

EXPLORING LIFESTYLE ORIENTATION, ATTITUDES TOWARD LIFESTYLE
MERCHANDISING, AND ATTITUDES TOWARD LIFESTYLE
ADVERTISING AS PREDICTORS OF BEHAVIORAL
INTENTION TO PURCHASE LIFESTYLE HOME
FURNISHING PRODUCTS
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A number of lifestyle merchandising and advertising strategies are being used in the home furnishings industry. However, there is limited research regarding the effectiveness of these strategies. The purpose of this study was to explore consumers' attitudes toward the lifestyle concept. Analyses of several consumer behavior variables and descriptors offered noteworthy findings for the home furnishings industry.

This study found that although lifestyle orientation is a valuable tool for delineating consumer markets, these segmentations were not significant determinates of consumers' preference for elements of the lifestyle construct. Retailers and manufacturers are not simply creating home furnishing collections that target the needs of specific psychographic segment, but rather creating lifestyles being aspired to obtain.

Although respondents scored the attitude variables neutral, the current market environment offers many examples of successfully home furnishing implementations of the lifestyle concept. These success stories coupled with additional findings indicate consumers' positive response to lifestyle merchandising.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		
1.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
	Statement of Problem	
	Rational	
	Purpose of Study	
	Assumptions	
	Operational Definitions	
2.	LITERATURE REVIEW.....	6
	Theoretical Framework	
	Review of Supporting Research	
	Lifestyle Merchandising and Lifestyle Advertising Trends	
	Summary	
3.	METHODOLOGY.....	27
	Research Design	
	Methodology	
4.	FINDINGS.....	44
	Descriptive Characteristics	
	Descriptive Analysis	
5.	DISCUSSION & SUMMARY.....	61
	Conclusion	
	Study Limitations	
	Recommendations for Future Research	
	APPENDIX.....	69
	REFEERENCES.....	77

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

Consumer spending on home furnishings generated \$63.3 billion in sales in 2003 and is expected to increase to \$71.1 billion in 2004 and to \$73.3 billion by 2005 (McIntosh, 2004). Home furnishings retailers and manufacturers are fueling this rise in today's competitive market through adaptations to the life cycle and to individual lifestyles. Determining a target market's lifestyle is increasingly important to retailers and manufacturers of home furnishing products because the consumers' needs and wants constantly change. In fact, consumers are moving from decorating in a style or period to establishing a personality or attitude in their homes. They want furnishings that are "as versatile as the little black dress in [their] wardrobe-equally stylish for day and night events" (Caringer, 1997, p. 53).

In 1996, trend forecaster Faith Popcorn successfully predicted that consumers would be longing to spend more time at home through *cocooning* (Gallup-Goodman, 2001). This desire to blanket themselves in the safety and comfort of their homes in turn generated the trend of *nesting*. Nesting occurs when consumers invest time and money to make their homes or *cocooning* places comfortable, yet stylish (Osborn, 2000). Home furnishings manufacturers

and retailers are employing unique marketing strategies in order to capitalize on these home trends. Anticipating significant economic gains, an emerging marketing technique in the home furnishings industry is lifestyle merchandising and advertising, which presents consumers with an aspired-to-lifestyle or created environment.

Rationale

The concept of lifestyle merchandising and advertising has been present in the home furnishings industry since the 1920's (Kim, 2001). However, this concept has gained increased interest in recent years as consumer trends shifted toward cocooning and nesting. Home furnishing leaders such as Lexington[®] Home brands, Thomasville[®] Furniture, Drexel Heritage[®], and Vanguard[®] Furniture, identify themselves as lifestyle brands, retailers, or manufacturers. In addition, a number of apparel fashion designers (e.g. Oscar de la Renta and Vera Wang), and national brands (e.g. Dockers[®] and Izod[®]) have been crossing over into the home furnishings industry and presenting consumers with lifestyle collections and brand extensions. Research is needed in this area to aid marketers and merchandisers in the home furnishings industry to better identify and communicate their lifestyle message to the consumer. Even though many home furnishing manufacturers and retailers are incorporating lifestyle merchandising and advertising into their marketing strategies, there is limited research regarding consumers' perceptions of the lifestyle concept in this product category.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to provide insight into consumers' perception of the lifestyle concept as it relates to lifestyle merchandising and advertising of home furnishings. In order to assess these perceptions, this study employed Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) theory of reasoned action as a conceptual framework for investigating the effect that lifestyle orientation has on consumer attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising and lifestyle advertising. In addition, this study examined lifestyle orientation, attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising, and attitudes toward lifestyle advertising as predictors of behavioral intention to purchase lifestyle home furnishing products. This study offers manufacturers and retailers a better understanding of consumers' purchase behavior when planning and implementing merchandising and advertising strategies.

Assumptions

This study is based on the assumption that intention to perform a given behavior can be predicted by the consumer's attitude toward the behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Furthermore, the study assumed that the respondents who participated in the initial focus group and the consumers who completed the survey questionnaire answered truthfully.

Operational Definitions

Attitude: The way consumers think, feel, and act toward a particular aspect of their environment (Hawkins, Best, & Coney, 2001).

Lifestyle: A concept defined as the means by which people live and spend time and money, mirroring a person's activities, interest, and opinions, as well as demographic variables (Blackwell, Miniard, & Engel, 2001).

Attitude toward lifestyle merchandising: A consumer's opinions and personal relevance that is felt toward products that are promoted by coordinating production, marketing, in-store advertising, display, and sales strategies to reflect the manifestation of one's self-concept or self-identity (Hawkins et al., 2001).

Attitude toward lifestyle advertising: A consumer's opinions and personal relevance that is felt toward presented references to one's self-concept or self-identity via a non-personal, sponsor-identified, paid message (Etzel, Walker, & Stanton, 2001).

Behavioral intentions: The reflection of the consumer's *plan of action* or the proposition associating one's self with a future action or behavior (Peter & Olson, 1999)

VALS2™: A well established lifestyle typology that segments American consumers into eight lifestyle segments (Hawkins et al., 2001).

Involvement: The level of perceived personal interest and/or relevance aroused by a stimulus given a particular situation (Zaichkowsky, 1985, Blackwell et al., 2001).

Media Preference: A consumer's attitudes toward one advertising outlet versus another (Blackwell et al., 2001; Russell & Lane, 2002).

Brand: A term, label, identification, symbol, sign, or any combination of the former, which distinguish a product or service from the competition (Russell & Lane, 2002).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study explored the relationship between lifestyle orientation, attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising, attitudes toward lifestyle advertising, and behavioral intention to purchase lifestyle home furnishing products. In addition, consumer consumption characteristics, involvement and media preference for information concerning lifestyle brands were investigated. Although limited, previous studies of lifestyle merchandising and lifestyle advertising served as a foundation for this research. Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) theory of reasoned action provided the conceptual framework for the study. The first section, Conceptual Framework, examines Ajzen and Fishbein's theory of reasoned action and explains its role in this study. Section two, Review of Supporting Research, summarizes relevant research for the construct and variables investigated. The third section, Lifestyle Merchandising and Lifestyle Advertising Trends, describes former and contemporary market conditions in the home furnishings industry with regard to lifestyle merchandising and advertising of home furnishing products.

Conceptual Framework

Theory of Reasoned Action

Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) theory of reasoned action offers a framework for exploring the relationship among external variables, attitudes, intentions, and behavior. The theory postulates that a consumer's intent to purchase and his or her purchase patterns are influenced by personal and social factors. Moreover, it suggests that a consumer's behavioral intention is derived from two factors: attitude toward the behavior and subjective norms.

The theory of reasoned action is an inclusive integration of attitude factors into a conceptual model that is intended to lead to improved understanding and improved predictions of consumer behavior. The theory is comprised of three main elements: a cognitive component, which is a consumer's attitude toward a particular product or brand; the subjective norm component, which reflects referent influence on a consumer's intended behavior; and a conative component, which often is expressed as a consumer's intention to buy (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004). Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual model.

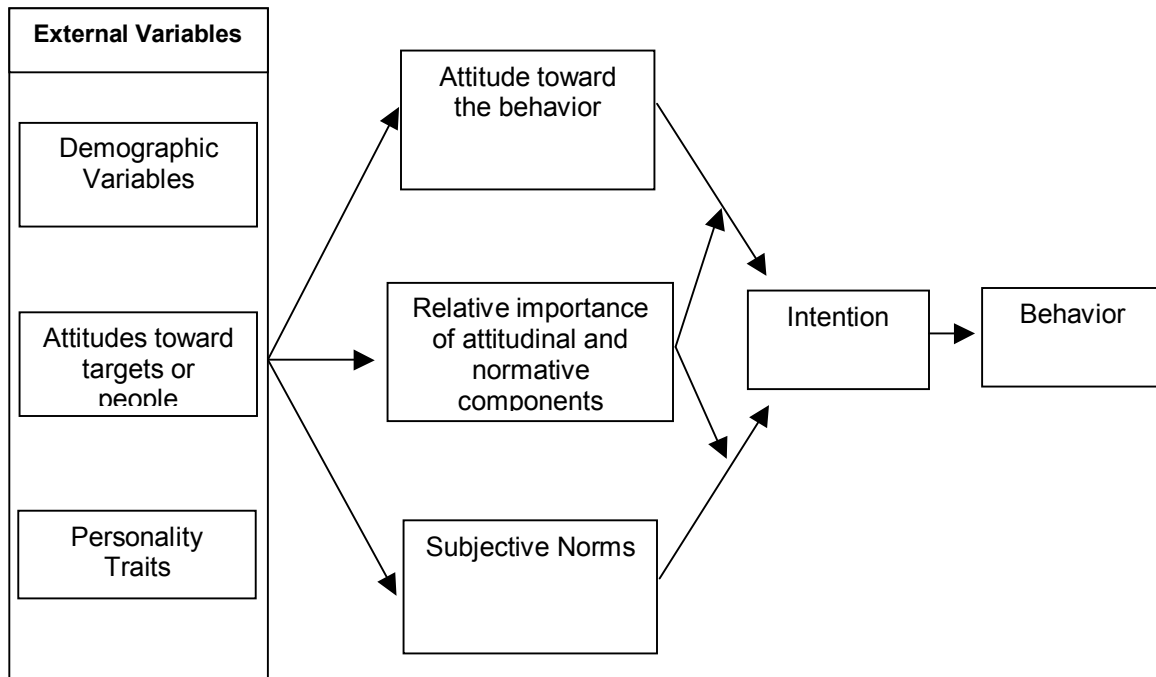


Figure 1. Ajzen & Fishbein's (1980) theory of reasoned action model.

Note. From *Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behavior* (p. 8), by I. Ajzen and M. Fishbein, 1980, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. Reprinted by permission of Pearson Education, Inc., Upper Saddle River, NJ

The collective organizations of cognitive, perceptual, emotional, and motivational processes related to one's environment are referred to as attitudes. Attitude serves four primary functions for consumers in the product decision-making process. Attitudes that serve as a means of organizing and categorizing beliefs about products or activities are known as the knowledge function. The value-expressive function is represented by attitudes that have been created and serve to express the consumer's individual values and self-concept. Utilitarian function is based on the conditioning construct that the consumer will have a more favorable attitude toward products or activities they view as having a positive effect or are rewarding. Attitudes that are created toward a product or

activity that aid in compensating for the consumer's inadequacies are known as the ego-defense function. The various functions of attitude lead to the consumer's overall attitude toward engaging in the given purchase decision, thus influencing behavioral intention (Hawkins et al., 2001). The attitude toward the behavior or action reveals the consumer's inclusive evaluation of engaging in the behavior. Behavioral intention reflects the consumer's plan of action or a proposition associating one's self with a future consumption action or behavior (Peter & Olson, 1999).

The theory of reasoned action is a widely accepted approach for explaining and predicting why consumers behave in a particular way and their intent to purchase products and/or services (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004). Numerous studies have tested the validity of the behavioral model, concluding that there is evidence to support the proposed theory that intentions toward a given action are motivated and formed based on attitudinal and subjective norms (Sheppard, Hartwick, & Warshaw, 1988; Leone, Perugini, & Ercolani, 1999; Christian, 2003). Choong (1998) applied the theory of reasoned action to ascertain consumers' level of brand loyalty. Findings indicated that when theory of reasoned action elements (attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and intention to engage in behavior) were favorable, brand loyalty was perceived to be at its maximum. Buttle and Bok (1996) employed the theory of reasoned action to examine behavioral intentions of international business travelers. They

found attitudes toward the behavior and subjective norms accounted for roughly 65% of the variance in their intention to stay in a hotel on the next business trip.

The theory of reasoned action is reported in scholarly research as a valid and reliable framework for assessing attitude-behavioral relationships (i.e. Sheppard, et al., 1988; Leone et al., 1999; Christian, 2003). Although the original theory analyzes attitudes and subjective norms as predictors of behavioral intention, several contemporary studies have expanded the model by incorporating other variables. For example, the theory was adapted by Vijayasarathy (2004) to form the technology acceptance model (TAM) which ascertains consumers' acceptance and intention to use online shopping. Significant predictors of attitude toward online shopping included compatibility, usefulness, ease of use, and security. Consumers' intent to use online shopping was strongly influenced by attitude toward online shopping, normative beliefs, and self-efficiency. Sheppard et al. (1988, p. 338) conducted a meta-analysis of Ajzen and Fishbein's conceptual model and concluded that the theory "has strong predictive utility, even when utilized to investigate situations and activities that do not fall within the boundary conditions originally specified for the model." The theory was selected as a framework for this study based on its success in predicting attitudinal and behavioral relationships.

Review of Supporting Research

Values and Lifestyle System 2™

One widely accepted lifestyle marketing approach that identifies eight American lifestyles is the Values and Lifestyle System 2™ (VALS2™) developed by SRI Consulting® Business Intelligence. Consumers' attitudes and values are measured by the strength of agreement with a series of statements such as "I like a lot of excitement in my life." How consumers respond leads to identification of the goals and behaviors to which they aspire to achieve, also known as their self-orientations. VALS2™ reveals three self-orientations: principle oriented (consumers that make purchase decisions based on their personal beliefs and values rather than the opinions of others), status oriented (consumers who are strongly influenced by the beliefs and values of others), and action oriented (consumers who purchase products to affect their environment and seek activity and adventure).

The second dimension of the VALS2™ refers to the physical, psychological, material, and demographic resources consumers have available to pursue their self-orientations. Based on the identified self-orientation and the amount of available resources, consumers can then be placed into one of the eight lifestyle categories: actualizers (affluent, successful consumers with a wealth of available resources), fulfilleds (satisfied, comfortable consumers who tend to be practical thinkers and look for functionality), believers (conservative consumers with strong beliefs in established codes and values), achievers

(consumers who strive to achieve control in the many aspects of their lives), strivers (consumers that who seek approval of others and the image of success), experiencers (young, impulsive consumers who like risk taking), makers (consumers who focus on independence and live within the context of family and work), and strugglers (consumers with little or no available resources who's goals often involve achieving basic survival needs) (Blackwell et al., 2001).

Kim et al. (2003) employed the VALS2™ lifestyle orientation typology to assess the ideal shopping center characteristics that consumers felt were reflective of their lifestyle orientation. This study described and illustrated six distinct shopping center layouts that reflected the six different VALS2™ lifestyle orientation categories. Lekakos and Giaglis (2004) investigated VALS™ lifestyle orientation as an effective method for segmenting consumers for the delivery of personalized advertisements in digital interactive television. This study found that the VALS™ typology was the best segmentation for introducing new products or product lines.

Degree of Involvement

One significant psychographic aspect of consumer behavior is involvement. Involvement is defined as the level of perceived personal interest and/or relevance aroused by a stimulus given a particular situation (Zaichkowsky, 1985, Blackwell et al., 2001). Moreover, the degree of consumer involvement reflects the amount of deliberation employed in order to minimize the risks and to maximize the benefits incurred by product purchase and use (Blackwell et al.,

2001). A consumer's degree of involvement ranges from high to low. The level of involvement is ascertained by the degree to which a consumer perceives the product or service to be important.

Wu (2001) investigated consumers' degree of involvement and advertising effectiveness. The results of the study found that there was a positive correlation between a high degree of consumer involvement and high advertising effectiveness. Involvement as a catalyst for motivating consumers' attention and comprehension process was investigated by Celsi and Olson (1988). Findings of this study indicated that involvement was a motivator in consumers' attention and comprehension processes, and thus affected the specific meanings that are produced regarding products.

Lifestyle Merchandising and Lifestyle Advertising

Capturing the consumer's attention is the key to selling products. In exploring the success of storytelling in selling, Kaufman (2003) found that when products are merchandised, advertised, or sold revolving around a story the consumer develops an emotional connection to that product and company. In addition, the use of storytelling or intimately involving the consumer with the brand by creating a desired environment is a far more convincing seller than rational arguments or statistical facts. Storytelling influences consumer attitudes by connecting with them on an emotional and psychological level. Escalas (2004) investigated the influence that storytelling and narrative transportation (the imaginative transfer of one's self into the advertisement) has on attitudes toward

advertising. The study found that the more detailed the storytelling and defined the imagery used, the more favorable the attitude toward the advertisement.

Retailers are adapting this narrative approach to their merchandising strategies. For example, at top 100 ranked retailer Gabbert's Furniture & Design Studio[®], furniture and accessories tell customers the story of eight distinct lifestyles ranging from the upper-class luxury and sophistication of the Grand Salon[®] to the down-home flavor found in their Circle G Ranch[®] category (Engel, 2000). Jim Gabbert, chief executive officer for Gabbert's[®] commented, "We wanted to build a store where consumers can make more comfortable decisions because they can visualize what it's going to look like in their homes." Gabbert describes the retail store as "... a stage. The architecture is not the star. The environment and the furniture are" (Edmonds, 2001, p. 35).

Englis and Solomon (1995) investigated lifestyle merchandising and advertising by examining how the media, merchandisers, and advertisers shape consumers' perceived realities regarding how others live. Television shows and advertisements in mass media were found to influence consumers' perceived reality of certain lifestyle categories. Consumers incorporate media depictions of these realities into their assumptions about how others live and what they consume, thus creating an aspired-to-lifestyle (Englis & Solomon, 1995). However, lifestyle merchandising is only successful if these depictions are meaningful and have symbolic value to the consumer (Englis & Solomon, 1997; Helman & De Chernatony, 1999).

The concept of social reality is a meticulously contrived marketing strategy that involves a personal relationship between the product, retailer, and consumer (Englis & Solomon, 1995). A consumer cannot embrace a lifestyle by purchasing just one item. The totality of an experience is needed. For example, to enter into the affluent and sophisticated world of Ralph Lauren[®], the consumer would need to purchase not only the Ralph Lauren Home Collection[®] chair, but also invest in the Ralph Lauren[®] paint, wall coverings, fabrics, and accessories (Solomon & Englis, 1994; Greco, 1997). The desire to emulate an aspired-to-lifestyle can motivate consumers' home furnishing purchase behavior and influence attitude toward lifestyle merchandising. Rabianski (2001) stated that use of the lifestyle concept may even facilitate product differentiation.

The Brand Concept

Definition of a Brand and Brand Loyalty

Brand and brand loyalty are concepts associated with lifestyle merchandising and lifestyle advertising. The lifestyle construct is focused on a brand's ability to tell a story, fulfill a functional or emotional need, create a perceived environment, and reflect aspired-to-lifestyles. Therefore, it is imperative to define and address the role of a brand with respect to consumer behavior.

Gardner and Levy's (1955) classic definition of a brand describes it as more than a label utilized to distinguish among manufacturers of products or services. A brand is a complex amalgamation of relevant symbolism, public

image, and the character and personality of the product or service being evaluated. Fanning (1999) takes a slightly broader approach by defining a brand as a collection of rational criteria (i.e., factual components and physical elements of the product or service) and emotional criteria (i.e., impressions, ideas, and opinions regarding the product or service). A brand is a term, label, identifier, symbol, sign, or any combination of the former, intended to distinguish and identify a product or service from the competition (Russell & Lane, 2002).

Within the home furnishings industry, consumers are presented with a multitude of consumption options and opportunities; each designer, retailing and manufacturing entity, and brand are bidding for the consumers' attention and discretionary dollar. As consumers reevaluate their consumption patterns, retailers and manufacturers face the challenge of maintaining consumer relationships. A competitive influx of new brands, retailers, manufacturers and brand extensions are flooding home furnishing markets (Payne et al., 2003). Retaining consumers is less expensive than acquiring new customers (Hill & Rifkin, 1999). Moreover, creating and preserving connections and relationships with the consumer is at the core of the brand loyalty concept. Brand loyalty occurs when consumers purchase a particular brand without contemplating the alternatives (Russell & Lane, 2002).

Brand Influences Relevant to the Lifestyle Construct

A brand is the accumulation of all elements employed to delineate one product, company or designer from the rest. The creation of a brand that successfully utilizes these elements to retain and maintain the consumers' attention and purchase preference is an arduous task. Scott Bedbury, former senior vice president of marketing at Starbucks® Corporation and creator of the Nike® Just Do It® campaign, believes that great brands can be founded on the following brand-building principles (Russell & Lane, 2002):

1. A great brand establishes an enduring relationship with the customer; focusing on long-term market distinction, as opposed to short-term economic gain.
2. A great brand capitalizes on the ideology that “anything can be branded”
3. A great brand knows itself and its customers. Knowing the right time, place, and positioning of new, unique, and innovative products or extensions is a vital component for keeping a lasting brand fresh and alive.
4. A great brand raises the expectation of quality within their industry and creates value for the consumer.
5. A great brand connects on an emotional level and realizes that a vast majority of consumers' purchase decisions are driven by emotions.

6. A great brand tells a story, bonding with customers on an emotional level and creating a relationship that evokes the feel of being connected to the greater experience.
7. A great brand is relevant to the customer; positioning the company, product, or brand in a way that meets the consumers' needs and wants, as opposed simply adopting a strategy that is popular.

In the current consumer market environment, becoming a great brand can be a daunting task. The old adage that “two is better than one” is a strategy that is becoming increasingly popular in the industry. Brand extensions are being created by retailers and manufacturers to capitalize on the appeal of fashion designers and celebrities outside the realm of soft goods in order to extend a brand or personality into the homes of consumers. This branding philosophy is another element of the lifestyle concept. The intended function of the lifestyle construct is to extend the desired image of the designer, manufacturer, and retailer into the lives of the consumer, which leads to greater brand awareness and recognition (Helman & De Chernatony, 1999). Moreover, establishing this connection with the consumer is a core principle for creating brand loyalty among customers. Designers and personalities from Vera Wang to Kathy Ireland are creating partnerships with industry entities such as Wedgwood® and Standard® Furniture to extend product lines and value into the consumers' lives.

Izod[®], an apparel brand known for its clean, sporty, and contemporary look, debuted its home collection in fall 2002. The line is an extensive collection of bedding, towels, and accessories that appeal to four specific lifestyles: Izod[®] Home, Izod[®] Resort, Izod[®] Spa, and Izod[®] Sport. Each lifestyle also has three levels of product categories: Basix, Classix, and Fashion (Shoulberg, 2002).

Dockers[®] brand, another well-known apparel brand, extended its concept of relaxed fit to the Dockers[®] Home Collection. Launched in spring of 2003, Dockers[®] name and style meet the consumers' need for branded casual lifestyle products for the home (Leizens, 2002).

Fashion designer Oscar de la Renta used his aptitude for design and his love of travel to create a lifestyle home furnishings line for Century[®] Furniture. The furniture pieces in the collection were inspired by his homes in New York (city look), Connecticut (country feel), and the Dominican Republic (island experience). He developed the collection with the intention that consumers would mix the various styles to create an individualistic environment (Loos, 2003).

Amidst a tepid economic recovery, consumer-driven markets, such as the home furnishings industry are increasingly realizing the value of building long-term relationships through an emotional connection with the customer. This bond is being forged by adding a personality or experience to a brand. Industry has coined this bringing together of product, brand, and consumer, a brand community. Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) define a brand community as structured

social relationships formed among users of a particular product or brand that are unique and not specified by geographic boundaries. Several studies concluded that those customers, who exhibit a strong emotional connection or relationship with a company, will often supplant satisfaction for trust and commitment as determinants of loyalty (Dwyer, Schurr, & Oh 1987; Berry 1995). In late 2001, the Cone/Roper Corporate Citizenship Survey reported that 81% of Americans indicated that they would switch brands to support a cause if there were consistent quality levels and price points (Armknecht-Miller, 2002). Moreover, consumers are placing more value on a brand or company's ability and willingness to develop relationships with consumers and communities. Retailers and manufacturers are becoming more aware of the important role that building and maintaining connections and communities with consumers play in developing a long-lasting brand.

Ruth Crowley, Vice President of Merchandising for Harley-Davidson Motor Company[®], believes that selling the consumer an experience involves more than product selection. The philosophy that drives customer relationships for the American classic, Harley-Davidson Motor Company[®], has helped turn the hard-core motorcycle company into an extended brand and an experience. The company is creating and sharing this sense of community by offering product lines and recreational events for the entire family (Crowley, 2002). When a customer enters the doors of a Harley-Davidson[®] store they can become part of

the H.O.G.[®] (Harley Owners Group) community by purchasing items that range from the motorcycle to baby clothes, dinnerware, and pet accessories.

A similar lifestyle experience is felt by drivers of Jeep[®] brand vehicles. When a consumer makes the consumption decision to purchase a Jeep[®], he or she is not simply investing in a mode of transportation but becoming a member of the Jeep[®] family. For over a decade this Chrysler subsidiary has provided its consumers an annual event that allows them to share their driving experience with fellow customers called Camp Jeep[®]. Jeep[®] believes that consumers' testimonials are the best form of advertising for their brand. Jeep[®] is tapping into the consumer experience and forming a bond that is proving to be a cost-effective communication tool for advertising the brand message (Stein, 2004).

Lifestyle Merchandising and Lifestyle Advertising Trends

The idea of creating a lifestyle with home furnishing products was initiated in the 1920's when Russel Wright created and marketed affordable, functional, and stylish home furnishings for the American consumer. Lifestyle marketing is attributed to Russel Wright (Kim, 2001). Consumers bought into his brand name and lifestyle. Wright's designs made life easier. His genius paved the way for contemporary lifestyle merchandisers such as Ralph Lauren, Martha Stewart, and other home furnishings manufacturers (Groer, 2001).

Even though lifestyle designers and products were accessible to consumers from the 1930's to the 1980's, it was not until May 23, 1983, when Ralph Lauren introduced a sophisticated, elite lifestyle, that lifestyle merchandise

became available to the masses. The Polo Ralph Lauren Corporation produces and markets home lifestyle products that give consumers a sophisticated, luxurious, and aspired-to-way of life. In 2000, Home Furnishings News named Ralph Lauren a visionary in creating a complete home environment (“HFN names visionaries,” 2002). Ralph Lauren Home Collection[®] has become a full line of table linens, tabletop items, blankets, throws, wall coverings, and fabrics that create a distinct lifestyle (Quail, 2002).

Another contributor to the lifestyle merchandising concept is Martha Stewart. From the Martha Stewart Everyday[®] product line available at K-mart to her television programs ranging in topics from gardening to cooking to home decor, Martha Stewart markets her name and products as a way and a style to be lived (Quail, 2002).

Lexington[®] Home Brands entered the lifestyle merchandising arena in 1989 with their Lynn Hollyn at Home[®] collections. A collection of eclectic, unique pieces as opposed to the traditional matching groups, this line has a strong brand name and thematic story. Based on the success of Lynn Hollyn at Home[®], Lexington[®] capitalized on the homespun lifestyle of North Carolina artist and designer Bob Timberlake with their launch of the World of Bob Timberlake[®] collection. Harkening back to styles of the 18th century Arts and Crafts movement, and English and Irish cottages, the Bob Timberlake[®] collection offers consumers an escape to the past (Shoulberg, 2002).

Another collection of Lexington® Home Brands that offers consumers a lifestyle is their Tommy Bahama® line (“Tommy Bahama licenses Wildwood”, 2001). This tropical island oasis collection appeals to customers’ need for a less stressful, relaxed home environment. With light, airy colors and calming materials such as rattan furniture, this line creates a defined carefree lifestyle. The line uses the fictional character Tommy Bahama to connect the consumer to the leisurely lifestyle portrayed by the character.

Lexington® Home is also using the thematic story concept to create lifestyle merchandise that appeals to children. The Betsy Cameron® Home collection tells the story of a young girl whose well- traveled father brings exotic gifts that inspire the furniture and accessories in her room. As the child consumer grows, the story of Betsy Cameron grows with them through stories sent via both online and traditional direct mail. Staking a long-standing reputation on the concept of lifestyle merchandising and advertising, Lexington® Furniture changed their established name to Lexington® Home Brands in March 2000. The name change occurred to reflect the vast number of lifestyle brands that the company carries (Bennington, 2004).

Thomasville® Furniture is also marketing lifestyle with their Ernest Hemingway® Collection, an eclectic mix of designs inspired by Hemingway’s travels to exotic places such as Key West, Cuba, Kenya, and Paris. Another Thomasville® Furniture personality line is the Humphrey Bogart® Collection (Slaughter, 2001). Both lines were created as response to consumer trends

indicating a strong affinity to Hollywood lifestyles of the 1940's and 50's (Goldsmith, 2002). With these collections, Thomasville® Furniture is capitalizing on the philosophy that consumers want to emulate the lives of people they admire. Such implementations of lifestyle merchandising through holistic environmental collections allow consumers to replicate these admired lives in their own homes.

Drexel Heritage® offers its customers a regional lifestyle with their Signature by Heritage Ivory Coast® collection. Instead of developing a lifestyle that is inspired by fictional or real individuals, Drexel Heritage® created a line of furniture and accessories that bring the lifestyle of a region to the consumer. The Ivory Coast collection allows customers to bring the exotic and romantic feel of colonial West Africa into their homes.

Vanguard® Furniture created furnishings to reflect a unique lifestyle with their PGA (Professional Golf Association) Tour® collection. The collection offers consumers the club house style for their homes and lives. With its classic attention to detail and luxuriously textured fabrics, Vanguard® Furniture allows customers to experience the sophisticated ambiance of the PGA Tour in their homes year round.

Travel resorts are also benefiting from consumers' desire to make their homes a refuge and getaway. The Westin La Cantera Resort® in San Antonio, Texas, uses furnishings, atmospherics, and storytelling to create a lifestyle escape for their guests. While this concept is not new, this approach to vacation

atmospherics is unique in that many of the furnishings featured at the resort can also be purchased. By giving patrons the opportunity to purchase these different elements, they can take the La Cantera lifestyle home (Crawford, personal communication, July 4, 2002).

Joe Ruggiero, design expert for Home and Garden Television[®] (HGTV), and Norwalk[®] Furniture combined creative forces to develop a line of furniture that offers the consumer a lifestyle that flows from room to room. Ruggiero has taken elements from memorable moments in his life and introduced them into his designs (J. Ruggiero, personal communication, August 26, 2002). The Joe Ruggiero Collection[®] creates an environment that fits the consumer's lifestyle and home.

Retailers and manufacturers are attracting customers by using lifestyle merchandising to turn non-lifestyle brands into lifestyle displays. De Boer's[®] Furniture Stores, a Canadian home furnishings retail chain, recently renovated its stores and redefined its marketing strategy to reflect the philosophy that consumers are attracted to aspired-to lifestyles. DeBoer's features five lifestyle presentations: Formalities, Trade Winds, Urban Loft, Modern, and Wine Country (Knell, 2002).

Summary

Many contemporary lifestyle concepts are present in today's home furnishings market. Despite its popular use, little empirical research exists regarding consumers' perceptions of lifestyle merchandising and lifestyle advertising. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine the effect of lifestyle orientation on attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising and attitudes toward lifestyle advertising. The second research objective was to determine if lifestyle orientation, attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising, and lifestyle advertising are significant predictors of behavioral intentions to purchase lifestyle home furnishing products. Azjen and Fishbein's (1980) theory of reasoned action served as the conceptual framework for the study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This exploratory study employed Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) theory of reasoned action to investigate the relationships between (1) lifestyle orientation (2) attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising, (3) attitudes toward lifestyle advertising and (4) behavioral intention to purchase lifestyle furnishing products. In addition, this research identified consumption characteristics, degree of involvement, and media preference for information regarding lifestyle home furnishing brands. See Figure 2. Consequently, the following research objectives were established to explore these relationships:

1. To determine consumer recognition of lifestyle brands.
2. To determine the effect of lifestyle orientation on attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising and attitudes toward lifestyle advertising.
3. To determine if lifestyle orientation, attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising and attitudes toward lifestyle advertising are significant predictors of behavioral intention to purchase lifestyle home furnishing products.
4. To identify consumption characteristics, degree of involvement, and media preference for information concerning lifestyle home furnishing brands.

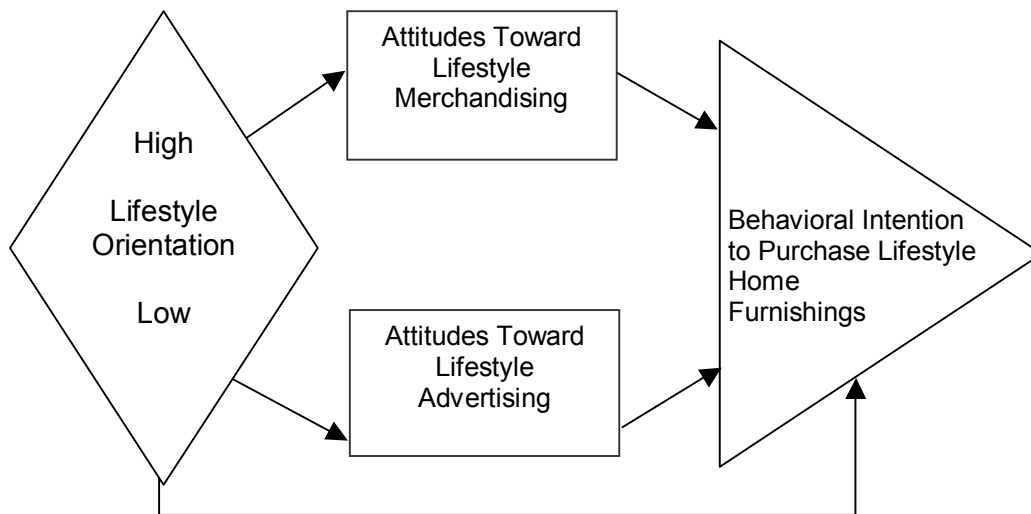


Figure 2. Model adapted from Ajzen and Fishbein’s theory of reasoned action.

Research Design

The conceptual framework used for this study was Ajzen and Fishbein’s theory of reasoned action. The theory of reasoned action has been tested and found to have strong predictive utility for investigating attitudinal and behavioral relationships. Moreover, the theory has been proven to be a valid and reliable model for exploring attitude and behavior relationships that were not specified in the original model (Sheppard et al., 1998). For the purpose of this study, the model was modified to examine variables pertinent to current industry marketing practices.

The objectives of the study are aligned into the theoretical framework. For objective two, lifestyle orientation served as the independent variable, while attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising and attitudes toward lifestyle advertising

served as dependent variables. For objective three, lifestyle orientation, attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising, attitudes toward lifestyle advertising served as independent variables, while behavioral intention to purchase lifestyle home furnishing products served as the dependent variable. The constructs in objective four served as descriptive variables.

The theory of reasoned action framework maintains that attitudes toward an action can predict a consumer's intended consumption behavior. The idea that purchase patterns can be forecasted by consumers' intent holds valuable implications for retailers and manufactures in the home furnishings industry.

Methodology

Lifestyle merchandising has received much attention in the marketplace. However, little empirical research measuring consumer perceptions exists in the current body of knowledge. The goal of this study was to enable understanding of consumers' perceptions of lifestyle merchandising and advertising and the resultant impact of said perceptions on behavioral intentions to purchase.

The research was conducted in three developmental stages. Stage I employed qualitative interviewing with a small, yet diverse focus group regarding lifestyle merchandising and advertising. In Stage II, a content analysis extracted primary, secondary, and tertiary needs from focus group interviews for quantitative instrument development. In Stage III, quantitative data collection and subsequent analyses were conducted. Table 1 summarizes the research activities and methods for each phase.

Table 1. Methodology: Research stages.

<i>Stage</i>	<i>Research Activities</i>	<i>Methods</i>
I.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary measurement - consumer perceptions of lifestyle merchandising and advertising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop qualitative interviewing guide • Lifestyle advertising review and case selection • Focus group interviews
II.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instrument development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content analysis of focus group interview • Pretest Instrument
III.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess consumer needs and perceptions around lifestyle merchandising • Validate/refute expected outcomes based on conceptual framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct quantitative consumer research • Analyze data within research constructs • Report quantitative analysis as applied to objectives

Stage I – Consumer Evaluation through Qualitative Interviews

Lack of substantive research and scale development and validation specifically related to lifestyle merchandising necessitated an initial assessment of the current consumer environment, including awareness, use, and perceptions of products or brands integrating lifestyle into marketing strategy. Focus group participants were recruited from a large southwest university in the United States. Convenience sampling produced a total of six college students (4 female and 2 male) ranging in age from 18 to 55. Participants selected had purchased home furnishings within the past 12 months or intended to purchase within the next 12 months. An ethnographic interviewing technique guided discussion of shopping

experiences, advertising, and visual merchandising. Participants were asked to respond to several open-ended questions.

1. "What are some of the visual elements that attract you or that you find favorable when looking at home furnishings in the retail store?"
2. "What makes these visual elements appealing?"
3. "What visual elements do you do you not like?"
4. "When looking at advertisements of home furnishings, what visual elements do you find appealing or attractive?"
5. "What visual elements do you dislike?"
6. "When decorating or furnishing your home, what are some of the important elements you do or would incorporate? Why?"

To develop measurement scales around print advertisements, participants also evaluated the six real-time print advertisements for lifestyle home furnishing collections that included the following: Tommy Bahama[®]-Lexington[®], Ernest Hemmingway[®] Collection - Thomasville[®], PGA Tour[®] Collection - Vanguard[®], Dockers[®] Home - American Pacific[®], and Martha Stewart Everyday[®] collection - Kmart. Each participant was asked unaided awareness of the lifestyle-oriented advertising strategy and to share reactions to and perceptions about each advertisement with the group.

Stage II – Qualitative Content Analysis and Instrument Development

Content Analysis

Qualitative analysis is a suggested method for establishing new measurement tools. By examining words, descriptions, and explanations, it is possible to construct a lifestyle marketing scale (Miles & Huberman, 1994). To better understand how lifestyle merchandising efforts are translated and discerned by the end consumer, as well as consumer reaction to such marketing, a measurement scale was developed based on the discussion generated by the focus group. Focus group narratives were recorded and transcribed so that a content analysis could be performed.

The first topic, visual display and merchandising within a store setting, generated a discussion of gallery style versus vignette displays. Gallery merchandising formats were defined to the focus group as showroom displays that feature products individually. Vignette merchandising formats were defined as displays that arrange various product lines and categories together to create a room setting. Most focus group participants responded favorably to furnishings that were displayed in vignettes as opposed to gallery style merchandising. Participants indicated that seeing home furnishings put together allowed them to visualize how collections or pieces would relate to their existing furnishings or complete an empty space. Several participants noted a desire for key visual display elements such as presentations that created an environment, rendered function, and were calming, relaxing, stylish, or offered escape from the world.

When asked about elemental marketing and merchandising tactics using celebrity endorsements, all of the focus group members indicated negative feelings toward home furnishings that were marketed in this manner. Likewise, feelings toward home furnishings that emulated the lifestyle of a celebrity were unfavorable. Moreover participants indicated that home furnishings merchandised or advertised in such a manner evoked a perception of trying to be someone else, which had a negative connotation.

When participants were shown the sample print advertisements and asked an unaided awareness question about lifestyle positioning as related to the advertisements, there was no association of the lifestyle concept to the advertising. In fact, a majority of the participants were unaware of the terminology. All focus group members indicated ambiguity in the definition of lifestyle merchandising or advertising. Interestingly, even though participants could not delineate lifestyle merchandising from other types of marketing initiatives, at least one of the collections presented in the advertisements evoked an emotionally charged response and subsequent personal identification from each of the participants.

The qualitative results discussed herein served as a basis for development of the survey instrument. Based on content analysis of interview responses, the review of literature, and established marketing scales, survey questions were developed that could measure and generate quantitative data for lifestyle merchandising (Appendix).

Instrument Development

Lifestyle orientation.

In order to identify lifestyle segments, a modified version of VALS2™ was implemented in this study. Similar to the method employed by Kim et al. (2003), the instrument developed to measure survey respondents' lifestyle orientation was based on published descriptors of VALS2™ (Blackwell et al., 2001; Hawkins et al., 2001; Russell & Lane, 2002). Participants self-selected characteristic sets (See Table 2.) that most accurately represented their lifestyle orientation.

Table 2. Lifestyle orientation definitions.

Orientation	Definition
Achievers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I am successful and deeply committed to work, family, community.• I like predictability and consistency over risk.• My work affords me material rewards and prestige that shows my success to my friends.
Strivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I like to be trendy.• I want to be stylish and admire people who are well known for their success and/or wealth.• Although difficult at times, making money is a goal in my life.
Fulfilleds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I am a mature, self-assured, well-educated professional.• I am content with my career, family, and doing leisure activities around the house.• I buy durable, functional products with value for the money.
Believers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• My activities center around home, family, and community.• I prefer American-made products.• I am not wealthy, but meet my needs sufficiently.
Experiencers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I am young, impulsive, and rebellious at times.• I seek variety, and excitement through new, offbeat, and risky activities and things.• Exercise, sports, outdoor recreation, and social activities are important to me.
Makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I am “old-fashioned” and focus all interest on family and hard work.• I'd rather buy items have a practical purpose.• When I want something done right, I do it myself.

Attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising and lifestyle advertising.

To accurately understand attributes of the lifestyle concept as related to home furnishing merchandising it was necessary to develop a modified measurement scale. Using a combination of tested marketing scale standards and the data extracted from the qualitative interviews, two separate scales were derived to measure both lifestyle merchandising and consumer attitudes toward lifestyle advertising. Traditional marketing scales served as the basis for both types of scales; however, the focus group served as a source for attributes that truly represented the specific subject matter of lifestyle home furnishing products.

In order to ascertain attitude toward lifestyle merchandising, participants were asked to rate their level of interest in looking at home furnishings. The measure used a 6-point rating scale (6 = *interests me* to 1 = *doesn't interest me*). The following statements were asked, regarding in-store displays: Looking at home furnishings that...

1. tell a story or set a scene.
2. are arranged in room settings.
3. are celebrity endorsed.
4. are shown as purely functional.
5. create a resort or retreat environment.
6. create a calming environment.
7. create a stylish environment.
8. reflect the lifestyle of celebrities or notable names.

Participants' attitudes toward lifestyle advertising were assessed through survey questions that asked respondents to indicate level of interest in looking at home furnishings advertising positioned around the lifestyle concept. Similarly, participants were asked to indicate agreement for eight statements as related to lifestyle advertisements. The measure used a 6-point rating scale (6 = *interests me* to 1 = *doesn't interest me*). The following statements were asked, with regard to advertisements: Looking at home furnishings that...

1. tell a story or set a scene.
2. are arranged in room settings.
3. are celebrity endorsed.
4. are shown as purely functional.
5. create a resort or retreat environment.
6. create a calming environment.
7. create a stylish environment.
8. reflect the lifestyle of celebrities or notable names.

The two scales were designed specifically to assess respondents' attitudes toward attributes of the lifestyle concept. Prior to survey distribution to the consumer sample, the survey was administered to forty-three college students to test for scale reliability. Cronbach's alpha was .80 for the scale measuring attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising and .86 for attitudes toward lifestyle advertising. These reliability alphas were considered to be acceptable based on the comparison of similar attitude scales (Bruner & Hensel, 1998).

Behavioral intention.

Using the same method that derived the attitude scales, consumers' behavioral intent to purchase lifestyle home furnishing products was developed that reflect the established lifestyle attributes. Using a 6-point rating scale (6 = *strongly agree* to 1 = *strongly disagree*), respondents indicated their level of agreement with the following eight statements: In the future, I intend to buy home furnishings that...

1. tell a story or set a scene.
2. are arranged in room settings.
3. are celebrity endorsed.
4. are shown as purely functional.
5. create a resort or retreat environment.
6. create a calming environment.
7. create a stylish environment.
8. reflect the lifestyle of celebrities or notable names.

The behavioral scale was created to assess respondents' intent to purchase lifestyle home furnishing products in the future. The scale was tested for reliability prior to distribution to the consumer sample. Reliability testing by the college group resulted in a Cronbach's alpha of .78.

Past consumption behavior.

Consumers' past consumption behavior to purchase lifestyle home furnishing products was developed to reflect the established elements of the

lifestyle construct. Using a 6-point rating scale (6 = *strongly agree* to 1 = *strongly disagree*), respondents indicated their level of agreement with the following eight statements: In the past, I have purchased home furnishings that...

1. tell a story or set a scene.
2. are arranged in room settings.
3. are celebrity endorsed.
4. are shown as purely functional.
5. create a resort or retreat environment.
6. create a calming environment.
7. create a stylish environment.
8. reflect the lifestyle of celebrities or notable names.

The consumption measure was created to ascertain survey participants' past purchase patterns of lifestyle home furnishing products. The scale was tested for reliability prior to distribution to the consumer sample. The college group was given the survey to test for reliability. Cronbach's alpha was .78.

In addition, past consumption patterns of general home furnishing products were assessed using magnitude data. Participants were asked to answer the following open-ended questions:

- How many home furnishing items have you purchased in the last 12 months?
- When was your last home furnishing product purchase?

The frequency of respondents home furnishing purchases was ascertained using a 6-point rating scale (1=0-6 months, 2=7-11 months, 3=1-5 years, 4=6-10 years, 5=11 or more years, 6=never). Survey participants were asked to respond to the following questions:

- How often do you buy large ticket (over \$2,000) home furnishing items?
- How often do you buy medium ticket (\$500-\$2,000) home furnishing items?
- How often do you buy small ticket (\$499-\$100) home furnishing items?
- How often do you buy decorative accessories (less than \$100) home furnishing items?

Brand identification.

In order to assess survey participants' recognition of lifestyle brands or collections, respondents were asked to indicate no or yes to the following question:

- Did you come into the store today to look for a particular brand or collection?

Affirmative responses prompted a listing of specific brands or collections for which participants were searching. Furthermore, respondents were asked to select retailers, manufacturers, and brands from a prepared list which they believed conveyed a lifestyle message. All brands, retailers, and manufacturers listed indicated through industry literature, slogans, mission statements, or advertisements that they were lifestyle brands or merchandisers (i.e. Gabbert's

Furniture[®], Martha Stewart Everyday[®], Drexel Heritage[®], Norwalk[®], Harvery's[®], Ralph Lauren[®] Home, Lexington[®] Home Brands, Humphrey Bogart[®] Collection, Robb & Stucky[®], Bob Timberlake[®], Tommy Bahama[®], Vanguard[®] Furniture, Dockers[®] Home, Ethan Allen[®], Thomasville[®] Furniture, Ernest Hemmingway[®] Collection, Ivory Coast[®] Collection, Pier 1 Imports[®]).

Media preference.

Rank order mean scores determined respondents' level of preference for various media. Survey participants were asked to rank (highest to lowest) frequency of media use to gather home furnishing product inspiration and information (i.e., magazines, television shows, television advertisements, radio, internet, showrooms, or other).

Shopping involvement.

Survey participants were asked to respond to a 10-item semantic differential scale that measured their level of involvement with respect to home furnishing purchases. A 6-point Likert scale was used, with 1 representing the lowest level of involvement and 6 representing the highest level. In order to test the reliability and internal consistency of the 10-item involvement scale, a Cronbach's Alpha was computed. The alpha value was found to be .9601 (See Table 3). This closely parallels the .95 alpha reported by Zaichowsky (1985) in her original study.

To ascertain an individual's involvement score, the involvement responses were summed and a mean score was calculated. The mean involvement score

was then calculated to reflect high, medium, and low degrees of involvement for each respondent. Mean involvement scores that of 1-2 were considered low involvement. Scores of 3-4 were considered medium involvement and scores of 5-6 were considered to reflect high involvement (Clements & Josiam, 1995; Josiam et al., 1999).

Demographic characteristics.

Gender, marital status, age, income, and education data were collected to describe the sample. Nominal data was used to measure gender and marital status. Ordinal data was used to describe age, income, and education.

Stage III – Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis

Data Collection

Upon completion of scale development and reliability testing, the survey instrument was submitted to a panel of research professionals for review. Several formatting and verbiage changes were made for participants' ease of understanding. However, no revisions affected either the fundamental meaning or interpretable meaning as questions were originally composed. The survey instrument was then reassessed by a second panel of experts and subsequently reviewed for validity. The research methodology and instrument were approved by an Institutional Review Board on the use of human subjects in research.

The population for the quantitative portion of the study consisted of consumers in a metropolitan statistical area of a state in the Southwest who have purchased or intend to purchase home furnishing products within the next year.

For this purpose, convenience sampling ($N = 100$) was used to collect data. Surveys were distributed through local retailers that carried at least one lifestyle line or applied lifestyle merchandising in their retail stores. Surveys were distributed to customers of the participating retailer as they left the store. As an incentive, survey participants were entered into a drawing for a \$50 gift certificate redeemable with the participating retailer. The winner was notified by mail and the participating retailer kept a record of the winner.

Data Analysis

Data were compiled and analyzed using the Statistical Program for Social Sciences[®] 12.0 for Windows[®] (SPSS). Descriptive statistics including frequency distributions and percentages were used to depict sample characteristics such as recent purchase behavior. Frequency analyses described the demographic characteristics of the sample. Rank order frequency described respondents' advertising media preferences when collecting information about home furnishings. Identification of lifestyle retailers and manufacturers were collected using frequency analysis.

The effect of lifestyle orientation on attitudes towards lifestyle merchandising and attitudes toward lifestyle advertising was determined by Pearson correlation analysis. Multiple linear regression analysis was then performed on the variables that indicated significant correlation in order to determine if lifestyle orientation was a predictor of attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising or attitudes toward lifestyle advertising. See Table 3.

Pearson correlation analysis was employed to determine if lifestyle orientation, attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising and attitude toward lifestyle advertising of home furnishing products predicted behavioral intention to purchase lifestyle home furnishing products. Again, multiple linear regression was employed on the variables that indicated significant relationships in order to identify predictors of behavioral intention to purchase lifestyle home furnishings products. See Table 3.

Table 3. Summary of statistical tests used for data analysis of research variables.

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Statistical Procedures
<u>Objective 2</u>		
Lifestyle Orientation	Attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising	Pearson correlation/ Multiple linear regression
Lifestyle Orientation	Attitudes toward lifestyle advertising	Pearson correlation/ Multiple linear regression
<u>Objective 3</u>		
Lifestyle Orientation	Behavioral Intentions	Pearson correlation/ Multiple linear regression
Attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising	Behavioral Intentions	Pearson correlation/ Multiple linear regression
Attitudes toward lifestyle advertising	Behavioral Intentions	Pearson correlation/ Multiple linear regression

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Descriptive Characteristics

One hundred consumers were surveyed to explore their recognition of lifestyle home furnishing brands. The relationship between consumers' lifestyle orientation, attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising, attitudes toward lifestyle advertising, and behavioral intention to purchase lifestyle home furnishing products were investigated also. In addition, consumers' consumption characteristics, degree of involvement, and media preference for information concerning lifestyle brands were identified.

Sample Characteristics

Descriptive statistics, including frequency distribution and percentages described the sample. A demographic profile of the survey respondents indicated that most were female (83%). The majority of respondents were married (63%). The largest percentage (37%) was between the ages of 18 and 30. Fifty-three percent of the survey participants had college degrees (41% bachelor's degree, 12% graduate degree). Sixty-three percent of respondents denoted annual household incomes of \$69,999 or less and 39.3% indicating incomes of \$70,000 or more. Eleven percent of respondents chose not to disclose their annual income, see Table 4.

Table 4. Demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency (N = 100)	Percent
Gender		
Male	17	17.0
Female	83	83.0
Marital Status		
Married	63	63.0
Single/ Widow(er)	37	37.0
Age		
18-30	37	37.0
31-40	24	24.0
41-50	25	25.0
51-60	12	12.0
Over 60	2	2.0
Education		
Some college or less	39	39.0
Associate or two year degree	6	6.0
Bachelor's degree	41	41.0
Graduate degree	12	12.0
Other	2	2.0
Income^a		
Less than \$30,000	24	30.0
\$30,000-\$49,999	14	15.3
\$50,000-\$69,999	16	18.0
\$70,000-\$89,999	13	14.6
\$90,000-\$109,999	12	13.5
\$110,000 or more	10	11.2
Missing values	11	11.0

Note: ^a 89 of 100 respondents indicated their annual household income. Therefore, percentages

for income were calculated from the 89 respondents that indicated income level.

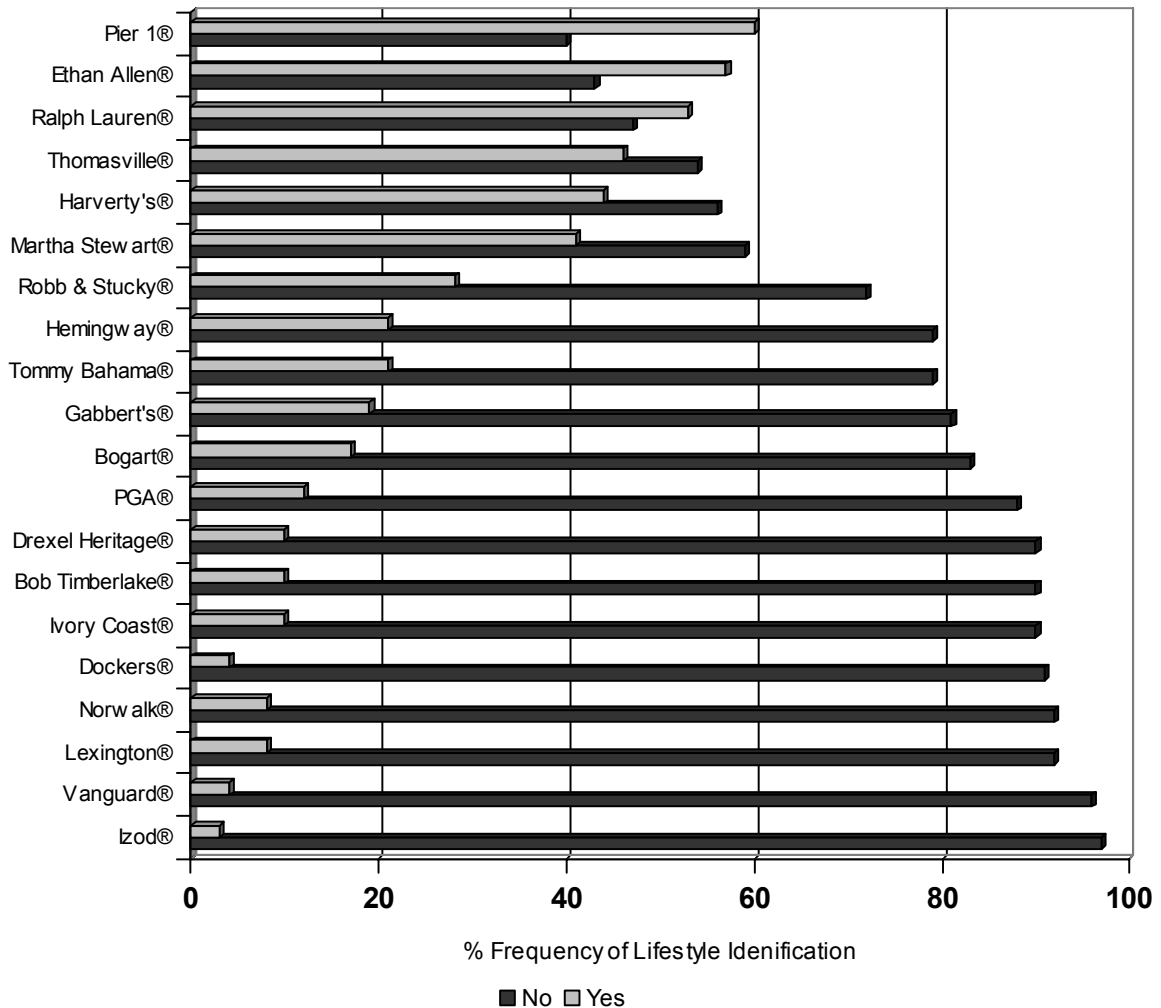
Descriptive Analysis

Objective 1

Objective one was to determine consumer recognition of lifestyle brands. Participants were asked to select from a list those retailers and manufacturers that they identified as being lifestyle brands, carrying lifestyle products, or implementing lifestyle merchandising. All brands on the list are identified as lifestyle brands in manufacturer-produced promotional material. A majority of respondents did not associate the lifestyle concept with the listed retailers, manufacturers, or brands (Figure 3).

In addition, respondents were asked if they were shopping for a particular brand. Ninety-six percent indicated that they did not look for a certain brand name of furnishings while in a retail showroom. The 4% of respondents that indicated a brand preference did not share significant similarities.

Figure 3. Frequencies: Respondents' identification of lifestyle-oriented marketers.



Objective 2

Lifestyle Orientation

The second objective of this study was to determine the effect of lifestyle orientation on attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising and attitudes toward lifestyle advertising. Due to the small number of respondents that identified with each of the lifestyle orientations, the six categories were organized to reflect available resources of each of the three self-orientation segments: principle

oriented, status oriented, and action oriented. Therefore, fulfilleds, achievers, and experiencers were merged to reflect lifestyle orientations with the greatest available resources. Believers, strivers, and makers were combined to represent the lifestyle orientations with the least available resources. Fifty-three percent of the sample indicated responses that categorized them into the self-orientation segment with the least available resources. The lifestyle orientation segment with the highest available resources was represented by 47% of the respondents. See Table 5.

Table 5. Distribution of lifestyle orientation.

High Resources (<i>n</i> =47)						Low Resources (<i>n</i> =53)					
Fulfilleds		Achievers		Experiencers		Believers		Strivers		Makers	
<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
26	55	8	17	13	28	22	42	10	19	21	40

Attitudes toward Lifestyle Merchandising

Using Cronbach's alpha the scale reliability of attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising tested was .84. Attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising variable resulted in a mean score of 3.26, with a standard deviation of .94. The median score of 3.38 indicated a normal sample distribution. Although respondents' scoring of the attitude construct were fairly neutral, participants with high availability of resources indicated higher mean scores ($M = 3.37$), as opposed to the low availability of resources ($M = 3.16$). See Table 6.

Table 6. Descriptive analysis of research variables.

	High Resources		Low Resources		Total	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising	3.37	0.78	3.16	1.05	3.26	0.94
Attitudes toward lifestyle advertising	3.06	1.00	2.83	1.10	2.94	1.05
Behavioral intention to purchase lifestyle home furnishings	3.18	0.815	2.86	0.996	3.01	0.907

Note: Table 6 represents the mean attitude and behavioral intention scores for the two lifestyle orientation groups (high availability of resources and low availability of resources). The attitude variables were scored on a 6-point scale (1 = *Doesn't interest me* to 6 = *Interests me*). The behavioral intention variable was scored on a 6-point scale (1 = *Strongly disagree* to 6 = *Strongly agree*)

In order to determine if significant difference in attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising existed between the two lifestyle orientation categories, an independent-samples *t*-test was employed. Results indicated no significant difference between respondents with a high availability of resources and those with a low availability of resources ($t = 1.13, df = 98, p = .26$).

Analysis of each of the lifestyle merchandising attributes indicated respondents' disfavor for lifestyle merchandising that reflected an association with celebrities or notable names. The lifestyle attributes that reflected storytelling, room settings, functionality, retreats or resorts, and calming and stylish environments had more favorable scores. See Table 7.

Table 7. Mean scores for lifestyle merchandising attributes.

Lifestyle Merchandising Attributes	Mean	SD
Home furnishings that are arranged in room settings	4.17	1.38
Home furnishings that create a calming environment	4.01	1.35
Home furnishings that create a stylish environment	3.96	1.48
Home furnishings that create a resort or retreat environment	3.42	1.46
Home furnishings that are shown as purely functional	3.41	1.36
Home furnishings that tell a story or set a scene	3.34	1.47
Home furnishings that reflect the lifestyle of celebrities	1.90	1.18
Home furnishings that are celebrity endorsed	1.87	1.36

Note: The attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising were scored on a 6-point scale (1 = *Doesn't interest me* to 6 = *Interests me*).

Attitudes toward Lifestyle Advertising

The reliability of the scale used to measure attitudes toward lifestyle advertising was tested using Cronbach's Alpha resulting in alpha values .88. Respondents' attitude toward lifestyle advertising resulted in a mean score of 2.94, with a standard deviation of 1.05. The median score was found to be 3.06, resulting in a normal distribution of scores. Survey participants' scoring of the attitude constructs were found to be neutral. See Table 6. Subjects with a high availability of resources ($M = 3.06$) indicated higher mean scores than their counterparts ($M = 2.83$).

An independent-samples *t*-test was conducted to determine if significant differences existed among the lifestyle advertising attitude scores for the two lifestyle orientation categories. Results of the parametric test indicated no

significant differences in attitudes toward lifestyle advertising between the lifestyle groups delineated by availability of resources ($t = 1.11, df = 98, p = .27$).

Examination of mean attitude scores for each lifestyle advertising attribute revealed interesting findings. The lifestyle attributes that reflected characteristics or association with celebrities were scored very low by respondents. The lifestyle attributes that reflected the elements of storytelling, room settings, functionality, escapes or retreats, calming and stylish environment scored on the higher end of the 6-point scale. See Table 8.

Table 8. Mean scores for lifestyle advertising attributes.

Lifestyle Advertising Attributes	Mean	SD
Home furnishings that are arranged in room settings	3.62	1.54
Home furnishings that create a calming environment	3.49	1.49
Home furnishings that create a stylish environment	3.47	1.59
Home furnishings that are shown as purely functional	3.15	1.39
Home furnishings that create a resort or retreat environment	3.09	1.42
Home furnishings that tell a story or set a scene	2.84	1.48
Home furnishings that are celebrity endorsed	1.95	1.23
Home furnishings that reflect the lifestyle of celebrities	1.89	1.21

Note: The attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising were scored on a 6-point scale (1 = *Doesn't interest me* to 6 = *Interests me*).

A Pearson correlation analysis determined if significant relationships existed among lifestyle orientation, attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising and attitudes toward lifestyle advertising. As summarized in Table 9, because analysis yielded no significant correlations, multiple linear regression analysis was not performed.

Behavioral Intentions

The reliability of the behavioral intention scale using Cronbach's alpha was .79. Behavioral intention to purchase lifestyle home furnishing products resulted in a mean score of 3.01 with a standard deviation of .91. The median score of 3.00 indicated a normal distribution of scores. Respondents' scoring of the behavioral intention construct was found to be neutral. However, respondents with the highest level of available resources indicated a stronger intent to purchase lifestyle home furnishings ($M=3.05$), compared to those with low availability of resources ($M = 2.86$). See Table 6.

A parametric independent-samples *t*-test was used to determine if there were significant differences between the behavioral intention scores of the two lifestyle orientation groups. Analysis indicated no significant differences in behavioral intention to purchase lifestyle home furnishing products when delineating respondents by high or low resource availability.

Table 9. Correlation between independent and dependent research variables.

Independent Predictors	Correlation Coefficients (<i>N</i> = 100)		
	Dependent 1 Attitudes Lifestyle Merchandising	Dependent 2 Attitudes Lifestyle Advertising	Dependent 3 Behavioral Intention
	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i>
Lifestyle orientation with high / low resources	0.114	0.111	0.173
Attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising	-	0.774**	0.791**
Attitudes toward lifestyle advertising	-	-	0.642**

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Objective 3

Objective three was to determine if lifestyle orientation, attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising and attitudes toward lifestyle advertising are significant predictors of behavioral intention to purchase lifestyle home furnishing products. Correlation analysis was applied to determine if significant relationships existed. Pearson correlation revealed significant ($p < .01$) relationships among all variables except the lifestyle orientation concept. Attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising ($r = .791$, $p < .01$), and attitudes toward lifestyle advertising ($r = .642$, $p < .01$) significantly correlated with behavioral intention. See Table 9.

Multiple linear regression was employed with the correlated dependent behavioral intention variable and independent attitude variables. Analysis showed that attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising was the only significant predictor of behavioral intention to purchase lifestyle home furnishings ($\beta=0.735$, $p<.01$), see Figure 4.

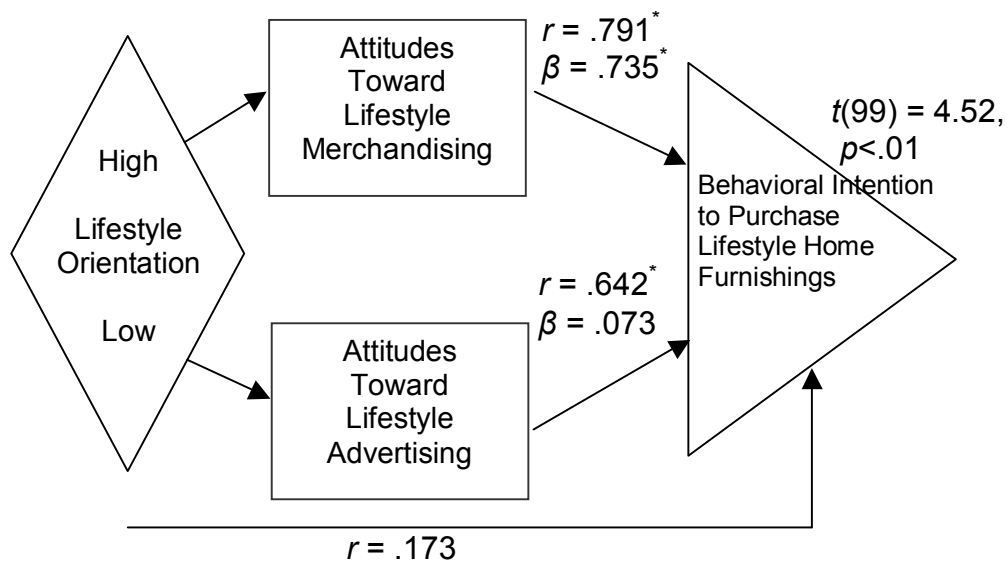


Figure 4. Multiple Linear Regression analysis of the independent lifestyle orientation and attitudes variables and the dependent behavioral intention variable.

Note: Objectives 2 & 3 are depicted in Figure 4. The first step (Objective 2) identified the variables that significantly correlated with behavioral intention to purchase lifestyle home furnishings products. The second step (Objective 3) employed multiple regression in order to determine which of the significantly correlated variables was a significant predictor of behavioral intention.

$$R^2 = .628, F = 81.923, df = 2$$

* $p < .01$

Objective 4

Consumption Characteristics

The fourth objective of the study was to identify consumption behavior, degree of involvement, and media preferences for information concerning lifestyle home furnishing brands. The samples' consumption behavior for purchasing home furnishings was assessed through frequency distributions and percentages. A majority of the respondents (71%) indicated they had purchased at least one home furnishing product in the past 12 months. In addition, of the participants who recently bought home furnishings, 55% purchased between one and five items. See Table 10.

Table 10. Consumption characteristics.

Home Furnishing Consumption	Frequency (<i>N</i> = 100)	Percentages
Purchased home furnishings within the last 12 months		
Yes	71	71.0
No	29	29.0
Number of home furnishings purchases within last 12 months		
1-5	39	55.0
6-10	24	34.0
11-15	1	1.0
16-20	4	6.0
More than 20	3	4.0

(Table continues).

Table 10. (continued)

Home Furnishing Consumption	Frequency (N = 100)	Percentages
Incidence of home furnishings purchases:		
Large Ticket Items (over \$2,000)		
0-6 months	4	4.0
7-11 months	5	5.0
1-5 years	15	15.0
6-10 years	27	27.0
11 or more years	32	32.0
Never	17	17.0
Medium Ticket Items (\$500-\$2,000)		
0-6 months	4	4.0
7-11 months	13	13.0
1-5 years	43	43.0
6-10 years	21	21.0
11 or more years	12	12.0
Never	7	7.0
Small Ticket Items (\$100-\$499)		
0-6 months	20	20.0
7-11 months	33	33.0
1-5 years	27	27.0
6-10 years	7	7.0
11 or more years	8	8.0
Never	5	5.0

(Table continues).

Table 10. (continued)

Home Furnishing Consumption	Frequency (N = 100)	Percentages
Decorative Accessories (< than \$100)		
0-6 months	62	62.0
7-11 months	20	20.0
1-5 years	8	8.0
6-10 years	4	4.0
11 or more years	6	6.0
Never	0	0

Note: The recency and quantity of survey participants' home furnishing purchases was determined by respondents indicating how many home furnishing items they had purchased in the last 12 months. The recency of participants' home furnishing purchases was determined by respondents indicating the date of their last purchase. The expenditure frequency of participants' home furnishing purchases was determined by respondents indicating how often they purchase large ticket items (over \$2,000), medium ticket items (\$500-\$2,000), small ticket items (\$100-\$499), and decorative accessories (under \$100). A 6-point scale was used (1 = 0-6 months, 2 = 7-11 months, 3 = 1-5 years, 4 = 6-10 years, 5 = 11 or more years, 6 = never).

The frequency of respondents' home furnishing purchases was assessed also. The largest percentage of respondents (32%) indicated that they purchased large ticket (over \$2,000) home furnishings every eleven or more years. Forty-three percent of participants purchased medium ticket (\$500-\$2,000) items every one to five years. Thirty-three percent of survey participants indicated that they bought small ticket (\$100-\$499) home furnishings every seven to eleven months. Sixty-two percent of respondents purchased decorative accessories (less than \$100) every zero to six months. See Table 10.

Degree of Involvement

To ascertain an individual's involvement score, the involvement responses were summed and a mean score was calculated. The mean involvement score was 4.08, with a standard deviation of 1.33. The median score was found to be 4.40. The mean involvement score was then calculated to reflect high, medium, and low degrees of involvement for each respondent. Low involvement (Low = 1-2) scores were represented by 22% of survey participants, 46% indicated medium involvement (Medium = 3-4) scores, and 30% indicated high involvement (High = 5-6) scores.

Media Preference

Respondents ranked seven resources based on their preference for using them to search for information regarding home furnishing purchases: watching television shows, listening to the radio, browsing Internet, watching television advertisements, reading magazines, looking at catalogs, and visiting showrooms. The majority of participants (56%) indicated that reading magazines was their most preferred media for gathering information. Twenty percent of respondents preferred getting home furnishing inspiration from television shows. Eleven percent of survey participants indicated that they gathered information regarding home furnishings from showrooms or catalogs, while 2% preferred television advertisements.

Past Consumption Behavior

Respondents' past consumption behavior to purchase lifestyle home furnishings was assessed and compared with intended behavior to purchase lifestyle home furnishing products. The scale reliability resulted in Cronbach's alpha of .80. Participants' past consumption behavior to purchase lifestyle home furnishing products resulted in a mean score of 2.27 with a standard deviation of .85. The median score was 2.25 indicating a normal distribution.

The following chapter summarizes and provides further discussion of the findings. Implications for retailers and manufacturers will also be presented in the proceeding chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION & SUMMARY

Despite the notable number of lifestyle merchandising and advertising strategies being used in the home furnishings industry, there is limited research regarding the effectiveness of these strategies. The purpose of this research was to explore consumers' attitudes and perceptions of the lifestyle concept. Consequently, the following research objects were established: (1) to determine consumers' recognition of lifestyle brands; (2) to determine the effect of lifestyle orientation on attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising, attitudes toward lifestyle advertising and behavioral intention to purchase lifestyle home furnishing products; (3) to determine if lifestyle orientation, attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising and attitudes toward lifestyle advertising were predictors of behavioral intention to purchase lifestyle home furnishing products; and (4) to identify consumption characteristics, degree of involvement, and media preference for information concerning lifestyle brands. Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) theory of reasoned action was used as a theoretical framework with minor modifications. A number of elements influence consumers' intent to purchase home furnishings. In recent years, the consumer trend has reflected the desire to feather the nest or to furnish the home to reflect a personality, attitude, or way of life. Retailers and manufacturers are employing unique strategies in order to capitalize on these trends. The buzzword in the industry and one of the more

popular strategies is the adoption of lifestyle merchandising and advertising into marketing mixes in order to influence consumers purchase decisions.

Several consumer behavior variables and descriptors were investigated in this study in order to gain a greater understanding and awareness of consumers' perceptions of the lifestyle constructs (i.e. lifestyle orientation, attitudes, and behavioral intention) as they relate to lifestyle home furnishings. Analysis of these variables offered noteworthy findings, insight, and implications for the home furnishings industry.

Conclusion

Consumer Recognition of Lifestyle Brands

The first objective of this study was to determine consumers' recognition of lifestyle brands. Respondents were asked to identify home furnishing brands, retailers, and manufacturers they believed conveyed a lifestyle marketing approach. A majority did not regard the listed entities as conveying a lifestyle message. These findings may suggest that consumers are unable to define the lifestyle concept. Retailers and manufacturers may not be communicating the lifestyle message clearly to consumers.

Effect of Lifestyle Orientation on Attitudes toward Lifestyle Merchandising, Attitudes toward Lifestyle Advertising, and Behavioral Intention

The second objective of this study investigated lifestyle orientation as a predictor of attitudes toward the lifestyle concept and behavioral intention to purchase lifestyle home furnishings. The psychographic segmentation of

consumers into lifestyle orientations had no significant effect on consumers' attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising, attitudes toward lifestyle advertising, or behavioral intentions. These findings may be explained by the inherent characteristics of lifestyle marketing within the industry. Many lifestyle retailers and manufacturers are re-evaluating traditional marketing strategies and examining the consumer/brand relationship and experience as a whole. Thus, the tactics being developed to communicate the lifestyle concept are taking into account more than just the lifestyle orientation of the consumer.

Although lifestyle orientation is a valuable and widely used tool for delineating a diverse consumer market, these segmentations were not significant determinates of consumers' preference for the various elements of the lifestyle construct. Moreover, retailers and manufacturers are not simply designing and creating home furnishing collections that target the needs of a specific psychographic segment, but rather creating a lifestyle being aspired to obtain. For example, although Thomasville's[®] Tommy Bahama[®] collection may be marketed to consumers that live the casual, laid back, carefree lifestyle, the collection also creates the illusion of a lifestyle. Through furnishing assortments and advertisements, consumers who either live or aspire to live the Tommy Bahama[®] lifestyle may indeed do so.

Lifestyle Orientation, Attitudes toward Lifestyle Merchandising and Attitudes toward Lifestyle Advertising as Predictors of Behavior Intention to Purchase Lifestyle Home Furnishings

The third objective of this study was to explore lifestyle orientation, attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising and attitudes toward lifestyle advertising as predictors of consumers' intent to purchase lifestyle home furnishing products. Although significant correlations existed among attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising, attitudes toward lifestyle advertising, and behavioral intention, respondents indicated fairly neutral feelings toward most of the variables' lifestyle attributes. However, survey participants indicated unfavorable attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising and advertising that reflected an association with celebrities or notable names. These findings could reflect consumers growing skepticism toward Hollywood and the media due to the recent number of highly publicized scandals involving celebrities. Consumers may also view product/celebrity associations as a gauge for product quality, as opposed to inspiration for style preference (Hawkins et al., 2001).

Multiple regression analysis indicated that respondents' attitudes toward lifestyle advertising were not a significant predictor of behavioral intention. This study would suggest that retailers and manufacturers that are employing the lifestyle construct into their marketing strategies are not successfully communicating the same lifestyle message to their consumers via the various advertising outlets.

Conversely, attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising were a significant predictor of behavioral intention to purchase lifestyle collections. The relationships among attitudes toward lifestyle merchandising and behavioral intention were significant; however respondents scored these elements as fairly neutral. These findings might possibly be another indication of consumers' inability to identify and define the lifestyle construct. Although consumers may be unclear as to what delineates a lifestyle brand, retailer, or manufacturer, *t*-test analysis indicated respondents modest intent to purchase home furnishings that reflect the various lifestyle attributes in the future.

In addition, the current home furnishings market environment offers many examples of successful implementations of the lifestyle concept. These success stories coupled with findings from this study indicate consumers' positive response to lifestyle merchandising. One might conclude that consumers "know what they like when they see it" without having to define it.

Moreover these findings may be an indication that retailers and manufacturers are connecting with consumers on a greater level. The home furnishings industry is realizing the value of knowing the customer, developing and nurturing relationships with the consumer, and gaining a greater understanding of the customers' needs and wants. This awareness is allowing retailers and manufacturers to create collections and assortments that satisfy consumers on a physical, emotional, and psychological level.

Identify Consumption Characteristics, Degree of Involvement, and Media Preference for Information Concerning Lifestyle Brands

The fourth research objective was to identify consumption characteristics, degree of involvement, and media preference for information concerning lifestyle brands. Respondents in this study rated involvement to be relatively low, when compared to other involvement research. These findings may be explained by the nature of the lifestyle concept. This study cited a number of retailers and manufacturers that are implementing lifestyle merchandising into their retail formats in order to make the shopping experience easier for the consumer. As the purchase decisions to invest in home furnishings become less challenging, thus less risk perceived by the consumer, the level of personal involvement begins to decrease. Furthermore, this may be another indication that the home furnishings industry is beginning to build stronger relationships with its customers, thus decreasing a buyer's hesitation.

Study Limitations

The findings from this study may not be generalizable to the population as a whole, because only patrons of home furnishing retail stores that carried one or more lifestyle brands or that employed lifestyle merchandising were surveyed. Although the intent was to target consumers who had been exposed to lifestyle merchandising and advertising, this selective sampling may have excluded important socio-economic groups. The majority of retailers that carried lifestyle collections or that use lifestyle merchandising are typically higher-end

establishments. Thus, consumers who cannot afford high-end furnishings may not have been present in the selected stores during data collection.

An additional limitation of this study was the small sample size ($N=100$). Due to the diminutive number of respondents that identified with each of the lifestyle orientations, the six categories were grouped to reflect available resources of each of the three self-orientation segments: principle oriented, status oriented, and action oriented. Thus, fulfilleds, achievers, and experiencers were combined to represent lifestyle orientations with the greatest available resources. Believers, strivers, and makers were combined to represent the lifestyle orientations with the least resources at their disposal.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are many aspects of the lifestyle concept that, if investigated could provide valuable information for retailers and manufacturers. Understanding consumers' perceptions of merchandising and advertising tactics can lead to more targeted and effective communication approaches. Recommendations for future research in the area of lifestyle merchandising and lifestyle advertising are discussed in this section.

A primary issue with regard to the lifestyle concept is the lack of a formal or established definition of lifestyle merchandising and lifestyle advertising. Future studies could explore the need and methods for developing a standardized definition. A larger sample of consumers and industry professionals would lend itself to comparative content analysis of various consumer segments' and industries' definition of the lifestyle construct.

Another aspect of lifestyle merchandising and advertising that could reveal significant implications for the home furnishings industry would be consumers' perceptions or differentiations of lifestyle merchandising as compared to traditional strategies of merchandising. Comparing the effect the two types of merchandising strategies have on consumers could reveal the effectiveness of each, by analyzing attitudes and past purchase patterns.

The concept of the brand and brand community plays an integral role in the effectiveness of lifestyle merchandising and lifestyle advertising. Future research could examine these specific roles. It would also be beneficial to

explore if and how the home furnishings industry could employ brand community concepts in order to increase awareness and preference for lifestyle collections.

Results of this study indicated that lifestyle advertising efforts may not be resonating with consumers. Future studies could compare advertising expenditure and lifestyle brand awareness. In addition, evaluating the media used to communicate the lifestyle message and lifestyle brand awareness could offer valuable insight into effective means of conveying the lifestyle concept to consumers.

Numerous implications of lifestyle merchandising and lifestyle advertising exist in today's home furnishings industry. Despite its abundant use further empirical research is needed to better understand consumers perceptions of the lifestyle construct, as well as its effectiveness as a selling tool.

APPENDIX

Trademarks, Brand Names, and Holding Entities

Trademarked Brand or Product	Entity Holding Trademark	Headquarters Location	Company Website
Century® Furniture	Century Furniture Industries	Hickory, NC	www.centuryfurniture.com
De Boer's®	De Boer's Furniture Stores	Toronto, Ontario	www.deboers.com
Dockers® Home & Luggage	Dockers, Inc.	San Francisco, CA	www.levistrauss.com
Drexel Heritage®	Drexel Heritage Furniture Industries, Inc.	High Point, NC	www.drexelheritage.com
Grand Salon® and Circle G Ranch®	Gabberts Furniture & Design Studio	Edina, MN	www.gabberts.com
Harley-Davidson Motor Company®	Harley-Davidson, Inc.	Milwaukee, WI	www.harley-davidson.com
Home & Garden Television® (HGTV)	Scripps Howard Broadcasting Company	Knoxville, TN	www.hgtv.com
Izod® Home, Izod® Resort, Izod® Spa, and Izod® Sport	Phillips-Van Heusen Corporation	New York, NY	www.pvh.com
Jeep® and Camp Jeep®	DaimlerChrysler Corporation	Auburn Hills, MI	www.daimlerchrysler.com
Joe Ruggiero Collection®	Ruggerio Ideas®, Joseph Ruggiero & Associates	Los Angeles, CA	www.ruggieroidesas.com
Lexington® Home, Lynn Hollyn at Home®, Tommy Bahama®, Betsy Cameron® Home	Lexington Home Brands	Lexington, NC	www.lexington.com
Martha Stewart Everyday®	Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, Inc	New York, NY	www.marthastewart.com
Microsoft Windows® Operating System	Microsoft Corporation	Redmond, WA	www.microsoft.com
Nike® and Just Do It®	Nike Inc.	Portland, OR	www.nike.com
Norwalk® Furniture	Norwalk Furniture Corporation	Norwalk, OH	www.norwalkfurniture.com
Oscar de la Renta® Home	Oscar de la Renta, Ltd.	New York, NY	www.oscardelarenta.com
Ralph Lauren®, Ralph Lauren Home Collection®	Polo Ralph Lauren Corporation	New York, NY	www.polo.com
SPSS® 12.0	SPSS, Inc.	Chicago, IL	www.spss.com
Standard® Furniture	Standard Furniture Manufacturing Company, Inc.	Bay Minette, AL	www.standard-furniture.com
Starbucks®	Starbucks Coffee Company	Seattle, WA	www.starbucks.com
Thomasville® Furniture, Ernest Hemingway® Collection, Humphrey Bogart® Collection	Thomasville Furniture Industries, Inc.	Thomasville, NC	www.thomasville.com
Vanguard®	Vanguard Furniture, Inc.	Hickory, NC	www.vanguardfurniture.com
Vera Wang® Home	Vera Wang Bridal House, Ltd.	New York, NY	www.verawang.com
Wedgwood®	Waterford Wedgwood, Plc.	Dublin, Ireland	www.waterfordwedgwood.com
Westin La Cantera Resort®	Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc.	White Plains, NY	www.starwoodhotels.com
World of Bob Timberlake®	Bob Timberlake, Inc.	Lexington, NC	www.bobtimberlake.com



UNIVERSITY of NORTH TEXAS

School of Merchandising and Hospitality Management

April 12, 2003

Dear Consumer:

To better understand what drives a consumer to purchase home furnishing products (i.e., furniture, accessories, and other décor items) the School of Merchandising and Hospitality Management at the University of North Texas is conducting a consumer behavior-related research study. The results of this study will be used as a resource for home furnishings manufacturers and retailers to better meet the needs of consumers.

I understand that by returning this survey, I am giving my informed consent as a participating volunteer in this study. I understand the basic nature of this study and agree that any potential risks are exceedingly small. I also understand the potential benefits that might be realized from the successful completion of this study. I am aware that the information is being sought in a specific manner so that no identifiers are needed and so that confidentiality is guaranteed. I realize that I have the right to refuse to participate and that my right to withdraw from participation at any time during the study will be respected with no coercion or prejudice.

NOTE: You must be of age 18 or older to participate in this survey. Questions or concerns about participation in research or subsequent complaints should be addressed first to the researchers Jennifer Wilbanks, *Graduate Student* at (940) 369-7270, or Lynn Brandon, Ph.D., *Associate Professor* at (940) 565-2439. This project has been reviewed and approved by the UNT Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (940-565-3940).

Please remember in appreciation for your help, we would like to place your name in a raffle for a \$50.00 gift certificate to Ethan Allen®.

Thank you for your help in this research effort. Should you have any questions or desire further information, please call me at (940) 369-7270.

Sincerely,

APPROVED BY THE UNT IRB
FROM 10/24/03 TO 10/23/04
[Signature]

Jennifer Wilbanks
Graduate Student

Dr. Lynn Brandon
Committee Chair

Home furnishings are defined as furniture, accessories, and home décor items (excludes appliances and electronic entertainment items)

SECTION I Please rate the following items on the given scale by **CIRCLING ONE** number that indicates your feelings.

\$ **Buying home furnishings is...**

Unimportant	1	2	3	4	5	6	Important
Boring	1	2	3	4	5	6	Interesting
Means nothing to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	Means a lot to me
Worthless	1	2	3	4	5	6	Valuable
Not beneficial	1	2	3	4	5	6	Beneficial
Irrelevant	1	2	3	4	5	6	Relevant
Unexciting	1	2	3	4	5	6	Exciting
Unappealing	1	2	3	4	5	6	Appealing
Nonessential	1	2	3	4	5	6	Essential
Not needed	1	2	3	4	5	6	Needed

Ads **Looking at ads for home furnishings products...**

Unimportant	1	2	3	4	5	6	Important
Boring	1	2	3	4	5	6	Interesting
Means nothing to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	Means a lot to me
Worthless	1	2	3	4	5	6	Valuable
Not beneficial	1	2	3	4	5	6	Beneficial
Irrelevant	1	2	3	4	5	6	Relevant
Unexciting	1	2	3	4	5	6	Exciting
Unappealing	1	2	3	4	5	6	Appealing
Nonessential	1	2	3	4	5	6	Essential
Not needed	1	2	3	4	5	6	Needed

SECTION II This section includes statements regarding your attitude toward home furnishings companies and their ads. Please **CIRCLE** the number that indicates your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.



In Stores



In Advertisements

Looking at home furnishings that...	Doesn't interest me						Interest me					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
tell a story or set a scene	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
are arranged in room settings	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
are celebrity endorsed	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
are shown as purely functional	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
create a resort or retreat environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
create a safe and calming environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
create a stylish environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
reflect the lifestyle of celebrities or notable names	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6

SECTION III Please **rank** the following resources based on your preference for using them to search for information regarding home furnishing purchases. **RANK** all that apply by indicating **1 for 1st preference, 2 for 2nd preference, so on..**

- I gather information and ideas about home furnishing products from the following sources
(rank all that apply)
- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| ___ watching television shows | ___ internet | ___ reading magazines | ___ visiting show rooms |
| ___ listening to the radio | ___ watching television advertisements | ___ catalogs | |

SECTION IV This section includes statements regarding your **ACTUAL** and **INTENDED** furnishing purchase. Please **CIRCLE** the number that indicates your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.



In the PAST, I have purchased home furnishing items that...

In the FUTURE, I INEND to buy home furnishing that...

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree					
tell a story or set a scene	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
are arranged in room settings	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
are celebrity endorsed	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
are shown as purely functional	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
create a resort or retreat environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
create a safe and calming environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
create a stylish environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
reflect the lifestyle of celebrities or notable names	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6

SECTION V This section includes statements regarding your **purchasing** of home furnishing products. Please **CHECK** or **WRITE IN** the answer that best describes your purchase patterns.

HOW MANY home furnishing items have you purchased in the last 12 months?

WHEN was your last home furnishing product purchase? _____

How **OFTEN** do you buy home furnishing products? _____

	1 = 0-6 months	2 = 7-11 months	3 = 1-5 years	4 = 6-10 years	5 = 11 or more	6 = never
<i>Large ticket items (over \$2,000)</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Medium ticket items (\$500-\$2,000)</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Small ticket items (\$100-\$499)</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
<i>Decorative Accessories (less than \$100)</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6

Did you come into the store today to look for a particular brand or collection?

No Yes, which one(s) _____

Which of the following would you say are *lifestyle* brands, collections, or retailers?
(check all that apply)

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gabberts | <input type="checkbox"/> Ralph Lauren Home | <input type="checkbox"/> Bob Timberlake | <input type="checkbox"/> Thomasville Furniture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Martha Stewart Home | <input type="checkbox"/> Lexington Home Brands | <input type="checkbox"/> Tommy Bahama | <input type="checkbox"/> Ernest Hemingway |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drexel Heritage | <input type="checkbox"/> Humphrey Bogart | <input type="checkbox"/> Vanguard Furniture | <input type="checkbox"/> PGA Tour collection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Norwalk Furniture | <input type="checkbox"/> Izod Home | <input type="checkbox"/> Dockers Home | <input type="checkbox"/> Ivory Coast Collection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Havertys | <input type="checkbox"/> Robb & Stucky | <input type="checkbox"/> Ethan Allen | <input type="checkbox"/> Pier 1 Imports |

SECTION VI The following questions will be used for descriptive purposes only. Please **CHECK** or **WRITE IN** the answer that best describes you.

What is your gender? Male Female

What is your current marital status? Married Single Widow(er)

What age group do you fall into?

under 18 18-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 over 60

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Some college or less Associate or two year college degree Bachelor's degree
 Graduate degree (Master's, PhD, MD, etc) Other (Please specify) _____

(Optional) Please check the category representing your annual household income.

Less than \$30,000 \$30,000-\$49,999 \$50,000-\$69,999
 \$70,000-\$89,999 \$90,000-\$109,999 \$110,000 or more

SECTION VII	This section includes statements regarding how you view your personality and lifestyle Please CHECK ONE of the following boxes that best describes you.
--------------------	--

✓ Please check one

<input style="width: 100%; height: 100%;" type="checkbox"/> <input style="width: 100%; height: 100%;" type="checkbox"/>	I am successful and deeply committed to work, family, and community. I like predictability and consistency over risk. My work affords me material rewards and prestige that shows my success to my friends.
<input style="width: 100%; height: 100%;" type="checkbox"/> <input style="width: 100%; height: 100%;" type="checkbox"/>	I like to be trendy. I want to be stylish and admire people who are well known for their success and/ or wealth. Although difficult at times, making money is a goal in my life.
<input style="width: 100%; height: 100%;" type="checkbox"/> <input style="width: 100%; height: 100%;" type="checkbox"/>	I am a mature, self-assured, well-educated professional. I am content with my career, family, and doing leisure activities around the house. I buy durable, functional products with value for the money.
<input style="width: 100%; height: 100%;" type="checkbox"/> <input style="width: 100%; height: 100%;" type="checkbox"/>	My activities center around home, family, and community. I prefer American products. I am not wealthy, but I meet my needs sufficiently.
<input style="width: 100%; height: 100%;" type="checkbox"/> <input style="width: 100%; height: 100%;" type="checkbox"/>	I am young, impulsive, and rebellious at times. I seek variety and excitement through new, offbeat, and risky activities and things. Exercise, sports, outdoor recreation, and social activities are important to me.
<input style="width: 100%; height: 100%;" type="checkbox"/> <input style="width: 100%; height: 100%;" type="checkbox"/>	I am old fashion and I focus all of my interest on family and hard work. I'd rather buy things that have a practical purpose. When I want something done right, I do it myself.

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