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Lifestyle Segmentation

From Attitudes, Interests and Opinions, to Values, Aesthetic Styles, Life Visions and Media Preferences

▌ *Patrick Vyncke*

ABSTRACT

▌ Nowhere in the field of mass communication research has the concept of 'lifestyle' been so prominently and fruitfully used as in the field of marketing communication, where it has been shown that lifestyles influence both consumption patterns and the processing of different forms of marketing communication. Therefore, the lifestyle concept has become the core of a special kind of segmentation research called 'psychographics'. This psychographic or lifestyle research usually takes as its point of departure extensive and ad hoc AIO (activities, interests and opinions) surveys, which then lead to often very colourful and useful lifestyle typologies using the technique of cluster analysis. In this article, new approaches to constructing lifestyle typologies are developed using the more general and stable concepts of values, aesthetic styles and life visions. Their applicability, both in isolation and in combination, to form meaningful lifestyle typologies is compared to traditional demographic segmentation criteria such as gender, age, social class and stage of life. This is done in four different markets: goods (cars), services (tourism), not-for-profit (political parties) and media (television programmes, films and magazines). In each of these markets, we compare the different segmentation systems in terms of most wanted product attributes or benefits as found in a survey using a quota sample of the Flemish adult population. It is found that values, aesthetic styles and life visions – either alone or in combination – can lead to very balanced and meaningful

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lifestyle typologies. In all four markets studied here, these lifestyle segmentations clearly surpass classic demographic segmentations in yielding significant differences in terms of product attribute or benefit evaluation. Finally, the research results clearly demonstrate the value of a media section as an essential part of a lifestyle questionnaire. ∎

Key Words   aesthetic styles, lifestyles, life visions, market segmentation, psychographics, values

Introduction

An organization that decides to operate in some market – whether consumer, industrial, re-seller or government – must recognize that it normally cannot equally serve all the customers in that market. These customers may be too numerous, too widely scattered and especially too heterogeneous in their needs and wants. Recognizing that those heterogeneous markets are actually made up of a number of smaller homogeneous submarkets, Smith (1956) introduced the concept of market segmentation – the process of dividing the total market into several relatively homogeneous groups with similar product or service interests, with similar needs and desires. From then on, market segmentation became the core concept of fine-tuned target marketing and communication campaigns.

Of course, many criteria can be used to assign potential customers to homogeneous groups. Commonly, these variables are grouped into three general categories (e.g. Gunter and Furnham, 1992: 4):

- *Product-specific, behavioural attribute segmentations* classify consumers focusing upon their purchase behaviour within the relevant product category or the benefits the consumer expects to derive from a product category.
- *General, physical attribute segmentations* of consumers, which use such easily observable criteria as geographic, demographic or socioeconomic variables to create homogeneous target markets.
- *General, psychological attribute segmentations,* which utilize profiles of consumers developed either from standardized personality inventories or, more recently, from lifestyle analyses. This kind of segmentation is often called 'psychographics'.

Of course, in the end, the target group needs to be profiled on all three descriptive levels. However, in this article we focus on psychographics, and especially on lifestyles as a targeting criterion, because these data are

of most value for communication managers. Indeed, since different brands within a product category are often hard to distinguish in terms of physical product attributes, many advertisers now profile their brand on rather psychological dimensions (Biel, 1992). Or, as Hornik (1989) points out, the basic premise of psychographics is that the more we know about people's lifestyle, the more effectively we can communicate with them. Correspondingly, research by Chiagouris (1991) has shown that marketing communication is more effective when end-user lifestyle profiles are understood and reflected in the content of the message. This means that lifestyle research is of capital interest for communication managers to 'visualize' their audiences more effectively.

Psychographics

Psychographics was a term first introduced by Demby (1974), putting together 'psychology', and 'demographics'. He felt the need to put more psychological flesh on the purely geodemographic bones, to add the richness of the social and behavioural sciences to demographics, in order to enhance understanding of consumer behaviour, and to develop more adequate advertising strategies. Indeed, demographic segmentations provide relatively hollow classifications of consumers, which reveal nothing about the motives underlying their consumption decisions.

Now, the first wave of psychographic research was mainly rooted in personality profiles. The most frequently used scale for measuring general aspects of personality as a way to define homogeneous submarkets is Edward's Personal Preference Schedule. Many other personality traits have been used to try to segment markets, and even today some scholars keep this line of research alive (see, for example, Wolburg and Pokrywczynski, 2001).

In general, however, these studies, being plagued with consistently low and even inconsistent correlations with consumer behaviour, have been disappointing and failed to satisfy marketers' needs. One of the main reasons probably was due to the fact that this research used standardized personality tests originally developed in clinical (read: for purposes of medical diagnostics) or academic (read: based on populations of students) contexts (Gunter and Furnham, 1992: 27, 33, 40).

In a second wave of psychographic research, the personality concept was replaced with the concept of 'lifestyle' (introduced by Lazer, 1963). Today, lifestyle is usually defined as the patterns in which people live and spend their time and money (Kaynak and Kara, 2001: 458). Chaney (1996: 4) defines lifestyles as 'patterns of action that differentiate people.

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. . . Lifestyles therefore help to make sense of what people do, and why they do it, and what doing it means to them and others.' Today, the lifestyle concept has become so central, and the personality concept so marginal to psychographic research, that the latter is currently equated with lifestyle research (see, for example, Hawkins et al., 1995: 328; Kahle and Chiagouris, 1997: x).

In general, lifestyle research is based on extensive surveys using appropriate quantitative methods. Again, we can distinguish different waves of research.

The AIO approach

At first, lifestyles were researched using large sets of AIO items. AIO refers to measures of activities, interests and opinions. Thus, authors such as Peter and Olson (1994: 463) define 'lifestyle' as 'the manner in which people conduct their lives, including activities, interests, and opinions'. Activities are manifest actions (work, hobbies, social events, vacation, entertainment, clubs, community, shopping, sports, etc.). Interest in some objects, events or topics (family, home, job, community, recreation, fashion, food, media, achievements, etc.) is the degree of excitement that accompanies both special and continuing attention to it. Finally, opinions are descriptive beliefs (of oneself, social issues, politics, business, economics, education, products, future, culture, etc.) (Plummer, 1974). For some examples of typical AIO statements, see, for example, Ewing et al. (2001) and Kaynak and Kara (2001). Three typical statements could be:

- I often listen to popular music (activity);
- I am very interested in the latest fashion trends (interest);
- A woman's place is in the home (opinion).

Often very large batteries of AIO items were used. For example, Wells and Tigert (1971) formulated 300 AIO items, while Cosmas (1982) used a questionnaire containing 250 AIO items.

The value systems approach

In a second wave of research, the value concept came to replace this very extensive and burdensome AIO approach. Values are commonly defined as desirable, trans-situational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in people's lives.

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The most important instrument for measuring values is the Rokeach Value Survey (Rokeach, 1973). His inventory comprises 18 values:

- A comfortable life;
- An exciting life;
- A sense of accomplishment;
- A world at peace;
- A world of beauty;
- Equality;
- Family security;
- Freedom;
- Happiness;
- Inner harmony;
- Mature love;
- National security;
- Pleasure;
- Salvation;
- Self-respect;
- Social recognition;
- True friendship;
- Wisdom.

A shorter and more easily implemented instrument is the List of Values (LOV), suggested by Kahle (1983), including only nine values. Another important scale for assessing value systems was developed by Schwartz and Bilsky (1990) and later modified by Schwartz (1992) (see Struch et al. [2002: 27] for the complete inventory developed by Schwartz, comprising 56 values).

Now, values are of particular interest because values may affect a wide spectrum of behaviour across many situations (Seligman et al., 1996). Indeed, individuals' value priorities are part of their basic worldviews (Struch et al., 2002: 16). Therefore, values are also important lifestyle determinants. As Gunter and Furnham (1992: 70) point out: 'Lifestyles are defined as patterns in which people live and spend their time and money. They are primarily functions of consumers' values.' Solomon (1994: 621) even defines lifestyle as an exhibited 'set of shared values'. Moreover, values are broader in scope than attitudes or the types of variables contained in AIO measures. They transcend specific situations (Grunert-Beckmann and Askegaard, 1997: 164). Finally, value inventories in general often only contain a handful of values, instead of 200 or 300 AIO items.

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This led researchers of the second wave of lifestyle research to use value batteries as input for their questionnaires, which proved to be much more elegant and fundamental than the AIO approach.

Now, looking at the most often used inventory, the one developed by Rokeach, one must say that this inventory cannot go without considerable criticism (although one cannot doubt the importance of Rokeach as a scientist of values). First, there is the supposed universality of these values. As Ness and Stith (1984: 235) point out: 'It can be concluded that the Rokeach values are basically American middle-class values.' Second, and more importantly, there is a lack of a strong theoretical and/or empirical base underpinning his inventories. Rokeach combined a literature study, the ideas of some 30 psychology students and the values as reported by some 100 adult respondents living in Lansing (Michigan) and to whom was explained what values are. This suggests that intuition played a far more important role than theory or empirical research in constructing the value inventory. The random character of his inventory was clearly illustrated by Jones et al. (1978), who found that the Rokeach values hardly represent one-third of the values people spontaneously put forward in empirical research.

Anyway, these criticisms made us engage in a rather compelling project: developing a value inventory ourselves, in order to use this for studying lifestyles.

Developing the value questionnaire

To develop a new value inventory, we followed two different approaches, complementing one another.

First, we took a quota sample of the Flemish population between 18 and 65 years old ($N = 236$). Each was asked to formulate some 20 desires. This provided us with a set of 4312 desires. Now, these desires can be regarded as expressions of underlying personal values. Values being very abstract, desires being very concrete, people find it easier to formulate desires than to express their values. Analysing these desires could thus lead us to a new value inventory. Using qualitative content analysis, we arrived at an inventory of 27 values.

A second approach started with 80 students formulating all kinds of possible values. This yielded a list of 981 values. Again, using qualitative content analysis, this list was reduced to a set of 124 values. These were then administered to a quota sample of the Flemish population between 18 and 65 years old ($N = 672$). Factor analysis (alpha factoring and

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oblimin rotation) yielded 26 factors (global values) explaining 66 percent of variance.

The results of both research projects were then merged, which led us to a value inventory of 35 values, including such things as:

- Being respected and appreciated by others;
- Wisdom;
- Joy and pleasure, having fun in life;
- Leading a simple and modest life;
- Good health, being healthy;
- Safety, living in a safe world;

and so on. The complete questionnaire is available upon request from the author. In the final questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate on a seven-point scale how important each value was in their lives.

However, we did not take the value concept as our sole way of constructing a lifestyle typology. We added two different approaches, without, however, returning to the burdensome, extremely ad hoc and very intuitive AIO approach.

Adding the concept of life visions

The value concept being very broad and general, we wanted to add a second section that was more concrete and specific, something which had to do with societal trends, the general issues that underlie AIO constructs, the way people 'look at life'. We call this 'life visions'. Life visions then can be defined as the perspective people take on some major issues in life. We drew up a list of 20 items that could be understood as major points of attention in contemporary western culture, including such things as health, beauty, male/female identities, work/money/time considerations, the use of leisure, partner relations, family relations, friends, culture, politics, economics and science.

Then, for each item, we formulated two polarized visions. For instance, for 'male/female identities', the corresponding statements were:

- Men and women are fundamentally equal. The roles society prescribes for them should be abandoned.

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- Men and women are fundamentally different. Therefore, society must permit men to act as a true male and women to act as a true female.

Again, the complete questionnaire is available upon request. Respondents were then asked to indicate on a seven-point scale how strongly they agreed either with the vision on the left or with the vision on the right of the seven-point scale (cf. a semantic differential).

Contrary to this 'content-oriented' part of the questionnaire, we added a third section which has more to do with 'form-oriented' things.

Adding the concept of aesthetic styles

Many authors have argued that we live in a postmodern society. Although postmodernism is a vague enough concept, some definitions of post-modernism stress the aestheticization of everyday life (e.g. Featherstone, 1991: 65–82). Of course, this aestheticization has profound implications for consumer culture.

Therefore, we wanted to add a section on aesthetic styles to our questionnaire. The point of departure was that style preferences are perhaps most visible in four 'product' categories: clothing, cars, houses and house interiors. For each of those categories, we assembled 30 different and diverse pictures. Then 25 respondents – 11 males and 14 females, twelve aged between 18 and 30, six between 31 and 45, and seven between 46 and 60 – were asked to perform a natural grouping task. Natural grouping is a research technique where respondents are asked to form 'natural' groups of stimuli, that is to group stimuli (here pictures of clothing, cars, houses and house interiors) that have something in common according to the feelings of the respondents. The results are then coded in (4 x 25) similarity matrices. Through multidimensional scaling, one can then produce two-dimensional scatterplots, showing which pictures 'naturally' group together. We then asked the respondents to provide proper style labels for each group of stimuli. For clothing, cars, houses and house interiors, this procedure resulted each time in seven different aesthetic styles.

In the final questionnaire, each of these 28 styles were visualized by two photographs and then presented to the respondents. They were asked to rate each style on a seven-point scale according to how appealing they found each of these styles, i.e. according to their personal taste. Again, the complete pictorial questionnaire is available upon request from the author.

Adding media preferences, product categories and demographics

Now, since our aim is a lifestyle typology relevant for predicting individual differences across a wide variety of behaviour, we included four product categories in our questionnaire: cars (a classic product), tourism (a service), political parties (a non-commercial product) and media. For both cars, tourism and political parties, a set of potential attributes or benefits was developed:

- *Cars*: 14 attributes, including safety, design, powerful engine, reliability, etc.;
- *Tourism*: 14 attributes of the ideal holiday, including warm and sunny climate, cultural infrastructure, luxurious, romantic, etc.;
- *Political parties*: 15 potential elements of party programmes, including: job opportunities for everyone, lowering taxes on labour, raising pensions, fighting unemployment, aiding the Third World, etc.

The media section focused on television, films and magazines:

- *Television*: 16 programme categories;
- *Films*: 12 'movie ingredients', including romance, adventure, hard action, humour, etc.;
- *Magazines*: 14 categories of magazines, including male, female, television, general information, fashion, sports, cars, etc.

The appealing power of each of these product attributes or benefits and each of these media categories was scored on a seven-point scale.

Finally, we added a section on demographics, asking the respondents for their sex, age, social class and stage of life.

Segmenting the market

The questionnaire was administered to a quota sample of the Flemish population (*N* = 995). In order to group these 995 respondents into more or less homogeneous lifestyle segments, we conducted a cluster analysis (which is, in marketing research, the dominant method for market segmentation). We selected a two-stage approach combining both hierarchical and non-hierarchical clustering methods (Punj and Stewart, 1983; Fournier et al., 1992: 331). Initial solutions, using Ward's hierarchical method, provided a preliminary indication of the total number of clusters. The final cluster solution was then identified using

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Table 1 Size (percentages) of the different types/market segments in each of the different lifestyle typologies

Type	Values	Life visions	Aesthetic styles	Overall V–L–A
Type 1	10.3	8.9	14.7	17.8
Type 2	8.8	14.8	17.6	20.5
Type 3	19.2	18.7	16.9	10.9
Type 4	24.2	14.2	9.5	16.1
Type 5	13.2	16.3	10.3	12.6
Type 6	14.5	11.6	15.6	13.4
Type 7	9.8	15.5	15.2	8.8
Total N = 995	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

the Quick Cluster K-Means procedure. Here we identified a range of solutions (from five to ten clusters) and chose the solution where (1) there were as many segments as possible, but no small segments of less than 5 percent, and (2) the number of clusters was justified by the results obtained through Ward's method.

Remarkably, for values (V), life visions (L), aesthetic styles (A) and a combination of those three categories of variables (V-L-A), this yielded a seven-cluster solution. Table 1 shows the size of the different segments in each lifestyle typology.

Next, we set out to analyse the performance of the different lifestyle typologies in four different markets (cars, tourism, political parties and media), and compare their discriminative power to that of classic demographic variables. However – before we turn to the research results in the next paragraph – we developed one more typology, using the same clustering procedure but including not only values, life visions and aesthetic style preferences, but also media variables (preferences for the 16 television programme categories, the 12 film ingredients and the 14 magazine categories, mentioned earlier). This resulted in again a very balanced typology of eight different lifestyles (see Table 2).

A comparison in different markets

Frank et al. (1972) and Wells (1975) concluded that the predictive validity of lifestyle with respect to purchase behaviour can be substantially better than that of general observable segmentation bases, such as geographic, demographic or socioeconomic variables. How do our typologies perform? To test the significant differences among the clusters

Table 2 The global lifestyle typology, including values (V), life visions (L), aesthetic styles (A) and media preferences (M)

Type	Global V–L–A–M
Type 1	12.7
Type 2	13.2
Type 3	12.2
Type 4	12.1
Type 5	8.8
Type 6	17.6
Type 7	9.4
Type 8	14.1
Total N = 995	100.0

on product attribute importance, a one-way ANOVA was performed (Kaynak and Kara, 2001: 468, Kahle et al., 1992: 347).

The next table summarizes our findings, by indicating how many product attributes (total = 85) proved to be significant (respectively at the .05 and the .01 level) or not, within the different product categories and in total. The overall lifestyle typology (V-L-A) combines values, life visions and aesthetic style preferences. The global lifestyle typology (V-L-A-M) combines values, life visions, aesthetic style preferences and media preferences. The demographic variables are sex, age (three segments: 18–30 years old, 31–45 years old and 46–65 years old), social groups (highest, high, low, lowest) and (nine) stages of life (from 'young – living with their parents' to 'elderly parents – most children have left home').

Table 3 reads as follows: if we look at the product category 'cars', we find, for example, that the consumer typology based on the values dimension results on all 14 car benefits in significant differences below the .01 level, while a segmentation based on the sex of the consumer only results in such significant differences on seven attributes, besides three attributes that score at the .05 level of significance and four attributes yielding no significant differences.

Notice that all psychographic segmentations perform extremely well compared to the much weaker performance of demographic and socioeconomic segmentations (which yield much larger numbers of non-significance), and this in all markets analysed here. The lowest number of significant differences is provided by the social class concept. One can

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Table 3 Overview of the performance of different lifestyle and demographic segmentation systems in different markets

Product category	Values	Life visions	Aesthetic styles	Overall V–L–A	Global (V–L–A–M)	Sex	Age	Social group	Stage of life
Television									
NS	–	5	3	–	1	5	2	8	4
< .05	–	–	1	2	–	2	4	5	3
< .01	16	11	12	14	15	9	10	3	9
N = 16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16
Films									
NS	1	2	1	–	–	2	5	11	4
< .05	–	1	1	1	1	–	–	1	3
< .01	11	9	10	11	11	10	7	–	5
N = 12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Magazines									
NS	–	1	1	1	–	1	6	9	6
< .05	2	–	1	–	1	1	3	3	3
< .01	12	13	12	13	13	12	5	2	5
N = 14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
Cars									
NS	–	–	–	–	–	4	1	13	2
< .05	–	1	–	–	–	3	3	1	1
< .01	14	13	14	14	14	7	10	–	11
N = 14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14

Tourism									
NS	–	1	1	–	–	4	2	11	3
< .05	1	2	–	–	–	4	2	2	–
< .01	13	11	13	14	14	6	10	1	11
N = 14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
Political parties									
NS	–	–	1	–	–	5	3	12	6
< .05	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
< .01	14	15	14	15	15	10	12	3	9
N = 15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Total									
NS	1	9	7	1	1	21	19	64	25
< .05	4	4	3	3	2	10	12	12	10
< .01	80	72	75	81	82	54	54	9	50
N = 85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85

NS: not significant.

refer here to the debates over 'the death of class' and so on, but this would take us too far from our subject.

To further distinguish the discriminative power of the different psychographic lifestyle typologies developed here, we also computed measures of association between the different typologies and the respective product attributes or benefits. Since we are combining nominal and interval data here, we chose to calculate eta (with the cluster variable as independent and the benefit measure as dependent variable). To summarize our findings, we calculated an averaged eta (over all benefits or attributes) for all markets under scrutiny, and compared the different cluster typologies on how they perform (see Table 4). One demographic variable – sex (which was one of the relatively better performing demographic variables in Table 3) – was included for reasons of comparison.

First, notice that of the three single-dimension typologies, the value typology performs better than the typologies based on either life visions or aesthetic style preferences (which both yield similar results). Moreover, adding life visions and aesthetic style preferences to the value-based research instrument, in order to create the overall V-L-A typology, hardly raises the average eta-value of the typology based on values alone. In 1978, Clawson and Vinson suggested that values perhaps equal or surpass the contribution of other major psychographic constructs in understanding consumer behaviour. Nevertheless, for communication strategists, adding life visions and aesthetic styles to the value dimension of course increases the richness of the lifestyle profiles obtained.

Second, notice that adding a section on media preferences to develop the global V-L-A-M typology *does* improve the average eta-value of the overall V-L-A typology substantially. This suggests the fruitfulness and even necessity of including a section on media preferences in developing a lifestyle questionnaire. Moreover, this section can yield very useful data for the media planning decisions the communication manager has to make.

Third, notice the difference between the selected media markets and non-media markets. In the three non-media markets, the five different lifestyle typologies all clearly outperform the classic demographic segmentation based on sex (which results in only very low eta-values). In the media markets, this is clearly much less the case, with sex even outperforming the lifestyle segmentations in the submarket of magazines. That only the global V-L-A-M typology performs extremely well in media markets needs not surprise us, since the corresponding media

Table 4 Comparison of eta-values of the different lifestyle typologies in different markets

Product category	Values	Life visions	Aesthetic styles	Overall V–L–A	Global V–L–A–M	Sex
Television						
Average Eta	.204	.176	.166	.207	.355	.146
Films						
Average Eta	.208	.185	.179	.221	.353	.182
Magazines						
Average Eta	.219	.200	.180	.222	.492	.350
Subtotal media						
Average Eta	.210	.186	.174	.216	.400	.224
Cars						
Average Eta	.319	.251	.273	.318	.348	.113
Tourism						
Average Eta	.292	.245	.234	.289	.333	.098
Political parties						
Average Eta	.317	.282	.235	.320	.349	.109
Subtotal cars, tourism, political parties						
Average Eta	.309	.260	.247	.309	.343	.106
Total all product categories						
Average Eta	.260	.224	.211	.263	.371	.165

variables are included in the set of variables used to develop the typology itself. Research results may be somewhat misleading here.

Summary

Lifestyle research emerged from the recognition that important demographic distinctions simply do not exist in many product categories and

even where they do, one cannot intelligently decide how to attract any particular market segment unless one knows why the distinctions exist. In order to attract and motivate a particular group of consumers through communication campaigns, one must gain insight into their psychological profile, i.e. their lifestyle.

Our research results suggest that it is possible to develop robust and balanced general lifestyle typologies (using either values, life visions or aesthetic style preferences alone, or in combination) that can be used by communication and marketing managers for strategic segmentation decisions across very different markets. These lifestyle typologies often outperform classic demographic and socioeconomic segmentation variables in terms of product benefit or attribute evaluation. A global typology, combining sections on values, life visions, aesthetic style preferences and media preferences, not only provides the richest data (for communication strategists, creatives and media planners), but also yields the best discriminative performance compared to other lifestyle segmentation methods.

Discussion

However, a general problem with lifestyle typologies has to do with questions of reliability and validity (for an extensive discussion, see Gunter and Furnham, 1992: 91–7). The main points of criticism are:

- *The methods used are purely inductive and not guided by theory.* Often, the items used in lifestyle questionnaires are based on common sense reasoning and implicit experience in carrying out market research. However, inasmuch as we have been basing ourselves on the value concept, it must be said that this is a concept very well grounded in both general social theory (mainly due to Rokeach) and in the theory of consumer behaviour (mainly due to the work of Reynolds, Gutman and Olson). Moreover, for both the value concept and the newer concepts of life visions and aesthetic preferences our inventories are based on considerable exploratory research.
- *The explanatory value of lifestyle types or dimensions concerning consumer behaviour is low and not well documented.* When it has been attempted to relate purchase data and lifestyle data in such a way that the amount of variance in the former explained by the latter can be ascertained, the amount of variance explained has often been very modest, sometimes even below the variance explained

by demographic variables alone (Wells and Tigert, 1971). As Wells (1975) put it in a review article: 'Stated as correlation coefficients these relationships appear shockingly small – frequently in the .1 or .2 range, seldom higher than .3 or .4.' Notice that our research instrument clearly yields better results, with average (!) eta-values at the .35 level.

Our option for dimensions (values, life visions, aesthetic style and media preferences) that are more reflective of lasting personal characteristics and behaviours, compared to the more variable and superficial AIO items, certainly improves the reliability of the research instrument. However, much more research needs to be done.

Indeed, we do recognize that the project of developing value inventories, life visions and aesthetic style preferences remains a subjective enterprise. Therefore, it would be interesting to see what other researchers, following a similar approach, would come up with. Equally interesting would be research exploring other markets than the ones under scrutiny here.

Nevertheless, some authors claim that the use of psychographics or lifestyle research remains even today one of the least understood but potentially most powerful approaches in market and communication research (see, for example, Gunter and Furnham, 1992: 30; Heath, 1995; Wolburg and Pokrywczynski, 2001). We hope that this article may contribute to a better understanding and a renewed interest in these little researched lifestyle dimensions.

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