times with my friends about it, just about perfume and shampoo. I do not mind talking about it".

Focus group: "We did not talk much about it".

Interviewee 5 (Brazilian, 30 years old, student)

Individual interview: "I've saw some friends commenting about something, I do not comment. I do not comment, because, the subject is not relevant to me".

Focus group: "No, I do not think it's relevant to me".

The question was whether they consider themselves vain.

Interviewee 3 (Brazilian, 28 years old, IT support)

Individual interview: "I do not consider myself a very vain person, I take care of my appearance in a normal way".

Focus group: "I think that I have a normal vanity, like any man".

Interviewee 4 (Brazilian, 29 years old, student)

Individual interview: "I do not consider myself vain, I think that I usually worry about my personal hygiene normally".

Focus group: "I'm not very vain".

During the individual interviews the question of being part of a focus group was brought up but none of the other nationalities were interested. Especially the Irish, were very uncomfortable in having this group conversation and immediately refused this possibility. The only group who showed willingness were the Brazilians. It may be concluded, that men still feel insecure about talking about their own consumption of beauty products and this is not presented by the literature review. In their statements it can be said that, they are still very much linked to a traditional social model, where they defined restrictions in a male and female world.

## **11) Data analysis**

This research will complement its final data with graphical analysis, the information contained in these graphic interpretations was obtained from the interviews and focus group. According to Mark (1996), the graphics are an efficient way to analyse variables and summarize information. They can help to understand trends in the data and describe complex relationships between information in a simplified way. Data analysis will also be based on data obtained from the focus group. As remarked by Mark (1996), a group interview, could be a focus group interview. This type of methodology is used by market researchers, who seek to better understand consumer opinion about a given product or service.

The data of this research will be analysed using the methodologies, pragmatism, content analysis and semantical content analysis (that includes: designation analysis and attribution analysis). According to Stewart *et al.* (2007), this type of analysis takes into account, why something is realized, it also includes procedures that can classify the signs based on the likely causes and effects. The analysis of the data in this research, will be based on the answers obtained in the interview and focus group. The analysis will be based on the probable causes and effects.

Stewart *et al.* (2007) suggested that, the analysis of the semantic content, can be considered as a way to classify the signs according to the meanings.

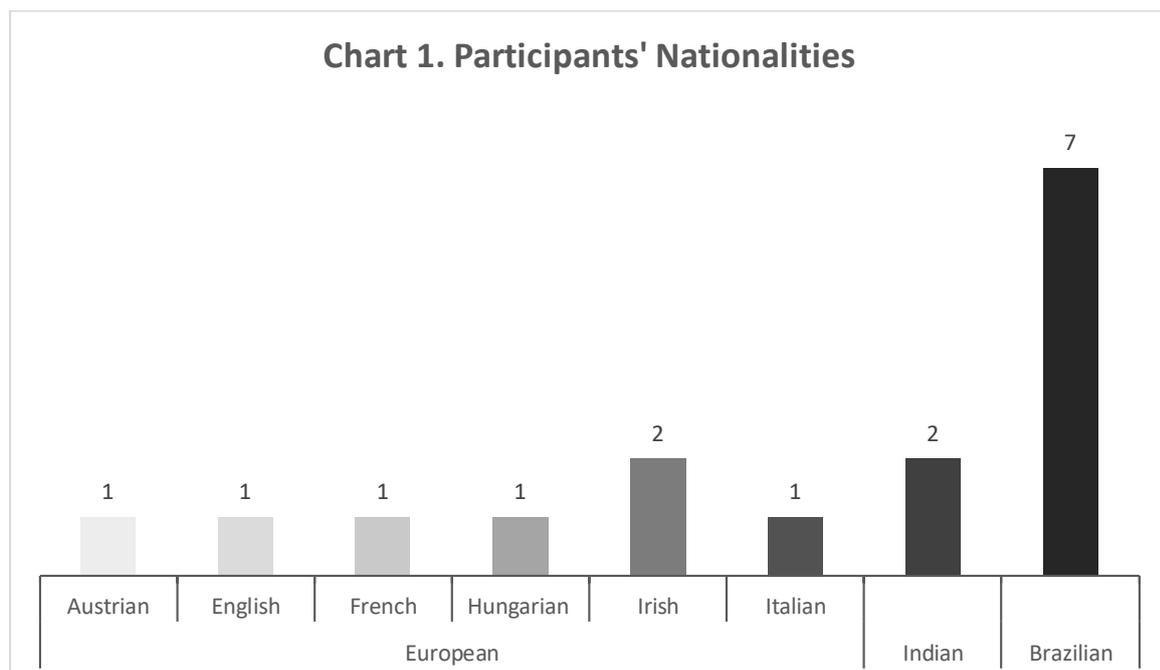
The analysis of semantic content is divided into some parts, two of them are: designation analysis and attribution analysis. These two forms of analysis will be used in the analysis of the data.

Focusing on Designation Analysis: “which determines the frequency with which certain objects (or persons, institutions, or concepts) are mentioned. This type of analysis can be rather simple counting exercise” (Stewart *et al.*, 2007, p. 119).

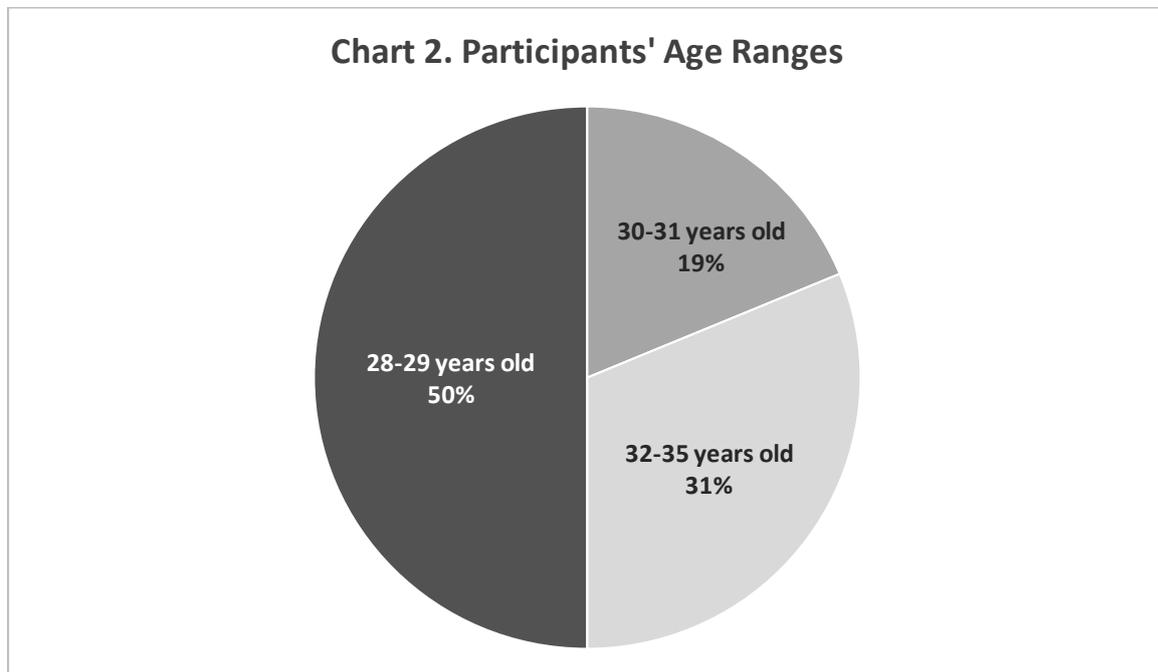
The frequency with which the same answers will be given during the interviews will be analysed, for example, if the interviewee considers himself a vain person or not. How much will the percentages of yes and no be? How often the interviewees said the same thing, for example: beauty products is a subject for woman.

## 11.1 Interview data analysis

The interviews had a total of sixteen participants: one French, one Italian, two Irish, one Austrian, one English, one Hungarian (total of seven Europeans), two Indians and seven Brazilians.



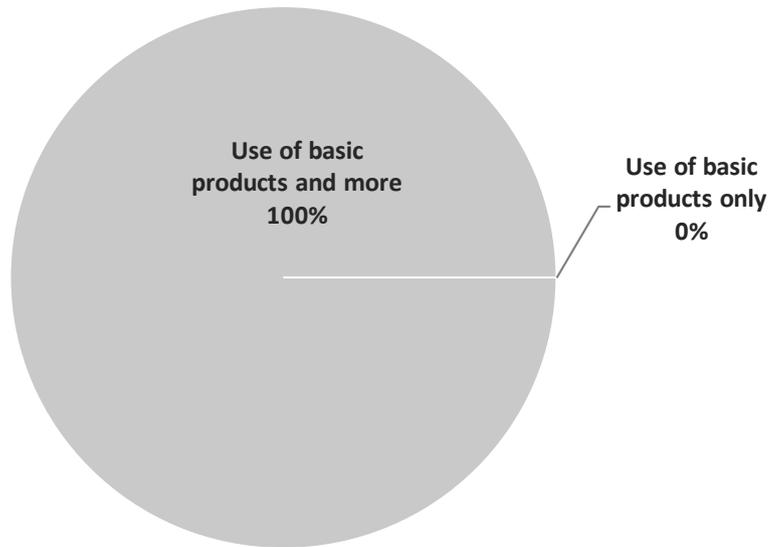
Average age among the interviewees.



Some questions in the interview, questioned the beauty products consumption of the interviewees. This consumption could be divided into two parts, the first among basic products, which can be related to personal hygiene products and the other parts were more aesthetically (which are not for basic needs). The graph below represents the findings from these questions, percentages of respondents who consume basic beauty products or who consumed more than just basic products.

The findings to assemble the graphic, was not made based on only one answer, but, throughout the interview. In most of the initial responses, the respondents said that they consumed only the basics. Throughout the interview, they admitted in using the consumption of other products of beauty, such as: cream and face soap, body cream, perfume, specific products for beard and others.

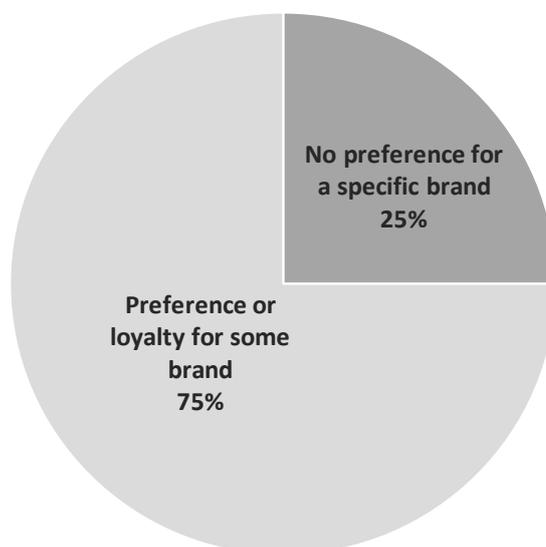
**Chart 3. Consumption of Basic Products and Others**



Most respondents said that they only consumed basic products, but by analysing all responses and comments throughout the interview, it could be concluded that 100% of participants consumed more than just the basic products that were related to personal hygiene.

The graph will present the average respondents, who had preference or fidelity to some brand of beauty product.

**Chart 4. Brands Preference**



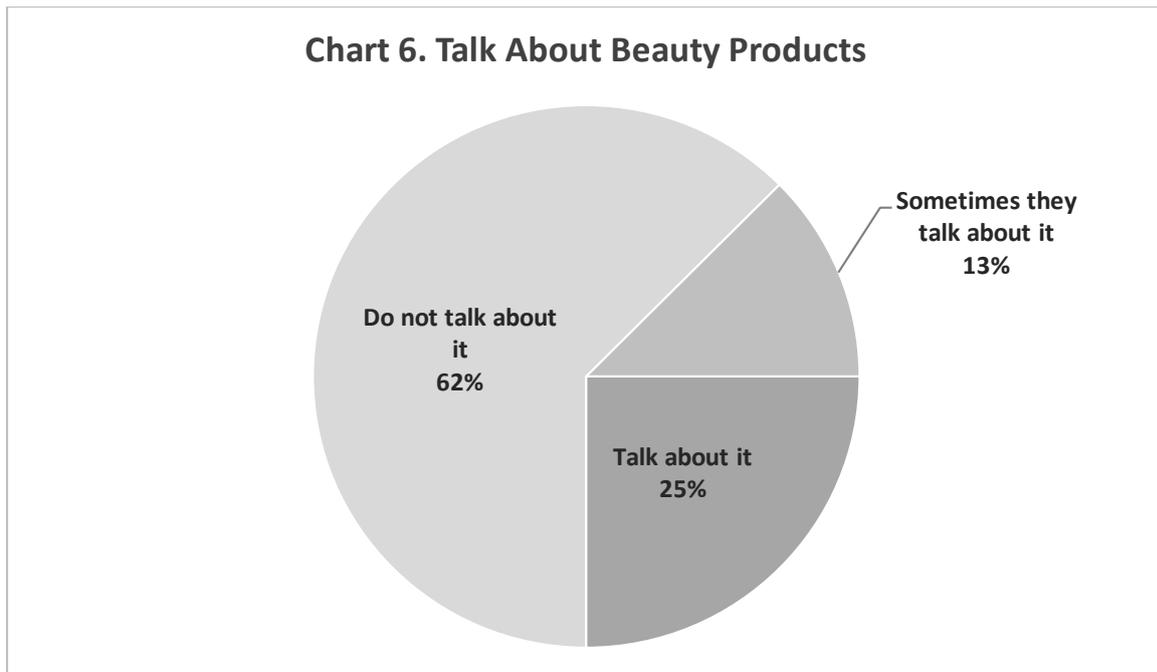
Based on the respondents' responses 75%, which represents the majority, have a preference to some brand. Among the participants, 25% have no preference to a specific brand.

The graphic will represent the respondents' responses to whether they would recommend a beauty products or not.



Among respondents 19% would recommend some beauty products to a friend, 19% would not recommend any products and with the majority of 62% of respondents who would only recommend a product if someone asked about it.

The graphic represents the question of whether they would talk with family or friends about the subject.



Only 10% of respondents talk about beauty products with friends or family, 15% talk about it sometimes and 75% representing the majority, do not talk about it.

## 11.2. Focus group data analysis

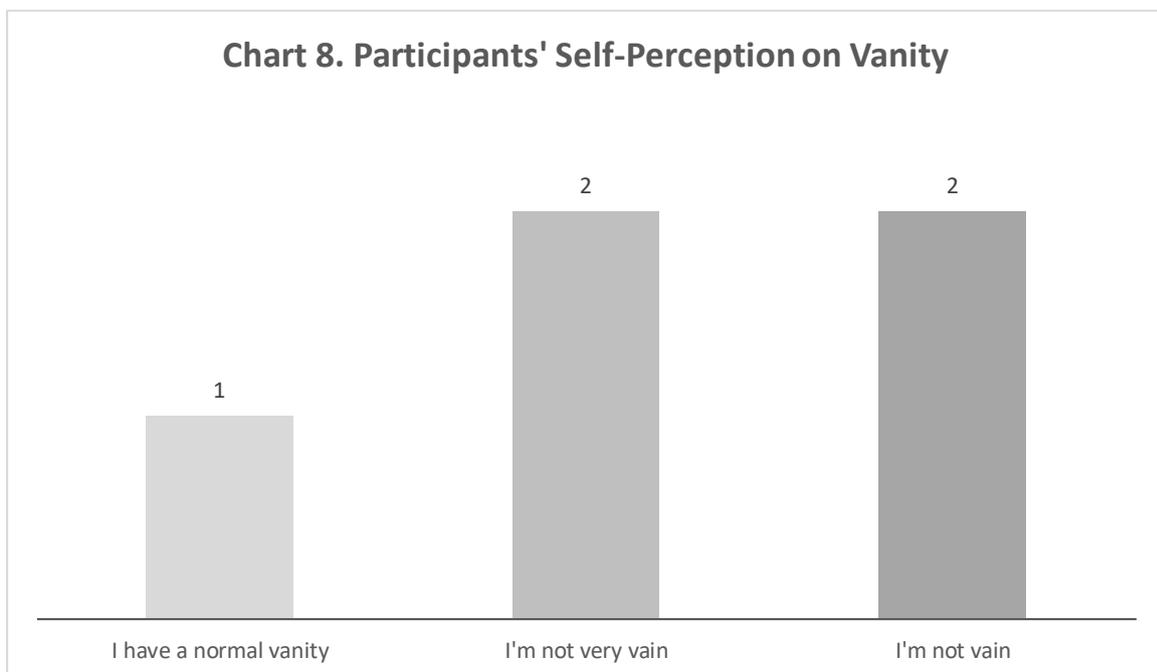
“The focus group interview provides a rich source of data and often leads to new and unexpected avenues for further research” (Mark, 1996, p. 243). The focus group of this research brought extremely relevant information to the analysis. In addition to promoting the comparison between participants' individual and group responses. This added very important data to the research.

In question number four, in the focus group questions, the participants were asked about their consumption of beauty products. Their consumption were divided into two categories: Category A, related to beauty products aimed at personal hygiene, which can be considered the basic products (deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, shower gel and others). Category B, was directed to vanity or greater care for appearance, not related to a basic needs (sunscreen, anti-aging cream, perfume and exfoliating body).



Based on the participants' statements during the focus group, 20% of participants stated that they had no interest in the subject, another 20% used both categories and 60% only used basic products.

Responses related to the question of whether they were vain.



Among the participants, 20% said they have a normal vanity pattern, 40% said that are not very vain and 40% said that they are not vain.

The last question was related to whether the participants would recommend a beauty product to a friend or family.



Among the participants 20% would not recommend their products and 80% would only recommend their products if they were asked.

## 12) Discussion

The relevant points that was found throughout the research analyses were the following: the difference between self-perception (regarding beauty products) between heterosexual and gay respondents, the difference in respondents' behaviour comparing individual interviews and focus group, the traditional concept (seen in most respondents) about beauty products and the male perception of beauty product consumption. The findings addressed in this paper are based on the qualitative research conducted (semi-structured interview and focus group).

Gay respondents were found to have a self-concept position with regards to beauty products, unlike heterosexual respondents. They have no problem admitting their consumption publicly, are more modern, interested in the subject and relate to brands. “Cultural socialization within the gay community influences men’s attitudes toward their appearance, which are expressed daily through their evaluation of, and investment in, their bodies” (Strubel and Petrie, 2018, p. 114). A relevant point in this analysis is that the LGBT social environment does not have a traditional judgment regarding masculinity, vanity and the use of beauty products. This social acceptance contributes a lot to consumers’ self-perception, because they do not have the same judgment as a traditional social environment.

There are some differences between the interviews and the focus group. In the individual interviews the participants felt more comfortable, gave more complete answers, were sincere, gave more details on what type of products they used, and expressed their real opinion about their self-perception of consumption. “Through regular exposure to traditional environments men internalize ideals and expectations of what it means to be “masculine” and develop reference points for self-evaluation, including their bodies and overall physical appearance” (Strubel and Petrie, 2018, pp. 114-115). Most respondents demonstrated different behaviour during the focus group, mainly because they were commenting on the subject in front of other men. For many, beauty products is still a woman's subject. Vanity is not related to masculinity and the image of a manly man. In the focus group the answers were simpler, more objective, participants made many jokes about the subject and were less sincere in their answers. Other people's judgments about beauty product consumption were more important than their own opinion and this directly affected the individuals' public self-perception of consumption.

As much as the literature presented in this paper, the results found in this research reinforced the evolution of male behaviour in relation to the beauty market. It was found, in research, that many men still have a traditional male thinking and behaviour in relation to the subject. Based on Shang and Pelosa (2016), the men learn to fit into the role of manhood, imposed by society, to be assertive, strong, and aggressive. The women play a role more related to being polite, caring, vain and delicate. Most men

are uncomfortable to talk about their consumption of beauty products publicly, yet they are stuck in social paradigms in which they divide "male world" and "female world."

It is socially conditioned in a traditional social environment, that men have to be masculine, virile, self-confident, independent, competitive and the provider for the family (Shang and Pelozza, 2016). Publicly, when they declare that they use a product, they always try to justify the use by reinforcing that they only use the basic products and often claim that they have no interest in the subject. Publicly the self-concept regarding the consumption of beauty products, is not totally sincere and truthful. It was reaffirmed what was seen earlier in the literature review, that men are actually consuming more beauty products and not just the basic products (related to personal hygiene). However, they do not admit this consumption publicly. The individual and their self-perception of this consumption is more honest and sincere, if they are in a private setting. This can be seen in the differences in responses and behaviour between individual interviews and focus group. An important observation to be made in relation to these findings, is that these points discussed above were not found on the literature references.

### **13) Conclusion**

Khan *et al.* (2017) suggested that, the cosmetic industry was very associated with the female audience, over the years this market also opened to the male audience. In the literature review the changes can be observed in the behaviour of the male audience, which indicated a greater concern with vanity and consumption of products and beauty services. The research intends to reaffirm or not, the statements made in this approach, such as: the man is vain, consuming more products and beauty services, is transitioning to the feminine world without his masculinity being questioned and other points.

The research can provide important information for the market and the academic environment. "However, despite the increasing importance of the male cosmetic

segment, little attention is given to research on the attitude of males toward the consumption of grooming products.” (Souiden and Diagne, 2009, p. 97).

With the lack of research related to this area and the growing market, it is imperative to know the needs and all aspects involved in the behaviour of the male consumer. Making the research to be carried out extreme relevant. According to Khan *et al.* (2016), the market for men's cosmetics are increasing rapidly, men are more attentive to beauty and fitness. The study intends to bring relevant information about the male consumer (on services and beauty products). By understanding the consumer, the market can develop better strategies, communication and have more accurate results.

Research has found that men are actually consuming more beauty products, some may prefer men-specific lines and others still enjoy traditional lines (designed for women). The public is having more information on the subject, but, they still have the female audience as reference for this type of content. Most respondents believe, that this subject is related to the female audience, they still have many traditional and patriarchal ideas. They do not take their consumption of beauty products publicly (mostly), mainly in their social environment and in front of other men. Respondents still associated the use of these products with women and gays. This makes men unwilling to be associated with this idea. They try to clarify that they only use the basics, they have no interest in the subject and when they use something, they always try to justify their consumption (according to research analyses).

During the literature review many points about male modernity and the characteristics of contemporary man and woman have been reported, however, the research can contribute with a different view on the subject. All this modernity brought by the literature, does not apply in many social nuclei. According to Khan *et al.* (2017), the culture directly impacts in the consumer behavior, people buy products to meet their needs and are influenced by culture and society. The society in which the consumer is inserted, their culture, beliefs, values and media, directly interfere in their self-concept in relation to beauty products. They have very different behaviours if confronted about their consumption in a personal (private) and public (in front of friends) environment. They have complex behaviours which makes more studies

critical to understanding their behaviour and all the aspects involved in order to have a more precise conclusions.

Answering to the questions regarding the research questions: What is the male perspective about beauty products? and what is the self- perception of different male consumption about beauty products? Answering the first question based on the research conducted, men are more interested in beauty products, however, they still will not admit their consumption publicly. In relation to the second question, Brazilians seem to be the ones who consume the most beauty products. The Europeans and the Indians, were still more conservative with their consumption in relation to the subject. In general, all respondents consume more than just basic products related to personal hygiene. However, their self-perception of this consumption at times does not represent the perceived reality.

A market with so much potential for growth, must be more attentive to know their consumers better, to understand their needs and to tailor their products and services to their customers. Customer satisfaction is fundamental for any business, this only happens if the brand knows its customers very well. There is still not a lot of research on the brands for men's beauty products and as a result, they are unable to know and understand the needs of their consumers. Even in the academic environment, compared to the female audience, the male is less studied. That should change in order to allow the sector to keep growing so that consumers of diverse social nuclei and cultures, can talk about the subject without restrictions, fears and judgments. This way, there would really be a modernity in the public and personal behaviour of consumers.

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