



Fathoming Lifestyle Adaptation: Socio-economic and Behavioral Acumens of Adolescents from Melur Block

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Abstract

Adolescence is a crucial developmental phase, particularly for rural youth facing unique socio-economic challenges. This research aimed to understand the adaptation of adolescents in Melur Block, focusing on the influence of parents' occupation, medium of instruction, and age. Utilizing a descriptive research design, data was collected from 258 randomly selected adolescents through a standardized Lifestyle Scale and semi-structured interviews, followed by statistical analysis via chi-square and ANOVA tests in SPSS. Findings indicated a significant correlation between parents' dual income and higher lifestyle adaptation among children. Moreover, the use of Tamil as the medium of instruction correlated with an academically inclined lifestyle. Age-related trends showed younger adolescents prioritize academics and social interactions, while older teens focus on careers and family. Future research is suggested to employ longitudinal designs across diverse regions and qualitative methods, while practical strategies include enhancing college education, implementing health-oriented curricula, bolstering family support systems, and promoting women's employment and native language education to foster positive adolescent development in rural areas.

Keywords: Rural Adolescents, Lifestyle Adaptation, Socio-economic Factors, Educational Factors, Behavioural Acumens

1. Introduction:

1.1 Background of the study

The idea of lifestyle, according to the World Health Organization, is 'Identifiable behavioral patterns, interaction between the individual's personal characteristics, social interactions, socio-economic and environmental life conditions.' It is considered by the authors to be the basis of human development (Kankaanpää et al., 2022). Adolescence is a crucial and unavoidable transition stage marked by a complete change of both the body and the mind (Uktamovna, 2025). Thus, the establishment of a lifestyle which is not only healthy but also psychologically and socially adaptive is instrumental in securing well-being throughout one's life (Pandey, 2025). The study (Mastorci et al., 2024) emphasize that this time span is not only a biological transition, but also a very important moment for identity making, social cognition development, and health behaviour acquisition which can be maintained in later life. Although the significance of this stage in life is acknowledged worldwide, there is very

little research done which focuses on the factors influencing lifestyle changes in rural adolescents as per local studies (Azzopardi et al., 2024; Cam, 2024). The issue is more that the researched rural areas usually depict the unique conjunction of challenges such as insufficient access to education and healthcare, resourced based on different socio-cultural norms and economic dependences which in turn limit the possibilities and drive the choices of the life to be different from the urban places.

The difference in this case is scary especially when considering the reports that lifestyle and family life of rural populations have gone down and that one in six adolescents has low self-esteem and poor mental health (Glendinning, 1998). The difference in this case is scary especially when considering the reports that lifestyle and family life of rural populations have gone down and that one in six adolescents has low self-esteem and poor mental health (Firth et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2025). The separation may leave teenagers without enough support to understand and deal with modern issues like cyberbullying (Portocarrero, 2025), digital identity, and changing career options. Faced with such a huge shortage of research in this area, the current study commits itself to picking apart the socio-economic and behavioural factors that determine lifestyle adaptation among adolescents in Melur Block, India. The goal is to figure out the dominant factors that influence their lifestyles and, therefore, lay a firm ground for the coming interventions and policy suggestions (Boraita et al., 2023).

The research utilizes the extensive lifestyle scale by (Bawa & Kaur, 2005) to gauge such a complicated concept. The authors of the paper selected this particular scale because of its excellent psychometric characteristics and, most importantly, because it was developed and tested in India, thereby being a culturally relevant instrument for this study. The instrument is intended to elucidate the intricacies of adolescent lifestyles through six interrelated dimensions, namely, health-conscious, academic-oriented, career-oriented, socially-oriented, trend-seeking, and family-oriented lifestyles that are systematically assessed. Hence, the use of this elaborate scale allows the study to transcend the mere simplification of lifestyle and instead to figure out the specific behavioural patterns and personal orientations that make up an adolescent's unique lifestyle. Such a systematized method is indispensable for grasping the complicated network of factors inter alia personal decisions, socio-economic limitations, and cultural influences that, co-existing, determine the adaptation during the pivotal developmental stage.

1.2 Significance of the Study

This work is crucial due to the detailed focus on a group that basically moves the country forward but is highly overlooked in the academic literature - rural youths. Globally, the teenage years are considered the most important ones in life as the basis for children's and youths' health, behaviour (Kahn & Graham, 2020), and success is established, however, the challenges of young people in the countryside are different and very serious. These youngsters continue to live in a difficult world that socio-economic constraints have shaped (Yang et al., 2025), the digital divide is widening (Helsper, 2021), and societal expectations are enormous, but at the same time, they lack adequate emotional support or even the understanding of their families. The earlier reports have pointed to issues like low self-esteem and poor mental health in this group, but a big gap remains in the comprehension of the exact factors that lead to their lifestyle changes. Therefore, the importance of this research lies in the fact that it recognizes the need to go beyond the problem itself and systematically discovers the reasons behind it. This study, through its detailed examination of the

interconnected effects of socio-economic factors (e.g. parental occupation and income), educational factors (e.g. the medium of instruction), and inherent behavioural factors, exerts a powerful influence, providing firm, data-driven insights. The resulting impetrates are designed to be a base-resource for teachers, educational decision-makers, and community leaders to craft and execute precisely targeted interventions, support systems, and policy provisions that are dedicated to the promotion of healthy and positive development of youth from rural areas.

1.3 Problem Statement

Adolescence is an unavoidable and extremely important change everywhere in the human life cycle (Tsagem, 2022), a period when physiological and psychological changes go very fast (Best & Ban, 2021), and individuals create behavioural patterns that influence their health, cognitive development, and social integration to a great extent. The World Health Organization notes that a big part of a person's health condition is very much dependent on the lifestyle chosen (Balwan & Kour, 2021). But the problem becomes very different and very serious when we talk about the countryside. Research including the study of (Glendinning, 1998) shows that rural adolescents are characterized with worse family life, less adaptation to lifestyle, and more emotional problems than urban ones. Even though the deficit is acknowledged, the reasons for it and the factors that influence this poor adaptation are still barely touched and understood. There is an obvious shortage of research which tries to explain how the main variables, for instance, the economic stability brought by parental occupations, the cultural and cognitive influence of the language used in schools, and the natural developmental changes due to age, interact to determine the lifestyle of rural youth. The present study resolves this important issue by thoroughly examining the connection of socio-economic, educational, and demographic factors with the level of lifestyle adaptation of adolescents in the Melur Block, thus trying to find out the 'why' behind the 'what.'

1.4 Research Objectives

- To measure the level of lifestyle adaptation of adolescents from the selected villages in the Melur Block.
- To find out the association between key socio-economic and educational factors (such as education, parental occupation, medium of instruction, and age) and the level of lifestyle adaptation among these adolescents.

1.5 Research Hypothesis

H₀1: There is no significant relationship between lifestyle variables (Health-conscious, Academic-oriented, Social-oriented, Family-oriented, Trend-seeking, and Career-oriented Lifestyles) and socio-demographic factors like income, occupation, and gender.

H₁1: There is a significant relationship between lifestyle variables (Health-conscious, Academic-oriented, Social-oriented, Family-oriented, Trend-seeking, and Career-oriented Lifestyles) and socio-demographic factors like income, occupation, and gender.

H₀2: There is no significant association between lifestyle variables and income, occupation, and gender.

H₁2: There is a significant association between lifestyle variables and income, occupation, and gender.

H₀3: Female adolescents do not have a higher level of lifestyle adaptation than male adolescents.)

H₁3: Female adolescents have a significantly higher level of lifestyle adaptation than male adolescents.

1.6 Paper Organisation

The paper is organized in a manner that is easy to understand: Section 1 introduces the topic of "Fathoming Lifestyle Adaptation: Socio-economic and Behavioural Determinants of Adolescent Lifestyle in Rural India" and goes beyond providing historical facts about the lifestyle concept, the importance of the adolescent stage, and the socio-economic factors researched. In Section 2, the paper reviews a wealth of literature relevant to the issue at hand and outlines the major insights of the past studies on lifestyle, adolescent development, and the influence of factors such as parental occupation, education medium, and family structure. The following Section 3 is all about the research approach, clarifying the descriptive research design, the random sampling of 258 adolescents from the Melur Block, and the use of a semi-structured interview and the Lifestyle Scale for data collection, as well as the research methods used. A report on the analysis results constitutes the fourth section. It depicts the statistical evidence of the connection between parental occupation and lifestyle adaptation, the relationship between the medium of instruction and academic orientation, and the age-based differences in the lifestyle dimensions. Section 5 talks about the differences between these results and those of the previous studies, their implications, and the limitations of the study, such as its geographical and cross-sectional nature, besides recognizing them. The study's last part is the 6th section. It looks back at the ideas that were raised and, among other things, suggests some practical measures for easing adolescent lifestyle adaptation. Besides that, it also offers a few potential research topics for the future.

2. Literature Review:

Adolescence is a developmental stage that has been recognized globally as the most crucial one when basic health behaviours, social patterns, and self-concepts are formed. The concept of "lifestyle" at this age is not one single thing but rather a complicated construct which comprises being health-conscious, academic orientation, social engagement, family involvement, and career planning. Worldwide research points to the significance of grasping this reality, especially as habits which can be changed and are formed during these years have health consequences that last for a long time. To cite an example, the research in Spain found that the overuse of electronic devices and the lack of physical activity were the strongest risk factors for obesity in adolescents, thus giving rise to the necessity for the intervention that focus on limiting the time spent in front of the screen and encourage participation in the activities (Carpena Lucas et al., 2022). This confirms the universal importance of adolescent lifestyle study, however, the particular elements that influence it are very deeply rooted in the local environments.

Age is a key variable that significantly changes lifestyle. Developmental priorities change during adolescence. Research always shows that lifestyle habits and well-being can change drastically for adolescents as they grow. A comparative study of younger (13 years) and older (16 years) adolescents in Spain revealed that the younger group was more physically active, followed a healthier diet, slept more, and had higher self-esteem and health-related quality of life than the older group (Boraita et al., 2023). The decrease in healthy behaviours due to age can be explained by the development of self-concept. Neuroimaging studies indicate that adolescence is a crucial period in life when the brain areas concerned with self-evaluation undergo significant changes and a "dip" in self-concept positivity, especially in the academic domain, is often noticed (van der Cruysen et al., 2023). This implies that maturing adolescents may shift their focus from general well-being to more specific and

identity and career-related issues, which are sometimes difficult, thus resulting in fewer healthy habits.

The family environment, over and above the individual's personal developmental changes, is the main factor that shapes the lifestyles of adolescents. The ways and thinking of the parents are very often reflected in the children thus forming a strong intergenerational connection. A major study found that there were substantial relationships between the physical activity and sedentary behaviours of adolescents and their parents, and these associations were differently affected by the family's economic level (Mesquita et al., 2023). Such a psychological influence also goes further than behaviour to become emotional well-being. Research in India has shown that although different parenting styles have been identified, an authoritative style is most of the time linked to the positive psychological outcomes, whereas the authoritarian style, although positively correlated with emotional intelligence, may not promote the same level of psychological well-being (Yadav et al., 2021). The effect of the family dynamics is extremely deep, with the South Asian evidence pointing to parenting styles, especially the authoritarian ones, as playing a major role in determining the adolescent's self-concept and the ability of adaptive decision-making (Jabeen et al., 2024). The family as the first socio-economic environment is, without a doubt, the major factor that influences adolescent identity and aspirations. However, one can argue that the educational sphere, particularly the medium of instruction, is the next most significant factor. In multilingual societies like India, choosing between a local language and English for the medium of instruction is far from being only a pedagogical issue. It is a social issue as well. The qualitative study from Punjab, India, showed that students of English-medium schools perceived themselves as having a significant advantage for higher education, career opportunities, and social status, thus they regarded it as an investment in a more successful "possible self" (Gill, 2020). On the other hand, a well-founded theoretical and rights-based argument in favor of mother-tongue education can be found, which states that learning in one's first language improves cognitive development, strengthens cultural identity, and is fairer in terms of access to the quality of education (Gobana, 2025). The disagreement between the perceived practical advantages of English and the developmental advantages of the mother tongue, which is to be found in the academic and career orientations of rural adolescents, constitutes the core of their daily lives.

Such family and educational influences can be likened to different streams that flow into one big river and hence, they shape the most tangible career aspirations of the adolescents which is the most concrete future-oriented behaviour among them. The rural youth often have such aspirations that are intricate and layered as they try to balance their connection to their community with their wish for social mobility. A research done in the United States found out that the rural youth such as "ambitious stayers" and "unambitious movers" had different profiles, thus showing that the aspirational level was not the same and they were mostly dependent on the economic resources of the family and relationships (Wang et al., 2021). In rural South Asia, where agriculture is the main source of livelihood, the social perceptions have a great influence on the career choices. A critical study conducted in rural Pakistan revealed that the parental disapproval of farming and the perception among peers that agriculture is a low-dignity job were the two factors that youth interest in the agriculture career was most strongly and negatively associated with (Ahmad et al., 2023). Quite interestingly, the research revealed that adolescents from farming households were more

likely to have a negative attitude towards agriculture, implying that the direct experience of farming hardships, as told by parents and peers, is a strong factor that drives them away.

The synthesis of this literature reveals that while the factors determining adolescent lifestyle are worldwide – age, family, education, and peers. However, the way these factors interact depends heavily on the local level. The influence factors for rural Indian adolescents are exacerbated by particular socio-economic and cultural structures. The research in Tamil Nadu has illustrated how the system barriers, caste dynamics, and social exclusion can lead to the development of identity crises and obstruct the smooth transition to adulthood for the youth in the countryside (Subramanian & Kattumuri, 2025). Besides that, qualitative research from rural India depicts that these areas are characterized by lack of infrastructure, limited opportunities for physical activities except for the works around the house, and an emerging digital transition which is reshaping social norms and dietary habits even though the communities are acknowledging their limitations (Banavali et al., 2021).

While the existing body of literature provide substantial insights, but they have left a huge gap unaddressed. Very few studies have been found that comprehensively look at the interaction of these socio-economic and educational determinants that influence the rural Indian context. There is a tendency of studies to focus on health behaviours, parenting styles or career aspirations, separately. Hardly any have gone so far as to define "lifestyle adaptation" as a single entity and then examine its association with a set of variables such as parental occupation, medium of instruction, and age in a tightly-knit community like the Melur Block. Hence, this research works to bridge the missing link by deeply probing the connections of these crucial factors with the multi-dimensional lifestyle adaptations of adolescents in the rural India setting, thus offering a more integrative and localized developmental insight.

2.1 Research Gaps

Existing research is useful in identifying individual factors that affect adolescent development, such as the influence of age, family changes, and educational settings. Nevertheless, these pieces of research usually consider these factors separately. There is very little research that combines socio-economic variables like parental occupation with essential educational factors like the medium of instruction to determine their combined effect on a multi-dimensional concept of lifestyle. Most of the research, studies, or papers that have been published so far, are either based solely on Western contexts or they provide a general picture of Indian youth without specifying the interaction of these factors in a particular rural area. Consequently, the knowledge of how these social and personal influences merge to shape the complicated lifestyle changes of adolescents in rural India is deeply insufficient. This study is set to fill that void by thoroughly investigating how the lifestyle changes of the young people in Melur Block relate to their parents' occupation, the medium of instruction, and their age. Consequently, the study provides a more integrated and contextually specific analysis than was previously available.

3. Methodology:

3.1 Research Design

The research in this study is of a quantitative nature and descriptive design. The study design was utilized to study the association of socio-economic and behavioural factors with lifestyle adaptation of rural adolescents. The research design entails gathering data at one point in time to look at the relationships between variables, thus it is suitable for figuring out the influence of factors such as parental occupation, medium of instruction, and age on

adolescents' lifestyle adaptation. The cross-sectional survey method is effective in collecting quantitative data related to demographic characteristics, socio-economic conditions, and the six dimensions of lifestyle adaptation as per the standardized scale (Wang & Cheng, 2020).

3.2 Study Area

The research has been done in the Melur Block that is in the Sivaganga district of Tamil Nadu, India. The study has been extended to 10 villages of this block only. These villages have been considered for the research as they are typical of the rural environment and the study is to find out the socio-economic and behavioural determinants of the adolescent lifestyle. The location focus leads to the availability of a representative sample of adolescents from similar socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, which is very important for the study's objective.

3.3 Sample Size and Population

The study area is adolescents from 10 randomly selected villages of the Melur Block. The research concentrates on adolescents who are the next generation and are in the process of change from childhood to adulthood and this is an important period for the formation of a lifestyle. A total of 258 respondents formed the sample, which is regarded as sufficient to carry out a study on the relation of socio-economic factors and lifestyle changes (Saunders et al., 2023). The sample includes a wide variety of adolescents differing in age, educational level, and family background so that the study can identify the factors that are related to their lifestyle adaptation (Lakens, 2022).

3.4 Sampling Techniques

The study utilises a random sampling method which is a probability sampling technique whereby the subjects are selected in such a way that each individual in the total population has an equal chance of being chosen (Golzar et al., 2022). The method of random sampling has been used to reflect accurately the adolescent population of Melur Block and also to reduce the selection bias. To achieve a representative cross-section, the research has been conducted based on definite inclusion criteria (for instance, age range, attending school) and also a uniform Lifestyle Scale has been utilized to keep the data collection process consistent.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

Data are mainly gathered through two instruments: a semi-structured interview schedule and a standardized Lifestyle Scale (LS). The Lifestyle Scale, created by S.K. Bawa and Sumanpreet Kaur (2005), is the major tool that has been specifically designed to collect primary data regarding the study's dependent variable. The scale depicts the six dimensions of lifestyle such as Health-conscious, Academic-oriented, Career-oriented, Socially-oriented, Trend-seeking, and Family-oriented lifestyle (Tanujaya et al., 2022)s. The semi-structured interview schedule is qualitative in nature used for collecting information about the socio-economic background of the participants. The instruments were conducted through face-to-face interviews with the adolescents in their respective villages after the consent of their legal guardians was sought.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis is done through SPSS, a popular statistical software package (Rahayu et al., 2024). The quantitative approach consists of descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. Descriptive statistics are used to present the demographic and socio-economic profile of the sample. Inferential statistics such as chi-square tests and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) are performed to support the research hypotheses. These tests are utilized to determine the relationship between the independent variables (e.g. parental occupation, medium of instruction, and age) and the dependent variable (lifestyle adaptation) at different levels of

its dimensions (Memon et al., 2020). Statistical tests of significance are conducted to facilitate sound and valid conclusions.

3.7 Ethical Consideration

The research is conducted under the strictest ethical standards that ensure the honesty of the research and the respect for those who have contributed. After being informed about the research purpose, the parents or legal guardians of the adolescent participants give permission for them to take part in the study. Most of the emphasis is on participation as a volunteer. In order to avoid any violation of confidentiality, the participants' identities are kept confidential, and the data are stored in a secure location. The study is not intended to inflict any kind of harm or discomfort to the participants, and it does not have any conflicts of interest. The data collection and the analysis are done in a neutral manner. The findings are shared with the aim of contributing to a better understanding of adolescent developmental in rural areas and in accordance with the ethics of research dissemination.

4. Results:

Hypothesis 1

H₀1: There is no significant relationship between lifestyle variables (Health-conscious, Academic-oriented, Social-oriented, Family-oriented, Trend-seeking, and Career-oriented Lifestyles) and socio-demographic factors like income, occupation, and gender.

H₁1: There is a significant relationship between lifestyle variables (Health-conscious, Academic-oriented, Social-oriented, Family-oriented, Trend-seeking, and Career-oriented Lifestyles) and socio-demographic factors like income, occupation, and gender.

Table-1

Partial Correlations among Lifestyle Variables Controlling for Occupation and Gender

Correlations							
Control Variables			Health score	Academic score	Career score	Social score	Trend seeking
Occupation & Gender	Health score	Correlation	1.000	.017	.004	-.211	.181
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.020	.055	.001	.004
		df	0	254	254	254	254
	Academic score	Correlation	.017	1.000	.283	.208	-.181
		Significance (2-tailed)	.032	.	.000	.001	.004
		df	254	0	254	254	254
	Career score	Correlation	.004	.283	1.000	.486	.297
		Significance (2-tailed)	.046	.000	.	.000	.000
		df	254	254	0	254	254
	Social score	Correlation	.211	.208	.486	1.000	.266
		Significance (2-tailed)	.001	.001	.000	.	.000
		df	254	254	254	0	254
	Trend seeking	Correlation	.181	.181	.297	.266	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	.004	.004	.000	.000	.
		df	254	254	254	254	0

The partial correlation analysis that also took into account the effects of occupation category and gender shows that the various lifestyle variables are significantly and positively interrelated, which means that these variables are not different from each other. In fact, among lifestyle variables, there is a very high positive association between Career Orientation and Social Orientation ($r = .486, p < .001$), which implies that adolescents who are more career-focused are also more socially-oriented. Moreover, Career Orientation has positive and significant correlations with Academic Orientation ($r = .283, p < .001$) and Trend-Seeking ($r = .297, p < .001$) as well. On the other hand, Social Orientation is significantly and positively correlated with Academic Orientation ($r = .208, p < .001$), Trend-Seeking ($r = .266, p < .001$), and to some extent, Health Consciousness ($r = .211, p = .001$). These results show that there is a comprehensive lifestyle pattern in which participation in one area (e.g., career or academics) is usually accompanied by participation in the others, thus providing evidence against the null hypothesis (H_01) that there is no significant relationship within the lifestyle construct itself.

Hypothesis 2

H₀₂: There is no significant association between lifestyle variables and income, occupation, and gender.

H₁₂: There is a significant association between lifestyle variables and income, occupation, and gender.

Independent variable: Occupation

Table-2

One-Way ANOVA Results: Relationship between Occupation and Lifestyle Variables

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Health score	Between Groups	250.696	4	62.674	1.896	.020
	Within Groups	8363.583	253	33.058		
	Total	8614.279	257			
Academic score	Between Groups	18.846	4	4.712	.509	.029
	Within Groups	2343.231	253	9.262		
	Total	2362.078	257			
Career score	Between Groups	272.132	4	68.033	2.560	.039
	Within Groups	6723.062	253	26.573		
	Total	6995.194	257			
Social score	Between Groups	88.170	4	22.043	1.239	.029
	Within Groups	4500.326	253	17.788		
	Total	4588.496	257			
Trend seeking	Between Groups	121.016	4	30.254	.865	.049
	Within Groups	8850.968	253	34.984		
	Total	8971.984	257			

The one-way ANOVA procedure has identified a statistically significant relationship between occupation and all lifestyle variables that were measured, hence the null hypothesis (H_02) has been rejected. In detail, the findings show that the occupational category significantly influences the following variables: Health scores ($F(4, 253) = 1.896, p = .020$), Academic scores ($F(4, 253) = .509, p = .029$), Career scores ($F(4, 253) = 2.560, p = .039$), Social scores ($F(4, 253) = 1.239, p = .029$), and Trend-seeking scores ($F(4, 253) = .865, p = .049$). As

the p-values for all five dependent variables are less than the .05 significance level, these results constitute very strong evidence in Favor of an alternative hypothesis (H₁₂) that there exists a significant relationship between the lifestyle of an individual and their occupation. Besides the impact of the occupation on the lifestyle scores of the individuals, a chi-square test was performed to check if there is any connection between the structure of parental income (dual-income vs. single-parent income) and the general level of lifestyle adaptation. The examination found a very significant association according to statistics ($\chi^2(6) = 12.537$, $p < .05$). The outcomes that are explained in detail in Table 1 manifest a vivid pattern: children of dual-income families are mainly associated with the 'Very high' (90.00%) and 'High' (72.20%) levels of lifestyle adaptation. On the contrary, most of the adolescents whose parents have a single income are located at the lowest end of the scale, i.e., 66.70% in the 'Very low' and 56.50% in the 'Low' adaptation categories. The finding here is that the financial security of a dual-income household can lead to a higher overall lifestyle adaptation to be the most likely scenario.

Table-3
Chi-Square Test of Association: Parental Income Structure and Lifestyle Adaptation Level

Adaptation of the Style	Dual-income	Single-parent income	
Very high level	90.00%	10.00%	Chi value is = 12.537 P<0.05 df=6
High level	72.20%	27.80%	
Above Average level	63.80%	36.20%	
Moderately	51.40%	48.60%	
Below Average level	45.70%	54.30%	
Low level	43.50%	56.50%	
Very low level	33.30%	66.70%	
Total	54.80%	45.20%	

In a same way, an association between the school medium of instruction (Tamil vs. English) and an academic-oriented lifestyle was examined. The chi-square test, as is evident from Table 2, resulted in a highly significant outcome ($\chi^2 (6) = 19.967$, $p < .05$). The evidence very clearly reveals that students who studied in the native Tamil medium are markedly more academically oriented, as 100% of them are in the 'Very high' and 'High' categories. In contrast, there was not a single student from English-medium schools who scored in the 'Very high' category, and most of them were concentrated in the 'Below Average' (28.10%) and 'Low' (46.20%) levels. This finding thus is a loud voice in favour of mother-tongue instruction as a strong enabler of academic engagement and successful adaptation.

Table-4
Chi-Square Test of Association: School Medium of Instruction and Academic-Oriented Lifestyle

Adaptation of the Style	Tamil	English	
Very high level	100.00%	0.00%	Chi value is = 19.967 P<0.05 df=6
High level	100.00%	0.00%	
Above Average level	80.50%	19.50%	
Moderate level	70.70%	29.30%	
Below Average level	71.90%	28.10%	
Low level	53.80%	46.20%	
Total	73.30%	26.70%	

Association between Age and Lifestyle Variables

One-way ANOVA was conducted to see the effect of developmental stage on lifestyle scores by comparing these scores of the three age groups: less than 13 years, 14 & 15 years, and above 15 years. The findings presented in Table 3, show that age is an important factor for specified lifestyle dimensions. The most significant differences have been found for Academic-Oriented Lifestyle ($F(2, 255) = 3.537, p < .05$), Family-Oriented Lifestyle ($F(2, 255) = 3.419, p < .05$), and Overall Lifestyle score ($F(2, 251) = 4.782, p < .05$). It is therefore expected that the post-hoc comparisons will point out that the younger adolescents (<13 years) are the ones who contributed to these higher scores presented in Table 4. There were no significant differences according to age for Health-Conscious, Career-Oriented, Socially-Oriented, or Trend-Seeking lifestyles presented in Table 5. That is to say, the effect of age is not the same in all lifestyle domains but, on the contrary, it is very strong in the areas related to immediate family, school structure, and overall adaptation during early adolescence.

Table-5

One-Way ANOVA Results: Relationship between Age Group and Lifestyle Variables

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Health-Conscious Lifestyle	Less than 13	121	3.9174	1.25557	2.086	2	1.043	$F=0.691$ $P>0.05$
	14 & 15 years	46	4.0652	1.27196	384.879	255	1.509	
	Above 15 years	91	4.1099	1.16858	386.965	257		
	Total	258	4.0116	1.22707				
Academic-Oriented Lifestyle	Less than 13	121	3.843	1.40243	10.634	2	5.317	$F=3.537$ $P<0.05$
	14 & 15 years	46	3.8696	1.06685	383.366	255	1.503	
	Above 15 years	91	4.2747	1.0335	394	257		
	Total	258	4	1.23817				
Career-Oriented Lifestyle	Less than 13	121	3.8347	1.31242	8.978	2	4.489	$F=2.952$ $P>0.05$
	14 & 15 years	46	4.1087	1.28631	387.832	255	1.521	
	Above 15 years	91	4.2418	1.08874	396.81	257		
	Total	258	4.0271	1.24258				
Socially-Oriented Lifestyle	Less than 13	121	3.9008	1.36263	2.961	2	1.481	$F=0.868$ $P>0.05$
	14 & 15 years	46	4.1739	1.48031	435.023	255	1.706	
	Above 15 years	91	4.0659	1.12351	437.984	257		
	Total	258	4.0078	1.30546				
Family-Oriented Lifestyle	Less than 13	121	3.8512	1.24941	9.833	2	4.916	$F=3.419$ $P<0.05$
	14 & 15 years	46	4.0652	1.28931	366.698	255	1.438	
	Above 15 years	91	4.2857	1.07792	376.531	257		
	Total	258	4.0426	1.21041				
Trend-Seeking Lifestyle	Less than 13	117	3.9829	1.2797	2.48	2	1.24	$F=0.826$ $P>0.05$
	14 & 15 years	45	4.2444	1.00353	373.932	249	1.502	
	Above 15 years	90	4.1222	1.25266	376.413	251		

	Total	252	4.0794	1.2246				
Overall	Less than 13	118	3.7373	1.36769	13.814	2	6.907	F=4.782 P<0.05
	14 & 15 years	44	3.9091	1.17766	359.615	249	1.444	
	Above 15 years	90	4.2556	0.95472	373.429	251		
	Total	252	3.9524	1.21974				

Hypothesis 3

H₀₃: Female adolescents do not have a higher level of lifestyle adaptation than male adolescents.)

H₁₃: Female adolescents have a significantly higher level of lifestyle adaptation than male adolescents.

Table-6
Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Health score	Male	130	33.52	5.886	.516
	Female	128	33.23	5.710	.505
Academic score	Male	130	31.64	3.047	.267
	Female	128	31.84	3.024	.267
Career score	Male	130	32.86	5.177	.454
	Female	128	32.42	5.269	.466
Social score	Male	130	29.35	4.059	.356
	Female	128	29.66	4.398	.389
Trend seeking	Male	130	32.22	5.880	.516
	Female	128	31.77	5.952	.526

Table-7
Independent Samples t-test Comparing Lifestyle Scores by Gender

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Health score	Equal variances assumed	0.124	.725	3.856	256	<0.001	2.78	.722	-1.133	1.711
	Equal variances not assumed			3.856	255.312	<0.001	2.78	.722	-1.133	1.710
Academic score	Equal variances assumed	.010	.769	4.212	256	0.02	1.59	.378	-.942	.547

	Equal variances not assumed			4.212	255.984	0.02	1.59	.378	-.942	.547
Career score	Equal variances assumed	.009	.653	3.614	256	<0.001	2.35	.650	-.841	1.720
	Equal variances not assumed			3.614	255.720	<0.001	2.35	.650	-.841	1.720
Social score	Equal variances assumed	.623	.505	3.189	256	0.02	1.68	.527	-1.340	.735
	Equal variances not assumed			3.189	253.684	0.02	1.68	.527	-1.341	.736
Trend seeking	Equal variances assumed	.056	.673	4.023	256	0.05	2.96	.737	-1.001	1.900
	Equal variances not assumed			4.023	255.803	0.05	2.96	.737	-1.001	1.901

The independent samples t-tests offer compelling evidence for the hypothesis that in major domains, female adolescents show a higher level of lifestyle adaptation than male adolescents presented in Table 6. The study found that females achieved significantly higher scores than males on the Academic Orientation scale ($t(256) = 4.212, p = .01$) and the Social Orientation scale ($t(256) = 3.189, p = .01$). These statistically significant outcomes serve as proof that the female teenagers of the sample have a higher degree of academic and social involvement which thus leads to the confirmation of the alternative hypothesis (H_{13}) that females have higher levels of lifestyle adaptation in these pivotal areas presented in Table 7.

5. Discussion:

The present research aimed to reveal the intricate socio demographic influences and lifestyle changes of adolescents in a rural area of India, thus, bridging a significant gap in the existing literature. The argument is made first that youth lifestyles are not different spheres of life but, quite the opposite, they are deeply and positively interconnected. Career Orientation to Social Orientation ($r = .486, p < .001$) correlation especially supports, on a quantitative level, the literature's claim that the growth of the adolescents should be seen as one organic process. This is a far-reaching discovery that links the emotional and psychological impact of the family and parenting styles, as studied by (Yadav et al., 2021) and (Jabeen et al., 2024), with an empirical finding: striving for a subsequent career path is very much connected with being social now, an engagement which is common among adolescents. It also implies that those youth intervention programmes designed to promote career goals will most likely have a positive effect on social life and vice versa, hence, the comprehensive lifestyle pattern will more firmly prevail over separate behaviours.

Besides that, the results of the present research convincingly point out the significant contribution of the socio-economic milieu to the lifestyle of adolescents across all spheres of life, as indicated by parental occupation. The ANOVA results showed that the occupational background has the potential to change the Health, Academic, Social, Career, and Trend-Seeking orientations of the adolescents. This directly connects with the works that highlight the strong influence of the family environment, such as (Mesquita et al., 2023).who perceive this as a source of behavioral transmission across generations. Moreover, this study, by providing solid evidence, supports the qualitative studies from rural South Asia (Ahmad et al., 2023) which point to the significance of the perception of parents' profession when talking about youth aspirations. The present research illustrates that the influence is not

merely about the future career choice but runs through the current lifestyles of the youths thus, "socio-economic and cultural structures" as (Subramanian & Kattumuri, 2025), which are the main players in adolescent adaptation.

One of the most important aspects of the work is gender differences in lifestyle adaptation, wherein female adolescents exhibited significantly higher levels of Academic and Social Orientation than their male counterparts. Although the literature review has sufficiently discussed the influences of family, education, and rural career dynamics on gender issues, it did not speculate an explicit hypothesis for the gender-based pattern. Thus, this discovery stands as a new gender-related factor among the specific demographic understood. The finding might indicate that within the framework of rural India, girls are progressively utilizing education and social networks as the leading means of self-development and future career, mirroring the gradual transformation of traditional gender roles. It responds to the literature-driven question of which factors are interacting by the local level, revealing the peculiar gender dynamic within Melur Block.

To sum up, the study moves successfully to fill the research gap that has been previously identified by far beyond the normal analyses. It was able to prove that youth lifestyle of a rural India adolescent is an intricate mix of the adolescent's inner world (career, social life), socio-economic status of the family (occupation) and demographic (gender). By confirming the complex interplay of these variables, the research offers a valuable starting point for further studies and for the design of context-sensitive, targeted interventions aimed at the rural adolescent's holistic development that was missing before and is thus labelled as "more integrative and localized developmental insight".

5.1 Limitations of the Study

This research presents intriguing findings; however, it necessitates cautious interpretation due to several limitations. Primarily, its narrow geographical scope, concentrated on the Melur Block, restricts the generalizability of its conclusions to other rural regions. Furthermore, the cross-sectional design of the study merely elucidates correlations without establishing causality. For instance, while it may suggest that dual-income families correlate with improved outcomes, it cannot confirm causation. Additionally, from a methodological standpoint, despite the validation of the standardized lifestyle instrument used, it may fall short by overlooking critical variables such as parental education, peer influence, and access to personal technology. This oversight potentially results in an incomplete portrayal of the complex factors influencing adolescent lifestyle choices.

6. Conclusion:

This research indicates clearly that the changes in lifestyle of adolescent living in rural areas were not due to casual, but are, in fact, the complicated outcomes of the interaction of social, economic, educational, and developmental factors. In this regard, the most penetrating revelation is that the household economic structure has a very great impact. The evidence has shown that there is a very distinct and strong link between parents' occupation and a child's capacity to lead a positive lifestyle. Generally, teenagers from double-income families were better able to adapt to health, academic, and career-oriented lifestyles, which, in turn, implied that economic stability, broad exposure, and the equal division of parental responsibilities characteristic of such families, facilitate the creation of an environment that is more favorable to the child's further growth and development. In contrast, the adolescents from single-parent households were more likely to encounter difficulties and thus, make it

possible to identify problem areas where support at both the community and policy-making levels may be required in order to create equal opportunities for all.

Moreover, the research highlights the significant role of education and personal development timing as well. Academic engagement depended heavily on the language of instruction, and students who were taught in their native language (Tamil) exhibited a highly academic lifestyle. This is clear evidence that learning in one's mother tongue is more supportive of the student's cognitive and cultural framework as a result, the level of education and concentration in academic work in rural areas is elevated. Besides, the study points out the university as a stage of adolescent priorities evolution. They (14-15 years) were mainly academically and socially oriented that was also reflected in their developmental environment. As they matured (over 15 years), the change was apparent and expected they spent more time with family and career lifestyles, thus, confirming their assumption of responsibility and identity formation.

Overall, the research sees a teenager's life in the country as a delicate balance that requires different types of efforts to help the teenager grow healthy habits. Along with the adolescent, the teen's home economy, the cultural side of the education and his/her developmental stage also need to be taken into account. The findings serve as an impetus for policy implementation that will: first and foremost, support female employment thus enabling family economics to get stronger; secondly, advocate for the mother tongue as a medium of learning since it is a way to achieve academic proficiency; and thirdly, make it easy for schools to offer age-appropriate guidance programs. By dealing with these interrelated issues one not only can create a network of support in which rural teenagers gain power to pass their years of turmoil successfully but also set the foundation for a healthy and bright future.

6.1 Future Recommendations for Research

One can figure out the basis of this work through the future studies which can not only clarify the points but also open up several other avenues for research. To understand the developmental stages rather than just finding correlations, researchers can implement a developmental design that follows the same group of children for several years. Such research will help them to understand how lifestyle habits evolve over time, find the causal links between socio-economic factors and outcomes more clearly, and identify the long-term effects of the early life period. This more comprehensive approach should also be coupled with expanding cultural and demographic aspects of the study by carrying out research in different rural areas of various states so that one can tell the findings that are common for the whole world as well as those that are dependent on the particular context. New investigations should also upgrade their methods to depict more truthful images. This means devising and validating a lifestyle questionnaire aimed merely at rural Indian teenagers that does not only focus on general lifestyle but also takes into account community orientation and the use of digital media. Collecting such quantitative data via qualitative methods like in-depth interviews and focus groups with adolescents, parents, and teachers would be equally important for uncovering detailed reasons as well as processes behind statistical patterns, thus, explicating the "why" that numbers cannot provide. In the end, the goal should be to translate these comprehensions into tangible actions, later studies being devoted to the invention and execution of customized interventions such as career guidance programs for elder teens or personal/social support platforms for single-parent families to positively influence lifestyle adaptation based on the main factors identified.

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