

Exploring Male Consumer Behavior: Beauty Salon and Spa Preferences in Tier 1 Cities

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Abstract: This research delves into the realm of male consumer behavior with regard to beauty salon and spa services within Tier 1 cities. Historically associated with women, the utilization of salon and spa services by men has gained significant traction in recent times. The study specifically focuses on the impact of reference groups on the preferences of men aged 18 to 25 years. By exploring the influence of family, friends, professional connections, and celebrities, the research uncovers the factors that shape men's decisions to engage with salon and spa offerings. A survey, conducted via a Google Form, was used to collect primary data, which was subsequently subjected to regression analysis. The findings reveal that reference groups play a crucial role in driving men's usage of these services, with family, friends, professional connections, and celebrities exhibiting positive influences. Intriguingly, the study concludes that social media influencers wield less sway in this regard. This research illuminates the evolving landscape of male grooming habits and provides insights for businesses and marketers seeking to understand better and target this growing segment of consumers.

Keywords: Male consumer behavior, beauty salon, spa services, grooming habits, celebrity influence, social media influences

Introduction

Women have traditionally been the primary target market for the salon services, but this is gradually changing. The market for salon aiming towards men is expanding quickly. The fact that the male market has enormous potential has begun to be recognized by the industry, who are now looking for methods to tap into it.

In order to increase their market share in this area, the salon services business is increasingly devoting more attention to male customers. A wide range of male salon services, including manicure, pedicure, body polishing, hair styling, etc., are now available.

According to Dabur India's marketing head for beauty care, males are increasingly acting as the market's driver for growth. They seek to project an image that reflects both social acceptance and professional accomplishment. The number of male clients at beauty salons has

also dramatically expanded, and Dabur capitalised on this trend by expanding the distribution of its OxyLife Men crème bleach to 1,000 men's salons nationwide.

The attitudes and opinions of males regarding using beauty salons are still not thoroughly understood by industry professionals. The target groups are men in Tier-1 cities in India between the age group of 18 to 25 years, which is a fast-growing market.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Feelaxo (2025) reported on the booming beauty salon market in India, attributing growth to urbanization and the expansion of premium services. Major cities like Mumbai, Delhi, and Bangalore have witnessed a surge in demand for high-end salon experiences, driven by affluent male consumers seeking

comprehensive grooming solutions. The study also noted the increasing participation of men in the beauty and wellness sector, reflecting a broader cultural shift towards male grooming.

HBS India (2025) highlighted the growth of the men's grooming sector within India's salon industry, noting a rising demand for services such as hair styling, facial treatments, and wellness programs. The study emphasized that Indian men are increasingly recognizing the importance of self-care, leading to the proliferation of premium, service-oriented men's salons and barbershops in urban centers.

Zenoti (2025) conducted a survey revealing that personalization has become essential in the spa and salon industry, with 97% of customers valuing tailored in-person experiences. Additionally, over 80% of clients preferred using mobile devices for booking appointments and receiving reminders. These findings suggest that male consumers in Tier 1 cities prioritize convenience and customized services when selecting beauty salons and spas. **Agarwal (2024)** examined the transformation of India's beauty industry, highlighting a significant shift towards premiumization and personalized experiences. The study noted that rising disposable incomes and the influence of social media have led to increased demand for high-quality beauty products and services among male consumers in Tier 1 cities. E-commerce platforms have further facilitated access to global beauty trends, enabling men to explore and adopt diverse grooming practices.

Ghosh (2024) analyzed the evolving landscape of the Beauty and Personal Care (BPC) industry in India, emphasizing the growing influence of Gen Z and Millennials. The research indicated that these demographics are driving the demand for experience-driven and digital-first shopping, often engaging with brands through social media and influencer-led promotions. This shift has led to an increased interest in

personalized grooming services among male consumers in metropolitan areas.

Kuester, Sabine (2012) stated that consumer behaviour is the study of groups of people or organisations and the methods they employ to choose, use, and remove goods, ideas, experiences or services in order to meet their needs, as well as the effects that these methods have on the customers and society

Lynn (2014) stated that the interaction of psychology, sociology, social anthropology, marketing, and economics is particularly significant in the study of consumer behaviour. Consumer behaviour aids marketers in comprehending the individual and group decision-making processes of consumers, such as how emotions influence the purchase of goods or services

Karve (2014) highlights that men are increasingly serving as the market's development catalyst. Sanjay Singal, marketing head for beauty care at Dabur India, emphasizes that men want to present an image related to career success and social approval. Male customers at beauty salons have also significantly increased. Taking advantage of this trend, Dabur increased the distribution of its Oxyline men crème bleach to 1000 men's salons in the country.

Rahul Bhalchandra, co-founder of the Everstone Capital and Helion Venture Partners-backed salon chain YLG (You Look Great), based in Bangalore, asserts that the decision to scale up the brand into other cities like Chennai and Mumbai was driven by the clear extension of services to males. He notes, "Today, 25% of our sales come from services accessible to men despite our recent entry."

Undoubtedly, the above two instances show that the male grooming and wellness market has skyrocketed, generating unbelievable revenue. This is further validated by the fact that the Indian market for male grooming was valued at \$643 million in 2018 and is anticipated to rise at a CAGR of over 11% to reach \$1.2 billion by 2024, as reported by **Mishra (2021)**.

Furthermore, it's evident that adults between the ages of 18 and 30 constitute over 50% of the general male population. **Choudhury (2017)** notes that men in India between 18 and 25 spend more money on grooming and personal care items compared to women. The study reveals that 45% of men appreciate devoting time to their personal grooming regimens. On average, an Indian man spends 42 minutes per day on grooming, with those in big cities dedicating about an hour, as observed by **Lim (2019)**.

Connected Beauty Consumer Report (2020) highlights the significant shift in the consumer behavior of men, particularly those aged 18 to 25. The post-pandemic era has witnessed a pivotal role of social media as an essential catalyst. The "Connected Beauty Consumer Report" on the Indian beauty and personal care market indicates that more than 50% of customers

utilize social media and online videos, while 40% conduct online research. Interestingly, consumers in Tier-1 and Tier-2 cities in India are rapidly catching up with their metro counterparts in terms of personal care product purchases.

Choudhury (2017) notes the evolving needs and goals of young Indian men. With an increase in disposable income, men are becoming more discerning and extravagant. A growing trend in India showcases men opting for cutting-edge grooming and personal care products designed exclusively for them.

As **Choudhury (2017)** further observes, Indian men are becoming increasingly self-aware of their appearance, seeking an improved and more attractive physical outlook. The influence of Western society, along with the emergence of Indian models, athletes, and actresses promoting health products, is elevating the grooming and personal care business. Aspiring adults are recognizing that their role models emphasize grooming and attire.

Moreover, a primary driver behind Indian men's use of grooming products is self-confidence. **Business Wire (2020)** notes a shift from the desire to look pretty to the pursuit of feeling confident and presentable. Social media's influence prompts individuals to follow the latest grooming trends, shifting brand messaging and claims from appealing to the opposite gender toward emphasizing confidence and personality enhancement.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this research is to identify the influence of Salon and Spa services among men of the age group 18-25 years in Tier-1 cities

Scope of the Study

- If the usage of salon and spa services by 18- to 25-year-old men in Tier-1 cities is affected by **Informational Reference Group influence**
- If the usage of salon and spa services by 18- to 25-year-old men in Tier-1 cities is affected by **Normative Reference Group influence**
- If the usage of salon and spa services by 18- to 25-year-old men in Tier-1 cities is affected by **Identification (Value Expressive) Reference group influence**

Research Methodology

Data Collection

Primary Data: For this research data was mostly gathered using an online questionnaire that was made available. The results of the questionnaire were used to evaluate the respondents' decision-making abilities and the values they unconsciously relied on.

Secondary Data: Primary research techniques made up the majority of this study. However, a number of research articles were examined to obtain insights from earlier studies done in this field in order to comprehend the literature and the ideas that are currently prevalent around decision-making.

Data Collection Methods: For the purpose of research Internet is used as a data collection method. The most enticing option was this one because it increased the potential audience and made it simpler to collect data from different demographic groups

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, SPSS is used to summarise the data and draw key insights from the data.

Data Analysis and Finding

A questionnaire was sent to men living in India's metro regions in order to gain insight into the impact of reference group influence on the use of beauty salons and spas among 18 to 25-year-old men residing in Tier-1 cities. The data was then cleaned and organised into categories for study after 200+ responses were chosen and examined. 105 respondents provided the necessary relevant info.

The study produced some results, but a larger sample size and more analysis are required to fully explore the area. The present sample size is insufficient to make meaningful behavioural judgments, and a thorough investigation of the population is needed to corroborate our experiments

1. FREQUENCY TABLE

Frequency tables have been created keeping in mind the responses that we got from the primary research that we conducted

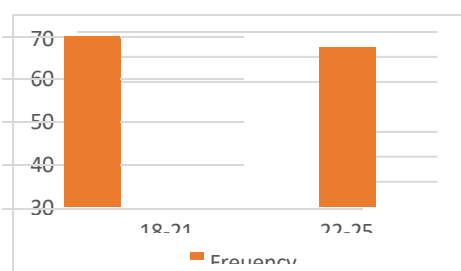


Figure 1 Chart shoeing frequency distribution of age

Out of 105 replies, 41 came from those between the ages of 18 and 21, while the remaining 64 came from people between the ages of 22 and 25

2. CROSSTABS

2.1 Crosstabs Age * Frequency

Below is the cross-tabulation which shows the relationship between the age of the respondents and the number of times they avail of the salon and spa services

| | Freq_SSS | | | Total |
|-----------|------------|---------|--------------|-------|
| | Bi monthly | Monthly | Occasionally | |
| 18 to 21 | 38 | 1 | 2 | 41 |
| Age years | 10 | 42 | 12 | 64 |
| Total | 48 | 43 | 14 | 105 |

Table 1: Relationship between age and how frequently salon and spa services are availed

Analysis: This cross-sectional data demonstrates how consumer preferences change with age and how frequently they visit the salon. This information is useful since it demonstrates how consumer patterns tend to evolve over time. This demonstrates how preferences change with age, a crucial measure in recognising trends and building products and services with the end user in mind.

The data unmistakably demonstrates that the majority of the target audience did shift their preferences over time. Here, majority of the respondents aged 18 to 21 years use salon and spa services bi-monthly and on the other hand, majority of the respondents aged 22 to 25 years use salon services monthly.

It goes without saying that as people become older, their usage habits alter. This is a crucial statistic since we will need to alter the way we communicate with audiences of various ages

2.2 Crosstabs relationship status * Spending per month

Below is the cross tabulation which shows the relationship between the relationship status and the amount of money spent per month on salon and spa services.

| | Spend_month | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----|
| | Upto 500 | Rs. 501 to Rs. 1000 | Rs. 1001 to Rs. 2000 | |
| Single | 37 | 8 | 4 | 49 |
| Rel_Stat | 14 | 42 | 0 | 56 |
| In a relationship | 51 | 50 | 4 | 105 |
| Total | | | | |

Table 2: Relationship between monthly amount spent and relationship status

Analysis: In the above cross tabulation, it is analysed that the male respondents who are in a relationship spend Rs. 501 to Rs. 1000 while the ones who are single spend less than Rs. 500 on salon and spa services in a month.

This clearly demonstrates that for a male respondent, their significant others act as an influential reference group as the latter might want the former to look more presentable. It also shows a trend where the respondents in relationships are more eager to spend money to look attractive and presentable

Regression Analysis

A linear regression was done to understand the impact of dependent variables, i.e. Reference Groups on the independent variable which is the change in frequency of visits to salon and spa services due to influence from reference groups

1. Regression to study the impact of friends as an informational reference group on the change in frequency of visit to salon and spa services

Null Hypothesis: Friends do not affect the frequency of visits to salon and spa services

Coefficients^a

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|-------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | | | .432 | 4.379 | .000 |
| | | | | 4.867 | .000 |

Table 3: Regression analysis between influence of friends on availing salon services

Analysis: Since the p-value is less than 0.05, null hypothesis is rejected.

2. Regression to study the impact of family as a normative reference group on the change in frequency of visit to salon and spa services

Null Hypothesis: Family do not affect the frequency of visits to salon and spa services

Table 4: Regression analysis between influence of family on availing salon services

| Coefficients ^a | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|
| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t |
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | |
| (Constant) | .809 | .143 | | 5.643 |
| Ref_fam | .232 | .035 | .542 | 6.545 |

a. Dependent Variable: Change_freq

Analysis: Since the p-value is less than 0.05, null hypothesis is rejected.

3. Regression to study the impact of professional circle as an identification reference group on the change in frequency of visit to salon and spa services

Null Hypothesis: Professional circle do not affect the frequency of visits to salon and spa services

| Coefficients ^a | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|
| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t |
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | |
| (Constant) | .755 | .175 | | 4.328 |
| Ref_Prof | .233 | .041 | .485 | 5.635 |

a. Dependent Variable: Change_freq

Table 5: Regression analysis between influence of professional circle on availing salon services

Analysis: Since the p-value is less than 0.05, null hypothesis is rejected.

4. Regression to study the impact of social media influencers as an identification reference group on the change in frequency of visit to salon and spa services

Null Hypothesis: Social media influencers do not affect the

frequency of visits to salon and spa services

| Coefficients ^a | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|
| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t |
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | |
| (Constant) | 1.554 | .172 | | 9.056 |
| Ref_sm | .048 | .050 | .095 | .965 |

a. Dependent Variable: Change_freq

Table 6: Regression analysis between influence of social media influencers on availing salon services

Analysis: Since the p-value is not less than 0.05, null hypothesis is not rejected.

5. Regression to study the impact of celebrities as an identification reference group on the change in frequency of visits to salon and spa services

Null Hypothesis: Celebrities do not affect the frequency of visits to salon and spa services

| Coefficients ^a | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|
| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t |
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | |
| (Constant) | 1.391 | .144 | | 9.635 |
| Ref_celeb | .100 | .043 | .225 | 2.345 |

a. Dependent Variable: Change_freq

Table 7: Regression analysis between influence of celebrities on availing salon services

Analysis: Since the p-value is less than 0.05, null hypothesis is rejected.

Conclusion

According to the research, most of the target population did

change their preferences over time. It should go without saying that as people age, their usage patterns change. This is an important fact because we will need to change the way we talk to audiences of different ages.

The second important finding that has to be established is the average amount that customers are willing to spend on salon and spa services in relation to their relationship status. This unmistakably illustrates a pattern in which customers in relationships are more ready to spend money than single customers, maybe because of their greater financial stability.

The main inference from this is that a consumer's tastes are easier to change when they are single, and after they commit to a relationship, they are more inclined to spend money.

Income and how frequently you use the salon and spa services are correlated. As a result, customers are willing to visit the salon more frequently as their net disposable income increases. According to our study, consumers are less inclined to spend more money on salon and spa services as they age. This may be since more individuals are using salon and spa services, which increases their accessibility and democratic nature. Even younger individuals are driven to having a better lifestyle service due to increased affordability and cheaper salon and spa services.

Regression analysis: To determine the effect of the reference group on the use of salon and spa services by males in Tier-1 cities, regression analysis was conducted. The investigation led to the conclusion that while social media influencers have a detrimental impact on a person's behaviour toward using salon services, friends, family, professional contacts, and celebrity endorsements had a good impact.

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