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- Schemenner, R.W., Huber, J.C. and Cook, R.L. (1987), "Geographic Differences and the Location of New Manufacturing Facilities," Journal of Urban Economics, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 83-104.

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**EMERGING LIFESTYLE OF WOMEN AND ITS IMPACT ON THE FOOTWEAR PURCHASE**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Women's footwear sector is an untapped one. About 80 - 90% of the footwear purchase in the women's sector takes place in the unorganised market with no branded manufacturer having significant presence. The lifestyle of women is also changing due to increased employability that has led to improved standard of living. Women are becoming more brand conscious. Footwear is no longer looked upon as a commodity but as image, attitude and lifestyle. There is a need for the marketers to relate the preference of the footwear according to their lifestyles. The present study attempts to find the association of the women consumers belonging to different lifestyles towards the footwear attributes. Women in the age group of 20 - 55 yrs have been considered. The population is infinite. Therefore the sample size has been statistically fixed at 2365. Chi square has been used to test the hypothesis. Factor analysis has been used to profile the respondents on the basis of their lifestyle. Correlation techniques have been used to establish a relationship between the attributes and the lifestyles. Eight lifestyles were identified. It has been observed various lifestyles prefer different footwear attributes.*

**KEYWORDS**

Consumers, Footwear, Lifestyle, Preference, Women.

**INTRODUCTION**

Footwear, once a utility has now become a lifestyle enhancement product. With the change in the lifestyle patterns among the people especially the youth, this product has also undergone a tremendous transition in terms of its character. Though women have not been the ones to spend on items like shoes, for the past two decades there has been a tremendous change in the buying habits of the consumers (Bijapurkar, 2001). As women becoming more discerning due to urbanization, favorable patterns of demography, increase in income levels and double income instances, media proliferation and the desire to look good, changes in the lifestyle pattern is inevitable. Women are becoming more aware of the different varieties of products that are produced and marketed all over the globe. The boom in the IT sector has led to the increase in employability among women who command large salaries from Indian and foreign multinationals. These consumers create an identifiable mark in shopping. Their preferences are noticeably different because they are a generation with economic power unlike the previous ones. Today's women dwell in an era of technological and media advances that affords them limitless access to the global market.

Footwear manufacturers in recent years along with the powerful new role that retail is playing in organizing the market, driven in part by surging consumer demand from entirely different lifestyle segments associated with the country's IT-BPO boom is all poised to new heights. For products which are manufactured indigenously and for which the competition is less, segmenting the market on the basis of demography will be typically sufficient. But these days consumers are exposed to many varieties of products. Therefore effective segmentation using new parameters are required for products where the market is flooded with many national and international brands and thus leading to heavy competition. With increasing globalization there is stiff competition between the multinational, national and the unorganized players to expand their market. In marketing literature there are various methods to measure consumer preferences but the most unique one is the psychographics which embeds lifestyle patterns in studying the consumers. The concept of "psychographics" emerged in the consumer behavior area in the late 1960s. It relates personality traits and lifestyle variables to consumer behavior (Robertson & Wind, 1980). Lifestyle determines how people live, how they view life, the values they attach to life (Bahtisen & Gumusluoglu, 2006) the activities they engage in the day to day life, their deeper interests, and their opinions on certain issues. It is a very useful and powerful tool to the marketers and advertisers as it starts from the people than the product (Plummer, 1974). Lifestyle segmentation is being widely used for many varieties of products starting from toothpaste to hunting (Kendall et al, 1983) but the reliability of relationships between the different segments formed depends upon the items included in the psychographic schedule.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

There exists a correlation between personality traits and consumer behavior (Kassarjian, 1971). A product is a set of attributes that has different meanings to different customers. Therefore buyers place importance on the products depending upon their personality (Alpert, 1972) and lifestyle (Cosmos, 1982). Wells (1975) listed several product categories where psychographic analysis had been applied and raised a number of important queries about the use of psychographics and the statistical tools that can be used. In his study he has insisted on the use of cross tabulation to multivariate techniques like clustering or Q factor analysis. But Taylor et al (1976) in his study has argued that multivariate techniques are superior to cross tabulations. According to Goldberg (1976) consumers buy those products that match their personality. Therefore product functions can be used to identify the target group. The technique can be applied with the novel products. Cannon and Merz (1980) in their study have compared demographic and psychographic methods in the indirect matching process for media selection. They have found that both the methods yielded almost similar results therefore manufacturers can very well use psychographics as marketing research instrument. Lesser and Hughes (1986) in their study have tested the psychographic profiles on various geographic locations to see if these segments can be generalized. According to Kahle et al (1989), Consumers rarely purchase anything exclusively for the functional aspects of the product. They always expect greater benefit from the purchase. Values are one of the abstract forms of knowledge when tied to a product or service can help to remember that specific item. In order to serve the diverse market profitably, the marketing managers must segment the market on the basis of information of the consumers who make the market. Therefore segmenting the market with value information about the consumers can help in developing effective and consistent marketing strategy.

Footwear is no longer a commodity rather image, attitude, lifestyle and so on (D'Mello Bernard, 2003). Consumers belonging to different lifestyles expect different benefits from products and brands. Insights into segment characteristics in terms of lifestyle supports managerial decisions in developing appropriate advertising strategies (Orth et al, 2004).

According to Inamdar & Chandra (2001), marketers in India have focused only on the higher socio-economic classes i.e., SECA & B, because it was thought that income alone decided the consumption behavior and only these classes can afford. But now due to changes in the average household monthly income and the education level that has led to improvement in the standard of living, the SECC&D classes cannot be ignored. Examining all these four classes will better reflect

their lifestyle and consumption patterns. Verma & Savita, (1999 & 2000) have suggested that profiling the customers on the basis of their Lifestyle and studying their buying behavior and perceptions can help the manufacturers and the advertisers.

R V Kumar and A Sarkar (2008) have conducted a study on the Indian Urban Consumers. The study focuses on individuals belonging to SEC A and B households between the age group of 21 – 70 yrs. The questionnaire primarily depends on VALS framework (Mitchelle 1984) for structuring the statements. Cluster analysis was used and six segments were identified. The study reports on the impact of ownership of consumer durables, computer and internet usages, most preferred investment avenues, hobbies and interest and media habits across the different segments. Personality traits of individuals affect brand buying decisions. Rajagopal (2008) insists in his study that brands can be successful only when they are associated with the customers' personality. Lifestyle segmentation strategies when used in service quality expectations of the consumers yields better result when compared to application of demographic segmentation (Thompson et al, 1993).

Therefore along with emotions, impulses (Rook, 1987) and attitudes, the role of Personality, Image, Reputation and Trust also should be considered in building brand – consumer relationship. Whether it is Apparel (Goswami, 2007), cars (Suresh & Raja, 2006) or life insurance (Burnett & Palmer, 1984) lifestyle profiling are a better tool to understand the consumer preferences. The changing role of women in greater China, trends toward smaller families and greater purchasing power had led to profound changes in consumer lifestyles (Jackie, L.M Tam & Susan H.C Tai, 1998).

According to Otto (1988) today's youth are very different from their predecessors. They are working generation who command greater earnings potential and therefore with high level of discretionary spending. The youth population is at its peak (Lam, 2006).

According to Punj, Deepshika (2010) Now a days, Indian consumers have become more discerning. Therefore India especially the urban cities are increasingly becoming a favourite destination of all the world renowned brands. Lifestyles are also key determinants in selecting residential locations (Walker & Li, 2007). Fraj & Martinez (2006) have used lifestyle profiling for ecological products. According to this study, individuals characterized by self-fulfillment feeling are more environment conscious and hence select eco friendly products

According to Engledow et al (1980), factor analysis has gained popularity in consumer research with the wide availability of computer and various statistical packages. The authors in their study have brought out the significance of the tool in the area of consumer research. Stewart (1981) describes in his study, that the success of factor analysis lies in the appropriateness of a data set. The study addresses many vital problems using factor analysis like the different techniques to be used in assessing the validity of a data set, the different rotation methods to be used and the number of factors to be extracted using different methods. Although there has been considerable research done in the areas of apparels, automobiles etc applying lifestyle segmentation there has been less interest in understanding the footwear preferences of the youth. The present study is an attempt to fill that gap.

## NEED FOR THE STUDY

Footwear as a product has undergone a sea change in terms of its character. It is no longer a commodity but attitude, image and lifestyle. This is a sector with vast potential but still untapped. By introducing new dimensions as lifestyle profiling of consumers can help the manufacturers to position the product better.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The women's footwear segment still remains the most untapped segment, with nearly 80-90 per cent of purchases taking place in the unorganised market. This is largely due to the dressing habits of women, for whom considerations of durability or comfort are less important than coordinated colours and designs. With the woman becoming more brand-conscious as opposed to the past state of being product-conscious, more and more internationally renowned players are expected to enter the market to fill this need-gap. Therefore profiling the consumers on the basis of their lifestyles would help the managers to position their products in a better way. There is plethora of opportunities still untapped in the footwear sector.

## OBJECTIVES

- ❖ To study the relationship between lifestyle and purchase preferences of women in their choice of footwear.
- ❖ To study the different lifestyles of women

## HYPOTHESIS

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the attributes and the lifestyle segments

H1: There is significant relationship between the attributes and the lifestyle segments

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### RESEARCH DESIGN

The nature of the study is descriptive. Primary data were gathered from the respondents. The respondents in the age group of 20-55 yrs constitute the population, which is infinite. The sample size was statistically fixed at 2365 nos.

### DATA COLLECTION

The questionnaire comprised of three parts. I part comprised of 50 statements that would help in profiling the customers into lifestyle segments. These statements were to be rated in a 7 point likert scale. Part II comprised of the attributes that the consumers would normally prefer the footwear to possess. These attributes were included after interviewing 30 respondents so that it would help in studying the market characteristics across different lifestyle segments.

## ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Statistical tools such as factor analysis, Chi Square and correlation were used. Cronbach's alpha was used to test the reliability of these statements. Factor Analysis was used to profile the respondents on the basis of lifestyles. For extraction of factors, Principal Component analysis was used. Varimax rotation was used to compute the factor loadings. Regression scores were used to identify the individual cases with their respective factors. For the purpose of the research the Men and Women sector was segregated and studied separately. Chi square analysis was used to test the hypothesis as to whether the attribute preferences varied across the different lifestyle segments or not. It was found that the lifestyle preferences varied across different lifestyle.

TABLE 1: CALCULATED CHI SQUARE VALUE BETWEEN DIFFERENT LIFESTYLE SEGMENTS AND THE ATTRIBUTES

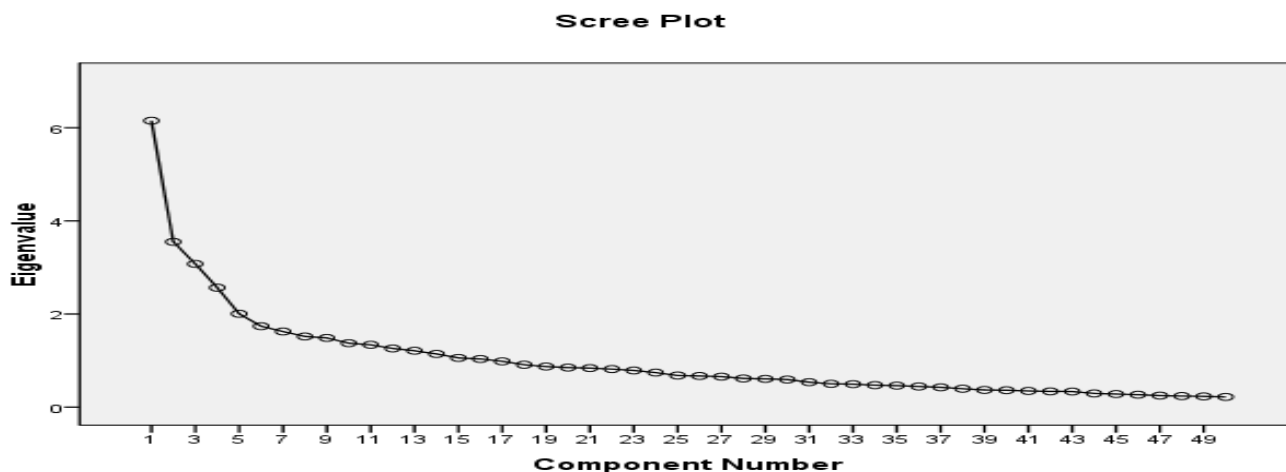
Attributes	Calculated Chi Square Value
Preference for standard colours like black, brown etc	289.63
Preference for fashionable footwear	648.37
Preference for branded footwear	180.71
Attitude towards squeaky noise	82.37
Preference towards friends' opinions	85.88
Preference towards family's opinions	216.95
Posture Enhancement	106.95
Botheration towards allergies	46.71
Ambience of the Store	170.72
Salesmen's behavior	105.54



The Chi Square Table Value at (0.05) is 18.31. As all the calculated values are greater than the table value, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis that the attribute preferences vary across different lifestyle segments.

Reliability Test was conducted on the dataset that pertains to Lifestyle analysis. There were 50 variables. The Cronbach's alpha yielded a score of 0.762. Therefore all the 50 items were considered for factor analysis. The Extraction method followed for extracting the factors was the Principal Component Analysis. Varimax Rotation was performed to calculate the factor loadings. As Principal Component Analysis was used, only the factors above Eigen Value of 1 were considered. For calculating the factor score for each consumer Regression method was used in order to segregate the consumers on their respective factors.

FIG. 1: SCREE PLOT WITH FACTOR EXTRACTION



For the purpose of the study 8 factors that explain 43.85% of the total variance has been considered.

TABLE 2: FACTORS EXTRACTED WITH THEIR ROTATED FACTOR LOADINGS

Factors	Rotated Factor Loadings
<b>Factor: Stylistic Lifestyle</b>	
I have one or more outfits that are of the very latest style	0.782
I like to spend a year in a foreign country	0.749
I pay cash for everything I buy	0.733
I am fashionable in the eyes of others	0.646
I enjoy stylistic dresses	0.599
I would go for a walk or do some exercise than sit idle	0.419
The most important part of life is to dress smartly	0.383
Spiritual values are most important than material values	-0.361
<b>Factor: Traditional Lifestyle</b>	
Women are dependent and needs men's protection	0.724
Giving dowry in marriage is a tradition and cannot be done away with	0.701
In the evenings, it is better to stay at home rather than going out	0.595
A women should not work if her husband does not like her to work outside the house	0.539
Looking after the house is primarily a women's responsibility irrespective of whether she is working or not	0.502
<b>Factor: Love - to - shop Lifestyle</b>	
I visit many shops before I fianlise my sales	0.818
I check the prices even of small items	0.659
I watch advertisements for announcement of sales	0.608
I am active in all social functions	0.587
I prefer my friends to spend	0.519
<b>Factor: Independent Lifestyle</b>	
I am more independent than most people	0.778
As far as possible after marriage nuclear family is better	0.777
I have more self confidence than most people	0.699
I have a lot of personal ability	0.583
<b>Factor: Fancy Lifestyle</b>	
One should always keep the house neat and clean	0.756
A fancy and distinctive living attracts me	0.754
I influence what my friends buy	0.665
Doing nothing will make me uncomfortable	0.459
<b>Factor: Liberal Lifestyle</b>	
I Participate or have participated in sports activities	0.731
One should bargain before a purchase	-0.409
<b>Factor: Socialising Lifestyle</b>	
I can mingle with strangers easily	0.742
I eat only home food and do not prefer to eat out	0.693
One should follow a proper routine such as eating meals at a regular time etc	-0.464
I'll take some courses to brighten my future	0.36
<b>Factor: Globe Trotting Lifestyle</b>	
I want to take a trip around the world	0.722
Think I will have more money to spend next year	0.631
I like parties where there is lot of music	0.503

TABLE 3: INTER-CORRELATION BETWEEN THE LIFESTYLES AND THE FOOTWEAR ATTRIBUTES

Attributes	Lifestyles							
	Stylistic	Traditional	Love To Shop	Independent	Fancy	Libera	Socialisin	Globe Trot
Std Col	.060	.407*	.116	.391	.183	.325	.309	-.305
Fashion	.237	.086	.254	.044	.699*	-.073	.422	.58*
Brand	-.021	.228	-.022	-.009	-.111	.327	-.644**	-.122
Noise	-.342	.100	-.098	.461*	.778**	-.193	-.273	-.036
Friends	.224	-.043	.501**	.399*	.219	-.392*	.043	.141
Family	.021	-.203	-.066	.017	.231	-.008	.533**	-.050
Posture	.579**	-.219	.181	.135	.316	.088	.237	-.51*
Allergies	.055	-.160	.298	.078	.599*	.319	-.499*	-.57*
Ambience	.148	.209	-.076	-.145	.242	.456*	-.005	-.399
Salesman	-.025	-.201	.273	-.136	.304	.581**	.126	-.456

\* Correlation significant at .05    \*\* Correlation significant at .01

Factor analysis yielded 8 factors that explain 43.85% of the total variance. The Factors extracted were Stylistic, Traditional, Love to shop, Independents, Fancy, Sportive, Strivers and Globe trotters. The stylistic consumers are very fashionable in nature. They prefer to have more outfits that of latest style. They perceive themselves to be highly fashionable and feel that the most important part of their life is to dress smartly. They seem to be highly correlated to the posture enhancement attribute ( $P_{(0.01)} = 0.579^{**}$ ). They preferred to walk tall. The traditional consumers felt that women are dependents on men. They are also highly conservative preferring to stay at home. They preferred only standard colours like black or brown in their footwear ( $P_{(0.05)} = 0.407^{*}$ ). The third segment exhibited high preference towards shopping. They visit as many shops before they finalise a sale. They very eagerly await advertisements which involves announcement of sales. This segment gave more preference to the opinion of their friends ( $P_{(0.01)} = 0.501^{**}$ ). The independents did not like the squeaky noise ( $P_{(0.05)} = 0.461^{*}$ ) and also gave importance to the opinion of their friends ( $P_{(0.05)} = 0.399^{*}$ ). The liberals did not mind spending on sports activities and for them the behavior of the salesman was very important ( $P_{(0.01)} = 0.581^{**}$ ). They also preferred to purchase from outlets where the ambience was good ( $P_{(0.05)} = 0.456^{*}$ ). They felt that friends opinion was immaterial ( $P_{(0.05)} = -0.392^{*}$ ). The respondents in the socialising segment were friendly and had high orientation towards their family. They gave more importance to the opinion of their family members ( $P_{(0.05)} = 0.533^{*}$ ). They were not brand conscious ( $P_{(0.05)} = -0.644^{*}$ ). The globe trotters loved to take a trip around the world. They liked to party. They were fashion conscious ( $P_{(0.05)} = 0.58^{*}$ ).

## FINDINGS

The attribute preferences vary across the different lifestyle. The stylistic segment preferred high heeled shoes as they liked to walk tall. The traditional segment wanted to purchase footwear with standard colours like black brown etc. The love to shop segment were very conscious about their friends' opinion. The independents would not want to hear any squeaky noise from their footwear. The Fancy lifestyle consumers were conscious about the squeaky noise and also preferred fashionable shoes. With women undergoing a transition in lifestyle, the marketers will have to adopt new parameters in their marketing strategies. Footwear now looked upon as a lifestyle enhancement product, segmenting the market on the basis of demography will be typically insufficient. With increasing competition in this sector from the unorganized players adopting lifestyle as a parameter for profiling the consumers will help the marketers to reposition their products better. This is a market that is still left untapped.

## SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The study can be extended further for mens' segment as well. Also the kids segment is a promising one. Further research on these segments can help in tapping the untapped opportunities in the footwear segment

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