

A Cultural Comparison of Sex Role Identity and Attitude toward Grooming and Recreational Apparel Shopping Behavior among Male Consumers

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Abstract : This study focused on the cultural differences between South Korea and the U.S. in terms of male consumers' sex role attitude and its influence on grooming and apparel shopping behavior. Purposive samples of American and South Korean males aged between 20 and 40 years were surveyed. The sample sizes were 219 and 233 for American and South Korean consumers, respectively. The data were analyzed by structural equation modeling and ANOVA using SPSS 12.0 and AMOS 14.0. The results indicated that only grooming was influenced by the perceived femininity in the case of South Korean men; however, the model for American men indicated a significant positive influence of femininity on grooming and recreational apparel shopping behavior. In other words, American male consumers who perceive themselves feminine were more likely to be engaged in grooming and recreational apparel shopping behavior. On the other hand, for South Korean men, recreational apparel shopping behavior was not influenced by their sex role attitude, or whether they considered themselves feminine or masculine. This means that recreational apparel shopping behavior is a gender-specific behavior in the U.S., but not in South Korea. The findings of this study indicated that culture has influence on consumers' approach to shopping and appearance. South Korean male consumers were more likely to acknowledge themselves as being feminine, enjoy apparel shopping and grooming compared to American male consumers.

Key words: male consumers, cultural comparison, sex role attitude, attitude toward grooming, recreational apparel shopping behavior

1. Introduction

The importance of male consumers in the fashion and cosmetic markets has garnered enormous attention of media and marketers since the turn of the millennium. The media used various terms, such as 'the metrosexuals' or 'grooming men', to refer to the diverse male consumer tribes who have special interest in their personal appearance but with differing key characteristics. In particular, men's cosmetic market has shown a dramatic growth in recent years. Sales of men's grooming products are growing in the U.S. and European markets (Gallon, 2012). In the U.S. market, men's cosmetics and toiletries products are estimated to be US\$2.6 billion in 2012 and are predicted to become over US\$ 3.2 billion by 2016. In the European market including Germany, France, Italy, Spain and the U.K., sales of men's skincare products increased from 289 million euros in 2005 to 420 million euros in 2010. The growth of this particular market in Asian countries, such as South Korea or China, is also comparable. In South Korea, men's cosmetic market has grown to a size of over 1 trillion won (approximately 8 billion

dollars); male grooming and clothing markets are no longer considered a market composed of a few male fashion innovators ("Korea Ranks No. 1", 2011). In particular, Korean male consumers are known to consume 20 percent of the world's total male cosmetics (Carreon, 2012). In China, the male grooming market is expected to increase by more than 20% each year between 2012 and 2014 (Gallon, 2012).

Another noticeable trend regarding these new male consumers is that they seem to enjoy shopping for grooming products or clothes. Shopping has been traditionally associated with women, and women's self-identities are defined through what they purchase while men's identities are defined through their achievement at the workplace as well as their status and ability (Bocock, 1993). This conventional construal of gender differences, however, seems to be no longer valid in the contemporary consumption-oriented society (Bakewell et al., 2006; Sturrock & Pioch, 1998). With these changes in gender-related expectations, many male consumers have cultivated their skills of shopping to the extent that they enjoy the experience of buying perfect products that fit their image and also finding the best deal.

Growth in sales of male grooming and self-care products as well as men's participation in apparel shopping have been attributed to the global trend of focusing on appearance (Sturrock & Pioch,

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1998) as well as to the transformation of gender-role expectations (McNeill & Douglas, 2011). What is notable from these self-caring male consumers is that their lifestyles or consumption patterns divert from the traditionally defined sex role stereotypes to a certain extent. According to the media, men look for the label 'for men' when purchasing grooming products and still do not want to pass as being feminine for using cosmetics (Holmes, 2012). Even though it is apparent that men's interest in appearance is somewhat related to sex role changes, no research systematically examined the motives of grooming from the perspective of the sex role. Since both grooming and shopping belong to the feminine domain of activities, it is likely that male consumers who accept more feminine values or attributes are more interested in shopping.

Consumers' attitudes and behaviors are shaped by the encompassing culture; thus, consumers from different cultural background may show distinct attitudes toward grooming or apparel shopping. The role of culture is important particularly in this context, because these sex-typed activities tend to be culture-bound. Even though the trend of heightened engagement in grooming is apparent in both the U.S. and South Korea, the extent to which these are associated with the definition of sex role may differ by culture. The lack of a cross-cultural comparison research in men's grooming or apparel shopping, needless to mention from the perspective on sex role influence, calls for attention to this topic. Exploring the cross-cultural differences in men's sex role attitudes and grooming and apparel shopping would be opportune, considering the current global increase of interest in appearance among male consumers.

The purpose of this study is to explore the motives of grooming among male consumers from the perspective of sex role attitude. Even though not all male consumers may be characterized as metrosexuals, male consumers these days are displaying significantly higher interests in grooming in general compared to those from past generations. Further, unlike their father generation, more of them are reluctant to relinquish their right to make decisions about their appearance to their wives or girlfriends. This seems to indicate a change in values, possibly due to the changes in the definition of sex role expectations, considering both grooming and shopping have been traditionally regarded as feminine activities.

This study particularly focused on the cultural differences between South Korean and U.S. male consumers in terms of their sex role attitude and its influence on grooming and apparel shopping behavior. The reason for choosing these two cultures was complex. American culture was selected because U.S. represents the Western or Oxidant culture, which is characterized by individualism, whereas South Korea represents the collectivistic, Oriental and Confucian culture. However, at the same time, South Korea

has experienced huge social changes during the past 50 years while the U.S. society has gone through a relatively gradual change during the same period of time. Even though South Korean culture is a traditionally patriarchal culture deeply rooted in Confucianism, it also particularly lays high value on socially observable aspects, such as appearance and fashion, due to the rapid social changes it has undergone (Jung et al., 2009). In an ever-changing social environment in South Korean society, prominent visual cues such as physical appearance serve as heuristics and help people respond better and faster to the world surrounding them. These factors make South Korean culture interesting to examine for the study of male consumers' apparel shopping behavior in comparison to another culture, such as the U.S., which possesses different characteristics in many respects.

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of male consumers' sex role attitudes on their recreational apparel shopping behavior and grooming behavior, and to explore the moderating effect of cultural difference on the relationship among these variables. The data used for this study are collected in 2005, when the trend called metrosexual was prominent in both cultures and male consumption of grooming products and clothes started to soar. Therefore, the analysis results of the data may show how the male consumers of two cultures respond differently to the novel social trend.

The following hypotheses were posited for the purpose of the study:

- Q1. What impact does the male consumers' sex role have on their recreational apparel shopping behavior?
- Q2. What impact does the male consumers' sex role have on their grooming behavior?
- Q3. Does culture have a moderating effect on the relationship between sex role identification and their apparel shopping and grooming behaviors?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Men and Grooming

Male consumers have shown increasing interests in fashion and grooming items since a couple of decades ago and the magnitude of this phenomenon is spreading over the globe. As evidence to this trend, *metrosexual* has been selected as the word of year in 2003 by American Dialect Society ("Metrosexual voted word of year," 2004). The term was first used by a homosexual columnist, Mark Simpson, in 1994 and was picked up by advertisers and mass media to refer to men who spend their money and time on grooming and appearance management ("Metrosexual voted word of year," 2004).

Multinational companies focusing on male consumers all over the globe are launching new product with mass advertising and in-store sampling and beauty specialists are available at malls to serve male consumers (“Spend on male grooming”, 2013). Metrosexual phenomenon was not restricted to North America or Europe; it spread into every part of the world, including the Confucius Asia. In 2012, Asia was found as the most growing market regarding the male grooming products according to a report by Kline & Company; It particularly was an obvious trend in Japan and South Korea (“Male grooming booming”, 2013).

South Korean media focused on metrosexuals, defining them as “male consumers who are interested in appearance grooming.” Various fashion or cosmetic products were developed and marketed to cater to this new consumer market. Images of men consuming skin care products or wearing tightly fitted shirts were broadcasted on public TV, and these images were soon copied by many fashion-forward young men. The society, in general, seemed to show great acceptance to the idea of men grooming. This male grooming behavior has been accepted even as a socially encouraging practice in Asian countries, especially, Japan and Korea (“Male grooming booming”, 2013). In a survey conducted by an online research center, Embrain(www.embrain.com), 72.6% of the total respondents agreed that men who care about their appearance ‘look good’, and 34.9% of the male respondents answered that they ‘strive’ to manage their appearance. According to this survey, South Korean men spent an average of 47,000 Won (approximately \$50) on grooming each month, and were willing to spend 1.6 times more in the future. Compared to the trend “*Kkotminam* (flowery handsome guys)” syndrome in the late 1990s, which focused mainly on facial features that some pretty men are born with, the metrosexual trend influenced South Korean male consumers to “manage” their appearance and actively engage in grooming and appearance management. By the middle of 2000s, the trend was combined with the so-called “*Mom-zzang* (good body) syndrome,” a trend that highlighted muscular body. This allowed the importance of personal control over body and appearance be emphasized further. Due to these trends as well as marketers’ activities associated with these trends, South Korean men have developed much elaborated standards for their appearance.

2.2. Men and Recreational Apparel Shopping Behavior

In many cultures, shopping has been considered a feminine activity; moreover, shopping for household necessities was primarily conducted by housewives (Dholakia et al., 1995; Malcolm, 1987; South & Spitze, 1994). Women indeed were found to spend more time on shopping and also shop more frequently than men (Boedeker, 1995; Underhill, 1999). However, since the turn of the

millennium, men’s participation in shopping activities has increased with global changes in gender-related social expectations (Moore et al., 2001; Rindfleisch et al., 1997; Underhill, 1999). In particular, men who are retired or whose wife has a job outside the home are likely to participate in shopping for merchandises, such as groceries (Dholakia et al., 1995).

Sex role may have a relation to shopping orientation, because men, who tend to be goal-directed, are more likely to focus on the ultimate goal, that is, the purchase of a product. Therefore, men tend to move directly toward the product they had planned to purchase, pick the product they want and leave the shopping mall. However, women, who are rather process-directed, are more likely to enjoy the process of shopping around just for the joy of it. Therefore, men who have a more feminine personality are expected to enjoy shopping. They are likely to spend more time on shopping regardless of whether they have the intention to purchase or even after they accomplish the purchase. Anecdotal evidence indicates that many U.S. male consumers find it stressful to even walk into a shopping mall and consider shopping as a tedious chore (Ogden-Barnes, 2012; “Why do men”, 2010).

Shopping for clothes, in particular, has been considered as the realm in which conservative men are least likely to engage in, because showing interest in appearance or fashion was considered feminine. Accordingly, wives of married men and girlfriends or mothers of unmarried men usually surrogated the clothing purchase because many men have found it difficult and uneasy to make a decision regarding their appearance (Moore et al., 2001). Recently, however, as more men have become interested in appearance and are willing to express themselves through appearance management, male consumers are participating in apparel shopping more than ever (Ogden-Barnes, 2012; Woodruff-Burton, 1998). What also contributed to this was the trend toward casual dress as work dress. The ‘Casual Friday’ policies in many companies led male fashion to include diverse colors and patterns beyond what was allowed for business suits—grey, black or navy blue pin stripes. In addition, thanks to this diversification of male clothing, men’s fashion market was able to expand faster than ever (Sung & Jeon, 2006). With more choices in the market, many men now are accepting diverse colors and styles of clothes, and they are learning to enjoy the art of choosing and experimenting with their garments.

The attention to appearance and grooming among individual male consumers may not be explained by these environmental factors alone. Because differences exist in the promptness of and the extent to which individuals respond to the changes in value, such individual differences cannot be explained by environmental changes alone. For example, for some male consumers are not used

to making decisions related to their appearance on their own or have certain internal obstacles toward enjoying these activities. For such consumers, these changes in the market may be perceived as a burden than an enjoyable experience. If individuals are to enjoy a certain activity, the activity has to have some personal value and relevance. More specifically, if a male consumer does not subscribe for apparel shopping as a meaningful activity, he would not enjoy it. The extent to which male consumers conform to the sex role specifications of the culture they belong to—or sex role attitude—may differ from person to person.

2.3. Sex Role and Culture

Sex role refers to the expectation of the culture or the society regarding each gender in terms of attribute, attitude, value or behavior. Sometimes, it also represents the social structure associated with sex or gender (Lenney, 1991). Sex role is a very broadly defined, comprehensive term, which is bound to the culture that encompasses the individuals and changes through time.

While scholars in the past deemed sex role as a unidimensional construct, and positioned femininity and masculinity at the respective ends of the construct, some scholars like Bem (as cited in Lenney, 1991) asserted that the two concepts are independent of each other. Bem suggested the concept of androgyny, a term that refers to a person who is high in both femininity and masculinity. Now, it is widely accepted that sex role is a bidimensional construct. According to the bidimensional concept of sex role, men and women may be classified as androgynous, feminine, masculine or undifferentiated. Bem asserted that androgyny is a desirable characteristic for individuals who are living in the modern society, whereas other scholars found that androgyny is positively associated with high self-esteem, self-actualization, desirability and ethical development (Chung, 1986).

On the other hand, some other scholars discussed the validity of sex role measures by culture. For example, a South Korean scholar Jeong (1990) contended that Bem's Sex Role Inventory (or BSRI) does not adequately reflect the gender stereotypes of South Korean society. South Korean male respondents in Jeong's study considered themselves to be very masculine; however, they scored lower on Bem's masculinity scale and higher on femininity scale than the U.S. male respondents. In other words, BSRI, which was developed based on Western culture, failed to reflect the sex role expectation of South Korean culture. Some traits such as "individualistic" or "competitive", which are traits considered as masculine in Western culture is considered feminine in South Korea (Jeong, 1990). Also, traits such as "loyal" and "understanding" are feminine traits in South Korea while they are considered masculine in Western culture.

The cultural differences as to how they define masculinity alludes that shopping for apparel may be more easily accepted by male consumers in some countries than others. Moreover, the same activities may be seen more acceptable in one country than another. This difference in sex role specification, to one hand, provides a basis for studying the cultural influence of sex role, but on the other hand, makes the comparison study difficult. Specifically, it is almost impossible to find a measure of sex role that is valid for both cultures.

3. Research Method

Two separate surveys were conducted for the purpose of this study. Purposive samples of South Korean and American males aged between 20 and 40 years were surveyed in the summer of 2005, in Seoul and vicinity area for South Korea and Pacific Northwest area for the U.S. As a result, 210 American and 233 South Korean usable questionnaires were returned. The rationale for

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the samples N(%)

Demographic Variable	Country		Total	
	Korea	U.S.		
Age	21-25	90(38.6)	89(42.4)	179(40.4)
	26-30	93(39.9)	70(33.3)	163(36.8)
	31-35	38(16.3)	32(15.2)	70(15.8)
	36-40	12(5.2)	19(9.0)	31(7.0)
	Total	233(100.0)	210(100.0)	443(100.0)
Marital status	married	27(11.6)	30(14.3)	57(12.9)
	never married	206(88.4)	180(85.7)	386(87.1)
	Total	233(100.0)	210(100.0)	443(100.0)
Occupation	Student	130(55.8%)	99(42.5)	229(51.7%)
	Manufacturing	7(3.0)	5(2.1)	12(2.7)
	Service/Retail	28(9.0)	27(11.6)	48(10.8)
	Clerical	48(20.6)	53(22.7)	101(22.8)
	Professional	19(8.2)	19(8.2)	38(8.6)
	Managerial	9(3.4)	7(3.0)	15(3.4)
	Total	233(100.0)	210(100.0)	443(100.0)
Education	high school	18(7.7)	87(41.4)	105(23.7)
	college	170(73.0)	104(49.5)	274(61.9)
	post college	45(19.3)	19(9.0)	64(14.4)
	Total	233(100.0)	210(100.0)	443(100.0)
social class (self-report)	Low	9(3.9)	5(2.4)	14(3.2)
	low-middle	104(44.6)	102(48.6)	206(46.5)
	high-middle	95(40.8)	80(38.1)	175(39.5)
	High	25(9.4)	23(11.0)	48(10.8)
	Total	233(100.0)	210(100.0)	443(100.0)

including men between 20 and 40 years old was that these younger generation male consumers are known to exhibit higher interests in appearance compared to the former generation. In order to assure that the South Korean and American samples are comparable, the variance-covariance matrices of the two samples were compared using Box's test of equality of variance-covariance matrices. The Box's M score was insignificant ($p = .17$), which indicates equality of variance-covariance matrices of the two groups. There were no statistically significant differences in terms of age, marital status and occupation. In terms of education, more Korean respondents had college or post-college degrees, which was likely considering the high percentage of college graduates in South Korea. The two samples were also comparable in terms of income when Korean respondents' incomes were converted into U.S. dollars. The demographic characteristics are summarized in Table 1.

Measures of recreational shopping orientation, grooming, masculinity and femininity were included in the questionnaire. Because sex roles were posited to be defined differently by culture (Bem as cited in Lenney, 1991; Jeong, 1990), the perceived masculinity and femininity each were measured using a single item. The respondents were asked to indicate how masculine or feminine they feel about themselves. The measure of grooming was composed of six items taken from the *Male Appearance Management Scale* developed by Lee (2007). Only the items related to grooming (facial care and hair care) were selected from the original 14 items of this scale. Recreational apparel shopping behavior was measured using the items related to recreational shopping from the *Clothing Shopping Orientation Scale* by Kim and Rhee(2003). The questionnaires were pretested by samples of men aged between 20 and 40, in both cultures ($n=16$ in the U.S. and $n=20$ in Korea) for the clarity and the reliabilities of the questions.

Structural equation modeling was employed to analyze the data using SPSS 12.0 and AMOS 14.0. First, in order to examine the relationships among the variables, an exploratory factor analysis and correlation analysis were conducted. Based on the results, measurement models were suggested and tested by a confirmatory fac-

tor analysis in order to assure the validity of the measures. Finally, a test of the structural model was separately conducted for each country, followed by a multi-group comparison between American and South Korean models.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Measurement Models

Before the structural model was tested, the measurement models were fitted for the purpose of validity assurance of the measures (Table 2). The measures of grooming and recreational apparel shopping behavior each consisted of 6 items. The items with low factor loadings were excluded in order to improve the overall fit and reliability. As a result, two items of recreational shopping and two items of grooming were excluded. The factor loadings for the measurement variables were over .50, which was considered acceptable. The composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) values were calculated for each latent variable, and the CR scores for both variables were found to exceed .50; the AVE scores were over .60. Therefore, the two latent variables were used for further analyses.

4.2. Structural Model

The structural model was specified to indicate the posited relationships among the variables. The sex role related variables (*i.e.*, femininity and masculinity) were positioned as exogenous variables. Double-headed arrows representing the covariance were added between femininity and masculinity because they were expected to be related to each other. *Recreational Apparel Shopping Behavior* and *Grooming* were positioned as endogenous variables. The disturbances of the endogenous variables were proposed to influence each other because these concepts were related to each other according to the previous research (Fig. 1).

The measurement model was fitted separately for each country (unconstrained model or Model 1) and was then compared to the model that assumed invariance in measurement weights (Model 2).

Table 2. Confirmatory factor analysis results

Latent Variable	Measurement variables	Estimates	CR	AVE
Recreational Shopping	I consider apparel shopping as a leisure activity.	.659	0.85	0.72
	When I shop for clothes, I carefully check the current fashion trend.	.696		
	I dress well for apparel shopping.	.749		
	I buy my favorite clothes no matter how much time and effort it takes.	.606		
Grooming	I use cosmetic products, such as lotion or cream for men.	.560	0.83	0.69
	I go to professional skin care clinics for skin care services.	.734		
	I have my hair done by hair stylists or at a beauty shop.	.770		
	Sometimes I wear my hair long or permed.	.565		

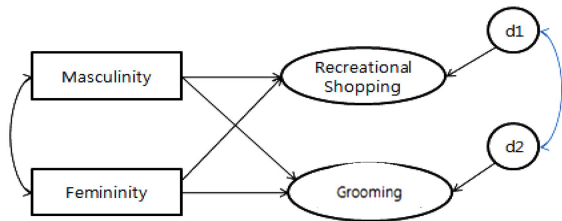


Fig. 1. The theoretical model.

The result indicated that there was no statistical difference between the unconstrained and measurement weight invariance models ($\Delta\chi^2 = 4.83$, $\Delta df = 6$, $p = .566$). In other words, the measurement models for American and South Korean were not found to be different, which warrants further comparison of the two models. Subsequently, nested model comparisons were performed between the measurement weight invariance model (Model 2) and the structural weight invariance model (Model 3). The structural weight invariance constraints reduced the fit of the model significantly ($\Delta\chi^2 = 124.44$, $\Delta df = 12$, $p = .000$). Therefore, the structural weight invariance model was rejected and Model 2 was accepted as the final model.

Fig. 2 illustrates the final model for each country along with the path coefficients. The fit indices for the model were moderately high ($\chi^2 = 166.05$, $df = 87$, $p = .000$, Q -value = 1.91, CFI = .923, RMSEA=.045). Even though the modification indices suggested additions of some covariance paths among error terms, this model was considered acceptable, considering its parsimony and theoretical legitimacy. The models indicated that grooming (.24, $p < .001$) was influenced by femininity in the case of South Korean men. In comparison, the model for American indicated a significant positive influence of femininity on grooming (.27, $p < .001$) and recreational apparel shopping behavior (.23, $p < .001$). More specifically, American male consumers who perceive themselves

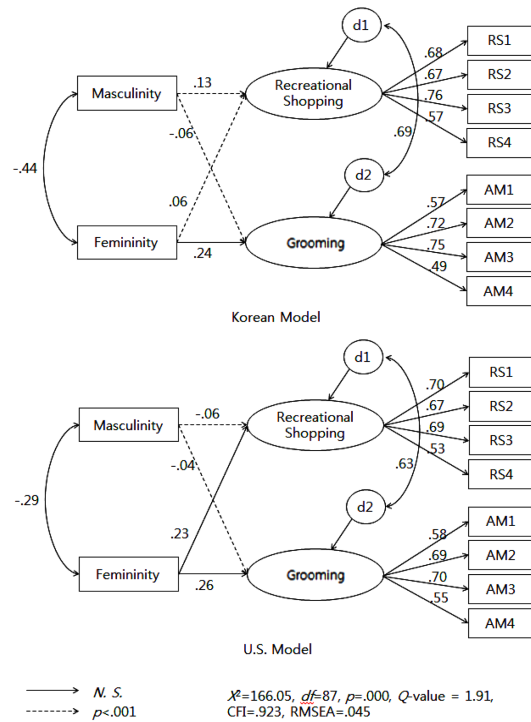


Fig. 2. The final models for South Korean and U.S. male consumers.

to be more feminine are more likely to engage in grooming and recreational apparel shopping behavior. On the other hand, for South Korean men, only grooming, not recreational shopping, was influenced by femininity. The masculinity perception did not influence grooming or recreational apparel shopping behavior in either country.

4.3. Mean Differences

Differences between American and South Korean male consumers were found in the means as well. For example, South

Table 3. Multi-group comparison results

Model	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	CFI	RMSEA	Model	Δdf	$\Delta\chi^2$	p
Model 1	128.28	62	2.069	.933	.049				
Model 2	133.10	68	1.957	.934	.047	Model 1 vs. 2	6	4.83	.566
Model 3	257.54	80	3.219	.820	.071	Model 2 vs. 3	12	124.44	.000
Model 4	314.40	85	3.699	.768	.078	Model 3 vs. 4	5	56.86	.000
Model 5	318.67	88	3.621	.767	.077	Model 4 vs. 5	3	4.27	.234
Model 6	379.07	96	3.949	.714	.082	Model 5 vs. 6	8	60.40	.000

- Model 1: Unconstrained model
- Model 2: Measurement weights constraint model
- Model 3: Structural weights constraint model
- Model 4: Structural covariances constraint model
- Model 5: Structural residuals constraint model
- Model 6: Measurement residuals constraint model

Table 4. Comparison of means in the two countries

Variable	U.S. M(S.E.)	South Korea M(S.E.)	t-test
Masculinity ¹	5.27(.10)	4.50(.08)	6.22***
Femininity ¹	2.65(.10)	3.42(.10)	-5.39***
RS1	2.27(.40)	2.20(.32)	-0.65
RS2	2.08(.32)	2.49(.30)	4.80***
RS3	2.37(.30)	2.59(.31)	6.12***
RS4	2.63(.25)	3.22(.24)	3.21***
AM1	1.36(.21)	1.62(.29)	2.56*
AM2	1.96(.26)	3.83(.14)	6.12***
AM3	1.31(.33)	2.08(.34)	6.16***
AM4	1.36(.29)	2.26(.36)	8.57***

¹ Estimated means
p*<.05, **p*<.001

Korean men conveyed higher femininity compared to American men. South Korean men’s femininity mean score was almost as high as South Korean men’s masculinity score. In comparison, American men’s mean score of femininity was considerably lower than their mean score of masculinity. Also, South Korean men scored higher in both grooming and recreational apparel shopping behavior than American men. The mean comparisons are presented in Table 4.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the motives of emphasizing appearance among male consumers from the perspective of sex role attitude. This study particularly focused on the cultural differences between South Korea and the U.S. in terms of male consumers’ sex role attitude and its influence on grooming and recreational apparel shopping behavior. Purposive samples of American and South Korean males aged between 20 and 40 years were surveyed. The sample sizes were 210 and 233 for American and South Korean consumers, respectively. Structural equation modeling was employed in order to analyze the data using SPSS 12.0 and AMOS 14.0. A test of the structural model was conducted for the whole sample, followed by a multi-group comparison between American and South Korean models. Subsequently, ANOVA was conducted to compare the means of the two samples.

The models indicated that only grooming was influenced by the perceived femininity in the case of South Korean men; however, the model for American men indicated a significant positive influence of femininity on grooming and recreational apparel shopping behavior of clothing. In other words, American male consumers who perceived themselves to be more feminine were more likely to

be engaged in grooming and recreational apparel shopping behavior of clothing. On the other hand, for South Korean men, recreational apparel shopping behavior was not influenced by their sex role attitude, or whether they considered themselves feminine or masculine. This means that recreational apparel shopping behavior is a gender-specific behavior in the U.S., but not in South Korea. The findings of this study indicated that culture has influence on consumers’ approaches to shopping and appearance. Specifically, South Korean male consumers were more likely to acknowledge themselves as being feminine, enjoy apparel shopping and grooming compared to American male consumers.

Considering the fast pace of changes in South Korean culture, the validity of East vs. West, Orient vs. Occident or collectivist vs. individualistic dichotomy between South Korea and the U.S. is questionable. The differences, however, should be interpreted with the cultural settings in mind as well as the geographical regions where data were collected—Seoul for South Korea and the Pacific Northwest area for the U.S. Compared to the Korean counterparts in Seoul, a metropolitan city where trendy clothing and grooming products are displayed and seen every corner of their lives through street malls and department stores in their neighborhood, male consumers in Pacific Northwest area could have exposed less to these marketing stimuli. The accessibility of the items may allow Korean consumers to partake in apparel shopping for recreation.

For marketers, the findings of this study indicate that culture has influence on consumers’ approaches to shopping and appearance. Specifically, South Korean male consumers were more likely to acknowledge themselves as being feminine, enjoy apparel shopping and grooming compared to American male consumers. Advertisers or marketers, therefore, may incorporate emotional appeals for grooming or clothing products into their marketing tactics. For both American and Korean men, those who perceived as being more feminine were more likely to engage in grooming. This implies that in order to encourage American or Korean male consumers to engage in grooming, marketers would need to emphasize that grooming is also a masculine activity. For Americans, perceived femininity also influenced recreational apparel shopping behavior. In the case of South Koreans, however, no relationship was found between femininity and recreational shopping. Considering that Korean men showed higher means for recreational shopping, they engaged in recreational shopping for apparel regardless of gender attitude.

The results of this study invite more cross-cultural comparison research in shopping orientation. Apparel shopping behavior, in particular, is an area that has been rarely explored cross-culturally. The results regarding the difference in apparel shopping orientation has implications for those global retailers who are targeting multi-

cultural consumer segments. Retailers should approach consumers from different cultures with different strategies. It is important for them to understand the cultural differences in order to better serve their diverse consumers.

The limitation of the study is that the data were collected eight years ago. Even though the results of the study may still be considered valid because male consumers in both countries have already displayed noticeable grooming and recreational shopping by the time of data collection, the possible changes in the social attitude and sentiments may need to be considered when interpreting the results. For future research, repeated research with similar age groups or cohorts may confirm how cultural sentiment on sex role has changed recent years. A cultural comparison with consumers from countries other than Korea or the U. S. may also be interesting.

Another limitation is that sex role attitude is measured using only two items, i.e., how masculine or feminine one feels about the self. Due to the difficulties of measuring this culture-bound concept cross-culturally, it was unavoidable to use the simplified measure. The terms, feminine or masculine themselves may also have different connotations in different cultures. For example, the term 'feminine' when applied to men seems to have a more negative connotation in the U.S. culture than in Korean culture according to the results of this study. A more universal measure that is not sensitive to such cultural differences may be needed for the validity of the results. Also, a future study may examine what specific grooming or appearance management practices are gender-typed and how strongly such gender-related social norms or expectations are administered in different cultures.

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