

MARKETING SKINCARE TO MEN: AN ANALYSIS OF MEN'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS
SKINCARE AND THEIR RESPONSIVENESS TO POTENTIAL MOTIVATORS

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Abstract

This paper examines what beliefs of potential male customers might hinder their consumption of skincare products and what strategies could prove useful to breaking through those barriers and effectively marketing skincare to men. The study uses text analysis for open-ended questions as well as analysis of averages, percentage ratings and t-tests for the remaining data. The results suggest that, currently, men are more open to using skincare products compared to previous generations. The study shows that men look for an affordable yet effective variety of products that target specific concerns or serve a specific purpose and are marketed in a straightforward way, with the properties of those products mentioned without the use of pseudoscience or marketing promoting toxic masculinity. Most importantly, the results show that respondents respond very well to knowledge, advice and recommendations pertaining to skin health and skincare products given by healthcare professionals/dermatologists as well as compliments on their skin from romantic and sexual partners. However, neither male nor female celebrities are a substantial influence on encouraging men to participate in the skincare market.

KEYWORDS: (USA, skincare industry, men, marketing, personal care)

JEL CODES: (M31, M37, M39)

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Introduction

Skincare, as a market segment, is the fastest growing part of the beauty industry ("Why Is The Skincare Market Growing At Such Breakneck Speed?", 2021). According to data from The NPD Group, sales of skincare products in the US grew by 13% in 2018, while makeup sales increased just by 1% (Garcia, 2019). The global skincare market was valued at nearly \$135 billion in 2018, increasing nearly 60% in the past 10 years and it is estimated to be at \$189.3 billion U.S. by 2025 (Ridder, 2021).

There are multiple factors contributing to the boom in the skincare industry growth such as rising demand for natural and organic skincare products (Ridder, 2021), social media and influencer marketing encouraging consumers to try out new brands and products that are being launched at rapid pace (Ridder, 2021), skincare becoming more attractive to younger generations (Ridder, 2021) as well as men showing increasing interest in skincare (Garcia, 2019).

In fact, men are a multibillion-dollar growth opportunity for the beauty industry (Warfield, 2019). According to a report by Grand View Research, the global men's skincare products market is anticipated to expand at a CAGR of 6.2% from 2020 to 2027 and reach \$18.92 billion by 2027 ("Men's Skincare Products Market Size | Industry Report, 2020-2027", 2020). Traditionally, male grooming market consisted of shave care but recently the demand for cleansers, facial moisturizers, and sunscreen is outpacing that of shave care essentials (Grand View Research, 2020) showing that male grooming is moving beyond the basics and catching up with the equivalent markets in Asia, especially South Korea (Grand View Research, 2020).

Over the past decade, South Korean men have become the world's most prolific male spenders on skincare, a market that grew by 44% in the country between 2011 and 2017, according to Euromonitor (Warfield, 2019). However, many market researchers speculate US men's skincare usage will grow ("Men's Grooming & Skincare Trends for 2020", 2019), which might mean eventually US will catch up with South Korea when it comes to normalizing skincare usage.

An important thing to consider for marketers is that the US skincare market has things to improve on before it can effectively grasp male consumers. Mainstream retail spaces like Sephora, Ulta or the department store beauty counters are often designed with female shoppers in mind (Chiquoine, 2020). What's more, Gen Z and millennials are less and less interested in buying traditionally gendered products (Chiquoine, 2020).

While there have been studies on skincare usage among males in countries like Pakistan, India, Vietnam, a significant effort to uncover research on skincare usage among male-identifying US citizens has come up rather empty. The available research does suggest young US male-identifying persons have quite different outlook on society and identity (Chiquoine, 2020) that suggests a new marketing approach.

With this understanding in hand, I believe there is great opportunity to grow skincare usage among US men. My study will explore what beliefs of potential male customers might hinder their consumption of skincare products beyond shave care and what strategies could prove useful to breaking through those barriers and effectively marketing skincare to them. It is extremely important for US skincare industry to understand those, as the norms and gender binaries that have existed for centuries are rapidly changing and socially unaware marketing can lose skincare companies billions of dollars.

The method I will use to explore how to effectively market skincare at US men is large sample quantitative study using field study where I will gather data on my own by creating a Qualtrics survey with multiple statement matrix style questions that will be sent out to male-identifying US persons which will provide me with the necessary data to answer my research question. The questions will be about respondents' general attitude towards skincare, frequency of use of all possible skincare products, possible barriers and attitudes as well as what could encourage them to use it.

I expect to show that education about skin and skincare ingredients as well as bigger representation of male-identifying people in both brand and retailer advertisement and male influencers can be very effective at increasing sales of skincare among males through breaking the stigma around men and personal care.

This study is structured as follows. The next section reviews relevant literature. It is then followed by an overview of data and methodology. Finally, the paper concludes with analysis of results and conclusions.

Literature review

The literature discussed in this chapter includes periodicals, articles, research papers and case studies. Most of them discuss skincare usage by men in other countries such as the UK, New Zealand, Brazil, Pakistan, South Korea and Indonesia around early 2000s, as the literature is sparse on men and skincare market in the USA and on the recent years. All of them focus on factors that contribute to the effective marketing of skincare products to men. While there are some common trends, there are also contradictory findings possibly due to different timeframes with different cultural norms around masculinity and grooming.

A term and phenomenon that recurs often in the literature is 'metrosexual'. According to McNeill and Douglas (2011), a metrosexual man is 'characterized by increased image consciousness and is sufficiently confident in his masculinity to move beyond stereotypical gender roles, publicly embracing his feminine side'. Datamonitor defines this term as 'a heterosexual man, usually an urban professional, who adopts traditionally female behaviors such as following beauty regimes and fashion trends' (KMI Corp., 2005). A case study on King of Shaves (KMI Corp., 2005), a British shave care brand which wanted to release a skincare line for men, explains how the emergence of the metrosexual men trend influenced their decision to move forward with the release of skincare line for men. The phenomenon of metrosexuality is present beyond the Western countries as research done in Pakistan (Amber-Yamin et al., 2016) indicates that male celebrities have impacted the male population of Pakistan to embrace traditionally feminine personal care product, including skincare.

While the growing popularity of metrosexuality contributed to the development of the earlier skincare and cosmetic brand for men in the 1990s and early 2000s, a lot of men were still hesitant to embrace the idea of skincare as it seemed more like pampering than grooming (McNeill & Douglas, 2011). According to McNeill & Douglas (2011), Thomas (2003) and KMI Corp., (2005), men were more likely to buy products that enhance their masculinity instead of threatening it by making them appear too feminine. According to McNeill & Douglas (2011), males want their grooming choices to be seen as utilitarian rather than self-indulgent. Thomas (2003) explains that the reason why men use deodorants now is because they were marketed at them as something masculine. The case study on King of Shaves skincare brand, discusses a similar phenomenon of selling aftershave to men (KMI Corp., 2005). According to Hiten Dayal, by calling male perfume aftershave, marketers de-feminized it and normalized buying it as a man (KMI Corp., 2005). This strategy of using ‘manly’ language to sell traditionally feminine products to men is discussed quite extensively in a few papers. However, another study found that men may be skeptical about ‘crafted for men’ etc. type of claims on skincare products (Deubler et al., 2021). It has to be noted, though, that this study was conducted in 2021 while the rest were conducted in early 2000s. This suggests that current male population may not be responsive to existing marketing created based on examples from the last decades.

Another thing researched is to what extent other people impact consumer behavior of men when it comes to skincare. Many sources (Thomas, 2003; Amber-Yamin et al., 2016; McNeill & Douglas, 2011) indicated that media and celebrities are a big influence on men consuming traditionally feminine skincare and cosmetic products. While the

other sources talk about media and celebrities normalizing using skincare, McNeill and Douglas (2011) say men feel forced by the society to adhere and be more feminine.

Another big factor in men's consumption of skincare products, it seems, is the impact of mothers, wives and girlfriends. According to McNeill and Douglas (2011), women were an influence on the purchasing behavior of men in their lives as they would often purchase products for them, which would introduce men to what the market has to offer and made it easier for men to purchase such products later on by themselves. What's more, appearing attractive to women and pleasing them by taking care of their appearance seemed to also be an important factor in the rise of consumption of skincare by males (McNeill and Douglas, 2011). Bittar (2004) also names celebrities and women as driving factors for men purchasing more skincare.

Two separate studies, one based in Brazil (Campos et al., 2016) and the other one in South Korea (Ridwan et al., 2017) found that Brazilian and South Korean men believe using skincare products will aid them in getting a better career or promotions.

According to Bittar (2004), it is more of a challenge to effectively market skincare to men in the USA compared to Europe in general. However, the study also indicated that the number of men using skincare products in the USA is increasing.

Society and its approach to gender and masculinity changes enormously within even a few years. According to Chiquoine (2020) the future of beauty, cosmetics and skincare industries, is genderless. Therefore, marketing that highlights the gender binaries might have appealed to men in the 1990s and early 2000s but the study by Deubler et al.(2021) shows it might not be true in 2021 or going forward. However, that study involved interviews with only 18 people in 2 cities in the USA, and shouldn't be considered

conclusive when it comes to the topic of skincare usage by US males. Since, to my knowledge, there are not any other recent studies on skincare usage patterns of US males, I believe my study will add a more current overview of male consumers' behavior when it comes to skincare products.

Data

Data overview

Data for this study was collected by creating a Qualtrics survey with multiple statement matrix style questions and sent out to male-identifying US persons. 124 respondents replied to at least one question, and 93 respondents completed all questions.

The survey was sent out to Colorado College students, posted to a LinkedIn group for Colorado College's Economics and Business students and alumni and posted to a group of alumni of United World Colleges who currently reside in the US.

The first part of the survey consisted of screen-in questions about age, annual combined household income, race and ethnicity, gender identity and sexual orientation.

Next followed a question on general interest in skincare and two open-ended questions about likes and dislikes regarding currently available skincare products.

Next followed questions of main interest. First, the respondents were asked about the frequency of use of 13 types of skincare product with the options of never, less than weekly, at least weekly, once daily, more than once a day. The types of skincare products used in the survey included: lip balm, toner, essence/serum/ampoule, face mask, prescription/OTC product, face cleanser, eye cream, face moisturizer, sunscreen, beard oil, shaving cream/gel, exfoliator and aftershave. Those account for products specifically targeted at men such as shaving cream/gel, aftershave and beard oil as well as products for respondents with special concerns – prescription/OTC product. Included in the survey were also basic skincare products more likely to be found in majority of people's cabinets such as face cleanser and sunscreen as well as additional skincare products such as eye cream and essence/serum/ampoule.

The first matrix type of question involved 12 beliefs and attitudes towards skincare products and with 7 point scale option ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The matrix statements for beliefs can be grouped in a few different subgroups such as skincare not being for men, men needing separate skincare from women, fear of being ridiculed for using skincare as a male-identifying person, skincare being useless or harmful, skincare not being worth its price as well as respondents' lack of concern for the appearance and health of their skin. Those subgroups of beliefs were chosen to be investigated in this survey based on the implications of literature review studies that suggest toxic masculinity is a huge factor in low sales of skincare products to men (McNeill & Douglas, 2011) as is lack of knowledge on skincare amongst men in general. The second matrix question involved 15 statements and asked which of those scenarios would make the respondent interested in buying and trying skincare products. Similarly to the last question, these statements can also be organized into subgroups representing the following types of scenarios: healthcare professionals explaining advantages of skincare for men or helping with putting together a skincare routine, famous male sports player, famous male artist, famous female celebrity talking about the benefits of skincare, bigger representation of men in advertisements and skincare in general, separate skincare lines created for men specifically, testimonies from other men about benefits of skincare, compliments from other men, compliments from romantic and sexual partners on the health of one's skin and finally female identifying partner or men shopping for skincare for the respondent. Those scenarios were also included in the survey to test the implications from the literature review section and other factors likely to influence consumer behaviors of men in 2021.

The last section of the survey consisted of questions about skin types and skin conditions of the respondents.

Descriptive statistics

When it comes to age of the respondents, the majority of respondents were relatively young, either GenZ or Millennials. 35.5 % of respondents were in the 21-24 years old bracket, 17.7% were in the 18-20 years old bracket and 14.5% were in the 25-29 years old bracket. However, the next biggest bracket of 13.7% was that of 60+ years old men. Average age bracket was that of 25-29 years old.

As for the annual combined household income, the biggest bracket was \$100 000-\$149 000 with 15.3% of respondents in it. It was followed by 13.7% of respondents earning less than \$20 000. Brackets of \$150 000-\$199 000, \$200 000-\$299 000 and \$300 000+ had equal amount of respondents of 11.3%. The average annual combined household income bracket was \$80 000-\$99 000.

As for the race and ethnicity of the respondents, 82% of them identify as white, 7.4% identify as Asian or Pacific Islander, 4.1% as Hispanic or Latino, 1.6% identify as Black or African American and 1.6% as multiracial or biracial.

When it comes to gender identity of the respondents, 92.7% of respondents identify as a cisgender man, 1.6% as a transgender man and 0.8% as genderfluid.

As for the sexual orientation of the respondents, 85.5% of the respondents identify as heterosexual, 6.5% as homosexual, 4.8% as bisexual, and 3.2 % as queer.

Respondents were also asked questions about their skin type and skin conditions.

46.2% of them reported having a beard, with 53.8% not having one.

When it comes to oily skin type, 35.5% of respondents reported not having oily skin at all, 36.6% of them reported having mildly oily skin, with the rest of respondents reporting in the options in between mild and severe. As for dry skin, 21.5 % of respondents report not having dry skin at all, 18.3% report having mildly dry skin and 3.2% report having severely dry skin, with the rest of respondents in between mildly dry and severely dry. When it comes to combination skin, 59.1% respondents do not experience combination skin at all, 14.0% of respondents have mild combination skin and the rest of them are quite regularly distributed after mild. 41.9% of respondents do not have sensitive skin at all, 19.4% have mildly sensitive skin and 1.1% of respondents have severely sensitive skin with the rest of respondents in between.

When it comes to skin conditions, 34.4% of respondents do not have acne at all and 37.6% of respondents have mild acne. 93.5% of respondents report not having rosacea with 3.2% of them reporting mild rosacea. When it comes to eczema, 83.9% of respondents do not have it while 3.2% report having mild eczema. 92.5% of respondents do not have psoriasis but 4.3% of respondents report having mild psoriasis. Finally, 4.3% of respondents have non-dangerous skin cancer. 94.6% of respondents report not having other skin conditions. One person reported having age spots, one wrinkles and another blackheads (which are classified as a type of acne).

Methodology

The resulting base size of 93 completed responses is not sufficient to allow for breakouts such as by demographics, product usage, or question responses.

In the first step of the data analysis, I will look at the very first question about general interest in skincare. Then, text analysis will be performed on the two open-ended questions. Responses will be grouped together depending on common themes and repeating answers.

Then, for the question on the frequency of usage of different types of skincare products as well as matrix questions about beliefs and interest in buying skincare given a certain experience, in addition to analyzing the averages for the data and the distribution of answers for different scale points, t-test, a type of inferential statistic (Hayes, 2021), will be performed in order to determine whether differences between different frequencies, beliefs and different potential motivators are statistically significant or merely coincidental.

Results and analysis

General interest

When asked ‘How interested are you in skincare products?’, responses were quite spread out over the 7 point scale ranging from not at all interested to extremely interested. 14.4% of respondents declared being not at all interested, and 1% of respondents declared being extremely interested. The median point scale of 4, which is in between not at all interested and extremely interested, was chosen by 16.3% of respondents. Scale point of 2, which lies after not at all interested was chosen by 26% of respondents. Scale point of 3 collected 17.3% of responses. When it comes to the scale points that indicate more interest, scale point of 5 had the second biggest amount of respondents with 21.2%. Finally, the scale point of 6 was chosen by 3.8% of respondents. The average scale point was 3, which indicated a medium average interest in skincare products. Overall, it seems like, while there is not a big portion of respondents extremely interested in skincare, there is quite a big amount of them that have some interest in skincare. There is also a big amount of respondents who indicate not being interested in skincare.

The questions that follow in the survey explore those interests, or lack thereof, in skincare as well as factors that contribute to those.

Open-ended questions

As for the open-ended question on general likes related to skincare products, a lot of responses kept repeating themselves and involved different aspects of skincare products and industry in general. Therefore, I classified those responses into different categories accordingly. The categories are as follows: specific products, specific ingredients,

specific properties, quality and effectiveness, cost, variety of options, branding and marketing, impact on the buyer and others or the environment.

A lot of respondents listed SPF, moisturizers, lotions and face washes as things they like about skincare.

When it comes to specific ingredients, one person mentioned paraben-free products as well as products with salicylic acid being important to them. Additionally, one person mentioned liking products that avoid certain ingredients but they didn't specify what those would be.

As for specific properties, this was the category that contains the most answers. Firstly, many respondents are looking for products that prevent and/or treat acne and/or wrinkles, have soothing and healing properties as well as products that help keep the skin hydrated, moisturized, clean and bright. What's more, a great amount of respondents stresses liking non-greasy products and the fact that, in their eyes, products in current skincare market are becoming more lightweight rather than greasy, with better smoother formulations. Another product property that was one of the most mentioned things was fragrance and scent. However, different respondents liked different things – while some liked fully unscented products, some liked products with a lot of fragrance. Simplicity when it comes to skincare products and routines in general was also mentioned by many.

Quality and effectiveness of products were also things respondents appreciate and their improvement compared to the past few years.

There were also multiple people that liked the price of the products as well as cheap drugstore brands like CeraVe and Cetaphil.

Variety of options is also appreciated by a few respondents, specifically different options targeted at different concerns as well as a bigger variety of skincare products currently offered that cater to men's needs.

When it comes to branding and marketing, some respondents explained they like brands that cater to men's needs without being stereotypical as well as marketing that is simple and straightforward.

As for impact on the buyer, others and the environment, one person liked the effect skincare had on their self-image, another person liked that the fragrance of his skincare was liked by his wife and another person appreciated sustainability and no plastic usage when looking for skincare products.

While all those results are only given by individuals or a group of a few individuals, they do present some common themes concerning what is desired by prospective male consumers of skincare. As indicated by the responses about specific products, the respondents are looking for the basic essential products that are effective at protecting and healing skin. Based on the fact that some respondents did say they are avoiding or looking for certain products, it can be deduced that part of the male market for skincare is interested enough in skincare to read the labels. Respondents also value quality and effectiveness of the products at reasonable prices. It is clear that a lot of respondents do know what they look for in skincare products and what skin goals they want to achieve by using them. Many specified that they are looking to treat certain skin conditions like acne or for certain characteristics like scent, lightweight consistency and appreciate the variety of products that are available to match many combinations of their needs. That may explain why the respondents like straightforward marketing instead of marketing

based on what society considers that men will find appealing. Through engaging with the marketing campaigns of skincare companies, they hope to learn about what those products treat and offer without consuming the ideas of toxic masculinity.

When it comes to the open-ended question on general dislikes related to skincare products, there were more diverse responses to this question as compared to the previous one. Some of the responses were the opposites of what respondents listed in the question about likes and many responses were contradictory, especially in certain categories like the variety of products available. Similarly to the previous question, the categories are as follows: ingredients, specific properties, quality and effectiveness, cost, variety of options, branding and marketing, impact on the buyer and others or the environment.

When it comes to comments about ingredients, some respondents found that many skincare products have too many ingredients, ingredients that are detrimental, or too harsh and that the products lack natural ingredients.

As for the specific properties of skincare products, while many respondents reported in the previous question liking the non-greasy, lightweight feeling of currently available skincare products, it is not the experience for all. In fact, many respondents mentioned not liking the oiliness and greasiness attached to their previous skincare experience and, in their opinion, majority of currently available skincare products. Others listed skincare products drying out skin as an unenjoyable skincare experience.

Fragrance was another thing that the respondents had varying preferences in. Many respondents listed skincare having any scent, or strong scent as a factor that makes them dislike a certain skincare product. Additionally, one person mentioned unmasculine

scents associated with skincare products as something that discourages them from buying a product.

As for the effectiveness of skincare products, a few respondents mentioned not believing that skincare has any benefits as well as their belief that the science behind skincare is not really proven. They also talked about skincare products not meeting the standards of what is advertised to potential customers and good products not being available in drugstores like Walgreens or CVS.

High cost of the products, especially for low quantities, as well as low quality of cheap skincare products are other concerns associated with currently available skincare listed by the respondents.

Similarly to the category of properties, the answers regarding the variety of options differ within what is disliked by the respondents and some also contradict what was mentioned by others in regards to their likes about skincare. While there were a few respondents that state they dislike the lack of variety of products targeted at men or lack of choices in general, most of the respondents are overwhelmed by the amount and variety of skincare products available. They state this abundance of products as the reason why they are often confused and unable to understand the characteristics of each product and ultimately choose any at all.

That also ties to other comments of respondents on false marketing. Many respondents indicated that there is a great amount of marketing that uses pseudoscience or scientific facts in inaccurate ways as well as broad statements.

False marketing is not the only issue respondents found with the way skincare is marketed. In fact, one of the most mentioned things is how skincare advertising relates to

masculinity and femininity. While there were two people who said ‘girliness’ and feminine aesthetics of the products and their packaging makes him dislike skincare, most respondents who raised the issue of the representation of men in marketing had quite different opinions. Some respondents mentioned disliking skincare for the stigma around skincare being feminine, or skincare products as well as their marketing being targeted specifically at women. Others explained that skincare products being strongly gendered discourages them from buying them. Another, quite big, group of respondents dislike skincare companies that use ‘blatantly masculine tropes’, ‘too over masculinized’, ‘macho’ marketing as described by some. An example of that would be ‘making the bottle all black and putting axes on it’ as listed by one respondent.

When it comes to impact on the buyer, others and the environment, respondents dislike that skincare industry might promote unhealthy and unrealistic beauty standards, animal testing that many companies still practice as well as unsustainability of many products and companies in general.

Respondents to this question had some different experiences and opinions when it comes to effectiveness and cost of skincare compared to the answers from the previous question. However, whether it is lack of certain ingredients or presence of natural ones, scented or unscented products – those two open-ended questions do show an important trend – customers looking for specific things. However, while the goal of all marketing campaigns is to help prospective customers understand what is being offered to them and what are the advantages, it seems, based on the responses, that despite respondents knowing the characteristics of products they want, marketing campaigns of skincare products fail to communicate whether their product would fulfill those needs of

customers. As mentioned by some respondents, the companies' marketing that promises it all and uses pseudoscience just discourages them from trying those products. What's more, as indicated by the studies in the literature review chapter, in previous decades very masculine images used in marketing campaigns would prove successful, but it seems not to be the case with the respondents who list those as another thing they very much dislike. Based on their responses, it seems that, ideally, respondents would like an affordable yet effective variety of products that target specific concerns or serve a specific purpose and are marketed in a straightforward way, with the properties of those products mentioned without the 'unnecessary complications' such as pseudoscience or 'macho' marketing, as described by some respondents.

Frequency of usage

Next question in the survey concerned the frequency of usage of different types of skincare products. Its purpose is to see which products are more popular amongst the male audience, which will allow to grasp its implications. The respondents had the following options of scale points to choose from: never (1), less than weekly (2), at least weekly (3), once daily (4), more than once a day (5). The percentage distribution of responses for all types of skincare products amongst the different scale point was collected as well as the averages, which are displayed in the table below. Additionally, t-test was performed to determine whether differences between frequencies of usage of different types of products are statistically significant or merely coincidental. T-test results are depicted through the statistical groups columns; products usage frequencies that share a * in the same column are not statistically significantly different at the 95% confidence level.

Table 5.1

Frequencies of usage of different types of skincare products

How frequently do you use the following products?	Mean	Statistical Groups	
shaving cream/gel	2.58	*	
chapstick(lip balm)	2.55	*	
face cleanser	2.40	*	
sunscreen	2.34	*	
face moisturizer	2.27	*	
aftershave	1.64		*
prescription/OTC product	1.53		*
exfoliator	1.47		*
face mask	1.31		*
beard oil	1.28		*
eye cream	1.19		*
toner	1.16		*
essence/serum/ampoule	1.16		*

Scale: 1= Never 2= Less Than Weekly 3= At Least Weekly 4= Once Daily 5= More Than Once a Day

Products usage frequencies sharing a * in the same column are not statistically significantly different at the 95% confidence level

The above table shows that products with the highest average frequency of usage are products that are more ‘basic’, essential products that are also advertised in a more gender-neutral way compared to products like serums, eye creams, which are mostly targeted at women. The most frequently used product by respondents is a gendered product - shaving cream/gel with the average of 2.58 meaning its average use amongst the respondents is at least weekly. It is followed by products like lip balm, face cleanser, sunscreen and moisturizer, whose averages are above 2, which means they are either used either less than weekly or at least weekly on average. Those are products that are considered essential skincare products necessary to clean and protect the skin.

Additionally, those products are in the same statistical group, which means they are not statistically significantly different at the 95% confidence level.

Next come aftershave and prescription/OTC product which, after rounding up to a full number, have an average value of 2 which signifies less than weekly. This is not particularly surprising considering the fact that not every male-identifying person shaves and, even if they do, aftershave is an additional step in the shaving routine. Similarly, I predicted prescription/OTC to have lower average frequency of usage because those are used for specific skin conditions and, if prescribed not everyone has the means to afford those. The rest of types of products have the average close to 1 which signifies never using them. Out of those products beard oil is the only one specifically targeted at men. However, 46.2% of respondents indicated having a beard and beard oil is an additional step so it makes sense that the average frequency of usage is so low. When it comes to the other types of products: exfoliator, face mask, eye cream, toner, essence/serum/ampoule, those are products most often targeted at women and the low frequency of usage of those products by male-identifying people is also to be expected. As for statistical groups, aftershave, prescription/OTC product, exfoliator, face mask and beard oil are not statistically significantly different at the 95% confidence level. Similarly, prescription/OTC product, exfoliator, face mask, beard oil, eye cream, toner and essence/serum/ampoule are also in the same statistical group, therefore they are also not statistically significantly different at the 95% confidence level.

When looking at the percentage distribution for different types of products, products with mean rounded up to 1 like serums or face masks, have from 76.9% to 91.3% of responses for the scale point of 1 which signifies never while the rest of scale points got chosen by

very small or none amounts of respondents. As for types of products whose mean value can be rounded up to 2, have a more even distribution among the 5 scale points but the majority of respondents still chose the scale point 1. As for lip balm, with the mean value of 2.55, the majority of respondents chose the scale point of 2, 34.6% precisely but the rest of responses have also a pretty even distribution. When it comes to the shaving cream/gel with the mean of 2.58, the highest percentage value of 40.4% belongs to the 3rd scale point, the lowest of 0% to 5th and the rest of points have an almost equal percentage distribution of 19.2%, 20.2% and 20.2%.

Beliefs

The first matrix question included 12 various beliefs about skincare potentially held by the respondents who could decide how strongly they agree with them on a 7 point scale with options ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). Its purpose is to understand what beliefs and attitudes the respondents hold when it comes to skincare. As explained in the data overview section of the data chapter, the beliefs were chosen based on the implications from the literature review chapter and can be grouped into the following categories: skincare not being for men, men needing separate skincare from women, fear of being ridiculed for using skincare as a male-identifying person, skincare being useless or harmful, skincare not being worth its price as well as respondents' lack of concern for the appearance and health of their skin. The percentage ratings for all beliefs amongst the different scale point was collected as well as the averages, which are displayed in the table below. Additionally, t-test was performed in order to determine whether differences between different beliefs are statistically significant or merely coincidental.

Table 5.2

Beliefs potentially held by men about skincare

BELIEFS	Mean	Statistical Groups			% Ratings of 6-7	% Ratings of 1-2
		*	*	*		
Skincare products are not worth their cost.	4.31	*			20	15
Men's skin differs from women's skin and there should be separate products for men and women.	4.24	*	*		22	16
Using many products on my skin will make it less healthy/ break out or react.	3.97	*	*		19	23
Skincare products are made specifically for women.	3.20			*	7	41
I don't concern myself with the appearance of my skin.	3.20			*	9	42
The caveman regimen (a skincare trend in which a person stops washing their face and usage of all products) is more effective than usage of skincare products.	2.89			*	4	44
Men don't need to use products other than shave care products.	2.86			*	5	52
Using skincare products would make me seem feminine in other people's eyes.	2.78			*	8	59
Skincare would do more harm than good to my skin.	2.78			*	6	49
Others would make fun of me if my skincare routine consisted of steps other than shave care products.	2.64			*	6	59
Skincare has no real benefits.	2.58			*	3	57
Skincare is not for men.	2.25			*	1	66

Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree to 7=Strongly Agree
Beliefs sharing a * in the same column are not statistically significantly different at the 95% confidence level

The above table shows beliefs in the order of beliefs people agree with the most first and going down to the ones they agree with the least. T-test results are depicted through the statistical groups columns; beliefs that share a * in the same column are not statistically significantly different at the 95% confidence level. Finally, in order to further examine

the robustness of beliefs, an analysis of combined ratings of six and seven as well as one and two further illuminates the degree of motivation for each statement.

The following 3 statements: 'skincare products are not worth their cost', 'men's skin differs from women's skin and there should be separate products for men and women' as well as 'using many products on my skin will make it less healthy/ break out or react' are in the same statistical group which means they are not statistically significantly different at the 95% confidence level.

When looking at the top two box responses (6 and 7 ratings), they were neither high nor low and quite similar to the bottom two box responses (1 and 2 ratings) for all 3 statements in the first statistical group. This makes sense considering that their average is close to the median point of 4.

When it comes to the results related to the 3rd belief in this statistical group 'using many products on my skin will make it less healthy/ break out or react' such as the mean and the ratings, those could explain why many respondents, in the open-ended questions, highlighted enjoying simplicity and effectiveness and results of products and expressed discontent with the amounts of products advertised at them whose properties don't make sense to them. It also aligns with respondents' frequency of usage of different types of skincare products as they reported using the more essential skincare products such as SPF more often and practically never using somehow additional steps like serums.

The first statement in the next statistical group is 'skincare products are made specifically for women' and its combined 1 and 2 rating is 41%. This signifies that respondents to this statement rather disagree than agree, which makes sense because, even though the respondents do not consume all types of skincare products frequently, they do consume

some products and expressed interest in products that would help them with their specific concerns in the open-ended question.

Next statement with the mean value of 3.2% and the last one in this statistical group is 'I don't concern myself with the appearance of my skin'. Once again, the combined 1 and 2 rating for this statement is a high 42% which shows that most respondents do not agree with the statement.

The next statistical group consists of 6 statements whose bottom two box responses (combined 1 and 2 rating) were very high, ranging from 44% to 59%.

First belief in this statistical group, with the mean of 2.89%, is 'the caveman regimen (a skincare trend in which a person stops washing their face and usage of all products) is more effective than usage of skincare products'. This statement is similar to saying that skincare is useless but, as discussed before, men do find benefits in using skincare so the majority of respondents disagreeing with this statement was expected.

'Men don't need to use products other than shave care products' has a mean value of 2.89 and the combined 1 and 2 rating for this statement is 52%. Once again, it is not surprising that most respondents disagree with the statement since their responses to the open-ended questions suggest they are interested in purchasing skincare other than shave care that meets their needs.

Another belief similar to the one about cavemen regimen that could be classified under the belief subcategory that skincare is useless or harmful is 'skincare would do more harm than good to my skin'. Its mean value is 2.78, combined 1 and 2 rating is 49%.

Clearly the majority of respondents disagree with this statement just like they did with the previous one.

Another statement with the mean value of 2.78 and combined bottom two rating of 59% is 'using skincare products would make me seem feminine in other people's eyes'. It makes sense that the majority of respondents disagrees with this statement as many of them expressed their discontent for lack of options targeted at men as well as proper marketing at male identifying people.

Next statement 'others would make fun of me if my skincare routine consisted of steps other than shave care products' has a mean value of 2.64 and the bottom two box rating is 59%, which means the majority of respondents strongly disagrees or disagrees with it. In the literature review it was a common concern of men to be ridiculed for using skincare if it was 'too girly' but it was data from different countries and previous decades so it is not very representative of attitudes of USA men in 2021. What's more respondents themselves indicated that they are interested in purchasing skincare products apart from shave care in the open-ended question.

The last statement in this statistical group with the mean value of 2.58 and combined 1 and 2 rating value of 57% is 'skincare has no real benefits'. It is another statement from the group of statements that are meant to measure to what extent the respondents agree that skincare is useless. Just like the other statements showed most respondents disagree with that statement, this one further confirms that.

The final statement on beliefs is 'skincare is not for men' and it has its own statistical group. The mean value for this statement equals 2.25 and its combined 1 and 2 rating is a very high 66%. As shown by similar statements and respondents' answers in the open-ended question, the male respondents believe there is skincare that is beneficial to their skin and are willing to try it.

Potential motivators

The second matrix question included 15 potential motivators to purchase skincare and the respondents could decide how strongly they are interested in skincare given those motivators on a 7 point scale with options ranging from not interested at all (1) to extremely interested (7). Those motivators were chosen to be included in the survey based on the literature review and can be organized into subgroups representing the following types of scenarios: healthcare professionals explaining advantages of skincare for men or helping with putting together a skincare routine, famous male sports player, famous male artist, famous female celebrity talking about the benefits of skincare, bigger representation of men in advertisements and skincare in general, separate skincare lines created for men specifically, testimonies from other men about benefits of skincare, compliments from other men, compliments from romantic and sexual partners on the health of one's skin and finally female identifying partner or men shopping for skincare for the respondent. Its purpose is to understand what types of scenarios could create an opportunity for the skincare industry to grasp the male-identifying consumers to purchase their products. The percentage ratings for all potential motivators amongst the different scale point was collected as well as the averages, which are displayed in the table below. Additionally, t-test was performed to determine whether differences between different potential motivators are statistically significant or merely coincidental.

Table 5.3

Potential motivators for men to purchase skincare products

POTENTIAL MOTIVATORS	Mean	Mean Statistical Groups		% Ratings of 6-7	% Ratings of 1-2
A healthcare professional/dermatologist explaining that men are more likely to get skin cancer and skincare products, especially sunscreen, can help prevent that.	5.07	*		43.2	7.4
A healthcare professional/dermatologist helping you put together a skincare routine.	4.82	*		42.1	12.6
My partner or a person of romantic/sexual interest to me complimenting me on my skin health/ skin appearance and asking about my skincare practices.	4.68	*		34.4	16.1
A healthcare professional/dermatologist explaining that skincare is a necessary part of taking care of your largest organ- skin, and not just a beautifying process.	4.65	*		31.6	11.6
A healthcare professional/dermatologist explaining skincare products carry many benefits for men.	4.56	*		32.7	14.8
My female-identifying partner or friend shops for skincare products for me.	3.87	*		19.3	23.7
A licensed cosmetologist helping you put together a skincare routine.	3.83	*		23.1	34.7
Testimonies from men about positive effects of skincare products on their skin.	3.61	*		13.7	32.6
Separate line of skincare products made appropriate for the needs of male-identifying people.	3.54	*	*	11.6	27.4
A bigger representation of male-identifying people in advertisements as well as skincare industry in general would make me more comfortable with purchasing skincare products.	3.49	*	*	6.4	31.6
Other men complimenting me on my skin health/ skin appearance and asking about my skincare practices.	3.24		*	13	41.9
Testimonies from men about positive effects of skincare products on their self-esteem.	3.23		*	11.6	44.2

A famous male sports player talking about the benefits a skincare product had on his skin.	2.62		*		4.2	58.9
A famous male artist (actor/musician etc.) talking about benefits a skincare product had on his skin.	2.34		*		4.2	66.3
A famous female celebrity talking about the benefits a skincare product had on her skin.	1.86			*	0	76.8

Scale: 1=Not At All Interested 7=Extremely Interested
Potential Motivators sharing a * in the same column are not statistically significantly different at the 95% confidence level

The above table shows potential motivators in the order of potential motivators people are interested in the most first and going to down to the ones they are interested in the least. T-test results are depicted through the statistical groups columns; potential motivators that share a * in the same column are not statistically significantly different at the 95% confidence level. Finally, in order to further examine the robustness of interest in the motivation statements, an analysis of combined ratings of six and seven as well as one and two further illuminates the degree of motivation for each statement.

There are 5 statements whose mean, when rounded up, equals 5, which signifies some level of sparked interest given those scenarios; they are also in the same statistical group meaning they are not statistically significantly different at the 95% confidence level. 4 out of those 5 statements concern a scenario with a healthcare professional/dermatologist or health-related situation. The other one is a statement involving compliments from a person of romantic/sexual interest. This statement was included based on a paper by McNeill and Douglas (2011) which stated wives and girlfriends have a significant impact on skincare purchasing decisions of their partners. Additionally, one responded did mention buying skincare products whose scents his wife likes. As for the statements

concerning health and healthcare, they were chosen by me based on research on many social media sites and influencers where men would mention trusting doctors more and I assumed those would have a great impact on consumers' behavior. As shown in the table, that assumption proved to be correct. It makes sense they are more interested in products recommended or chosen by doctors as well as after knowing medical facts related to skin health. It is because those make their choices of skincare far more simple and they have the assurance that those products will most likely be effective if recommended by a professional, which is something indicated by the respondents in the open-ended questions where they highlighted liking simplicity and effectiveness of the products. As can be seen in the table, the first statement, 'a healthcare professional/dermatologist explaining that men are more likely to get skin cancer and skincare products, especially sunscreen, can help prevent that', has rather high combined 6 and 7 ratings of 43.2%. That suggests, if presented with the possibility of real dangers and reasons as to why skincare is worth the money or useful, most will respond quite positively. The second statement in order is that on healthcare professionals building a skincare routine for their patients with the mean value of 4.82. As the previous statement, this one also has high combined ratings for scale points of 6 and 7 of 42.1%. This shows that having a qualified individual help with choosing skincare products can make a real difference in spiking interest in it. It does make sense considering the responses in the open-ended question part where respondents talk about their confusion as to which products are actually beneficial to their skin and specific skin concerns. Next statement on compliments from romantic/sexual partners has a mean value of 4.68. While the combined 6 and 7 rating is still pretty big (34.4%), it is lower than those for the

previous statements due to lower average for this one. This statement being among statements related to healthcare does show that opinions of people, especially those one is attracted to, can matter as much as caring about one's health. This has quite big implications for marketing. However, it has to be remembered that marketing that uses masculinity and all related things, such as relationships, can be tricky considering many respondents in this study and literature review dislike the toxic masculinity, macho approach to advertising skincare.

Next statement 'a healthcare professional/dermatologist explaining that skincare is a necessary part of taking care of your largest organ- skin, and not just a beautifying process', has a mean of 4.65. The combined 6 and 7 rating is 31.6%. Similarly, to the previous statements related to health, this one also has a greater impact on respondents compared to most non-health related scenarios.

Next statement, 'a healthcare professional/ dermatologist explaining skincare products carry many benefits for men', with the mean of 4.56 has the combined 6 and 7 rating of 32.7%, very similar to that from the previous statement. Those two last statements, however, have a lower mean than the previous ones related to health. This might be because they are more general, unlike the other ones naming specific circumstances such as skin cancer or an offer of help with putting together an actual skincare routine.

Next 5 statements, with very similar means, are in the same statistical group meaning that they are not statistically significantly different at the 95% confidence level. They have many implications considering their similarities with the first 5 statements, yet lower mean values.

First statement in this statistical group with the mean of 3.87, 'my female-identifying

partner or friend shops for skincare products for me' is based on the literature review that says men use skincare products if and those that are chosen by their female friends or partners. It was also mentioned by one respondent in the open-ended question, that he likes and uses his wife's products. That statement was created on the same principle as 'a healthcare professional/dermatologist helping you put together a skincare routine', the principle being other people choosing the products for men. However, the higher mean for the above one carries the implication that it is not only others helping men choose skincare products that matters but also who those people are and whether they have the necessary knowledge and qualifications to do so. As for the % ratings, the combined 1 and 2 rating of 23.7% is higher than the combined rating of 6 and 7 for this statement, which is the first case in which 1-2 rating is bigger than 6-7 rating.

'A licensed cosmetologist helping you put together a skincare routine', with the mean of 3.83, is another statement with interesting implications. Once again, it is a statement concerning someone helping choose products. It does make sense that its mean value is lower than the one involving a health professional/ dermatologist since, even though cosmetologists are qualified, health professionals and dermatologists do have a wider wealth of knowledge on the topic. Additionally, the difference might be because cosmetologist is not a profession known by everyone so they would trust doctors and their close ones more or if to spend money on professional help, they would prefer to spend it on someone with more extensive qualifications. As for the ratings, the scale points of 1 and 2 were chosen by 34.7% of respondents in total, so a big portion of respondents is not interested or not at all interested.

Next statement in line is 'Testimonies from men about positive effects of skincare

products on their skin', with the mean value of 3.61. That statement entails trusting others with skincare recommendations just like the previous statements. However, it has a lower mean value as compared to the previous statements that concerned some sort of recommendations, either by a healthcare professional/ dermatologist, female friend/partner or licensed cosmetologist. That implies that respondents trust professionals and women close to them more than any men. The fact that they would trust women more than men is not surprising considering the fact that there is a commonly held belief that women are or should be the experts on cosmetic and personal care products over men. When it comes to the ratings, once again, the combined 1 and 2 rating is quite big with 32.6% of respondents being not at all or not interested given that scenario.

Next statement 'separate line of skincare products made appropriate for the needs of male-identifying people' has the mean of 3.54 and its combined 1 and 2 rating is 27.4%.

Some literature review discussed in the second chapter indicates that products specifically targeted at men have higher chances of being purchased by men but there are other studies that contradict that. As for the open-ended questions there were some respondents that indicated desiring more variety of products targeted at men and others that like products advertised in a more gender-neutral way. All of those show that, the population is divided and it depends on the preferences of individuals.

The last statement in this statistical group is 'a bigger representation of male-identifying people in advertisements as well as skincare industry in general would make me more comfortable with purchasing skincare products' with the mean of 3.49 and the combined 1 and 2 rating of 31.6%. Based on that it seems like, compared to other factors, better representation seems to not make a significant difference for an average respondent when

it comes to encouraging them to purchase skincare.

While that was the last statement of that particular statistical group, that statement and the statement on the separate line of skincare product share another statistical group with the next statements, meaning, when compared to each other, they are all not statistically significantly different at the 95% confidence level.

Next statement in that statistical group ‘other men complimenting me on my skin health/ skin appearance and asking about my skincare practices’ entails the similar principle of ‘my partner or a person of romantic/ sexual interest to me complimenting me on my skin health/ skin appearance and asking about my skincare practices’. However, while the latter statement was one of statements with the highest means, the former is one of the statements with the lowest means. That implies that the study’s male-identifying respondents value compliments but from people they are attracted to and a compliment from a fellow man does not encourage an average respondent to go out of their way to purchase or continue purchasing skincare products. As for the % rating, a very big portion of respondents, specifically 41.9% chose the scale point of 1 or 2.

Last statement in this statistical group ‘testimonies from men about positive effects of skincare products on their self-esteem’ is very close to a previously discussed statement where the testimonies were about the effects of skincare on respondents’ skin health. The mean for this statement is 3.23, which is lower than the previous one. The combined 1 and 2 rating is 44.2% which implies that respondents react more to knowledge of direct benefits to their skin and its health rather than indirect effects such as improvement in self-esteem.

The last statements were included in the survey based on literature review that suggests

male celebrities are a factor that proved effective at advertising skincare to men. The first 2 statements involved 2 types of male celebrities – sports players and artists, while the last statement was about female celebrities to test whether the gender of them has an impact. The two statements about male celebrities were in the same separate statistical group while the statement about female celebrities had its own statistical group. The statement with a famous male sports player had the highest mean of 2.62 out of those 3 followed by the mean of 2.34 for the statement involving a famous male artist (actor/musician etc.) while the statement involving a female celebrity had the lowest mean of 1.86 out of all the statements in general. For all 3 of the statements, the majority of respondents chose not interested at all option; the combined 1 and 2 ratings for the 3 statements were 58.9% for male sports players statement, 66.3% for male artist statement and 76.8% for female celebrity statement. This shows that the studies in the literature review chapter, which are not from the US and are from previous decades, should not currently be used alone to determine marketing strategies as, even though celebrities were successful at advertising skincare in 1990s and 2000s, the results of this study imply that this is no longer the case and there are better potential motivators to attract male customers. Similarly, the study does suggest that female celebrities would not convince potential male customers to purchase skincare nowhere nearly as effectively as healthcare professionals.

Conclusions

The aim of this paper was to explore what beliefs of potential male customers might hinder their consumption of skincare products and what strategies could prove useful to breaking through those barriers and effectively marketing skincare to men. To my knowledge, relevant literature is very scarce and mostly concerns men in other countries and previous decades. Considering the ever-changing social norms around masculinity, beauty, personal care and their interconnectedness, I found it valuable to explore how to attract men to skincare products in the USA in 2021.

The initial analysis of the 2 open-ended questions regarding general likes and dislikes of currently available skincare products showed that respondents are looking for an affordable yet effective variety of products that target specific concerns or serve a specific purpose and are marketed in a straightforward way, with the properties of those products mentioned without the ‘unnecessary complications’ such as pseudoscience or ‘macho’ marketing, as described by some respondents.

When it comes to the frequency of usage of skincare products, the most frequently used products are shaving cream/gel, lip balm, face cleanser, sunscreen and moisturizer listed in the order starting from most frequently used. Those are products, with the exception of shaving cream/gel, which are commonly considered essential and are advertised to all genders compared to products with low frequency of usage: serums, toners, eye creams, face masks and exfoliators which are mostly targeted at women. That finding also aligns with findings from the previous open-ended questions that suggests respondents look for simple essential products. Aftershave, beard oil and prescription/OTC products are products for specific needs, specifically facial hair and some skin condition and even for

those they are often considered additional steps. Considering the demographics of this study, it makes sense those products have a low frequency of usage.

When it comes to the survey question on beliefs and attitudes towards skincare, the average respondent didn't strongly agree with any of the statements. The highest average for the beliefs question was 4.31, which is close to the median point 4. This shows that, on average, respondents were more inclined to disagree or be neutral to all of the statements, which involved beliefs that have proven to be barriers for men to expand their experience of skincare products. This is a good sign as it may mean there is opportunity to attract male customers into the skincare market if knowing what they would positively respond to.

The next question aims to determine that by presenting 15 scenarios with potential motivators. The results showed that respondents respond very well to knowledge, advice and recommendations pertaining to skin health and skincare products given by healthcare professionals/dermatologists as well as compliments on their skin from romantic and sexual partners. However, neither male nor female celebrities are a substantial influence on encouraging men to participate in the skincare market.

Those results carry many implications for the whole industry. Namely, men are looking for affordable and effective products such as face cleanser, moisturizer, sunscreen, lip balm and shaving cream/gel that target and help their specific skin concerns or needs. Most of them, however, do not appreciate the marketing based on harmful gender stereotypes, which is shown by results in the open-ended questions section as well as results of the matrix question on beliefs. As shown by the results from the open-ended questions section as well as potential motivators section, if the skincare industry is to

attract male customers, they may do so in the most effective way by marketing in a straightforward way clearly highlighting the properties and uses of the products and why those products are need by men and beneficial to their skin. Presence of licensed professionals like dermatologists who share their knowledge or provide recommendations for specific needs in marketing campaigns may also prove extremely effective at normalizing and making male-identifying people more comfortable with the idea of purchasing skincare.

While the study did result in interesting findings, it had its limitations. Firstly, the respondents were not fully representative of the USA demographics, which did not allow for regression analysis that would cross-run respondents answers to the questions with their race, gender, sexual orientation etc. Secondly, the products listed in the frequency of usage question as well as statements in the matrix questions are not exhaustive of what can be asked and explored about the skincare industry and men. A recommendation for future research would be to find more even numbers of respondents representing different demographics so those can be accounted for in the research to see whether there are significant differences in skincare purchasing behaviors of men with differing cultural, racial and socio-economic backgrounds.

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Appendix A

Note on literature review

I searched the following databases within "Business" and "Economic" journals only:

Business source complete, EconLit, NBER working paper series, EconPapers, Centre for Economic Policy Research, Social Science Research Network (SSRN), IDEAS, Nexis Uni, JSTOR, Academic Search Complete, Project Muse Scholarly Journals Online, ScienceDirect, Social Sciences Abstracts With Full Text, Web of Science, OpenDissertations, Primary Search, Newspaper Source Plus, E-Journals, Business Source Premier, Academic Search Premier, Academic Search Complete. I used the following terms to search the databases: skincare industry, skincare market, skincare products, skincare for men, men, male-identifying persons, USA, South Korea, beauty industry, cosmetic industry, gendered skincare, gender-neutral skincare. Very few relevant sources came up, most of them from early 2000s and countries other than the USA.