THE ROLE OF LIFESTYLE IN SHAPING CONSUMER PREFERENCES FOR DURABLE GOODS: A STUDY OF COLLEGE TEACHERS IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT

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Abstract
Lifestyle significantly influences consumer preferences, particularly in the selection of durable goods such as electronics, automobiles, and home appliances. This study examines the impact of lifestyle dimensions—opinion, interest, and activity—on consumer preferences for durable goods. Using a survey-based quantitative approach, primary data were collected from self-financing arts and science college teachers in Coimbatore district. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to analyze the relationship between lifestyle dimensions and key consumer preference factors, including brand consciousness, novelty-seeking, price sensitivity, and impulsiveness. Findings reveal that interest and novelty-seeking are the most influential factors in shaping purchasing behavior. The study provides valuable insights for marketers, policymakers, and businesses, highlighting the need for lifestyle-driven marketing strategies to effectively target different consumer segments.
Keywords: Lifestyle, Consumer Preferences, Durable Goods, Structural Equation Modeling, Consumer Behavior, Marketing Strategy.

1. Introduction
Consumer preferences for durable goods are shaped by a combination of psychological, social, and economic factors, with lifestyle playing a crucial role. Lifestyle, defined through activities, interests, and opinions (AIO framework), determines an individual's purchasing behavior and brand affiliations. High-involvement products such as electronics and automobiles require significant decision-making, influenced by lifestyle dimensions such as brand perception, social influence, and technological awareness.

Self-financing college teachers, as a consumer segment, exhibit distinct lifestyle patterns influenced by their financial stability, professional commitments, and social aspirations. Understanding how their lifestyle affects their product preferences is essential for businesses to develop effective marketing strategies. While numerous studies have explored general consumer behavior, limited research exists on how lifestyle shapes durable goods preferences among educators. This study seeks to bridge this gap by analyzing the correlation between lifestyle and consumer preferences within this professional group.

2. Statement of the Problem
Despite extensive research on consumer behavior, the impact of lifestyle on purchasing decisions for durable goods remains underexplored, particularly among self-financing college teachers. Their unique financial and professional environment influences their decision-making, making it essential to understand how their lifestyle affects preferences for durable goods. Key questions addressed in this study include:
- How do lifestyle dimensions (opinion, interest, and activity) influence consumer preferences for durable goods?
- What role do brand consciousness, novelty-seeking, and price sensitivity play in the purchasing behavior of educators?
- How can businesses leverage lifestyle-driven consumer insights to tailor marketing strategies?

By addressing these issues, the study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how lifestyle factors shape durable goods preferences, offering practical insights for marketers and policymakers.

3. Research Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research approach, utilizing a structured questionnaire to collect primary data from self-financing arts and science college teachers in Coimbatore district. A sample of 792 teachers from 52 colleges was surveyed using a random sampling method to ensure diverse representation.

The research framework incorporates Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to analyze the impact of lifestyle dimensions on consumer preferences. The collected data were subjected to descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression modeling to identify significant relationships. The methodology ensures statistical robustness and validity in measuring the influence of lifestyle on purchasing decis

4. Tools Used

The study employed the following statistical and analytical tools:

- **Structured Questionnaire**: Designed based on the AIO (Activities, Interests, and Opinions) framework.
- **SPSS and AMOS Software**: Used for data analysis and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).
- **Descriptive Statistics**: To summarize and interpret data trends.
- **Correlation Analysis**: To examine relationships between lifestyle dimensions and consumer preferences.
- **Regression Analysis**: To determine the predictive power of lifestyle on purchasing decisions.

These tools helped in systematically analyzing consumer behavior and identifying significant lifestyle-driven purchasing trends.

5. Objectives of the Study

The primary objectives of this study are:

1. To analyze the lifestyle dimensions (opinion, interest, and activity) of self-financing arts and science college teachers in Coimbatore district.
2. To examine consumer preferences for durable goods based on lifestyle attributes.
3. To evaluate the impact of brand consciousness, novelty-seeking, and price sensitivity on purchasing behavior.
4. To assess the relationship between lifestyle choices and high-involvement product preferences.
5. To provide marketing recommendations based on lifestyle-driven consumer insights.

6. Review of Literature

6.1 Lifestyle and Consumer Behavior

Lifestyle is a key determinant of consumer behavior, influencing purchasing preferences and decision-making processes. Kotler and Keller (2016) define lifestyle as an individual's way of living, expressed through activities, interests, and opinions. The AIO framework categorizes consumers based on their personal values, behaviors, and consumption habits, impacting their purchasing choices.

The Psychographic Segmentation Model (Plummer, 1974) classifies consumers based on lifestyle dimensions, helping marketers understand behavioral tendencies and tailor product offerings accordingly. Similarly, the Consumer Decision-Making Styles Model (Sproles & Kendall, 1986) highlights cognitive and behavioral factors influencing purchase decisions, emphasizing traits such as brand consciousness and price sensitivity.

Recent studies further emphasize the significance of lifestyle in shaping consumer preferences. Tešić and Bogetić (2022) found that lifestyle factors such as social influence, financial planning, and technological awareness drive purchasing choices in the digital age. Likewise, Singh and Garg (2020) identified that economic status and cultural background play a crucial role in consumer behavior, with lifestyle acting as a mediator in brand perception and product selection.

7. Data and Interpretation

7.1 Socio-Economic Profile of Sample Teachers

The sample comprises 792 college teachers with the following key characteristics:

- **Area of Residence**: Majority (51.80%) reside in rural areas.
- **Gender**: Predominantly female (62.10%).
- **Age Group**: The majority (50.60%) are aged between 36-45 years.
- **Marital Status**: Most (82.10%) are married.
- **Education Qualification**: 42.40% hold an M.Phil.
- **Designation**: Most (80.10%) are Assistant Professors.
- **Family Type**: 59.60% belong to a joint family.
- **Household Composition**: 83.10% are family members, with 49.00% having four members in their family.
- **Income**: 47.70% earn up to Rs. 15,000 per month.
- **Savings**: 43.90% save above Rs. 30,000 per month.

7.2 Occupational Details of Teachers

- **Work Location**: 53.50% work in town areas.
- **Work Hours**: 54.70% work six hours per day.
- **Teaching Discipline**: 25.80% are from commerce.
- **Teaching Experience**: 60.40% have below ten years of teaching experience.
- **Commute Distance**: 40.40% travel up to 10 km.
- **Mode of Transport**: 61.40% use a two-wheeler.

7.3 Lifestyle of College Teachers: Mean Score Analysis

Lifestyle is categorized under three factors: Activities, Interests, and Opinions.

Category	Top Scoring Lifestyle Factors	Mean Score
Activities	Spending time on favorite games	4.70
Interests	Home maintenance	4.65
Opinions	Buying electronic goods when salary increases	4.24

The data suggests that teachers prioritize personal leisure, particularly gaming, and home maintenance over other activities. Their purchasing decisions are influenced by salary increases, especially for electronic goods. However, they spend comparatively less time with family and relatives and show minimal concern for the future of technology. This indicates a lifestyle focused on individual interests and practical needs rather than social or forward-looking technological perspectives).

7.4 Association between Lifestyle and Select Variables

A Chi-Square test was conducted to examine the relationship between select variables and lifestyle.

Selected Variables	Chi-Square Value	Significance Level
Area of Residence	15.714	5%
Age	13.865	5%
Gender	12.674	1%
Marital Status	9.715	1%
Educational Qualification	67.07	1%
Monthly Income	32.587	1%
Family Savings	28.642	1%

Fifteen out of seventeen variables demonstrated significant association with lifestyle levels. Notably, education, income, and savings are critical factors influencing lifestyle.

7.5 Relationship Between Lifestyle and Decision-Making Behavior

A Structural Equation Model (SEM) was developed to analyze the impact of lifestyle on decision-making behavior.

- **Model Fit Indices**:
  o Chi-Square = 617.093, p < 0.05 (indicating significant fit)
  o GFI = 0.882, CFI = 0.860, RMSEA = 0.116 (acceptable model fit)

The Structural Equation Model (SEM) confirms that lifestyle significantly influences decision-making behavior, with a strong positive path value of 0.63. Among lifestyle factors, interest has the highest impact (0.78), highlighting its key role in shaping decisions. In terms of decision-making behavior, novelty and fashion-consciousness (0.82) are the most dominant factors. The model fit indices indicate an acceptable fit, supporting the reliability of these findings.

7.6 Normality Assessment of Decision-Making Variables

Variable	Skewness (c.r.)	Kurtosis (c.r.)
Recreational Buying	-1.114	1.752
Novelty	-0.839	1.225
Brand Consciousness	-1.176	2.266
Quality Perception	-1.863	8.046
Interest	-1.838	10.075

The normality assessment indicates that all decision-making variables exhibit negative skewness, suggesting a tendency toward higher values. Quality Perception and Interest show the highest skewness and kurtosis, indicating a more pronounced deviation from normal distribution. The elevated kurtosis values for these variables suggest a leptokurtic distribution, meaning data points are more concentrated around the mean with heavier tails. This implies that respondents exhibit strong preferences in these areas, with less variation in their responses.

8. Conclusion

The study concludes that lifestyle plays a crucial role in shaping consumer preferences for durable goods among college teachers. Higher educational qualifications, increased income levels, and strong interest in home maintenance and modern technology significantly impact consumer choices. Teachers exhibit high brand consciousness, novelty-seeking behavior, and preference for quality and durable products. The findings suggest that marketers should focus on product innovation, branding, and technological advancements to appeal to this segment.

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