Consumer emotions and perceptions toward fragrances and their advertisements

Gaewalin Oupadissakoon and Jean-François Meullenet
Department of Food Science, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR
Email: goupadis@uark.edu

Sensory & Consumer Research Center
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
http://www.uark.edu/ua/sensory

Introduction

Fragrances have been found to have an impact on mood, social identity, and professional image of wearers. Pleasant fragrance scents generally have a positive effect on the mood of wearers (1). Wearing pleasant perfumes reduces negative non-verbal behavior which could be related to stress, anxiety, and embarrassment (2). Recently, an emotion-specific questionnaire has been developed to measure emotional responses associated with foods (3).

Understanding elicited emotions and perceptions for fragrances could be beneficial during product development, maintenance, and advertising. However, limited research has dealt with this subject. Having a research framework to determine when consumers wear fragrances and how fragrances make them feel will enable the fragrance industry to develop fragrances to target specific consumer groups.

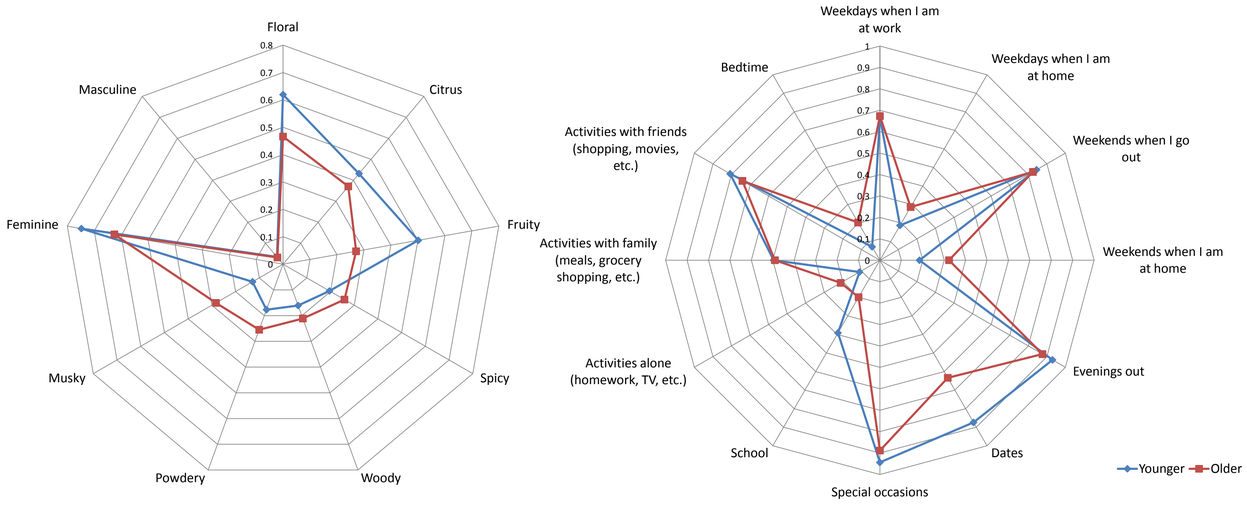
Objectives

1. To validate emotion attributes used to describe fragrances.
2. To understand the impact of fragrance advertisement on likelihood of wearing.
3. To assess fragrance usage and selection criteria.

Materials and Methods

- Female consumers (*n* = 624) were surveyed about fragrance usage and feelings toward their most preferred and most disliked fragrances, as well as their likelihood of wearing fragrances after seeing a series of advertisements.
- A total of 121 emotion attributes from previous fragrance elicited emotion studies (1, 4) and Profile of Mood States (5) was provided for consumers to describe their most preferred and most disliked fragrances.
- Female commercial fragrance advertisements were used (*n* = 10). Consumers were asked about the likelihood of wearing fragrances after seeing the advertisements. Emotion terms to describe the feelings of a person who would wear the fragrances were also selected by each participant.

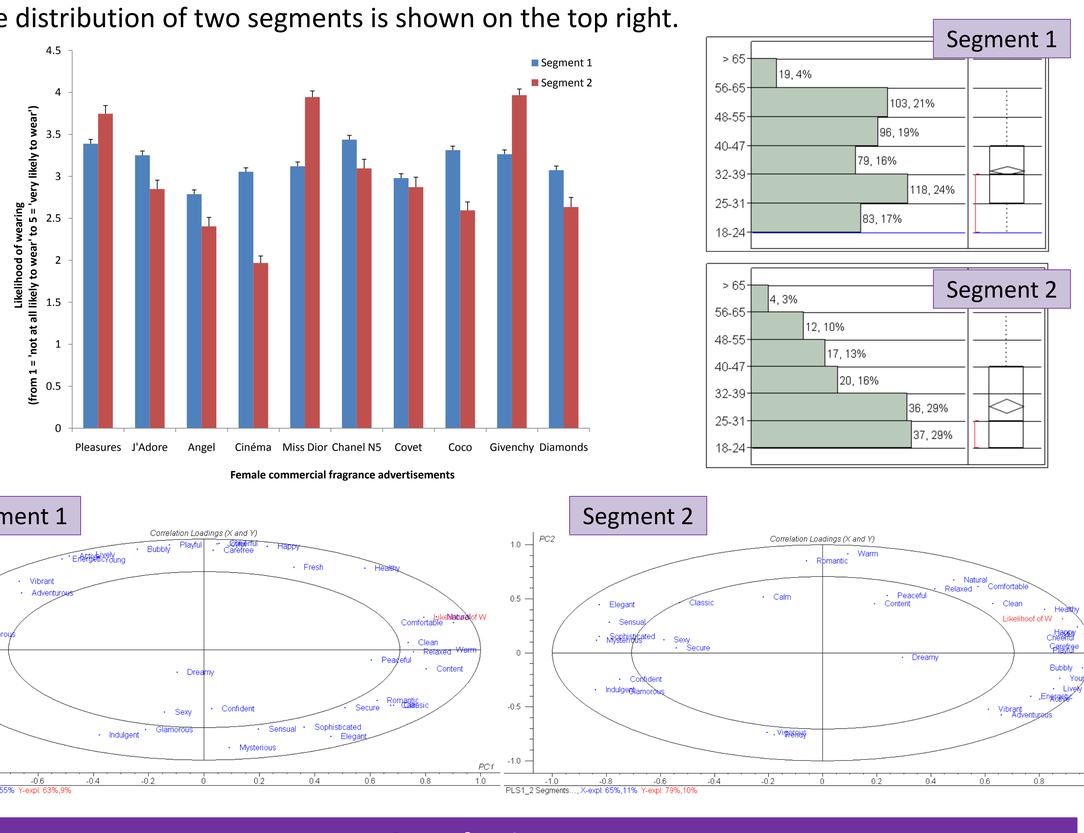
Figure 1. Radar charts comparing proportion of fragrance types (left) and wearing occasions (right) between two age groups; younger group = 18-39 years old (*n* = 373) and older group = 40-65 years old (*n* = 251).



Results

- 40 emotion attributes were selected for a subsequent consumer study on elicited emotions, including 24 positive and 16 negative attributes.
- The most used positive emotion terms to describe preferred fragrances were 'fresh' (53.2% selection rate), 'romantic' (48.4%), and 'happy' (45.7%).
- Most disliked fragrances were mostly described by emotion terms 'annoyed' (34.0%), 'irritated' (26.9%), and 'bitter' (25.3%).
- The most selected occasions for wearing fragrances were 'special occasions' (92.1%), 'evenings out' (90.9%), and 'weekends when I go out' (83.7%).

Figure 2. Comparison of likelihood of wearing after seeing advertisements (top left) and important emotion terms from PLSR (bottom) between two consumer segments. The age distribution of two segments is shown on the top right.



Conclusions

- Character, strength, and lastingness of the scent were major fragrance selection criteria. The younger consumer group tended to wear fragrances with feminine, floral, fruity, and citrus scents while the older consumer group was more likely to wear fragrances with musky, powdery, and spicy characteristics.
- 2 segments of consumers were classified based on likelihood of wearing.
- According to the regression coefficients, 'classic,' 'happy,' and 'sophisticated' were the important emotion attributes affecting likelihood of wearing for segment 1. For segment 2, 'playful,' 'happy,' and 'bubby' were the important emotion attributes.

References

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