

Unmasking and Enhancing the African Lifestyle

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Abstract: The lack of information about the African consumer is somehow alarming and it's not helping most marketers to arrive at informed decisions. These are often based on other realities and tailored according to a hypothetical African idiosyncrasy.

This paper attempts to determine some of the various African lifestyles. It will also uncover how Africans spend their time and money, and how marketers can communicate and attract new consumers, retain the current consumers and make them spend more and more money on their products.

Introduction

Market segmentation is the process of dividing a market into distinct groups of potential customers. Within each group, or segment, these are homogenous across certain parameters, e.g. their needs, characteristics, behavior, product requirements and responsiveness to different marketing programs are fairly consistent. Each segment of customers, however, must be heterogeneous across these parameters.

Ideally accurate market segmentation should identify groups of individuals who are very homogeneous compared to other individuals within their group and, in contrast, very heterogeneous when compared to individuals of other groups.

The advantage of market segmentation is that it allows investors to evaluate various segments and select those which are most attractive to them. By understanding the manner in which a segment behaves, the investor is able to strategize and tailor an effective marketing scheme which will be more beneficial. In contrast, mass market segmentation has proven in the past to be ineffective and it is the cause of some marketing failures particularly when a company enters a new market; and in Africa, a considerable proportion are indeed yet to be explored.

Psychographic segmentation is a method of market segmentation based on the psychology and lifestyle habits of customers. It considers a number of potential influences on buying behaviour, including the attitudes, expectations and activities of consumers. If these are known, then products and marketing campaigns can be customized to appeal customer motivations.

The proposition of market segmentation is that customers who share certain characteristics will behave similarly, but the success of this theory will depend upon the criteria chosen to segment the market. If one uses a geographical basis it is assumed people living in the same area are similar customers, but it is not accurate to say that all people living in Mombasa, for example, will buy the same products. Furthermore, segmentation by other similar methods such as demographics, organizational differences etc. only enables marketers to narrow their opportunities; they rarely provide enough specific information to make a decision on dividing the market.

Therefore in order to appeal to this psychological aspect of the customer's purchases decisions, marketers try to endow their products with brand personalities designed to correspond with consumer personalities' (Lilen & Kotler, 1983: 293). However, the importance of getting the right reflection in personalities is illustrated by a case study of Dr Pepper, whose sales actually fell as a result of a campaign that appealed to people with 'traditional values' because 'people that actually drank Dr. Pepper viewed themselves as being different, innovative and they wanted excitement in their lives' (Bobrowski, 2002).

Segmenting the market by use of psychographic segmentation is based on several attributes. These could include consumer interests, activities, hobbies, opinions, attitudes, values, behavioral patterns, e.g. occasions when a product is purchased or consumed, level of usage e.g. light, heavy or medium, habits, lifestyle, perception of selling company, degree of loyalty to the selling company and competitor companies; and benefits sought.

Any effective market segmentation however must be evaluated considering the following attributes/characteristics:

Substantial: their size should be sufficiently large to justify the allocation of resources to target them;

Durable: they should be relatively stable to minimize the costs of frequent changes;

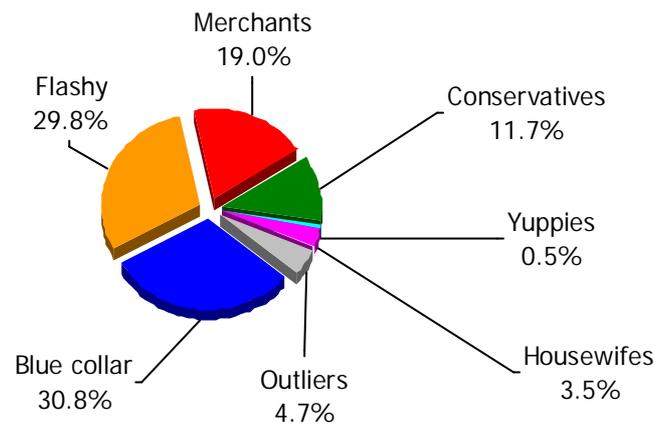
Identifiable: their differentiating attributes should be measurable to allow for their accurate identification;

Unique needs: segments must respond differently to different marketing needs to justify separate offerings,

Accessible: segments should be reachable through communication and distribution channels;

The African Lifestyles¹

The analyses yield the presence of six distinctive segments in the market i.e. the *Blue collar* (30.8%), the *Flashy* (29.8%), the *Merchants* (19.0%), the *Conservative* (11.7%), the *Housewives* (3.5%) and the *Yuppies* (0.5%). About 5% are outliers which can not be included in any of these segments.



¹ Two-step cluster analysis.

Profile of the African Segments ²

The *Blue Collar* (30.8%)

The *blue collar* is one of the most important segments in the market if taking into consideration their size i.e. almost a third of the market (31%). Nevertheless, nearly all *blue collars* belong to the DE socio-economic group (93%), the majority holds secondary education (59%), and either they are self-employed (36%) or unemployed (30%). This segment reflects the sociologic reality observed in majority of countries in the African continent.

Lifestyle, Attitudes and Needs

(Most divergent variables for this segment compared with the total) ³	Total average	The Blue collar
I like to be at the centre of attentions, being admired and recognized	3.5	3.6
Life is tough so I live one day at a time	3.6	3.7
I care about people. It matters to me that other people are ok	3.7	3.8
I have a very active social life	3.6	3.7
Having fun in everything I do is important to me	3.2	3.5
I long to have the freedom to live the life I desire	3.6	3.8
I am afraid of being alone	3.4	3.6
I like to be the first in my community to use new products and brands	3.1	3.4
I am content with the person that I am at the moment	3.8	3.9

As their purchasing power is very low, enjoying each day as their last and having fun is probably their top priority in life. Hence they don't have many aspirations and live one day at the time.

Their satisfaction is achieved through interaction with their peers i.e. through the pleasure of social interacting. As they can't achieve much, when they are with their peers they like to be the first to use new products/brands and being admired for that reason.

Nevertheless, their consumption is directed to their basic needs and some particular services. Those targeting this segment must address their specific needs i.e. low costs products meeting their basic requirements.

Innovative and simple products/services which allow *blue collars* to slightly increase their life quality at a low cost are probably the best way to enhance their lifestyle and get the most out of this segment. If it is fun, innovative and cheap; it will fit like a glove. Their happiness will be increased and brand loyalty through these feelings will be achieved.

² Nearly all conclusions were inferred in terms of statistical significance at least at a 95% confidence level ($p=0.05$). Several conclusions were supported by higher significances ($p=0.00$); Some of the conclusions are also speculative and can not be statistically inferred as they were supported by the qualitative findings.

³ All calculations on this chapter refer to an average of an ordinal variable varying between 1 and 5 where 1 means "strongly disagree", 2 means "disagree", 3 means "neutral", 4 means "agree" and 5 means "strongly agree".

The Flashy (29.8%)

In terms of status the flashy don't differ significantly from the population but there is a slightly higher proportion belonging to the higher socio-economic groups (6.9% belong to the AB/C1). Comparing with the general population they are relatively more educated (40% vs. 30%). The vast majority is single (93%), students (95%) and young (79% are 25 years old or below).

The size of this segment (29.8%) reflects how young the African continent is and the size of its potential. This is probably the most attractive segment in Africa; they represent the future of the continent. Depending on their business, companies should invest tremendously in this segment to ensure the longevity of their brands.

Lifestyle, Attitudes and Needs

(Most divergent variables for this segment compared with the total)	Total average	The Flashy
Financial security is very important to me	4.1	4.2
I always set goals for everything I do and make every effort to reach them	4.0	4.3
Education is important to get ahead in life	4.1	4.5
I like to be at the centre of attentions, being admired and recognized	3.5	3.9
Being seen with the right people is important to me	3.7	3.9
I like to buy products that are unique and innovative	3.3	3.5
I would like to be seen as trendy	3.1	3.6

The flashy are young ambitious individuals, who are still studying and view education as a means to achieve the goals they set for themselves. They also want to be admired and recognized and that implies that they have to possess the products/brands which are observed as valuable by their peers and/or they socialize with the "right people". Consumption and socialization are therefore very important to them.

Highly flashy products which can catapult their status to the highest point are very attractive to this segment. They will spend more money than they can afford just for the sake of 'showing off' among their peers. And for a certain proportion this will not be difficult to achieve since they belong to a certain socio-economic group.

If they can not afford, then the product must distinguish them somehow, either through its uniqueness or innovation.

Targeting this segment is relatively easy, they can be found in schools/universities and/or where the 'right people can be found' - the ones you want to be seen with. Or alternatively in events (e.g. musical festivals) which allow them to socialize and have as much fun as they need.

The Merchants (19.0%)

The majority of *merchants* are male (61%), they are mainly aged over 31 (58%), belong to the lower socio-economic groups (42% are C2 and 56% are DE), they are relatively educated (51% hold secondary education) and obviously the great majority work full time (33%), while the rest work part-time (26%) or are self-employed (37%).

Lifestyle, Attitudes and Needs

(Most divergent variables for this segment compared with the total)	Total average	The Merchants
Financial security is very important to me	4.1	4.3
I always set goals for everything I do and make every effort to reach them	4.0	4.3
Education is important to get ahead in life	4.1	4.2
My career is the most important thing in my life	3.9	4.0
I work hard just to make ends meet	3.9	4.4
I live by the principles and values that are in line with my religion	3.8	4.0
I live by the principles and values that are in line with my upbringing	4.0	4.2
When I buy a product, quality is the most important thing	3.8	4.1

Merchants work hard every day to achieve what they need to survive and therefore need a relative sense of security. They are proud of being fairly independent and like to emphasize that fact to their peers. They wish to be respected and recognized by the community and that fact is motivated by their need of belonging. They have a very active social life and care about people who are close to them. These attitudes are in line with their values (religions and self values).

Since their life is unbalanced i.e. more professional, particular products/services which facilitate that side of them might be more attractive. Facilitating contacts or transactions with potential buyers/suppliers either through transport or communication must be seen as a good opportunity to target *merchants*. Certain information services which allow them to arrive at new ideas to enhance their business must enhance their lifestyle. Basically anything which can drive them towards success must yield positive results.

This segment doesn't seek stylish products. In fact they are even more in line with a conservative and religious fashion. So their products/services must be practical and straight forward, not sophisticated. Quality and effectiveness are the most important to them although their purchasing power is not considerably high.

Targeting this segment is also fairly easy in some cases. *Merchants* can be found in their dukas, kiosks or hanging around as hawkers. Some own more ambitious businesses though.

The Conservatives (11.7%)

Majority of the *conservatives* are aged 31 and above (60%), belong to the C2 socio-economic group (96%) and are generally highly educated (43%). Most of them (59%) are married or living with a partner. They don't study anymore (0%) but they are working full-time (20%), part-time (34%) or are self-employed (27%).

Lifestyle, Attitudes and Needs

(Most divergent variables for this segment compared with the total)	Total average	The Conservatives
I need to feel there is a place that I can call home	3.5	3.9
Financial security is very important to me	4.1	4.3
I always set goals for everything I do and make every effort to reach them	4.0	4.2
Being seen with the right people is important to me	3.7	3.9
Life is tough so I live one day at a time	3.6	3.8
I care about people. It matters to me that other people are ok	3.7	3.9
I have a very active social life	3.6	3.8
Having fun in everything I do is important to me	3.2	3.6
I long to have the freedom to live the life I desire	3.6	3.9
I would like to be seen as trendy	3.1	3.2
I like to be the first in my community to use new products and brands	3.1	3.3
I would like to be in control of my life at all times	4.0	4.2
I am content with the person that I am at the moment	3.8	4.1

The *conservatives* have arrived at a certain stage in their lives whereby now they seek mostly stability. They now have a family and need financial stability to ensure they are able to support them. They work hard for that purpose; they even set goals and make an effort to reach them. Nevertheless due to their family commitments they strive to find a balance between their personal and professional life as they care about their close relatives and consider that a good time spent with them is very important.

This segment prefers products/services that are more family/household oriented. Those products/services that can enhance the quality of time spent with their family at home will have an impact. Or alternatively those who can satisfy their need for stability/security will also impact. Reliability is a major decisive factor when deciding what to purchase/hire.

Targeting this segment can be achieved through the communication channels one can access at home i.e. television, radio, newspapers and internet.

Housewives (3.5%)

This small segment is comprised mostly of women (76%) but there are still some housewives who are actually men. They are mainly aged over 31 years old (52%), belong mainly to the DE socio-economic group (83%), they are relatively less educated and majority of them are not currently working (79%) or are now retired (21%).

Lifestyle, Attitudes and Needs

(Most divergent variables for this segment compared with the total)	Total average	<i>The Housewives</i>
Financial security is very important to me	4.1	4.2
I work hard just to make ends meet	3.9	4.0
Life is tough so I live one day at a time	3.6	3.7
I like to be part of a community	3.8	3.9
I care about people. It matters to me that other people are ok	3.7	3.8
I live by the principles and values that are in line with my upbringing	4.0	4.1
I would like to be in control of my life at all times	4.0	4.1

Housewives focus a lot on their household and being in control of it. They care about the people who are nearby i.e. their small circle of relatives and friends, and enjoy being part of a “community”. They also believe they work hard to maintain their lifestyle and perceive life as being hard so they only take the effort to “make ends meet”.

The potential of this segment is not high, but brands should take them into consideration especially if their products relate to household consumption. Nevertheless this segment is somehow inactive and not very easy to target as they are not very sensitive to marketing activities. Some are retired (21%) and some only communicate with their small circle of relatives and friends. This is indeed the most effective marketing i.e. word of mouth.

The Yuppies (0.5%)

The smallest segment of the market comprises mainly male individuals (67%), aged 31 years old and above (80%), mostly belonging to the AB segment (78%) and highly educated (67% completed an university degree). They work full time (40%) in high positions or are self-employed/own their own business (10%).

Lifestyle, Attitudes and Needs

(Most divergent variables for this segment compared with the total)	Total average	<i>The Yuppies</i>
I always set goals for everything I do and make every effort to reach them	4.0	4.5
Education is important to get ahead in life	4.1	4.4
I care about people. It matters to me that other people are ok	3.7	4.3
I have a very active social life	3.6	4.0
I live by the principles and values that are in line with my religion	3.8	4.5
I live by the principles and values that are in line with my upbringing	4.0	4.6
When I buy a product, quality is the most important thing	3.8	4.2
I long to have the freedom to live the life I desire	3.6	4.0
I only buy what I need	3.7	4.4
I would like to be in control of my life at all times	4.0	4.5

Yuppies are very ambitious individuals who seek social status through success. Education is therefore one of their most important values as they understand its importance and the part it plays in achieving their objectives as well as to be in control of their life. They have their own values which are more in line with themselves rather than with the general society, but they also value spending time with their family but also with the people they consider to be important for them, particularly if it helps them somehow.

Products that can help them achieve their success and can reflect their success to their peers will be successful among this segment.

They are very accurate in their spending and they only buy what they need though. Quality is of most importance, and apparently stylish products are not as important although they maintain a need for recognition. Products/services must be pragmatically designed as, if the products/services don't fit their need for success, they will find it hard to sacrifice their money on them. Individuals belonging to this segment are not very vulnerable to psychological marketing as they generally have a very strong personality and they can not be easily convinced.

All means of media communication are effective to target *yuppies*. This segment is very much in touch with the world.

Media Consumption⁴

Television Consumption

% Column	<i>Yuppies</i>	<i>Housewives</i>	<i>Conservatives</i>	<i>Blue collar</i>	<i>Merchants</i>	<i>Flashy</i>	Total column
Yesterday	50.0	36.1	81.2	47.4	63.3	62.9	59.1
Within the last 7 days	40.0	27.8	13.2	21.3	14.3	22.5	19.6
Within the last 4 weeks	0.0	13.9	2.1	7.8	9.4	6.8	7.3
Within the last 3 months	10.0	15.3	1.3	5.8	5.7	3.0	4.7
Within the last 12 months	0.0	5.6	1.3	2.2	2.6	1.2	2.0
Longer than 12 months ago	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.2	0.5
Never done activity	0.0	1.4	0.9	14.1	4.7	3.5	6.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Chi-square=208,787; df=30; p=0.00

The mass market can be reached through television (59%) judging that the majority of respondents confessed they used this media channel “yesterday” (59%).

In relative terms this means of communication is more effective among the *conservatives* (81% stated “yesterday”), the *merchants* (63%) and the *flashy* (63%).

In contrast, television is relatively less effective amongst the *housewives* (36% watched television “yesterday”). Nevertheless, this segment shows a relatively higher consumption compared with the remaining segments within the last seven days (28%).

Radio Consumption

% Column	<i>Yuppies</i>	<i>Housewives</i>	<i>Conservatives</i>	<i>Blue collar</i>	<i>Merchants</i>	<i>Flashy</i>	Total column
Yesterday	44.4	44.4	43.9	39.4	41.6	41.9	41.4
Within the last 7 days	11.1	18.1	21.1	17.0	25.5	23.7	21.3
Within the last 4 weeks	0.0	12.5	7.6	10.2	7.0	9.4	9.1
Within the last 3 months	0.0	13.9	7.6	3.4	4.9	6.8	5.6
Within the last 12 months	0.0	2.8	2.5	2.7	2.6	2.3	2.5
Longer than 12 months ago	0.0	2.8	1.7	1.1	3.4	1.8	1.9
Never done activity	44.4	5.6	15.6	26.2	15.1	14.1	18.2
Total column	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Chi-square=83,557; df=30; p=0.00

Radio is not as effective as television but even so it reaches almost half of the market (41%). There is no significant difference among all segments in analysis, but within the last seven days the *merchants* and the *flashy* consumed relatively more radio.

⁴ In this particular survey only the communication accessibility was measured.

Printed Media Consumption

% Column	<i>Yuppies</i>	<i>Housewives</i>	<i>Conservatives</i>	<i>Blue collar</i>	<i>Merchants</i>	<i>Flashy</i>	Total column
Yesterday	44.4	11.0	40.4	14.4	17.1	21.2	20.2
Within the last 7 days	44.4	17.8	28.5	15.2	23.4	26.3	22.2
Within the last 4 weeks	0.0	16.4	8.9	9.6	16.1	16.9	13.3
Within the last 3 months		19.2	5.5	4.5	8.6	11.2	8.1
Within the last 12 months		4.1	0.0	2.4	3.6	1.7	2.2
Longer than 12 months ago	11.1	6.8	0.4	4.5	2.3	2.1	3.0
Never done activity	0.0	24.7	16.2	49.4	28.8	20.7	31.1
Total column	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Chi-square=281.975; df=35; p=0.00

Printed media is available on a daily basis and eventually reaches nearly a fifth of the market (20%). This trend is in relative terms higher however among the *conservatives* (40% consumed printed media “yesterday”).

The *merchants* and the *flashy* also consume relatively more media than the remaining segments judging by their cumulative percentages within the last seven days i.e. 41% and 48% respectively.

Internet Consumption

% Column	<i>Yuppies</i>	<i>Housewives</i>	<i>Conservatives</i>	<i>Blue collar</i>	<i>Merchants</i>	<i>Flashy</i>	Total column
Yesterday	30.0	0.0	9.7	0.6	4.4	9.1	5.3
Within the last 7 days	40.0	4.2	18.6	1.0	4.7	14.1	8.3
Within the last 4 weeks	10.0	2.8	10.1	0.6	3.1	8.3	4.8
Within the last 3 months	0.0	0.0	4.6	1.0	3.9	6.0	3.5
Within the last 12 months	0.0	0.0	2.1	0.2	0.8	1.8	1.0
Longer than 12 months ago	0.0	1.4	2.5	1.3	1.0	1.3	1.4
Never done activity	20.0	91.5	52.3	95.4	82.0	59.4	75.7
Total column	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Chi-square=359.666; df=35; p=0.00

Internet has not yet been experienced by slightly more than three quarters of the market (76%). This low penetration rate is even relatively higher amongst the *housewives* (92%), the *blue collar* (95%) and the *merchants* (82%). Paradoxically, the *yuppies* (30%), *conservatives* (10%) and the *flashy* (9%) demonstrate higher daily levels of internet consumption. When considering the ‘last 7 days’ the consumption levels increase, particularly amongst the *yuppies* (40%).

Conclusions

In conclusion there is scientific evidence which demonstrates that in Africa, there are distinguished lifestyles which can yield more successful marketing results.

Marketers on this continent can now appeal more effectively than before towards meeting customers' psychological personalities as these influence purchases decisions.

The potential of the market in absolute terms lies mainly in the *blue collar* segment but ultimately the highest potential is hidden among the *flashy Merchants* also apparently hold a certain potential. Nevertheless these conclusions are very universal as obviously they depend on the sector in which one operates.

All segments in analysis hold different particular characteristics and marketers can take them into consideration as they will probably increase their sales, especially if their products have a high psychological component.

Psychographic basis have "evolved in response to some of the shortcomings of other segmentation methods, because it goes beyond superficial, functional features and on to benefits that can be seen to enhance the customer's lifestyle on a much more emotional level" (Brassington & Pettitt, 2000: 187) as it is widely understood that psychographic variables heavily influence purchasing decisions.

Apart from the obvious advantage of increased sales, the advantages of psychographic segmentation are:

- Increased brand value of the company in the eyes of the customer.
- Greater usefulness of the product for the customer.
- Better inputs for the design of new products that the customer will like.
- Lower amounts of money spent on marketing, as it is now more specific.
- Increased ease of targeting a specific type of customer base.
- Enhanced simplicity in deriving effective and efficient marketing strategies.
- Greater degree of customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, resulting in higher levels of customer retention.

In conclusion, the psychographic segmentation method in Africa will also have the ability to offer an organization a way of understanding consumers and thus increasing the likelihood of convincingly persuading them that buying its product will enhance their lifestyle or help them achieve their aspirations.

Methodology

Data instruments design

In the first stage qualitative techniques such as focus groups were conducted to provide the insights and the individuals' exact language required to design the segmentation questionnaire.

Their own statements were collected and analyzed in verbatim and a battery of ordinal variables was incorporated in the questionnaire reflecting their psychographic and lifestyle statements (statements were randomly ordered in the questionnaire to avoid the *halo* effect).

The ordinal variable used was: "strongly disagree", "disagree", "neutral", "agree" and "strongly agree".

The statements were:

"I need to feel there is a place that I can call home"

"I make plans to spend time with my family on a regular basis"

"Financial security is very important to me"

"I always set goals for everything I do and make every effort to reach them"

"Education is important to get ahead in life"

"My career is the most important thing in my life"

"I like to be at the centre of attentions, being admired and recognized"

"Being seen with the right people is important to me"

"I work hard just to make ends meet"

"Life is tough so I live one day at a time"

"I like to be part of a community"

"I care about people. It matters to me that other people are ok"

"I have a very active social life"

"Having fun in everything I do is important to me"

"I live by the principles and values that are in line with my religion"

"I live by the principles and values that are in line with my upbringing"

"When I buy a product, quality is the most important thing"

"I long to have the freedom to live the life I desire"

"I am afraid of being alone"

"I like to buy products that are unique and innovative"

"I only buy what I need"

"I would like to be seen as trendy"

"I like to be the first in my community to use new products and brands"

"I would like to be in control of my life at all times"

"I am content with the person that I am at the moment"

Note: partial data was removed in order to respect the confidentiality of the client and its information.

Universe: individuals aged 15 years old or above residents in a certain African country⁵ ;

Sampling method: random multistage sampling stratified by gender, age and *habitat* (rural/urban);

Sample: 2002 interviews;

Statistical significance: for a binominal distribution the standard error of this sample is 0.011. Therefore, for a confidence level of 95% ($p=0.05$) the maximum error for a proportion in this sample is +2.19%.

Interviewing technique: face-to-face interviews;
