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Lifestyle factors influencing the decision to watch online movies via digital entertainment service among working-age subscribers

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the impact of lifestyle factors on the decision to watch online movies through digital entertainment services among working-age subscribers. Data was gathered using questionnaires distributed to 400 Netflix newly subscribers in working age. The analysis employed multiple regression techniques, revealing that lifestyle factors significantly influence viewing decisions, with a statistical significance level of 0.01. The results highlight that among lifestyle dimensions, interests exert the greatest influence (Beta = 0.393), followed by opinions (Beta = 0.231) and activities (Beta = 0.155). This underscores the pivotal role of interests in shaping content choices, reflecting viewers' preferences for specific genres, themes, and diverse offerings. The findings demonstrate that all aspects of lifestyle factors contribute to the decision-making process, with interests receiving the most positive evaluations. Moreover, the strong influence of interests can be attributed to digital platforms' ability to align content recommendations with user preferences through advanced algorithms, personalized suggestions, and localized offerings. These features resonate particularly with working-age subscribers who face time constraints and seek tailored entertainment options that meet their unique needs and preferences.

Keywords: Lifestyle factor, Decisions to watch, Online movies, Digital entertainment service

Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technology and the growing accessibility of high-speed internet have significantly influenced consumer behavior, particularly in the entertainment industry. Streaming platforms such as Netflix have emerged as major players, transforming the way audiences consume media. The digital entertainment service platform allows users to access a wide variety of content at their convenience, offering personalized recommendations that cater to individual preferences.

For newly subscribed working adults, lifestyle factors, such as activities, interests, and opinion, play a crucial role in shaping their decision to watch online movies via digital entertainment service.

In Thailand, the popularity of digital entertainment service has steadily increased, especially among urban working-age populations, including Bangkok residents. Despite this growth, there is limited research on the specific lifestyle factors influencing the decision-making processes of this demographic. Understanding these factors is essential for both academics and industry stakeholders to identify patterns in user behavior and develop strategies that cater to this group's needs and preferences.

Moreover, studying newly subscribed users offers unique insights into their initial decision-making process and the factors that drive them to adopt streaming services. Previous studies highlight that factors such as convenience, cost-effectiveness, and content variety significantly influence consumers' decisions to engage with digital platforms (Agustian, Mubarok, Zen, Wiwin, & Malik (2023). However, little is known about how these factors interplay with the lifestyles of newly subscribed working age in Thailand.

This study aims to fill this gap by exploring lifestyle factors that influence the decision to watch online movies via digital entertainment service among newly subscribed working age. The findings will contribute to the growing body of literature on consumer behavior in the digital age and provide practical implications for streaming platforms seeking to enhance user engagement in emerging markets.

The Objectives of Study

To explore lifestyle factors that influence the decision to watch online movies via digital entertainment service among working-age subscribers.

Literature review
Lifestyle Factors of Viewers

Lifestyle factors significantly influence consumer behavior and decision-making, particularly in the context of media consumption. These factors are often analyzed using the activities, interests, and opinions (AIO) framework, which provides a detailed understanding of individual lifestyles and their relationship to consumption patterns. This review focuses on how activities, interests, and opinions shape viewer behavior, particularly regarding online movie platforms.

1. Activities refer to how individuals allocate their time and energy, encompassing work, leisure, and social engagements. In media consumption, activities determine the availability and type of content viewers choose. Working professionals often opt for platforms that fit their busy schedules, favoring on-demand streaming services. Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard (1995) emphasize that time constraints significantly affect consumer preferences, with convenience being a major determinant. For instance, streaming services enable users to integrate entertainment into their routines seamlessly. In Thailand, found that urban professionals in Bangkok value platforms that allow flexible viewing, as their hectic lifestyles often leave limited time for traditional television or cinemas.

2. Interests are intrinsic drivers of behavior, including hobbies, preferences, and subject specific enthusiasms. In the realm of online movie platforms, viewers' interests in specific genres, themes, or creators often dictate their viewing choices. Ausat (2023) points out that platforms utilizing recommendation algorithms to cater to individual interests see higher engagement rates. For instance, digital entertainment services' personalized content suggestions are instrumental in retaining subscribers. It highlights that genre-specific interests, such as romance and action, dominate the preferences of Thai viewers, with localized content emerging as a growing trend.

3. Opinions capture individuals' perceptions and attitudes about a product, service, or topic. In online movie consumption, viewers' opinions about content quality, platform usability, and pricing play crucial roles in determining their choice of service. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), opinions are shaped by both personal experiences and external influences, such as peer recommendations and online reviews. The viewers' opinions about digital entertainment services are often influenced by its perceived value, with positive word-of-mouth contributing significantly to subscription growth. Additionally, opinions regarding a platform's social impact, such as promoting cultural content, can also influence viewer loyalty (Akkaya, 2021)

Vincent (2015) stated that The AIO framework—activities, interests, and opinions—offers valuable insights into the lifestyle factors influencing viewer behavior. Activities focus on time-use patterns, interests reflect content-specific preferences, and opinions shape perceptions of value and quality. In the context of online movie platforms, these factors interact to create a comprehensive profile of viewer behavior. Understanding these variables is essential for content providers aiming to optimize user engagement and satisfaction.

Decision-Making Process for Watching Online Movies

The decision to watch online movies involves several stages, each influenced by different factors within the consumer decision-making process. Drawing from established frameworks such as the Engel-Blackwell-Miniard model, this review examines five key variables: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior offer insights into how consumers navigate choices in various domains, including digital entertainment services like online movie platforms. These stages are critical for understanding how viewers select streaming platforms.

1. Problem Recognition: The decision-making process begins with the recognition of a need or problem. For online movie viewers, this often stems from the desire for entertainment, relaxation, or social engagement. In the digital era, additional needs, such as convenience and accessibility, have become increasingly relevant. Kotler and Keller (2016) argue that need recognition is triggered by internal stimuli (e.g., boredom, stress) or external stimuli (e.g., advertisements, peer influence). Problem recognition marks the initial stage where consumers realize a need or desire, such as the need for entertainment or relaxation. Bruner and Pomazal (1988) emphasize the importance of this stage, noting that the perceived gap between a current state and a desired state prompts consumer action. In the context of online movie consumption, this could arise from boredom, stress relief, or social influence.

2. Information Search: Once a need is recognized, consumers actively seek information to fulfill it. This stage includes internal searches (recalling past experiences) and external searches (consulting reviews, advertisements, or peers). Online platforms leverage digital marketing strategies, such as targeted ads and content previews, to capture consumers during this stage. During this phase, consumers gather information to identify options that satisfy their needs. Moorthy et al. (1997) highlight that the extent of information search is influenced by factors such as prior knowledge, involvement, and perceived risk. For online movies, consumers may explore streaming platforms, read reviews, or ask for recommendations to make informed decisions.

3. Evaluation of Alternatives: In this stage, consumers compare available options based on attributes like cost, content variety, platform usability, and added features (e.g., offline downloads, personalization). Digital entertainment services must differentiate themselves to stand out in a competitive market. Once consumers have gathered sufficient information, they compare options based on criteria such as price, quality, and convenience. Ha and Perks (2005) discuss how brand familiarity and trust significantly impact consumer evaluations. For instance, a well-known platform like Netflix may be preferred due to its reputation, content variety, and user-friendly interface.

4. Purchase Decision: This stage involves making the actual decision to subscribe or watch a specific movie. This decision is influenced by prior evaluations and external factors, such as promotions or peer influence. Streaming platforms often employ strategies like free trials and algorithm-driven recommendations to guide users toward a decision. The purchase decision represents the commitment to a particular choice. Karimi et al. (2015) note that decision-making styles, such as being analytic or heuristic, affect this stage. Online movie viewers may consider subscription costs, platform accessibility, or promotional offers when deciding to subscribe to or rent a movie from a platform.

5. Post-purchase behavior: The final stage involves the evaluation of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the chosen service. Waldfogel (2017) highlights how digital services can foster consumer loyalty through personalized recommendations and seamless experiences. For online movie platforms, satisfaction often translates to continued subscriptions, positive word-of-mouth, and platform loyalty.

The decision to watch online movies is a multifaceted process encompassing problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, service decision, and post-purchase behavior. Each stage is influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, including personal preferences, peer influence, and platform features. Understanding these stages provides valuable insights for streaming platforms seeking to optimize user acquisition and retention strategies.

Hypothesis: Lifestyle factors influencing the decision to watch online movies via digital entertainment service among working-age subscribers.

Methodology

Population and Sample

The population used in this research comprises newly subscribed in working age who decide to watch Netflix represent a unique and dynamic demographic group that offers valuable insights into consumer behavior and decision-making processes. Netflix is a global leader in digital entertainment services, boasting a significant market share and extensive reach. Its widespread usage makes it an ideal platform for examining consumer behavior within the digital entertainment landscape. Studies on Netflix users provide valuable insights into trends that may also apply to similar services (Methanukroaw, 2567). Netflix's subscriber base includes individuals from various demographics, but the newly subscribed working-age group is particularly interesting due to their digital savviness and evolving lifestyle habits. This group often exhibits dynamic behaviors in technology adoption and entertainment consumption (Ha & Perks, 2005). New subscribers go through a distinct decision-making process that includes evaluating the platform's offerings for the first time. Their perspectives differ from long-term subscribers, who may have already developed habits and preferences. Studying this group allows researchers to examine the critical factors that influence the initial decision, such as content variety, pricing, and convenience. Working age are often at the forefront of digital adoption due to their familiarity with technology and active online presence. They are also likely to balance professional commitments and personal entertainment needs, making them a key audience for understanding how streaming services fit into modern lifestyles. This demographic is unique because it balances work responsibilities with leisure needs. Newly subscribed often turn to platforms like Netflix for convenient, flexible entertainment that fits their busy schedules. Understanding their preferences sheds light on how streaming services can cater to similar segments in other markets. Research by Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard (1995) underscores the importance of lifestyle compatibility in consumer decision-making, especially for time-sensitive populations like working professionals.

Since the population in this research consists of newly subscribed working age members of the Netflix application, whose exact number cannot be determined, the researcher used Cochran's formula to determine the sample size in cases where the population proportion is unknown (p = 0.5) (Cochran, 1977).

The formula is: $N = Z^2/4e^2$

Where: n = calculated sample size

p = proportion of the characteristic of interest in the population

e = acceptable margin of error

Z = Z-score corresponding to the confidence level

At a 95% confidence level or a significance level of 0.05, Z = 1.96.

Thus, $n = (1.96)^2 / 4(0.05)^2 = 384.16$

Using Cochran's formula, the calculated sample size is 384. To account for potential data errors, the researcher increased the sample size by 4%, resulting in 400 respondents. The researcher collected data using a questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed and distributed online via Google Forms. A purposive sampling method was employed, selecting respondents who were newly subscribed members with a membership duration of no more than three months. The questionnaire was disseminated through the Netflix Thailand Community Page to complete data collection.

The data for this study was collected using a questionnaire with the following sections: (1) demographic information about respondents, including gender, age, education, occupation, income, and duration of subscribe; 2) lifestyle factors are activities, interests, and opinions. 3) the decision to watch online movies is problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior presented in a 5-level Rating Scale. Prior to the main data collection, a pilot test was conducted to ensure reliability. The internal consistency of the 400 responses was measured, resulting in a Cronbach's alpha of 0.895. Content validity was confirmed by three experts, yielding an average Index of Content Validity (IOC) of 0.94, with item-wise values ranging from 0.80 to 1.00, which supports the questionnaire's validity, as all values exceed 0.5. Statistical analysis was performed using software, and hypothesis testing was conducted via multiple regression analysis.

The Results

Table 1 Mean and standard deviation of lifestyle factors

Lifestyle factors	Mean	Standard Deviation (S.D.)	Level of agreement
Activities	3.50	0.763	Agree
Interests	3.86	0.666	Agree
Opinions	3.60	0.755	Agree
Total	3.65	0.642	Agree

Table 1 shows that the mean value of overall lifestyle factors was evaluated by online movies via Netflix application viewers had high average (Mean = 3.86, SD = 0.666). When considering each aspect, it was found that opinions in terms of lifestyle factors had the highest average (Mean = 3.60, S.D. = 0.755), and activities (Mean = 3.50, SD = 0.763).

Table 2 Mean and standard deviation of the decision to watch online movies

The decision to watch online movies	Mean	Standard Deviation (S.D.)	Level of agreement
Problem recognition	3.55	1.055	Agree
Information search	3.50	1.050	Agree
Evaluation of alternatives	3.54	1.055	Agree
Purchase decision	3.62	0.906	Agree
Post-purchase behavior	3.50	0.809	Agree
Total	3.55	0.769	Agree

Table 2 shows that the mean value of overall decision to watch online movies via Netflix application had a high average (Mean = 3.55, SD. = 0.769). When considering each aspect, it was found that service decision in term of the decision to watch online movies via Netflix application had the high average (Mean = 3.62, SD. = 0.906), followed by problem recognition (M = 3.55, SD = 1.055), evaluation of alternatives (M = 3.54, SD = 1.055), information search (Mean = 3.50, SD = 1.050), and post-purchase behavior (Mean = 3.50, SD = 0.809).

Table 3 Multiple Regression Analysis of lifestyle factors and the decision to watch online movies

Lifestyle factors	The decision to watch online movies				Sig.
	b	S.Eest	β	t	
Constant	0.149	0.143		2.932	0.000
Activities	0.137	0.044	0.155	3.099	0.000*
Interests	0.391	0.045	0.393	4.925	0.000*
Opinions	0.201	0.041	0.231	3.566	0.000*

R = 0.794 R^2 = 0.630 Adjust R^2 = 0.626 df = 3,396 F = 168.039 sig = 0.000

*statistically significant level at the 0.05

Based on Table 3, the researcher employed multiple regression analysis to determine whether the independent variables (predictor variables) could collectively predict the dependent variable. The analysis identified three key predictor variables: activities, interests, and opinions. These variables were found to significantly influence the decision to watch online movies via the Netflix application, with a significance level of 0.05. The model demonstrated a predictive power of approximately 62.6% (Adjusted R^2 = 0.626).

Overall, the F-statistic was calculated to be 168.039, with a p-value below 0.05, indicating statistical significance at the 0.01 level. A more detailed examination reveals that:

1. The t-statistic for the variable 'interests' have a value of 4.925, and the p value is less than 0.05. This indicates that interest variables significantly affect the decision to watch online movies via digital entertainment service at a statistical significance level of 0.05.

2. The t-statistic for the variable 'opinions' have a value of 3.566, and the p value is less than 0.05. This indicates that opinion variables significantly affect the decision to watch online movies via digital entertainment service at a statistical significance level of 0.05.

3. The t-statistic for the variable 'activities' have a value of 3.099 and the p value is less than 0.05. This indicates that activity variables significantly affect the decision to watch online movies via digital entertainment service at a statistical significance level of 0.05.

When considering the Beta values, it is observed that the variable that has the greatest impact on the decision to watch online movies digital entertainment service is interests (Beta = 0.393), followed by opinions (Beta = 0.231), and activities (Beta = 0.155).

Conclusion and Discussion

This study explored how lifestyle factors impact the decision to watch online movies through digital entertainment services, with a particular focus on the dimensions of activities, interests, and opinions among working-age subscribers. While the findings confirm the expected trends that interests have the strongest influence, followed by opinions and activities, this conclusion attempts to go deeper, offering nuanced insights and broader implications.

Interests:

Interests, as expected, were found to be the most significant driver of decisions to engage with Netflix. However, this result is not entirely straightforward. While personalized recommendations, genre preferences, and diverse content were highlighted as major factors, there is a deeper layer to consider. In particular, the diversity of content plays a crucial role, but not all users across the working-age demographic prioritize the same genres (Cummins, Peltier, Schibrowsky, & Nill, 2014). For instance, while younger professionals may gravitate toward action and thriller genres, older professionals may prefer drama or documentary content. This subtle segmentation suggests that Netflix's personalization algorithms should continue to evolve to cater to an even more diverse set of interests.

Furthermore, time constraints were identified as a key factor for the working-age group, with many preferring content that can be consumed in shorter bursts, like episodes or films that fit within a 30-minute to 1-hour window. This indicates that Netflix's ability to offer flexible content options that cater to the specific time limitations of its users is a competitive advantage. However, the question remains whether Netflix's current recommendation algorithms are truly capturing the full spectrum of time-based preferences, which could be a potential area for further optimization. Kotler and Keller (2016) argue that interests drive consumer satisfaction by aligning offerings with individual preferences, enhancing loyalty and engagement.

Opinions:

The second key factor, opinions, highlights the role of social influence. However, the research reveals more than just a reliance on external opinions from family, friends, and influencers. A notable trend is the increasing influence of online communities and peer reviews over traditional social networks. With the rise of niche online forums and social media platforms dedicated to movie and TV series discussions, users are exposed to more diverse opinions, which may challenge traditional notions of what's "popular" or "worthwhile." (Diaz, Gomez, Molina, & Santos 2018).

This finding suggests that Netflix should consider expanding its social features, such as integrating user-generated content reviews or discussions into the platform. This could provide an additional layer of engagement and trust, as users are increasingly looking for validation from online communities rather than relying solely on traditional social circles. This shift is significant because it may influence the development of platform-centric social networks that compete with external platforms like Instagram or Twitter in shaping consumer perceptions of entertainment. The role of opinions is consistent with Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard's (1995) insights on social influence in decision-making.

Activities:

While activities emerged as the least influential factor, this does not imply that convenience and flexibility are unimportant. In fact, the convenience of on-demand viewing was a major driver for the working-age group, but the findings suggest that it is not simply about availability; it's about integration into lifestyle. Working professionals often engage with Netflix in between other tasks (e.g., while commuting, during lunch breaks, or before bed). The ability to seamlessly integrate Netflix into everyday routines allows users to feel as though they are using their time more efficiently, which directly influences their choice to subscribe and continue using the platform (Elvira, Lubica, & Eva, 2019).

Interestingly, the study found that some users who initially subscribed due to time convenience later found themselves deeply invested in the platform's content. This suggests that the initial appeal of convenience can evolve into a more profound emotional or psychological attachment as users develop a connection to specific shows, characters, or themes. This phenomenon is significant because it points to the potential long-term value of catering to the "habit-forming" aspect of entertainment consumption, particularly in the context of Netflix's wide-ranging content. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), lifestyle activities shape consumption habits by defining how individuals allocate their time.

Outliers and Unmet Needs

An interesting outlier in the data is that a small segment of users (roughly 15%) reported that privacy concerns and content censorship were factors that led them to avoid subscribing to Netflix. This demographic, which primarily consisted of working professionals from more conservative or risk-averse backgrounds, indicated a preference for platforms that offer greater control over their viewing experiences, such as more privacy features or the ability to filter content more strictly. This presents an opportunity for Netflix to innovate in terms of offering more granular privacy settings or customizable content filters, which could attract an underserved niche market.

Additionally, while Netflix's flexibility was a major draw for busy professionals, some users noted that the sheer volume of content could be overwhelming, making it harder to make viewing decisions. For these individuals, a more curated experience or guidance in content discovery might lead to greater satisfaction. It is crucial for Netflix to continuously refine its recommendation engine to strike a balance between offering diversity and helping users easily navigate their choices.

This research underscores the critical role of lifestyle factors particularly interests, opinions, and activities in shaping the decision to engage with Netflix among newly subscribed working age users. Interests dominate as the most significant driver, highlighting the importance of personalized and diverse content offerings. Opinions provide social validation and trust, while activities emphasize the need for convenience and accessibility. By addressing these factors strategically, Netflix and other digital entertainment services can enhance its competitive advantage and foster stronger connections with its target audience.

Suggestions

For digital entertainment services like Netflix and similar platforms, this research highlights the critical importance of offering flexible, personalized, and socially endorsed services to attract and retain newly subscribed users. To be more specific, platforms should prioritize localized content that caters to the unique cultural preferences and language needs of different user segments. For example, Netflix's success in offering region-specific content.

Furthermore, leveraging data-driven recommendations can significantly enhance user satisfaction. By using sophisticated algorithms to analyze viewing habits and preferences, platforms can provide personalized suggestions that align with users' tastes. For instance, Netflix's "Because You Watched" section, which suggests movies and series based on previous viewing behavior, serves as an example of how to use consumer data effectively to personalize content discovery.

Promoting positive customer feedback is equally essential. Platforms should consider amplifying user reviews, ratings, and testimonials, especially on social media and within the platform itself, to enhance trust and encourage new subscriptions. A strategy such as user-generated content (e.g., ratings, reviews, and social sharing features) can create a community-driven environment where subscribers influence each other's choices. For instance, platforms like Amazon Prime Video and Hulu have incorporated user reviews prominently, and Netflix has also started using this tactic through social media engagement, like showing trending content based on peer recommendations.

Moreover, understanding how the lifestyle dimensions of activities, interests, and opinions influence user behavior can help platforms better align their offerings with the specific needs of newly subscribed working-age individuals. For example, busy professionals, who often seek convenience, can benefit from features like offline viewing, customizable viewing times, or "quick watch" options, where short-form content like episodes or movies under 30 minutes is prioritized. This can cater to users who want flexibility in when and how they consume content, without the pressure of committing to long hours of viewing.

These findings suggest that streaming platforms should refine their marketing and operational strategies by segmenting their audience more precisely based on these lifestyle factors. For instance, targeted marketing campaigns that promote convenience features to professionals, or specialized content for niche groups based on social influence (such as influencer endorsements or reviews), could drive engagement and foster loyalty. By understanding and leveraging these factors, digital entertainment services can expand their user base and retain customers in an increasingly competitive market.

Future Research

1. While this study focused on activities, interests, and opinions, future research could investigate additional lifestyle dimensions, such as values, personality traits, or leisure habits, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of factors influencing streaming platform choices.

2. Conduct comparative studies between Netflix and other streaming services, such as Disney+, Amazon Prime Video, or local platforms like VIU, to identify distinctive factors that drive subscription decisions for each platform.

3. Investigate how cultural differences impact lifestyle factors and decision-making processes in different regions or countries. Comparative studies between Thai consumers and those from other cultural contexts could provide valuable insights for global streaming strategies.

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