

**‘SIPPING IN STYLE: EXPLORING THE LATTE LIFESTYLE AND
SPENDING HABITS IN PREMIUM CAFES’**

Project Report

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Under the guidance of

Ms. LEKSHMI C

**In partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of
BACHELOR OF COMMERCE**



**ST. TERESA'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), ERNAKULAM
COLLEGE WITH POTENTIAL FOR EXCELLENCE**

Nationally Re-Accredited with A++ Grade

Affiliated to

Mahatma Gandhi University

Kottayam-686560

March-2026

ST. TERESA'S COLLEGE, ERNAKULAM (AUTONOMOUS)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project titled "**SIPPING IN STYLE: EXPLORING THE LATTE LIFESTYLE AND SPENDING HABITS IN PREMIUM CAFES**" submitted to Mahatma Gandhi University in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Degree of Bachelor in Commerce is a record of the original work done by **Ms. Sana Muhammed Ashereff, Ms. Aliza Therese, Ms. Abiya K R, and Ms. Fiza Siraj** under my supervision and guidance during the academic year 2025-26.

Project Guide

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DECLARATION

We, Ms. Sana Muhammed Ashereff, Ms. Abiya K R, Ms. Aliza Therese, and Ms. Fiza Siraj, final year B.Com students Taxation Department of Commerce (SF), St. Teresa's College (Autonomous) do hereby declare that the project report entitled “**SIPPING IN STYLE: EXPLORING THE LATTE LIFESTYLE AND SPENDING HABITS IN PREMIUM CAFES**” submitted to Mahatma Gandhi University is a bonafide record of the work done under the supervision and guidance of Ms. Lekshmi C, Assistant Professor of Department of Commerce (SF), St. Teresa's College (Autonomous) and this work has not previously formed the basis for the award of any academic qualification, fellowship, or other similar title of any other university or board.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all, we are grateful to God Almighty for his blessings showered upon us for the successful completion of our project.

It is our privilege to place a word of gratitude to all persons who have helped us in the successful completion of the project.

We are grateful to our guide **Ms. Lekshmi C**, HOD, Department of Commerce (SF) of St. Teresa's College (Autonomous), Ernakulam for her valuable guidance and encouragement for completing this work.

We would like to acknowledge **Dr. Anu Joseph**, Principal of St. Teresa's College (Autonomous), Ernakulam for providing necessary encouragement and infrastructure facilities needed for us.

We would like to thank **Smt. Lekshmi C**, Head of the Department, for her assistance and support throughout the course of this study for the completion of the project.

We will remain always indebted to our family and friends who helped us in the completion of this project.

Last but not the least; we would like to thank the respondents of our questionnaire who gave their precious time from work to answer our questions.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1: INTRODUCTION

In the evolving landscape of urban consumer behavior, the act of enjoying a cup of coffee has transcended its functional role as a source of caffeine. What was once a brief pause in a busy day has transformed into a symbolic gesture of lifestyle, identity, and aspiration. The emergence and widespread popularity of premium cafés—such as Starbucks, Blue Tokai, Third Wave Coffee, and independent boutique coffee houses—have played a pivotal role in cultivating what is now popularly known as the latte lifestyle. This shift is particularly prominent among urban youth, working professionals, and social media-conscious consumers who view café visits not merely as a means to satisfy a craving but as an opportunity to engage in a curated experience.

These establishments offer much more than coffee; they blend artisanal products with thoughtfully designed interiors, ambient music, Wi-Fi-enabled spaces, and a sense of exclusivity that appeals to the modern consumer's desire for comfort, social belonging, and aesthetic pleasure. The décor, the aroma of freshly brewed beans, the latte art, and even the barista's craft all contribute to an immersive atmosphere that encourages lingering, conversation, and often content creation for social platforms. Cafés have become informal offices for freelancers, networking hubs for professionals, and social sanctuaries for friends and couples.

Moreover, the products themselves—be it a cold brew with oat milk, a seasonal pumpkin spice latte, or handcrafted pour-over coffee—are increasingly marketed as artisanal and sustainable, aligning with consumers' growing interest in ethical sourcing, environmental responsibility, and personal wellness. The willingness to spend on higher-priced beverages and café merchandise reflects a broader trend of “affordable luxury,” where small but premium indulgences are seen as expressions of self-worth and personal choice.

This chapter explores how this café-centric lifestyle reflects shifting consumer values in the context of urban living. It examines the psychological, social, and cultural motivations behind this trend, delves into how premium cafés leverage branding and design to shape customer preferences, and investigates the implications of this lifestyle on spending behavior and identity formation. As sipping a latte becomes both a personal ritual and a social signal, understanding this phenomenon provides valuable insight into the intersection of modern consumption, identity, and experience-driven economies.

1.2: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study aims to explore the rise of the latte lifestyle and analyze consumer spending habits at premium cafés. Over the past decade, cafés have transitioned from mere beverage outlets to social spaces that represent lifestyle, identity, and personal taste. With the growing popularity of premium cafés, especially among urban youth and

working professionals, there has been a noticeable shift in how people spend on coffee and related experiences. Customers are often willing to pay significantly more for handcrafted beverages, branded merchandise, and the curated ambiance offered by these establishments. Despite being seen as casual expenses, these frequent purchases can accumulate into substantial spending over time. This study seeks to understand the underlying motivations behind such spending—whether driven by taste, trend, social media influence, or a desire for self-expression. The research will also examine how often people visit premium cafés, how much they typically spend, and what factors most influence their purchasing decisions. By doing so, this project aims to provide insight into the changing dynamics of consumer behavior within modern café culture.

1.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research explores the ‘Latte lifestyle’ and spending habits of urban youth and working professionals at premium cafes, focusing on motivations, economic impact, and cultural influences of ‘Latte Lifestyle’ within the demographic region of Ernakulam.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Primary Objective

To investigate the Latte Lifestyle by examining the spending habits, motivations, and experiences of urban youth and working professionals who frequent premium cafes in Ernakulam.

Secondary Objectives

1. To investigate the cultural, social, and economic dynamics of the "latte lifestyle".
2. To identify the factors such as quality, ambiance, sustainability, and social media influence, driving consumer preferences for premium cafes.
3. To assess the economic impact of the latte lifestyle by analyzing spending patterns, frequency of visits, and additional expenditures.
4. To systematically analyze the diverse motivations behind premium cafe visits.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the methodology adopted for the study, “Sipping in Style: Exploring the Latte Lifestyle and Spending Habits at Premium Cafés.” It details the

research approach, data sources, participant selection, and analytical tools used to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

1.5.1 Research Design

The study employs a descriptive research design, which is well-suited for capturing and presenting insights into consumer behavior at premium cafés and resto bars. This approach allows for an indepth look at the preferences, spending habits, and lifestyle motivations of café-goers, without attempting to alter or influence their choices.

A quantitative methodology forms the backbone of the research, utilizing structured questionnaires to gather data. The study is cross-sectional, with all information collected within a defined time frame. To interpret the findings, basic statistical tools such as percentages, charts, correlation, regression and mean are used, making it easier to identify and communicate key trends and patterns.

1.5.2 Sample Design and Size

The sampling strategy is based on non-probability convenience sampling, selecting participants who are easily accessible and willing to contribute. The focus is on individuals who are regular visitors to premium cafés and resto bars.

The sample comprises 200 respondents, primarily college students and young professionals aged 18 to 35, residing in Ernakulam. This demographic was chosen as it best represents the urban youth and working professionals most engaged with the “latte lifestyle.” Data collection was conducted through both online and through face to face structured questionnaires

1.5.3 Collection Of Data:

Both primary and secondary data will be used for data collection.

Primary Data

Primary sources of data are the original sources from which the researcher directly collects the data. For collecting primary data, we use the method of structured questionnaire. The questionnaire includes closed-ended questions which allows us to collect data that is qualitative and quantitative in nature.

Secondary Data

Secondary data refers to data that is already in existence as a result of previous research. It helps to make primary data collection more specific since with the help of secondary data, we are able to make out what are the gaps and deficiencies and what additional information needs to be collected. The sources of secondary data used for this study include journals and articles, web sources, reports and theses.

1.5.4 Research Instruments for Data Collection and Analysis

For the analysis of collected data, various quantitative analytical tools will be employed. These include correlation analysis (to identify the strength and direction of relationships between variables), regression analysis (to examine how independent variables influence dependent variables), and descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions, and standard deviation. Additionally, cross-tabulation, chi square tests and factor analysis may be applied to uncover deeper patterns and associations within the data. These tools will help provide a comprehensive understanding of the spending habits and lifestyle preferences of consumers frequenting premium cafe

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

1. Respondent Reluctance: Some respondents were hesitant to provide honest and complete answers regarding their premium café preferences and spendings , which may have affected the accuracy of the study's findings.
2. Time Constraints: As college students, the team faced challenges in balancing academic responsibilities with the time required for comprehensive research.
3. Small Sample Size: The study relied on a limited sample size, which may not fully represent the broader population engaging in the latte lifestyle.
4. Lack of Expertise: The team's limited prior experience in formal research methodologies may have influenced the design, execution, and analysis of the study.

1.7 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter Outline in a research study refers to the process of organizing and dividing the content into logical and coherent chapters or sections. Each chapter typically focuses on a specific aspect of the research.

This research study has been presented in five chapters . Each part of the study has a significant role in the completion of study. Here are the chapter segregation followed for the study.

1.7.1 Introduction

1.7.2 Literature Review

1.7.3 Theoretical Framework

1.7.4 Data Analysis and Interpretation

1.7.5 Findings, Recommendations and Conclusion

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

2.1.1 Exploring the Influence Factors in Consumer Preferences Towards Café Selection: An Empirical Study (2025)

Kamila Maritsha, L. Tri Wijaya N. Kusuma, Wike Agustin Prima Dania, and Debrina Puspita Andriani(2025) explored factors influencing consumer preferences in café selection in Malang City, Indonesia, through a quantitative study published in the ‘Journal of Engineering and Management in Industrial System’. Using questionnaires from 297 respondents and analyzing data via K-Means Clustering and SEM, the study found that café atmosphere, service quality, and E-WoM significantly impacted purchase decisions, while the traditional marketing mix did not. Three consumer segments were identified: high purchasing power individuals, budget-conscious youth, and educated middle-class consumers, each with distinct preferences. The findings suggest cafés should prioritize service quality, digital presence, and ambiance to align with evolving consumer behavior, which favors experiential and social factors over conventional marketing. Adapting strategies to these segments can enhance competitiveness and satisfaction in Malang’s dynamic café market.

2.1.2 Coffee Culture and Urban Settings: Locating Third Place in the Digital Era. The Cases of About Life Coffee Brewers in Tokyo and Kopi Tuku in Jakarta- (2022)

Anastasia Widyaningsih, Putri Kusumawardhani, and Diana Zerlina (2022) authored a case study titled Coffee Culture and Urban Settings: Locating Third Place in the Digital Era – The Cases of About Life Coffee Brewers in Tokyo and Kopi Tuku in Jakarta, under the Faculty of Art and Design at Universitas Pelita Harapan. The study explores how urban cafés in Asian cities have evolved into modern “third places”—public spaces that function between home and work—amid growing digitalization. Through comparative analysis, the paper highlights how About Life Coffee Brewers in Tokyo caters to fast-paced, minimalist coffee experiences, while Kopi Tuku in Jakarta fosters a more community-driven, locally rooted culture. Both cafés illustrate how design, affordability, and social media presence are essential in attracting millennial consumers. The study concludes that today’s cafés serve as hybrid environments—social, digital, and experiential—where global café trends are adapted to fit local urban lifestyles.

2.1.3 Coffee People in Tehran, Glasgow and Amsterdam by Reza Shaker Ardekani and Jan Rath (2020)

Reza Shaker Ardekani and Jan Rath authored Coffee People in Tehran, Glasgow and Amsterdam, published in the Journal of Consumer Culture (2020). The research explores how specialty coffee bars serve as identity spaces for the new urban middle class in three culturally distinct cities.

The study sets out to understand how urban middle-class individuals use specialty

cafés to perform social distinction and express their lifestyle values. Drawing on Bourdieu's theory of taste and distinctions, the authors explain that cafés serve not only as consumption zones but symbolic stages where consumers project individuality, environmental consciousness, and global citizenship. It finds that patrons in Tehran, Glasgow, and Amsterdam embrace artisanal cafés as manifestations of aesthetic preference and cultural capital rather than purely utilitarian coffee vendors. The specialty coffee movement is framed as part of a broader cultural shift toward aesthetic, experiential, and socially conscious consumption.

2.1.4 Cultural implications of Starbucks consumption in China; why do Chinese have latte on their mind (2016)

Garette Hersh (2016, University of Mississippi) examines the rapid expansion of coffee production and consumption in China. FAO data (2015) show that output doubled roughly every five years over two decades, while USDA and ICO figures estimate consumption reached 120,000 metric tons in 2015—twice the level just three years earlier, with an annual growth rate of 16%. Coffee-related sales also more than doubled in value from US\$1 billion in 2005 to US\$2.4 billion in 2015, with projections of US\$3.65 billion by 2019. Although coffee was introduced in the late 1800s, it remained niche until Nestlé popularized instant coffee among office workers. A decisive shift occurred with Starbucks' entry in 1999, reframing coffee in China from a utilitarian beverage to a lifestyle and social experience, thereby embedding café culture within the country's modern consumer landscape.

2.1.5 The latte revolution; Regulations, market and consumptions in the global coffee chain (2002)

Stephano Ponte's study *The Latte Revolution: Regulation, Market and Consumption in the Global Coffee Chain* (2002) analyzes the transformation of the global coffee industry, using Denmark's café market as a case. He traces the collapse of the International Coffee Agreement (ICA) in 1989, which ended quota-based price stability and shifted power from producing countries to large transnational roasters and traders. This restructuring left small farmers vulnerable to volatile prices while profits increasingly accrued to corporations in consuming nations. At the same time, consumer behavior in wealthy countries shifted toward specialty, organic, fair-trade, and single-origin coffees, with upscale cafés marketing coffee as a premium lifestyle experience through quality, ambience, and branding. Ponte highlights the paradox that while affluent consumers embrace high-value café culture, producers in the Global South face declining income and marginalization in the value chain.

2.2 NATIONAL LEVEL

2.2.1.Coffee House to Barista: A Study of Cultural Change (2009)

Payal Sen's (2009) dissertation, 'Coffee House to Barista: A Study of Cultural Change' (Jadavpur University), examines the shift in Kolkata's coffee culture from traditional Indian Coffee Houses to modern chains like Barista and Café Coffee Day. Using mixed methods—including interviews, surveys, and observations with 200 respondents—the study highlights how globalization and market liberalization have transformed coffee spaces from intellectual, politically charged hubs into commercialized, brand-driven venues catering to young, affluent consumers. Findings reveal a preference for trendy, air-conditioned cafés over the traditional, socially interactive Indian Coffee House, reflecting broader lifestyle changes and Western influences. The research concludes that this shift prioritizes profit and fast-paced consumption over the historical role of coffee houses as centers of prolonged social and political discourse.

2.2.2. Influence of Digital Marketing on Consumer Choices in Bangalore's Cafe Industry(2023)

Deeptesh Banerjee's (2023) market research report, 'Influence of Digital Marketing on Consumer Choices in Bangalore's Café Industry' (Indus Business Academy), examines how digital strategies—social media campaigns, online promotions, and loyalty programs—shape consumer behavior in Bangalore's thriving café sector. Using mixed methods (130 surveys and secondary data), the study found Instagram and Facebook most effective due to visual appeal and influencer marketing, while discounts, cashback offers, and online reviews strongly influence decisions. However, personalization and customer service need improvement to boost loyalty. The findings emphasize that experiential and financial incentives outperform traditional promotions, urging cafés to adopt data-driven, interactive digital strategies to stay competitive in this dynamic market.

2.2.3.Change in Consumer Patronage and Willingness to Pay at Different Levels of Service Attributes in Restaurants: A Study in India (2014)

Kirti Dutta, H.G.Parsa, Rahul.A.Parsa and Milos Bujisic (2014), in their study 'Change in Consumer Patronage and Willingness to Pay at Different Levels of Service Attributes in Restaurants' (Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism), examined how food quality, service quality, and ambiance influence Indian diners' willingness to pay (WTP) and patronage across four restaurant types—fine dining, casual dining, chain QSRs, and independent QSRs. Using a scenario-based experiment with 308 respondents in Delhi, they found food quality most critical in fine dining, ambiance more impactful than service in casual dining, and speed/accuracy key for QSR chains, while ambiance differentiated independent QSRs. The study highlights that elevating service attributes from low to high levels boosts

WTP and repeat visits, suggesting restaurateurs strategically invest in food quality, ambiance, or efficiency based on segment-specific preferences to maximize returns in India's evolving dining market.

2.2.4. A Study on Consumer Preferences Towards the Consumption of Beverages Among Youth and Adults: A Case Study on Coffee Market in India-Apoorva Srivastava and Dr. Kritika Malhotra (2024)

Apoorva Srivastava and Dr. Kritika Malhotra (2024), in their paper A Study on Consumer Preferences Towards the Consumption of Beverages Among Youth and Adults: A Case Study on Coffee Market in India (IJARIIE), examine the shifting coffee habits of Indian consumers. The study highlights the rise of premium brands like Blue Tokai, Third Wave, and Starbucks, noting that youth are drawn to cafés for ambiance, aesthetics, and social interaction, while adults focus more on taste and trusted brands such as Café Coffee Day or independent cafés. Social media, branding, and digital loyalty programs strongly influence both groups. Using questionnaires and cross-tabulation of age, income, frequency, beverage choice, and willingness to pay, the research concludes that cafés now serve as lifestyle and identity symbols beyond just coffee consumption.

2.2.5.Specialty Coffee Courts Indian Consumers,- STiR Coffee & Tea Magazine (2023–2024)

The STiR Coffee & Tea Magazine feature Specialty Coffee Courts Indian Consumers (2023–2024) explores the rapid growth of India's premium coffee market. Artisanal brands like Blue Tokai, Third Wave, and Tata-backed chains are driving a shift in metros toward specialty brewing and café experiences, which now make up about 5% of the formal market. Urban youth and millennials are willing to pay ₹250–₹350 for premium drinks, influenced by cupping events, storytelling on bean origins, and curated brew methods. Cafés also serve as social hubs, blending design, community, and digital engagement to build loyalty, while venture capital investments (e.g., \$30 million in Blue Tokai) highlight the sector's growing economic significance.

2.2.6. Café culture: Socio-historical transformations of space, personhood and middle class in Pune, India

In Pune, café culture blended global influences with local identity, much like in other post-socialist societies such as China. Located in middle-class and elite urban areas, cafés—with their higher prices—attracted educated, English-speaking youth while distinguishing them from those at roadside tea stalls or cybercafés. They promoted leisure and moderate spending, contrasting with the frugality of older generations, the conservatism of the traditional middle class, and the extravagance of the elite. For young people, cafés offered freedom from parental control and spaces for fashion, friendships, and dating, enabling self-expression through consumption and helping them construct identities as modern, liberal, middle-class Indians

2.2.7. Psychological Drivers and Daily Spending Habits: How the Latte Factor Shapes Financial and Compulsive Behavior Among Millennials

Mukhibathul Hikmah (Universitas Mulawarman) studied how self-esteem and self-control influence millennials' financial behavior and compulsive buying, using Social Cognitive Learning Theory and survey data from 150 respondents analyzed with WarpPLS. Results show that self-esteem strengthens self-control and financial behavior, indirectly reducing compulsive buying, including small repeated "latte factor" expenses. Self-control improves financial habits and lowers impulsive spending, while good financial behavior also reduces compulsive purchases. The study underscores the need to build self-regulation and psychological awareness to curb harmful spending, especially in the digital era where micro-spending often undermines financial stability.

2.2.8. Cafe culture has become a lifestyle in India(2014)

Nusra (2014) traces the historical trajectory of coffee consumption in India, noting its presence since the 15th century, while emphasizing the sector's contemporary expansion. Domestic consumption has been increasing at an annual rate of 2.5–3% (equivalent to 3–4 million bags), positioning India, alongside China, as a significant emerging market in the global coffee industry. This growth is underpinned by South India's long-established coffee culture, the expanding middle class, and the proliferation of urban café culture, which has reframed coffee as both a social and lifestyle commodity. Current production levels stand at approximately 43 million bags (300 lakh tonnes), with domestic consumption rising to 25–35% of output, compared to 15–20% in earlier decades. While production is projected to remain relatively stable, Nusra predicts that rising demand will likely outpace supply within the next five years

2.3 STATE LEVEL

2.3.1 Enjoying Life: Consumption, Changing Meanings, and Social Differentiation in Kerala, India By Filippo Osella (2021)

This paper examines shifting consumption patterns among Kerala's urban middle class, highlighting a move toward lifestyle-oriented and experiential spending captured in the notion of 'jeevitha anubhoothi' (enjoying life). Practices such as dining at branded cafés, purchasing premium goods, and leisure consumption are framed as markers of status and modernity, particularly among younger, aspirational groups. Consumption thus operates as a form of social differentiation, signaling participation in global consumer culture and a departure from earlier middle-class ideals of thrift and simplicity. These insights directly align with the study of premium café culture,

illustrating how visits to chains like Starbucks and Café Coffee Day function as expressions of identity and lifestyle rather than purely matters of taste or convenience.

2.3.2 Evolving Food Choices Among the Urban Indian Middle Class by Ray & Ray (2011)

This study analyzes the transformation of food preferences within India's urban middle class, shaped by globalization, modern lifestyles, and evolving work patterns. Eating out, once considered an occasional indulgence, has become routine among younger groups and dual-income households. Food choices are increasingly guided by aspirations, health awareness, and social signaling, with restaurants and cafés—particularly international and premium outlets—serving as markers of convenience, cosmopolitanism, and identity. In relation to café culture, the paper underscores that visits to establishments such as Starbucks or Café Coffee Day extend beyond financial choices, reflecting deeper cultural and aspirational shifts in urban consumption.

2.4 SUMMARY

The literature reviewed spans international, national, and state-level studies, collectively highlighting the socio-cultural evolution of coffee consumption and café culture in urban contexts.

At the **international level**, research emphasizes how cafés are emerging as modern-day “third places”—informal, hybrid spaces that blend leisure, identity expression, and digital connectivity. Studies from Japan, Indonesia, Iran, and Europe reveal that premium cafés are not only food retail spaces but lifestyle symbols. Consumer choices are increasingly shaped by ambiance, digital marketing, and social experience rather than just price or taste. Factors like electronic word of mouth (E-WoM), service quality, and social capital have proven to influence café patronage more than traditional marketing approaches. These works also shed light on the paradox of global coffee economics, where upscale consumer experiences in wealthy nations coexist with fragile incomes for coffee growers.

At the **national level**, literature explores how café culture in India has transformed under the influence of globalization, digital marketing, and changing youth identities. Findings from Kolkata, Pune, and Bangalore illustrate that cafés have transitioned from spaces of intellectual discourse to lifestyle-driven hubs that appeal to the urban middle class and aspirational youth. Studies confirm that social media, brand image, and personalized experiences heavily impact consumer decisions. The emergence of artisanal and specialty cafés is also linked to identity signaling, financial behavior, and generational shifts in consumption preferences.

At the **state level (Kerala)**, two key studies confirm this cultural redefinition. Osella (2021) introduces the concept of “jeevitha anubhoothi” (enjoying life) to explain how discretionary consumption—such as frequenting premium cafés—has become normalized among Kerala’s youth as a marker of modernity and status. Ray & Ray (2011) further emphasize that eating out has become routine among Kerala’s middle class, driven by aspirational lifestyle choices and convenience.

Together, the literature supports your research focus by confirming that café visits today are not merely about coffee—they’re about lifestyle, self-expression, and evolving urban identities.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-paced urban landscape, coffee has evolved far beyond a simple morning ritual—it has become a cultural statement, a lifestyle marker, and even a social currency. From the carefully crafted flat whites of minimalist coffee bars to the oat milk lattes served in hand-thrown ceramics, the act of sipping a premium coffee drink is now as much about identity as it is about caffeine. This phenomenon, often dubbed the "latte lifestyle," represents a growing trend where individuals—particularly urban millennials and Gen Z—frequent high-end cafes not just for the beverage, but for the experience, ambiance, and status that come with it.

Premium cafes have successfully positioned themselves at the intersection of luxury and everyday life. With artisanal brews, curated interiors, and Instagrammable aesthetics, they attract a clientele willing to pay a significant markup for what might once have been a simple cup of coffee. But beyond the surface lies a deeper inquiry: what motivates people to spend upwards of \$6–\$10 daily on specialty drinks? Is it convenience, indulgence, or the emotional comfort wrapped in the aroma of single-origin espresso? And how do these spending habits reflect broader economic, social, and psychological trends?

This exploration delves into the world of premium coffee consumption—from the nuanced branding strategies of boutique cafes to the consumer behaviors that sustain them. It seeks to understand not just what people are drinking, but why—and what the act of sipping in style reveals about contemporary values, aspirations, and priorities. In examining the intersection of caffeine, culture, and commerce, we gain insight into a generation that is redefining luxury on its own terms—one latte at a time.

The rise of premium cafes is not merely a shift in taste, but a reflection of a broader socio-economic transformation. As traditional markers of wealth—like home ownership or luxury vehicles—become increasingly inaccessible for younger generations, especially in urban areas, the focus has shifted toward small-scale, daily luxury that offer both pleasure and prestige. A \$7 latte may seem excessive in isolation, but for many, it represents an affordable indulgence, a way to insert a moment of beauty, craftsmanship, and calm into an otherwise chaotic day. Moreover, premium coffee culture is deeply entwined with identity curating and social signaling. The kind of coffee one drinks, the café one frequents, and even the cup it's served in can signal values like environmental consciousness, cultural awareness, or refined taste. A customer ordering a nitro cold brew in a plant-filled, ethically-sourced café isn't just buying a drink—they're participating in a story, one that aligns with their personal brand. Social media platforms, especially Instagram and TikTok, have further amplified this trend, turning cafés into lifestyle stages and coffee into content.

From a business perspective, premium cafes operate within a niche that fuses hospitality, design, and storytelling. They often emphasize traceability—highlighting

the origin of beans, the farmers who grew them, and the sustainable methods used in production. This transparency, paired with sleek branding and community-focused messaging, builds loyalty and trust. Customers don't just return for the coffee—they return for a sense of belonging, a familiar ritual in an increasingly unpredictable world.

Financially, these habits add up. What seems like a harmless daily treat can amount to hundreds of dollars each month—raising questions around financial literacy, priorities, and long-term spending behaviours. Critics argue that such spending is emblematic of short-term gratification culture, while others see it as a rejection of outdated norms around saving and investing in favour of living well in the present. Interestingly, for many latte-lifestyle adherents, premium coffee spending coexists with frugality in other areas—opting for secondhand fashion, bike commuting, or co-living arrangements. It's a complex balancing act of values and trade-offs.

Finally, the latte lifestyle also intersects with mental health and self-care narratives. The daily ritual of visiting a favorite café, interacting with baristas, and savoring a carefully made drink can serve as an anchor—especially for those navigating the loneliness and overstimulation of city life. In this way, premium cafes function not just as businesses, but as third spaces: social environments that exist outside of home and work, offering comfort, connection, and a curated sense of community.

3.2.DEFINITION OF THE LATTE LIFESTYLE OF THE URBAN YOUTH

The "latte lifestyle" refers to a modern consumer and cultural phenomenon, predominantly observed among urban youth, characterized by a preference for premium coffee experiences, aesthetic-driven consumption, and small, daily indulgences that reflect personal identity, values, and aspirations.

Far beyond just drinking coffee, the latte lifestyle encompasses a broader set of behaviors and attitudes, including:

- Frequenting artisanal or boutique cafes known for specialty brews, curated interiors, and socially conscious branding.
- Viewing coffee not merely as a beverage, but as a social ritual, a moment of self-care, or a creative expression.
- Spending consciously on “affordable luxuries”, like a \$6 oat milk latte or hand-baked pastry, even while being price-sensitive or minimalist in other aspects of life.
- Using cafés as social hubs, remote workspaces, or digital backdrops—blending leisure, work, and social media presence in one space.

- Associating premium coffee consumption with values like sustainability, authenticity, craftsmanship, and aesthetic minimalism.

For urban youth, especially millennials and Gen Z, the latte lifestyle reflects a new form of status and self-expression. It is less about traditional luxury and more about curating experiences that align with their individual tastes, ethical values, and online identities. In this context, a daily latte becomes more than a drink—it becomes a symbol of lifestyle, intention, and belonging.

3.3. CORE COMPONENTS OF LATTE LIFESTYLE

3.3. 1. Aesthetic Consumption

- Coffee is not just consumed for taste or energy—it's chosen based on how it's presented, photographed, and shared.
- Premium cafes are often designed with minimalist, cozy, or “Instagrammable” interiors that appeal to visual culture.
- The act of sipping coffee in stylish settings is part of an aesthetic experience, not just a beverage choice.

3.3. 2. Experiential Spending

- Urban youth prioritize experiences over possessions.
- Spending on coffee is seen as an everyday indulgence or “micro-luxury” that offers emotional satisfaction.
- Cafes become destinations for socializing, working remotely, dating, or introspection—often replacing traditional leisure spaces.

3.3. 3. Brand and Identity Alignment

- Preference for cafes with ethical branding, such as fair trade beans, plant-based milk options, and sustainable practices.
- Choice of café and drink reflects personal values—e.g., minimalism, environmentalism, creativity.
- Youth use these choices to signal their lifestyle, beliefs, and social awareness.

3.3. 4. Digital Integration and Social Media Culture

- Documenting café visits and latte art is a common part of online identity creation, especially on platforms like Instagram and TikTok.
- Cafes are chosen partly for their “shareability”—ambiance, décor, and presentation that enhance one's personal brand.

3.3. 5. Community and Belonging

- Premium cafes serve as “third spaces”—neither home nor office—where youth feel a sense of belonging.
- Regular visits can build relationships with baristas or other regulars, fostering a subtle, community-based identity.

3.3. 6. Conscious Yet Paradoxical Spending

- Urban youth may budget tightly in some areas (e.g., thrift shopping, renting, minimalism) while freely spending on coffee.
- Reflects a “treat yourself” mentality—a small luxury that provides joy without major financial risk.
- Also highlights the paradox of consumption: valuing sustainability but still engaging in frequent, sometimes expensive, consumer behaviors.

3.3. 7. Time, Convenience, and Routine

- Premium cafes fit neatly into urban routines—easy access, fast service, and consistent quality.
- The latte becomes a ritual of comfort and control in a fast-paced, often chaotic lifestyle.

These components together define what it means to be “sipping in style”—it’s about taste, yes, but also about social meaning, emotional satisfaction, and lifestyle alignment. The latte lifestyle isn’t just about coffee—it’s a lens through which many young people navigate identity, belonging, and modern urban life.

3.4. HISTORICAL CONTEXT: THE EVOLUTION OF CAFÉ CULTURE

The history of café culture is deeply intertwined with broader social, economic, and cultural transformations across the world. Coffee, which today is often associated with leisure, sophistication, and global lifestyles, has gone through several stages of development—from its origins as a traditional beverage in the Middle East, to becoming a global commodity, and finally, evolving into a central feature of urban culture in modern societies. Tracing this history provides valuable insight into how cafés moved from being simple spaces for consuming coffee to becoming symbols of modern living, identity, and community.

3.4.1 Early Coffee Houses: Origins in the Middle East and Europe

The earliest documented coffee houses, known as qahveh khaneh, emerged in 16th-century Ottoman Istanbul. These spaces quickly gained popularity as meeting places for conversation, music, storytelling, and even political debate. Unlike taverns, which revolved around alcohol, coffee houses were seen as sober, intellectual venues where people from different walks of life could gather. These institutions soon spread across the Middle East, Persia, and North Africa, creating what some scholars call the first “public sphere” of discussion and exchange of ideas.

By the 17th century, coffee had reached Europe, where coffee houses flourished in major cities like London, Paris, and Vienna. London’s coffee houses, in particular, earned the nickname “penny universities,” since for the price of a penny, one could buy a cup of coffee and gain access to intellectual debates, newspapers, and discussions with merchants, scholars, and artists. Parisian cafés, meanwhile, became centers for artistic and political thought, frequented by Enlightenment thinkers such as Voltaire and Rousseau. In Vienna, the café culture developed its own unique identity, combining music, art, and literature, and laying the foundations for the iconic Viennese coffeehouse tradition that still thrives today.

3.4.2 Colonial Influence and the Global Coffee Trade

The spread of coffee culture cannot be separated from the colonial expansion of European powers. Coffee plantations were established in colonies such as India, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), and the Caribbean, often relying on enslaved or indentured labor. This transformed coffee from a regional beverage into a global commodity. By the 18th and 19th centuries, coffee had become part of daily life in both Europe and the Americas, aided by the rise of industrialization and urbanization. However, it was not until the 20th century that cafés became closely linked with leisure and lifestyle, rather than merely serving as points of sale for the beverage.

3.4.3 Café Culture in India: From Coffee Houses to Global Chains

India’s tryst with coffee dates back to the 17th century, when Baba Budan is said to have brought coffee beans from Yemen to Karnataka. Over time, the southern states of Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu became major centers of coffee production. Coffee houses in India initially served as modest social spaces, particularly in urban centers. The establishment of the Indian Coffee House (ICH) chain in the 1950s was a landmark moment. Run as worker cooperatives, ICH outlets in cities like Kolkata, Delhi, and Thiruvananthapuram became hubs of political and intellectual discussion. For decades, these cafés symbolized affordability, accessibility, and community— attracting students, writers, and activists.

However, the landscape began to change in the 1990s with India’s economic liberalization. Rising disposable incomes, exposure to Western consumer trends, and

the aspirations of a growing middle class created demand for more modern, branded café experiences. This was when Café Coffee Day (CCD) revolutionized the café market. Founded in 1996, CCD presented cafés as youth-oriented spaces with catchy slogans like “A lot can happen over coffee.” Unlike Indian Coffee Houses, CCD emphasized ambience, branding, and the idea of cafés as social hangouts rather than functional meeting spots. This marked a cultural shift where coffee drinking became intertwined with lifestyle and status.

3.4.4 The Globalization of Café Culture

By the early 2000s, global coffee chains like Starbucks entered India, introducing international trends such as flavored lattes, frappuccinos, and seasonal beverages. Starbucks did not simply sell coffee; it sold an experience—the aura of cosmopolitanism, comfort, and exclusivity. Its cafés were designed as “third places,” a concept popularized by sociologist Ray Oldenburg, referring to spaces beyond home and work where people could gather, relax, and socialize. Starbucks and similar brands made café visits a cultural marker, especially for urban youth eager to associate with global lifestyles.

At the same time, a wave of artisanal and boutique cafés such as Blue Tokai, Third Wave Coffee Roasters, and Flying Squirrel emerged in cities like Bengaluru, Delhi, and Kochi. These cafés focused on origin-based coffee, sustainability, and craft brewing, appealing to consumers seeking authenticity and connoisseurship. Thus, café culture in India became a blend of global corporate brands and localized, artisanal initiatives—both catering to aspirational consumption patterns.

3.4.5 Café Culture Today: A Lifestyle Choice

In contemporary India, cafés have become integral to urban and semi-urban life. For students, cafés double up as study spaces. For young professionals, they are networking hubs. For many, they represent a space of escape from crowded homes or busy work routines. The popularity of cafés also reflects broader changes in lifestyle: the rise of nuclear families, increasing urbanization, the influence of social media, and the search for spaces of individuality.

Importantly, cafés have also become symbols of identity and modernity. Holding a Starbucks cup or posting a picture from a chic café on Instagram has become a way of signaling not just taste in coffee but participation in a global consumer culture. This transformation—from traditional coffee houses rooted in intellectual debate to modern cafés associated with lifestyle branding—illustrates how café culture has evolved into a powerful force shaping consumption and identity.

3.5. SCOPE AND GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS

The scope of a study defines the breadth and boundaries of what is being examined, while the geographical focus situates the research in its specific context. In the present study, which looks into the Latte Lifestyle and its influence on consumer spending habits, the scope goes beyond the simple act of coffee consumption. It extends into lifestyle choices, financial behaviors, cultural practices, and the symbolic meanings that cafés carry in urban societies. The geographical boundaries of the research also play a crucial role, since café culture is not uniform—it is shaped by local demographics, socio-economic structures, and exposure to globalization.

3.5.1 Scope of the Study

This research is concerned with understanding the broader implications of café culture, particularly focusing on premium outlets such as Starbucks, Café Coffee Day (CCD), and other branded cafés that have redefined coffee consumption in India. The scope extends across several dimensions:

- 1. Consumer Behavior and Spending Habits:**

The study examines how individuals, especially youth and young professionals, allocate part of their disposable income to café visits. Small but frequent expenditures on lattes, frappuccinos, or premium snacks may appear insignificant but accumulate into what economists call the “Latte Factor.” The scope includes analyzing whether such spending reflects impulsive consumption, social signaling, or genuine lifestyle preference.

- 2. Sociocultural Practices:**

Cafés are not only sites of consumption but also social hubs. The scope of the study covers the symbolic value of cafés as “third places” (after home and work) where people meet, interact, and perform aspects of modern identity. This includes investigating how café visits are tied to leisure, networking, dating culture, and social media presence.

- 3. Financial Literacy and Awareness:**

The study also stretches into exploring the financial awareness of café-goers. Do consumers recognize their café spending as “invisible expenditure” that impacts long-term savings? The scope includes identifying the tension between aspirational consumption and financial prudence among urban consumers.

- 4. Generational and Demographic Dimensions:**

The study primarily focuses on urban youth (aged 18–30) and young working professionals, as they are the most active participants in café culture. However, it does not exclude other segments such as middle-aged individuals, families, and retirees who may also frequent cafés for leisure or social reasons.

5. Comparative Perspective:

While the primary setting is urban India, particularly Kerala and metropolitan areas such as Kochi and Bangalore, the scope also draws references from global café culture to highlight similarities and differences. For instance, while cafés in New York or Tokyo may signify efficiency and individuality, cafés in Kerala often highlight leisure, community, and aspirational belonging.

3.5.2 Geographical Focus

The geographical focus of this study is Kerala, with a particular emphasis on the city of Ernakulam (Kochi) and other urban centers like Trivandrum, Calicut, and Palakkad. Kerala provides a unique case study for several reasons:

1. High Literacy and Awareness:

Kerala has one of the highest literacy rates in India, which translates into a population that is socially aware, aspirational, and increasingly brand-conscious. This makes it an ideal location to study how informed consumers make lifestyle choices.

2. Urban Aspirations in a Semi-Urban Context:

Kerala's cities, while not as cosmopolitan as Mumbai or Delhi, display strong urban aspirations. International brands like Starbucks and indigenous café chains coexist with traditional tea stalls (chayakadas), allowing researchers to observe how global lifestyles interact with local culture.

3. Youth Demographics:

Kerala has a large youth population, many of whom are college students or young professionals working in IT, healthcare, and service industries. This group is highly active in café culture, making them a primary target for this study.

4. Migration and Global Exposure:

With a significant diaspora spread across the Middle East, Europe, and North America, Kerala's urban population is heavily influenced by global consumer practices. The return of young migrants and their families has fueled demand for international brands and lifestyle experiences, including premium cafés.

5. Accessibility of Data:

Conducting research in Kerala provides logistical advantages. The presence of both multinational chains (Starbucks) and Indian chains (CCD, Barista, Third Wave Coffee) in the state ensures that data can be gathered from diverse café-goers representing multiple consumption patterns.

3.5.3 Boundaries of the Study

While the scope is broad, certain boundaries must be acknowledged:

- The research does not focus on rural areas where café culture is limited, and traditional tea stalls dominate.
- The study excludes the production side of coffee (plantations, supply chains) and instead concentrates solely on consumption and lifestyle.
- The geographical focus is largely restricted to Kerala and select metropolitan cities, meaning findings may not fully apply to smaller towns or non-urban contexts.

3.4.4 Significance of the Scope and Focus

By narrowing the geographical focus to Kerala while situating it in the broader context of India's café culture, the study ensures both depth and relevance. Kerala offers a distinctive cultural lens through which to analyze the latte lifestyle, while the broader Indian urban context allows the findings to resonate with national trends. Ultimately, this balance ensures that the study captures both local nuances and global influences, making the findings meaningful for academics, policymakers, café businesses, and consumers themselves.

3.6.OBJECTIVES OF LATTE LIFESTYLE

In today's fast-paced, hyper-connected urban landscapes, the "Latte Lifestyle" has emerged as more than just a food preference — it is a cultural phenomenon, a social ritual, and a symbolic marker of modern identity among youth and working professionals. Far beyond the frothy surface of steamed milk and espresso, this lifestyle encapsulates aspirations for sophistication, belonging, self-care, and global connectivity. From Instagrammable café corners to quiet work nooks humming with productivity, the latte has become a canvas upon which urbanites project their values, status, and daily rhythms. Here we are exploring the key objectives that drive the Latte Lifestyle, revealing how a simple cup of coffee functions as a powerful tool for social signaling, mental respite, ethical expression, and personal empowerment in the contemporary metropolis.

3.6.1. Social Signaling and Identity Expression

The Latte Lifestyle serves as a visible marker of modernity, sophistication, and aspirational living. Urban youth and professionals often use consumption of food at premium cafes to signal membership in an educated, cosmopolitan class. This behavior aligns with Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital — where taste and consumption habits reflect social positioning. Drinking lattes in trendy cafes becomes less about caffeine and more about projecting an image: cultured, globally aware, and economically stable.

3.6.2. Creation of Third Spaces for Networking and Community

Urban professionals and youth seek environments beyond home (first space) and office/school (second space). Cafés offering lattes function as “third spaces” — neutral, comfortable zones for informal meetings, remote work, creative brainstorming, or socializing. The Latte Lifestyle facilitates access to these semi-public domains that foster professional networking, romantic connections, or peer bonding. The ambiance, Wi-Fi, and aesthetic appeal of such venues make them ideal for both productivity and leisure.

3.6.3. Ritualization of Self-Care and Mental Wellbeing

For many overworked professionals and stressed students, purchasing and savoring a latte becomes a daily ritual of self-care. The act provides a momentary pause — a sensory experience (aroma, warmth, taste) that offers psychological comfort. In high-pressure urban environments, this small indulgence symbolizes control over one’s time and well-being. It’s a micro-escape that combats burnout and reinforces mindfulness amid chaos.

3.6.4. Alignment with Global Consumer Trends and Digital Culture

The Latte Lifestyle reflects participation in globalized consumer culture. Instagrammable latte art, limited-edition seasonal flavors, and loyalty apps turn coffee consumption into shareable digital content. Urban youth especially engage in this as part of curated online personas. Brands leverage FOMO (fear of missing out) and influencer marketing to drive engagement. Thus, the lifestyle isn’t just about consumption — it’s about digital validation and trend participation.

3.6.5. Economic Empowerment Through Micro-Luxury Consumption

In economies where large luxury purchases (cars, homes) are out of reach for many young professionals, the Latte Lifestyle represents “affordable luxury.” Spending money on a crafted beverage or gourmet food feels justifiable as a treat — a way to enjoy premium experiences without major financial strain. This micro-luxury model empowers consumers to feel affluent and discerning even on modest incomes, reinforcing a sense of upward mobility and personal reward.

3.6.6. Support for Ethical and Sustainable Consumerism

Increasingly, the Latte Lifestyle incorporates values-driven consumption. Urban youth and professionals gravitate toward cafes promoting fair trade practices, eco-friendly packaging, plant-based milk alternatives, or community initiatives. Choosing a “guilt-free latte” allows them to align personal indulgence with ethical responsibility — turning everyday consumption into activism. This objective merges hedonism with moral identity.

3.6.7. Enhancement of Productivity and Cognitive Performance

Caffeine remains a key functional driver. For students cramming for exams or professionals managing back-to-back Zoom calls, lattes offer a calibrated energy boost. Specialty cafes also provide ambient noise levels and ergonomic seating conducive to focus. Thus, the Latte Lifestyle doubles as a productivity hack — merging physiological stimulation with environmental optimization to enhance performance in competitive urban landscapes.

3.6.8. Urban Integration and Exploration Catalyst

The pursuit of the “perfect latte” motivates exploration of different neighborhoods, hidden cafes, and pop-up coffee labs. This transforms routine commutes or weekends into curated urban adventures. For transplants or newcomers, café-hopping becomes a tool for neighborhood integration and discovery. The Latte Lifestyle thus fuels urban mobility and deepens connection to the city’s cultural fabric.

3.6.9. Brand Loyalty and Personalization in a Standardized World

Loyalty programs embed users into brand ecosystems (e.g., Starbucks Rewards), creating emotional attachment and habitual spending. For urban professionals seeking control and recognition in impersonal cities, personalized lattes offer both comfort and identity affirmation.

The Latte Lifestyle among urban youth and working professionals is far more than just a habit. It is a multidimensional phenomenon encompassing social signaling, psychological wellbeing, economic strategy, ethical alignment, and cultural participation. Each objective interweaves to create a lifestyle that responds to the complexities, pressures, and aspirations of contemporary urban life.

3.7.ADVANTAGES OF THE LATTE LIFESTYLE IN PREMIUM CAFÉS

The "Latte Lifestyle," characterized by frequenting premium cafes, extends far beyond the simple consumption of coffee. It offers a multifaceted set of advantages that align with the social, psychological, and professional needs of urban youth and working professionals. Based on the study's objectives, the advantages can be categorized as follows:

3.7.1. Social & Cultural Enrichment

- **Community Building:** Premium cafés act as informal “third places” where urban youth and professionals forge friendships, network, and exchange ideas beyond home and work.

- **Cultural Exposure:** Menus often feature international coffee styles, seasonal flavors, and artisanal brewing methods, exposing patrons to global coffee culture.
- **Identity Signaling:** Ordering a specialty latte and sharing it on social media signals a modern, cosmopolitan identity that aligns with contemporary lifestyle trends.
- **Creative Inspiration:** The aesthetically pleasing ambiance (design, music, art) stimulates creativity, making cafés popular workspaces for freelancers and designers.

3.7.2. Economic Benefits

- **Stimulus to Local Economy:** Highspending customers generate revenue for café owners, suppliers (coffee beans, dairy, bakery items), and ancillary services (delivery, logistics).
- **Job Creation:** Premium cafés require skilled labourers, managers, and support staff, contributing to employment opportunities in the service sector.
- **Spillover Spending:** Patrons often spend on complementary items (books, gadgets, coworking subscriptions) and nearby retail outlets, amplifying economic impact.
- **Entrepreneurial Innovation:** The competitive environment encourages cafés to experiment with new product lines, sustainability initiatives, and tech-enabled ordering systems.

3.7.3. Personal WellBeing & Lifestyle Quality

- **Mindful Breaks:** A well-crafted latte provides a sensory pause that reduces stress and improves mental focus during a busy day.
- **HealthConscious Options:** Many premium cafés offer plant-based milks, low sugar syrups, and portion control, supporting healthier consumption choices.
- **Ritualistic Satisfaction:** The ritual of ordering, waiting, and savoring a latte can enhance mood and create a sense of routine and stability.
- **Enhanced Productivity:** The caffeine boost, combined with a comfortable environment, can increase alertness and efficiency for professionals working onsite.

3.7.4. Sustainability & Ethical Awareness

- **EcoFriendly Practices:** Many establishments adopt reusable cup programs, biodegradable packaging, and waste reduction measures, influencing consumer habits.

- Community Impact Projects: Some cafés reinvest profits into local community projects (e.g., literacy drives, environmental cleanups), fostering social responsibility.

3.7.5. Technological & Experiential Innovation

- Digital Ordering & Loyalty: Mobile apps enable seamless ordering, personalized recommendations, and reward programs that enhance customer convenience.
- Immersive Ambiance: Use of ambient lighting, curated playlists, and interior design creates a multisensory experience that differentiates premium cafés.
- Social Media Amplification: Instagram-ready latte art and café interiors generate user-generated content, driving organic marketing and brand visibility.
- DataDriven Personalization: Cafés collect purchase data (with consent) to tailor offers, seasonal menus, and targeted promotions, improving customer satisfaction.

3.7.6. Motivational & Aspirational Drivers

- Status & Prestige: Frequenting premium cafés is perceived as a marker of taste, sophistication, and upward social mobility.
- Exploration & Novelty: Rotating seasonal drinks and limited-edition collaborations satisfy the desire for new experiences.
- Self-Expression: Customizable latte options (milk type, sweetness level, toppings) allow patrons to tailor the drink to personal preferences.
- Peer Influence: Recommendations from friends, influencers, and online reviews shape motivations to try new cafés and products.

3.7.7. Overall Societal Impact

- Cultural Hub Creation: Premium cafés become venues for art exhibitions, live music, and community talks, enriching the cultural fabric of Ernakulam.
- Urban Revitalization: The clustering of high-end cafés can rejuvenate underutilized neighborhoods, attracting foot traffic and ancillary businesses.
- Knowledge Exchange: Informal meetups, workshops, and “coffee talks” foster
- Lifestyle Benchmarking: The latte lifestyle sets a benchmark for quality, service, and experience that other hospitality sectors may emulate, raising overall industry standards.

The “latte lifestyle” is more than a consumption pattern; it is a multidimensional phenomenon that delivers social, economic, health, environmental, and cultural advantages. Understanding these benefits helps café owners, and consumers sustain

and amplify the positive impacts of premium café culture in urban settings like Ernakulam.

3.8. DISADVANTAGES OF THE LATTE LIFESTYLE IN PREMIUM CAFÉS

3.8.1. Financial Drain

One of the clearest disadvantages of the Latte Lifestyle is the financial strain it creates. A premium latte costs several times more than coffee prepared at home. While the expense may seem minor on a daily basis, over a year it adds up to thousands of rupees or dollars. This money could instead be saved or invested for long-term benefits. For young professionals and students, this constant outflow of money can become a burden and delay important financial milestones.

3.8.2. Health Issues

Premium café beverages often contain high levels of sugar, cream, and flavored syrups. A single latte can sometimes have as many calories as a dessert. Consuming such drinks regularly increases risks of obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases. High caffeine intake can also cause dependency, disturb sleep cycles, and contribute to anxiety. Over time, these health effects can outweigh the short-term enjoyment of the drink.

3.8.3. Dependency on Convenience

Another disadvantage is the overreliance on convenience. Coffee is a simple beverage that can be prepared at home affordably, yet many people become dependent on cafés for their daily fix. This reduces self-sufficiency, discourages healthier alternatives, and weakens budgeting discipline. Over time, individuals may begin to see expensive coffee as a necessity rather than a luxury.

3.8.4. Environmental Damage

The environmental impact of café culture is also a major drawback. Despite sustainability campaigns, disposable cups, lids, and straws continue to generate waste. Most of these items are not recycled and contribute to pollution and landfill accumulation. Even reusable cups require energy and materials to produce, meaning that the environmental footprint of this lifestyle remains significant.

3.8.5. Reinforcement of Consumerism

Premium cafés are marketed not just as coffee shops but as lifestyle brands. This encourages people to overspend on experiences that promote image and status. Coffee, instead of being viewed as a simple drink, is turned into a symbol of success and

modern living. Such marketing reinforces consumerist values, leading to impulsive spending and reduced financial discipline.

3.9. POTENTIAL CONCERNS OF THE LATTE LIFESTYLE IN PREMIUM CAFÉS

3.9.1. Long-Term Financial Security

A key concern of this lifestyle is its impact on long-term financial stability. The money spent on daily lattes could otherwise accumulate into meaningful savings or investments. For younger generations, this habit may limit the ability to save for education, housing, or retirement. Over decades, the opportunity cost becomes substantial, raising questions about long-term security.

3.9.2. Social and Psychological Pressure

Premium café culture creates psychological pressure tied to identity and social belonging. Many people visit cafés not only for coffee but also to project an image of sophistication. This can cause individuals to feel pressured to spend money just to “fit in.” When they cannot maintain the habit, feelings of inadequacy or exclusion may arise, linking self-worth to consumption.

3.9.3. Widening Socioeconomic Divide

The high costs of premium cafés create exclusive spaces that are inaccessible to lower-income groups. What is a casual expense for one person may be unaffordable for another. This exclusivity reinforces class distinctions and risks widening social divides. Over time, café culture can normalize inequality by celebrating lifestyles that only some can afford.

3.9.4. Cultural Shifts

Another concern is the gradual cultural shift away from home-prepared food and drink. As cafés become central to daily routines, traditional practices of making affordable meals and beverages at home lose importance. This weakens values of frugality and resourcefulness, and future generations may treat luxury consumption as a daily necessity.

3.9.5. Sustainability and Ethical Issues

Global demand for premium coffee creates significant environmental and ethical challenges. Coffee farming is linked to deforestation, high water usage, and biodiversity loss. In addition, workers in coffee-producing countries often face poor wages and harsh conditions. While consumers may not see these hidden costs, their daily purchases contribute to these global problems. This raises concerns about sustainability and fairness in the coffee industry.

3.10. IMPACT OF THE LATTE LIFESTYLE

3.10.1. Economic Impact

- **High Daily Expenditure**

The most immediate economic impact of the Latte Lifestyle is the significant cost of daily coffee purchases. A single latte may appear affordable, but when consumed regularly, the expense accumulates to thousands over a year. For many individuals, particularly students and young professionals, this represents money that could have been redirected into savings, investments, or other essential expenses.

- **Opportunity Cost of Spending**

Another dimension is the opportunity cost. The money spent on premium café coffee could instead fund education, housing deposits, or retirement plans. By prioritizing short-term indulgence, individuals often sacrifice long-term financial growth. This has implications for personal wealth accumulation, especially during the early years when financial habits are being formed.

- **Industry Growth and Consumerism**

On a broader scale, the café industry benefits from this consumer behavior. Premium cafés contribute to job creation, urban development, and tax revenues. However, this industry thrives on marketing lifestyle rather than product necessity. While it boosts local economies, it also promotes consumerism, channeling disposable income toward luxuries instead of essentials, which may weaken household financial resilience in the long run.

3.10.2. Social & Cultural Impact

- **Cafés as Lifestyle Hubs**

Premium cafés have transformed into cultural and social spaces where people gather, work, and socialize. They are marketed as symbols of modernity, success, and sophistication. This elevates coffee drinking into a lifestyle statement rather than a simple daily routine.

- **Erosion of Home-Based Traditions**

With café visits becoming routine, there is a gradual decline in home-prepared drinks and meals. Traditional practices of brewing coffee at home, often tied to family routines and frugality, are being replaced by consumption-based habits. This cultural shift redefines luxury indulgence as an everyday necessity.

- **Social Exclusivity and Inequality**

The Latte Lifestyle also creates concerns around inclusivity. Premium cafés, due to their pricing, are accessible mainly to middle- and upper-income groups. Those who

cannot afford them may feel excluded, reinforcing social divides. These cafés become subtle markers of class and privilege, reflecting broader inequalities in society.

3.10.3. Psychological Impact

- Identity and Self-Expression

For many individuals, café culture offers a way to project identity and lifestyle. Ordering from a premium café is not only about coffee but also about associating oneself with global modernity and sophistication. This makes consumption a form of self-expression and social branding.

- Pressure to Conform

At the same time, the psychological pressure to conform is evident. People may feel compelled to visit cafés not out of personal preference, but because it signals belonging to a particular social group. When they cannot afford the habit, feelings of inadequacy or exclusion may develop, creating dissatisfaction and stress.

3.11. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Theory/Concept	Key Ideas	Relevance to Latte Lifestyle Study
Third Place Theory (Ray Oldenburg, 1989)	Cafés as “third places” between home and work, encouraging community interaction.	Explains why premium cafés (Starbucks, CCD) are not just about coffee, but about identity, belonging, and socialization.
Consumer Culture Theory (CCT)	Consumption is symbolic—people consume products for meanings, not just utility.	Justifies why spending in cafés = lifestyle signaling (status, modernity, global outlook).
Conspicuous Consumption (Thorstein Veblen, 1899)	People consume luxury goods/services to display wealth and status.	Visiting Starbucks/CCD becomes a visible marker of middle-class aspirations.

Latte Factor (David Bach, 1999)	Small, repeated expenses (like lattes) add up to significant financial impact.	Connects to the “invisible spending” problem of café culture and its effect on financial discipline.
Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs	Beyond basic needs, people pursue belonging, esteem, and self-actualization.	Café-going satisfies higher-order needs: social belonging (hanging out), esteem (being seen in a premium space).

Collectively, these theories demonstrate that the latte lifestyle cannot be viewed solely as a matter of food consumption. Instead, it represents a convergence of social interaction, identity construction, cultural signaling, and financial decision-making. By grounding this study in such diverse theoretical perspectives, a holistic understanding of premium café culture can be developed.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

& INTERPRETATION

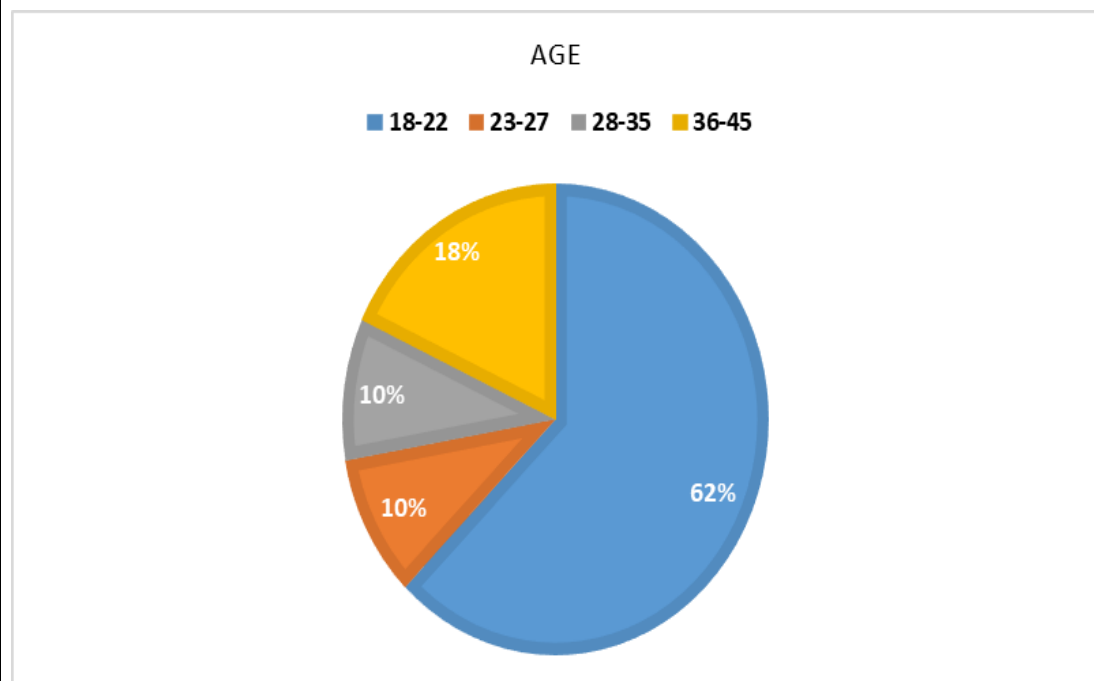
4.1: ANALYSIS ON THE BASIS OF AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Table 4.1: The table represents the age of the respondents.

AGE	Number of respondents	Percentage
18-22	128	62%
23-27	20	10%
28-35	20	10%
36-45	37	18%

Source: Primary Data

Figure 4.1: The figure represents the age of the respondents.



INTERPRETATION

The age distribution is heavily skewed toward younger respondents. A clear majority of 62% fall in the 18–22 age group, while 23–27 and 28–35 age groups each account for 10%, and 36–45 represents 18%. Overall, the sample is dominated by individuals aged 18–22.

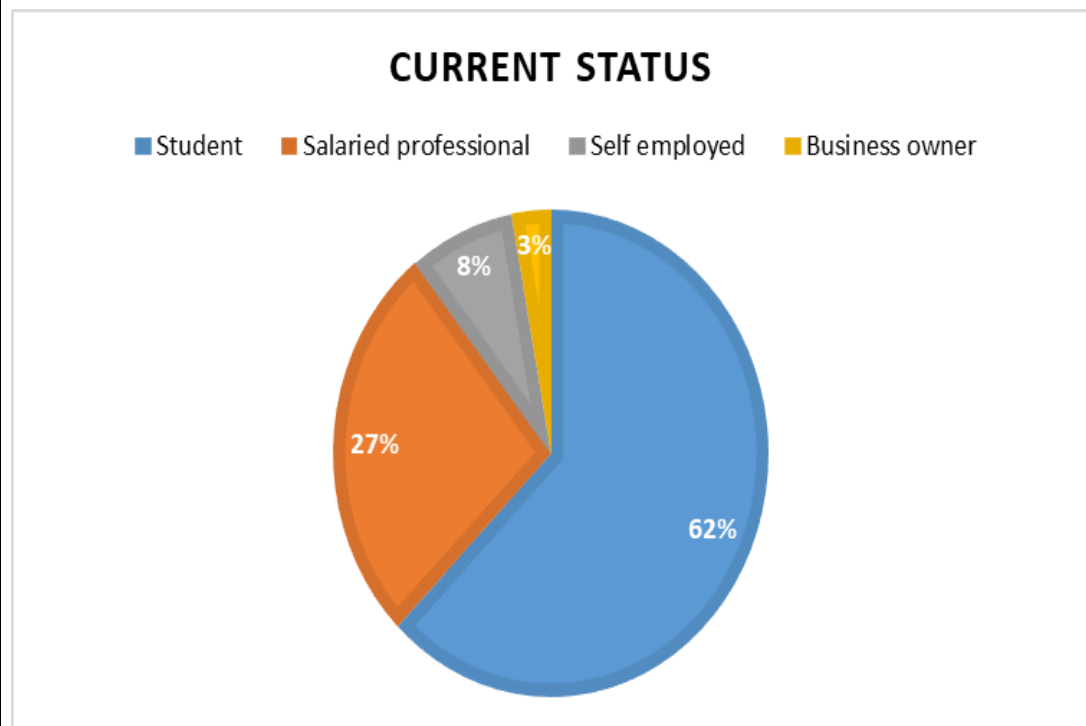
4.2: ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Table 4.2: The table represents the current status of the respondents.

Current status	No of respondents	Percentage
Student	128	62%
Salaried professional	55	27%
Self employed	16	8%
Business owner	6	3%

Source: Primary Data

Figure 4.2: The figure represents the current status of the respondents.



INTERPRETATION

The above figure shows that students constitute the majority of respondents, accounting for 62 percent of the sample. Salaried professionals follow with 27 percent, while self-employed individuals represent 8 percent. Business owners make up the smallest group, contributing 3 percent of the respondents.

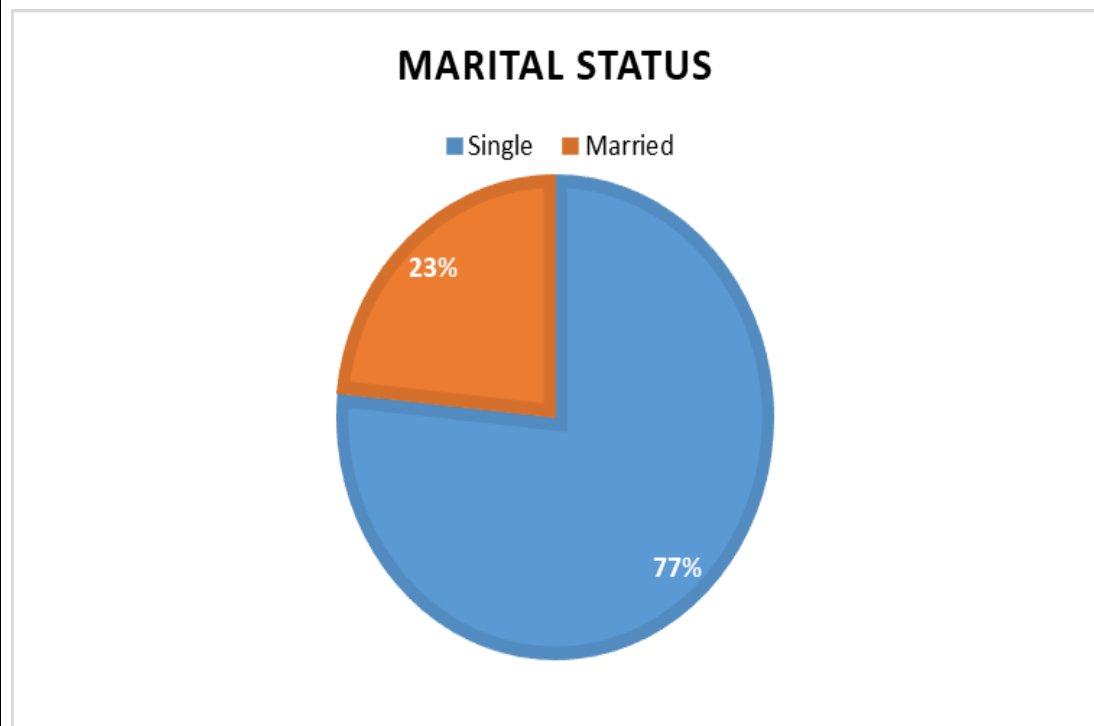
4.3: ANALYSIS OF THE MARITAL STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Table 4.3: The table represents the marital status of the respondents.

Marital status	Number of respondents	Percentage
Single	157	23%
Married	48	77%

Source: Primary Data

Figure 4.3: The figure represents the marital status of the respondents.



INTERPRETATION

The above figure shows that a large majority of respondents are single, accounting for 77 percent of the sample. The married respondents constitute the remaining 23 percent, indicating comparatively lower representation of married individuals.

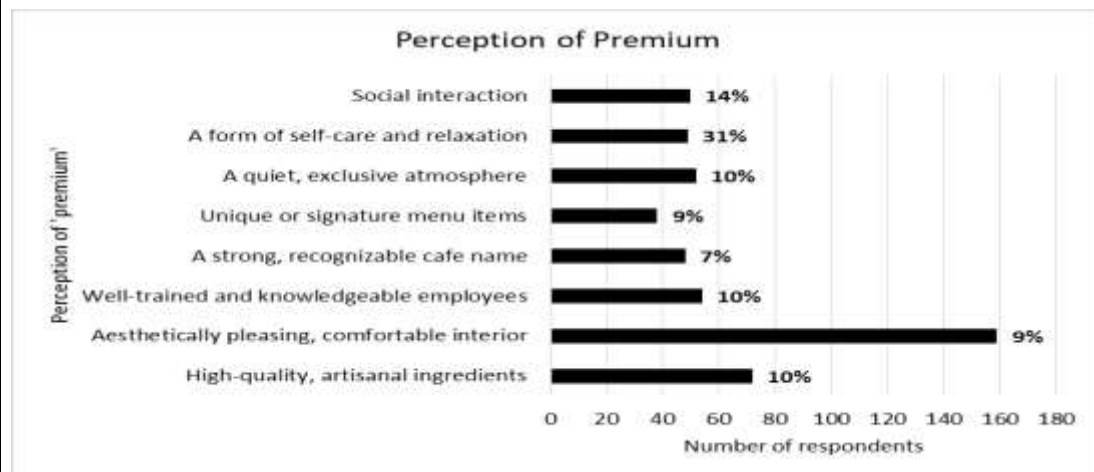
4.4: ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONDENT'S PERCEPTION OF 'PREMIUM' IN THE CONTEXT OF A CAFE

Table 4.4: The table represents the respondent's perception of 'premium' in the context of a cafe.

Perception of 'premium'	Number of respondents	Percentage
High-quality, artisanal ingredients	72	14%
Aesthetically pleasing, comfortable interior	159	31%
Well-trained and knowledgeable employees	54	10%
A strong, recognizable cafe name	48	9%
Unique or signature menu items	38	7%
A quiet, exclusive atmosphere	52	10%
A form of self-care and relaxation	49	9%
Social interaction	50	10%

Source: Primary Data

Figure 4.4: The figure represents the respondent's perception of 'Premium' in the context of cafes.



INTERPRETATION

The above figure shows that the most common perception of a premium café is an aesthetically pleasing and comfortable interior, as indicated by 31 percent of respondents. High-quality, artisanal ingredients are associated with premium cafés by 14 percent of respondents. Well-trained and knowledgeable employees, a quiet and exclusive atmosphere, and social interaction are each perceived as indicators of premium by 10 percent of respondents. A strong, recognizable café name and the idea of a café as a form of self-care and relaxation are each mentioned by 9 percent of respondents. Unique or signature menu items are considered a premium attribute by 7 percent of the respondents.

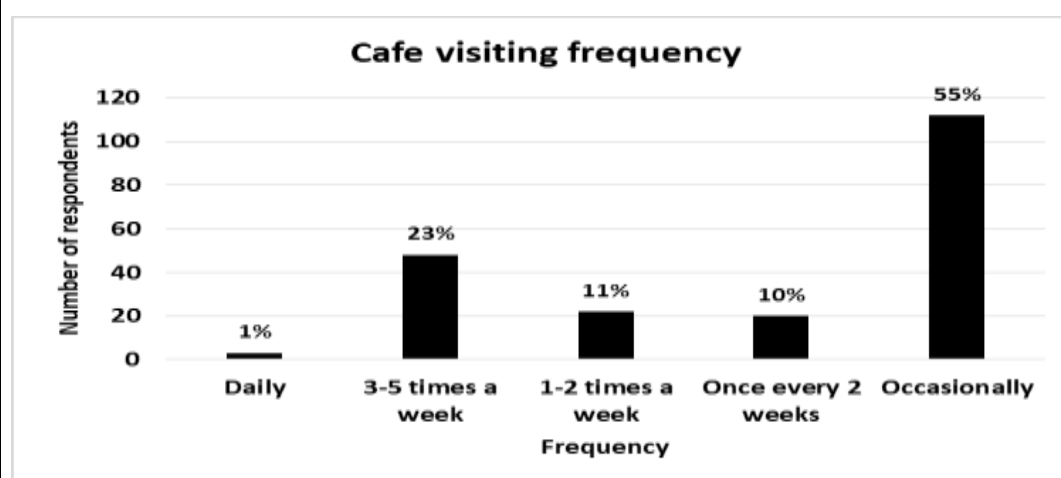
4.5: ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONDENT'S CAFE VISITING BEHAVIOUR AND FREQUENCY

Table 4.5: The table represents the respondent's cafe visiting behaviour and frequency.

Number of visits to premium cafes	Number of respondents	Percentage
Daily	3	1%
3-5 times a week	48	23%
1-2 times a week	22	11%
Once every 2 weeks	20	10%
Occasionally	112	55%

Source: Primary Data

Figure 4.5: The figure represents the respondent's cafe visiting behaviour and frequency.



INTERPRETATION

The figure indicates that the majority of respondents visit cafés occasionally, accounting for 55 percent of the sample. A significant proportion, 23 percent, report visiting cafés three to five times a week, reflecting a regular consumption pattern. Moderate visitation is observed among those who visit one to two times a week at 11 percent and once every two weeks at 10 percent. Daily café visits are relatively rare, reported by only 1 percent of respondents.

4.6 ANALYSIS ON THE SOCIAL GROUPS WITH WHOM RESPONDENTS GENERALLY VISIT CAFÉS

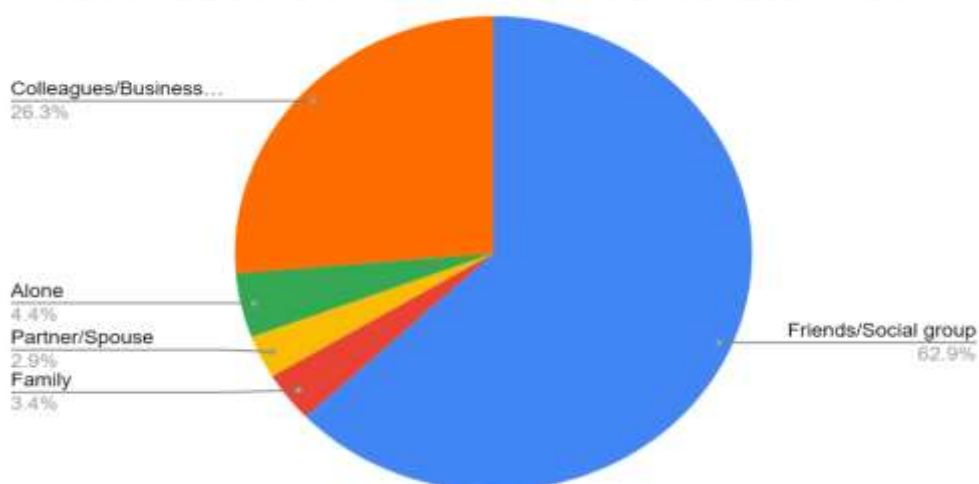
Table 4.6.: The table represents the type of companions accompanying the respondents during their café visits.

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Alone	9	4.4
Friends/Social Group	129	62.9
Colleagues/Business associates	54	26.3
Partner/Spouse	6	2.9
Family	7	3.4
TOTAL	205	100

Source: Primary Data

Figure 4.6: This figure represents the type of companions accompanying the respondents during their café visits.

Count of Who do you usually take along on your café visits?



INTERPRETATION

The results indicate that cafés are primarily social spaces, as 62.9% of respondents visit with friends or social groups and 26.3% with colleagues or business associates. Visits alone (4.4%), with family (3.4%), or with a partner/spouse (2.9%) are comparatively few, suggesting that cafés are largely perceived as social and networking environments

4.7. ANALYSIS OF THE AVERAGE EXPENDITURE PER VISIT AT PREMIUM CAFÉS

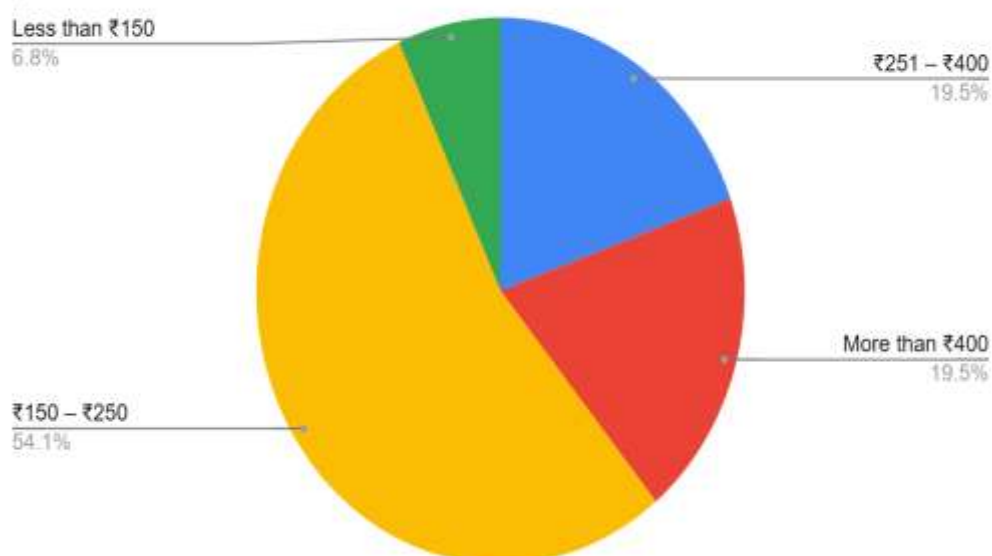
Table 4.7: This table represents the average amount respondents spend per visit at a premium café.

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Less than ₹150	14	6.8
₹150 – ₹250	111	54.1
₹251 – ₹400	40	19.5
More than ₹400	40	19.5
TOTAL	205	100

Source: Primary Data

Figure 4.7: This figure represents the average spending per visit by respondents at a premium café.

Count of On an average, how much do you spend per visit at a premium cafe?



INTERPRETATION

The data indicates that more than half of respondents (54.1%) typically spend ₹150–₹250 during café visits, making it the most common spending range. Moderate to higher spending brackets (₹251–₹400 and above ₹400) each account for 19.5%, while only 6.8% spend less than ₹150. This suggests that cafés are generally viewed as moderately priced spaces where mid-range spending is the norm.

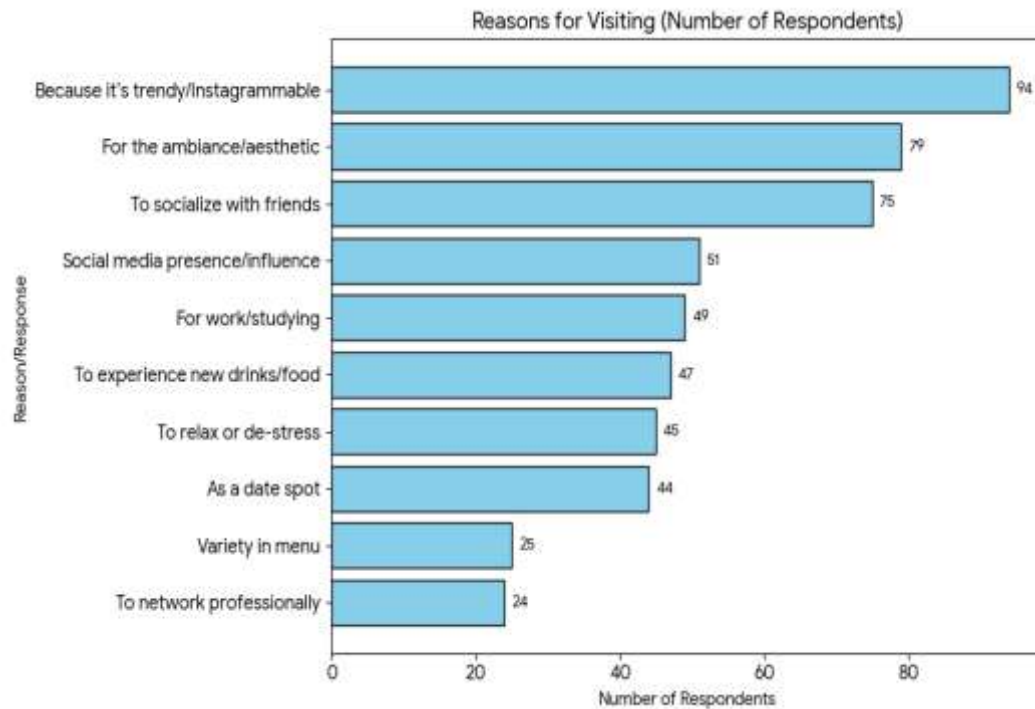
4.8. ANALYSIS OF THE PRIMARY REASONS FOR RESPONDENTS' VISITS TO PREMIUM CAFÉS

Table 4.8: This table outlines the main reasons respondents choose to visit premium cafés.

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
To socialize with friends	75	36.6
For work/studying	49	23.9
To relax or de-stress	45	22
As a date spot	44	21.5
To experience new drinks/food	47	22.9
For the ambiance/aesthetic	79	38.5
Because it's trendy / Instagrammable	94	45.9
To network professionally	24	11.7
Variety in menu	25	12.2
Social media presence/influence	51	24.9
TOTAL	205	100

Source: Primary Data

Figure 4.8: This figure outlines the main reasons respondents choose to visit premium cafés.



INTERPRETATION

The data shows that café visits are mainly driven by lifestyle and social factors, with trendiness/Instagram appeal (45.9%) and ambiance/aesthetics (38.5%) being the strongest motivations. Socializing with friends (36.6%) and work/study purposes (23.9%) also play a role, while professional networking (11.7%) is less common. Overall, cafés are viewed more as trendy and experience-oriented spaces than purely functional ones.

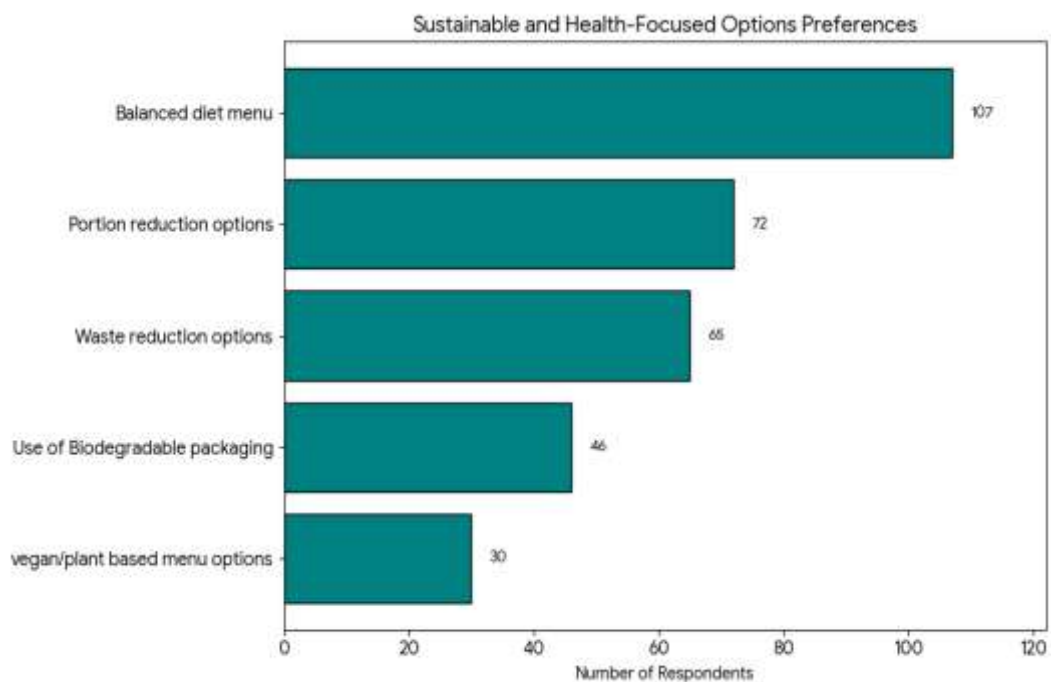
4.9. ANALYSIS OF SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES INFLUENCING RESPONDENTS' CHOICE OF CAFÉ

Table 4.9.: This table illustrates how various sustainability practices influence respondents' café preferences.

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Use of Biodegradable packaging	46	22.4
Portion reduction options	72	35.1
Waste reduction options	65	31.7
vegan/plant based menu options	30	14.6
Balanced diet menu	107	52.2
TOTAL	320	100

Source: Primary Data

Figure 4.9.: :This figure illustrates how various sustainability practices influence respondents' café preferences.



INTERPRETATION

The findings indicate that most respondents prefer balanced diet menu options (52.2%), showing increased concern for healthy eating. Portion control (35.1%) and waste reduction measures (31.7%) were also important to many respondents. In contrast, biodegradable packaging (22.4%) and vegan or plant-based options (14.6%) were less commonly selected, suggesting they are lower priorities.

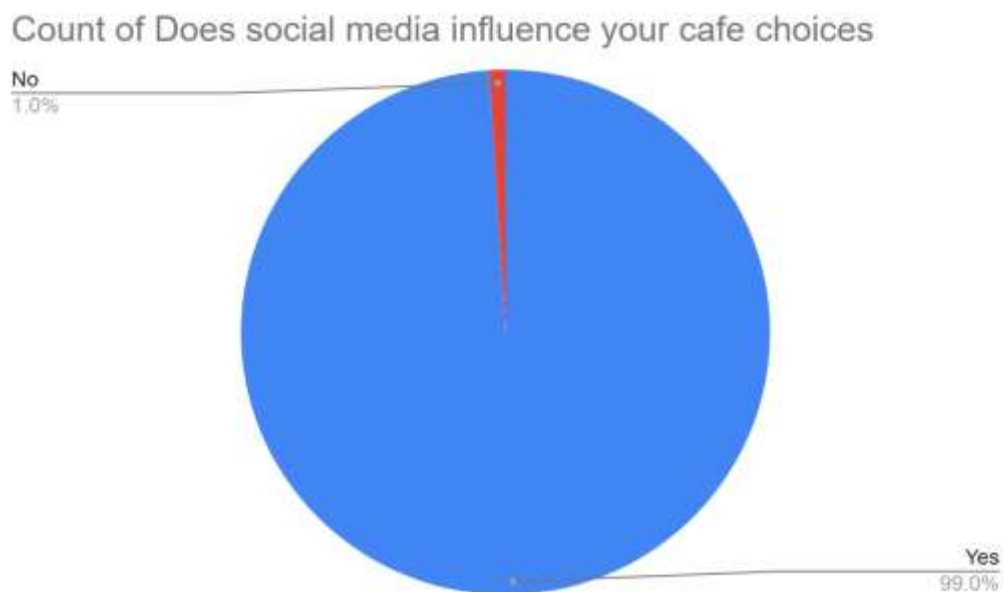
4.10. ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL MEDIA'S INFLUENCE ON RESPONDENTS' CAFÉ CHOICES

Table 4.10. : This table presents respondents' views on whether social media influences their choice of cafés.

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	203	99
No	2	1
TOTAL	205	100

Source: Primary Data

Figure 4.10. : This figure presents respondents' views on whether social media influences their choice of cafés.



INTERPRETATION

The results show that social media strongly influences café choices, with 99% of respondents stating that it affects their decisions. Only 1% reported no influence from social media. This indicates that social media plays a significant role in shaping consumer preferences and café selection behavior.

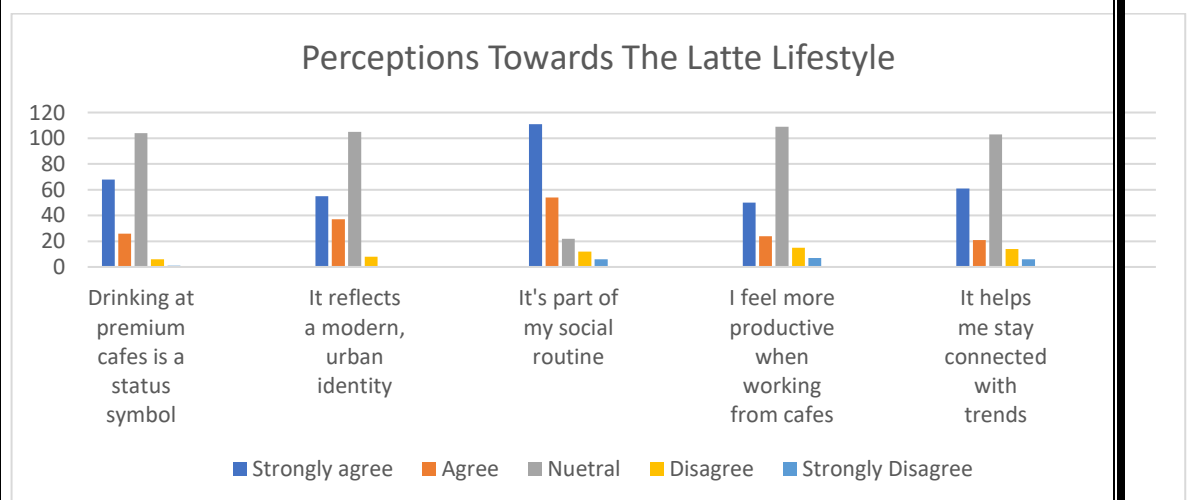
4.11. ANALYSIS OF PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE LATTE LIFESTYLE

Table 4.11 : This table presents respondents' perceptions towards the latte lifestyle

	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Drinking at premium cafes is a status symbol	68	33%	26	13%	104	51%	6	3%	1	0%
It reflects a modern, urban identity	55	27%	37	18%	105	51%	8	4%	0	0%
It's part of my social routine	111	54%	54	26%	22	11%	12	6%	6	3%
I feel more productive when working from cafes	50	24%	24	12%	109	53%	15	7%	7	3%
It helps me stay connected with trends	61	30%	21	10%	103	50%	14	7%	6	3%

Source: Primary Data

Figure 4.11: This figure illustrates respondents' perceptions towards the latte lifestyle



INTERPRETATION

The combined analysis of respondents' perceptions towards the latte lifestyle indicates a generally moderate and balanced outlook. Across all five statements—relating to status symbolism, modern urban identity, social routine, productivity while working from cafés, and connection with trends—the majority of respondents have expressed a neutral opinion. This suggests that while premium café culture is recognised by some respondents as having social, symbolic, and experiential value, it is not strongly internalised by the majority as an essential or defining aspect of their lifestyle. Nevertheless, a notable proportion of respondents agree or strongly agree that the latte lifestyle reflects elements of status, modernity, and trend awareness, highlighting its aspirational appeal among certain groups. Overall, the findings suggest that the latte lifestyle holds selective influence, appealing more as an occasional experience rather than a dominant or deeply embedded lifestyle practice.

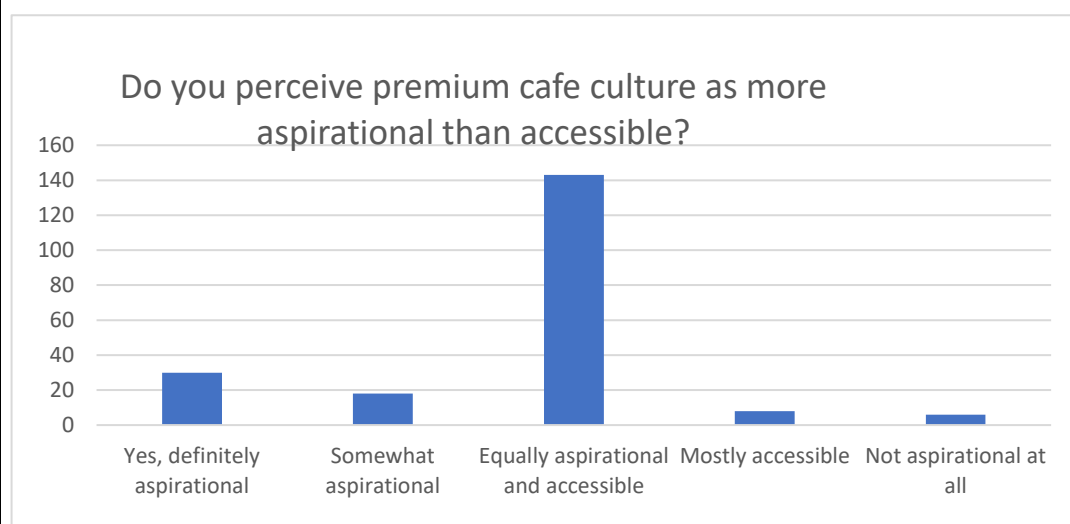
4.12. ANALYSIS OF PERCEPTION OF PREMIUM CAFÉ CULTURE AS ASPIRATIONAL OR ACCESSIBLE

Table 4.12. : This table presents respondents' perceptions of premium café culture as aspirational or accessible

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes, definitely aspirational	30	15%
Somewhat aspirational	18	9%
Equally aspirational and accessible	143	70%
Mostly accessible	8	4%
Not aspirational at all	6	3%

Source: Primary Data

Figure 4.12: This figure illustrates respondents' of premium café culture as aspirational or accessible



INTERPRETATION

The above figure shows the respondents' perception of premium café culture in terms of its aspirational and accessible nature. It is observed that a majority of the respondents perceive premium café culture as equally aspirational and accessible. A smaller proportion of respondents view it as definitely or somewhat aspirational, while very few respondents perceive it as mostly accessible or not aspirational at all. This indicates that premium café culture is largely viewed as a balanced concept rather than being exclusively elite or inaccessible.

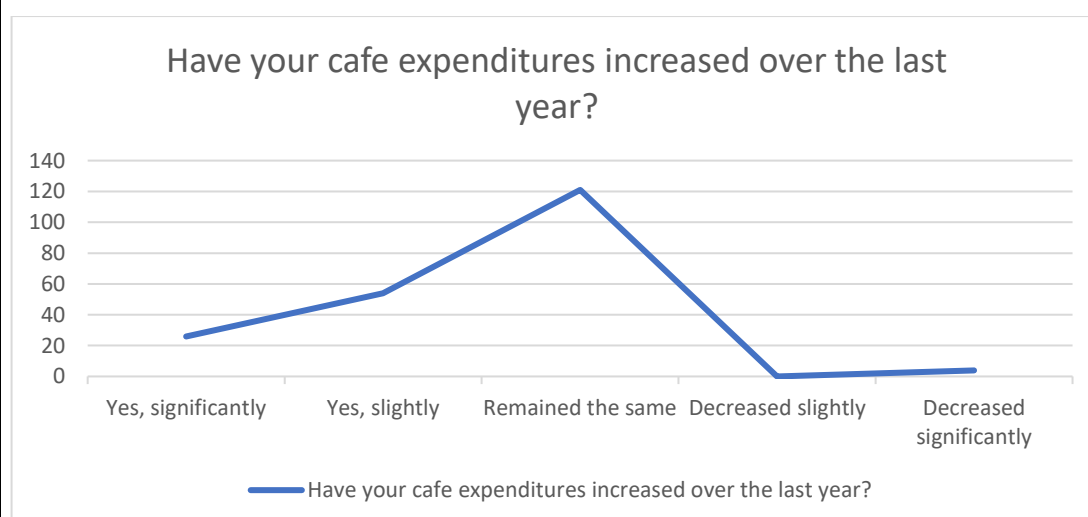
4.13. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN CAFÉ EXPENDITURE OVER THE LAST YEAR

Table 4.13. : This table presents changes in café expenditure over the last year

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes, significantly	26	13%
Yes, slightly	54	26%
Remained the same	121	59%
Decreased slightly	0	0%
Decreased significantly	4	2%

Source: Primary Data

Figure 4.13: This figure illustrates changes in café expenditure over the last year.



INTERPRETATION

The above figure illustrates the changes in respondents' café expenditure over the last year. It can be observed that a majority of the respondents report that their café expenditures have remained the same. A noticeable proportion indicate that their spending has increased slightly or significantly, while very few respondents report a decrease in café expenditure. This suggests that although premium cafés continue to attract consumer interest, overall spending levels have largely remained stable.

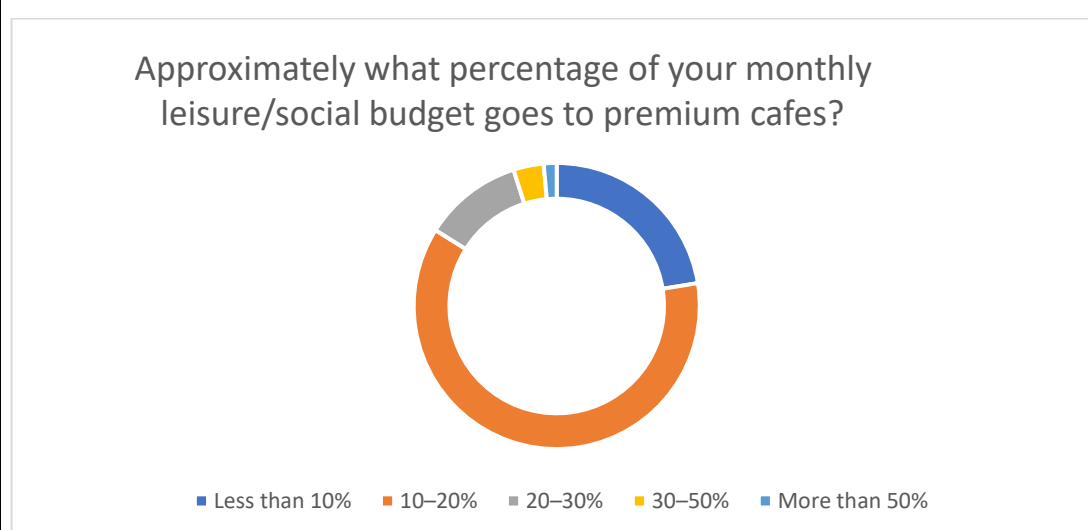
4.14. ANALYSIS OF MONTHLY LEISURE OR SOCIAL BUDGET ALLOCATED TO PREMIUM CAFÉS

Table 4.14. : This table presents monthly leisure or social budget allocated to premium cafés.

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Less than 10%	46	22%
10–20%	126	61%
20–30%	23	11%
30–50%	7	3%
More than 50%	3	1%

Source: Primary Data

Figure 4.14: This figure illustrates monthly leisure or social budget allocated to premium cafés.



INTERPRETATION

The above figure shows the approximate percentage of respondents' monthly leisure or social budget spent on premium cafés. It is observed that a majority of the respondents allocate 10–20% of their budget to premium cafés, while a significant number spend less than 10%. Only a small proportion of respondents allocate more than 30% of their monthly budget to premium cafés. This indicates that premium cafés form a regular part of respondents' leisure spending, but generally account for a moderate share rather than a dominant portion of their overall budget.

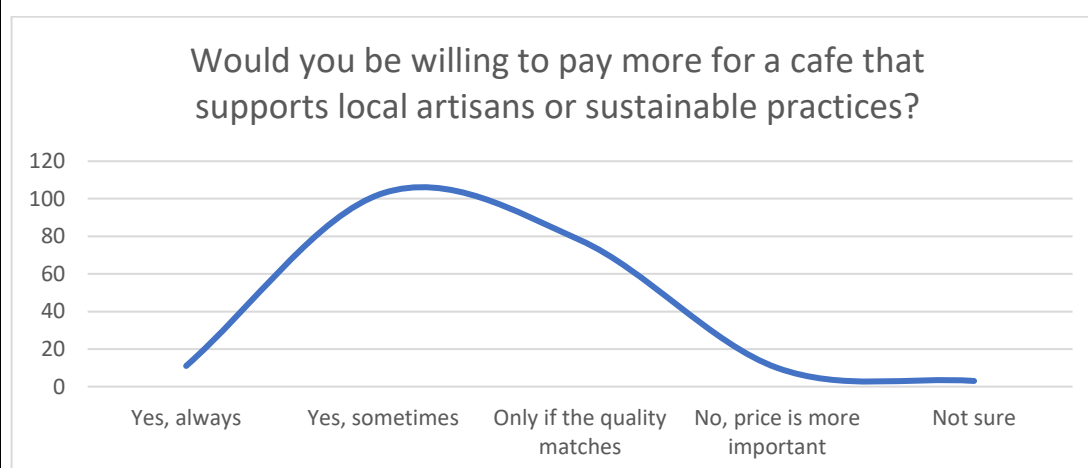
4.15: WILLINGNESS TO PAY MORE FOR CAFÉS SUPPORTING LOCAL ARTISANS OR SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Table 4.15. : This table presents respondents' willingness to pay more for cafés supporting local artisans or sustainable practices.

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes, always	11	5%
Yes, sometimes	103	50%
Only if the quality matches	78	38%
No, price is more important	10	5%
Not sure	3	1%

Source: Primary Data

Figure 4.15: This figure illustrates respondents' willingness to pay more for cafés supporting local artisans or sustainable practices.



INTERPRETATION

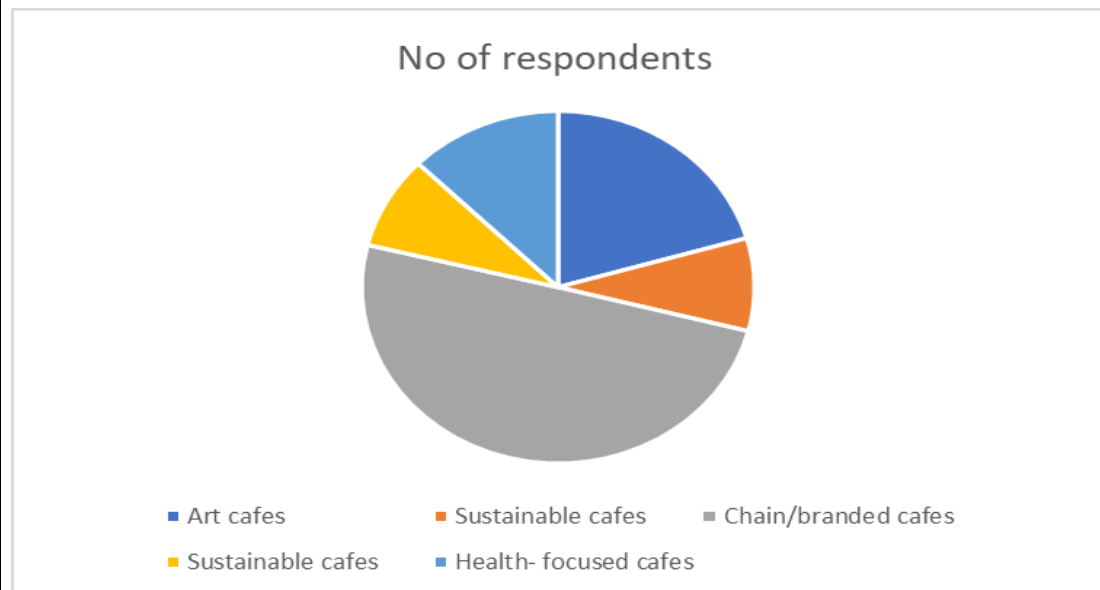
The above figure shows the respondents' willingness to pay more for cafés that support local artisans or sustainable practices. It is observed that 11 respondents are always willing to pay more, while a majority of the respondents, 103, are willing to pay more sometimes. Further, 78 respondents are willing to pay more only if the quality matches their expectations. On the other hand, 10 respondents indicate that price is more important, and 3 respondents are not sure. This indicates that although sustainability and ethical practices influence consumer preferences, price sensitivity and quality considerations continue to play a significant role in decision-making.

4.16. ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON RESPONDENTS' CAFÉ CHOICES

Table 4.16: This table presents the influence of social media on respondent's cafe choices

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Arts cafe	65	20.5
Sustainable cafe	27	8.5
chain/branded cafe	158	49.8
cultural/ethnic	27	8.5
Health focused cafes	40	12.6
TOTAL	317	100

Figure 4.16: This figure presents respondents' views on whether social media influences their choice of cafés.



INTERPRETATION

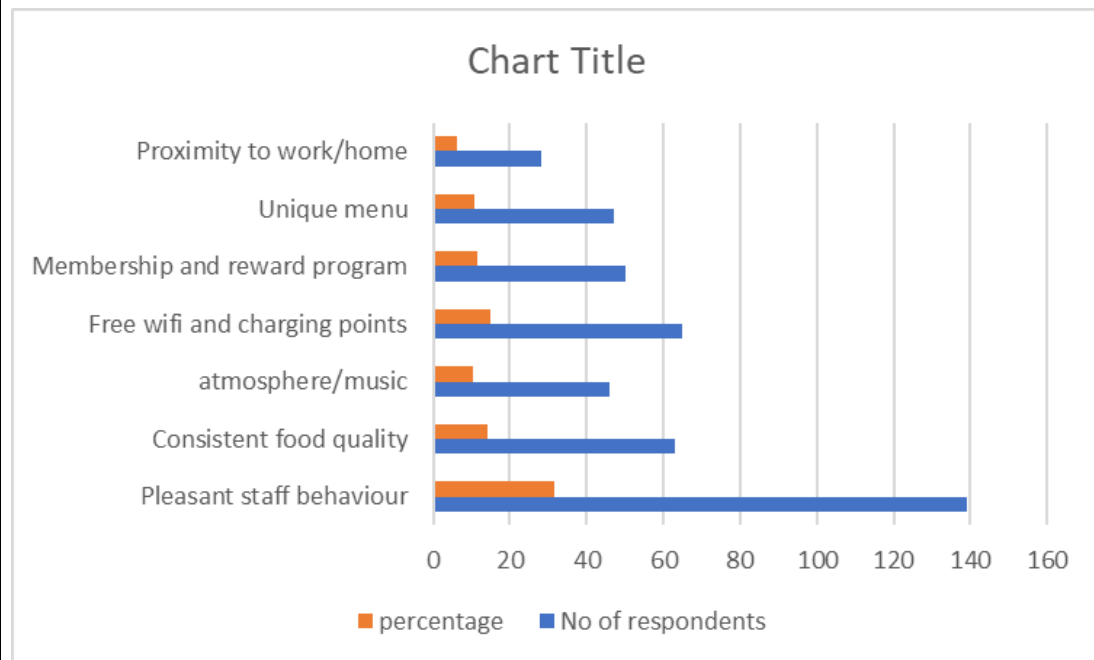
Out of 317 respondents, chain or branded cafés are the most visited, with 158 respondents (49.8%), likely due to familiarity, consistency, and convenience. Arts cafés follow with 65 respondents (20.5%), showing interest in creative and aesthetic environments. Health-focused cafés attract 40 respondents (12.6%), indicating rising health awareness. Sustainable and cultural/ethnic cafés are the least preferred, each chosen by 27 respondents (8.5%), possibly due to limited availability or niche appeal.

4.17. ANALYSIS ON THE INFLUENCE WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCE CUSTOMER'S LOYALTY TO A PARTICULAR CAFÉ

Table 4.17 : This table presents respondents' factors influencing on customer's loyalty to a cafe

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Pleasant staff behaviour	139	31.7
Consistent food quality	63	14.3
Atmosphere/music	46	10.5
Free wifi and charging points	65	14.8
Membership and reward program	50	11.4
Unique menu	47	10.7
Proximity to work/home	28	6.4
TOTAL	438	100

Figure 4.17 : This figure presents respondents' factors influencing on customer's loyalty to a cafe



INTERPRETATION

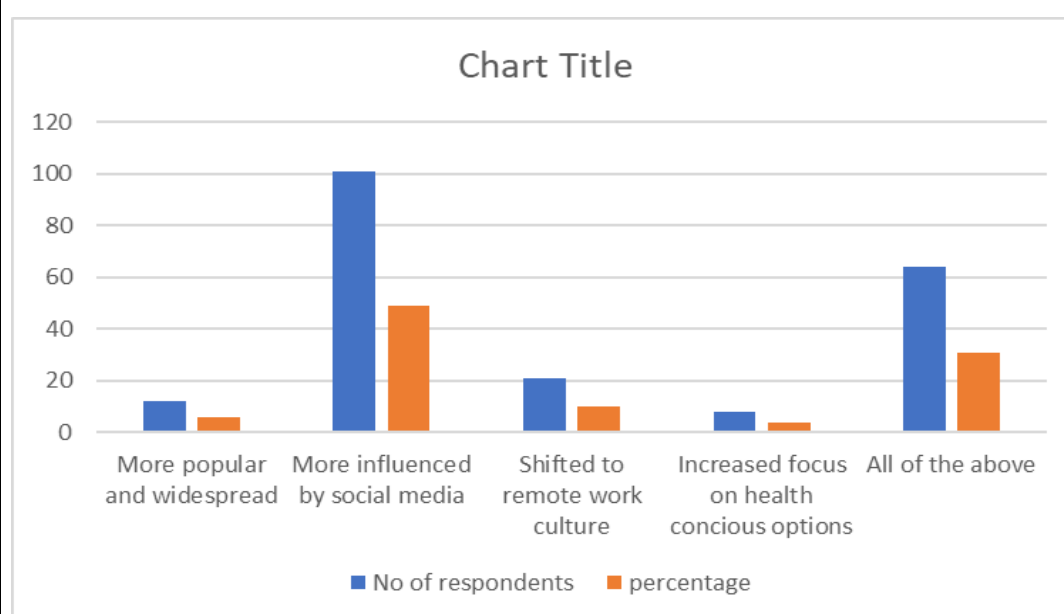
.The table shows factors influencing café choice based on 438 responses, with pleasant staff behaviour being the most important (31.7%), highlighting the value of good service and interaction. Free Wi-Fi and charging points (14.8%) and consistent food quality (14.3%) are the next key factors, showing the importance of convenience and reliability. Membership and reward programs (11.4%), along with unique menu offerings (10.7%) and atmosphere or music (10.5%), moderately influence decisions. Proximity to work or home is the least influential factor (6.4%), indicating customers are willing to travel for a better café experience.

4.18. ANALYSIS ON RESPONDENT'S OPINION ON HOW CAFÉ CULTURE AMONG YOUTH IN ERNAKULAM CHANGED OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS

Table 4.18 This table presents respondent's opinion on how cafe culture among youth in Ernakulam changed over the past five years

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
More popular and wide spread	12	5.8
More influenced by social media	101	49
Shifted to remote work culture	21	10.1
Increased focus on health- conscious options	8	3.8
All of the above	64	31
TOTAL	320	100

Figure 4.18 : This figure presents respondents' factors influencing on customer's loyalty to a cafe



INTERPRETATION

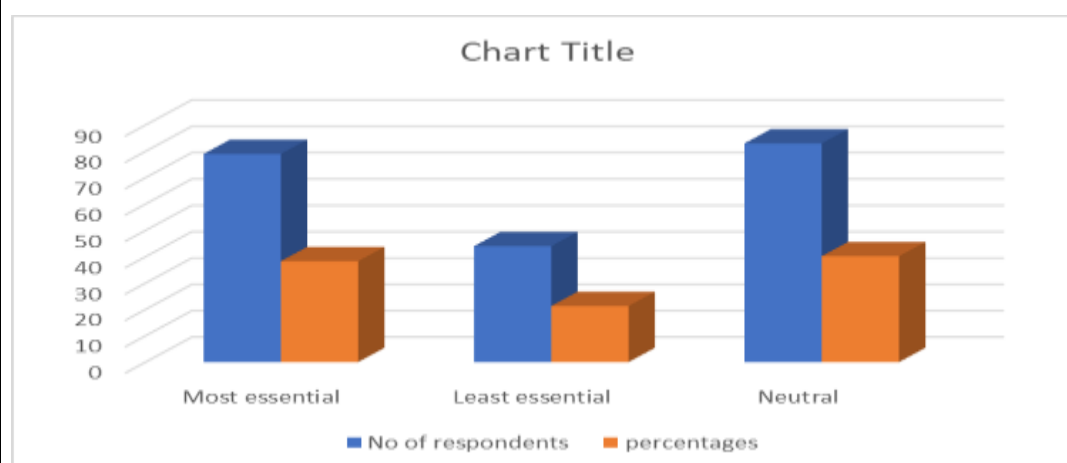
The table shows that social media influence (49%) is the main reason for changing café preferences. All factors combined (31%) also have a strong impact. Remote work culture (10.1%) has a moderate influence, while popularity (5.8%) and health-conscious options (3.8%) have the least influence.

4.19. ANALYSIS ON RESPONDENT'S OPINION ON FACTORS TO BE INCLUDED IN IDEAL CAFE

Table 4.19.1 This table presents respondent's opinion on factors to be included in ideal cafe (quite zones for work/study)

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Most essential	79	38.3
Least essential	44	21.3
Neutral	83	40.2
TOTAL	206	100

Figure 4.19.1 : This figure presents respondents' factors influencing on customer's loyalty to a cafe (quite zones for work/study)



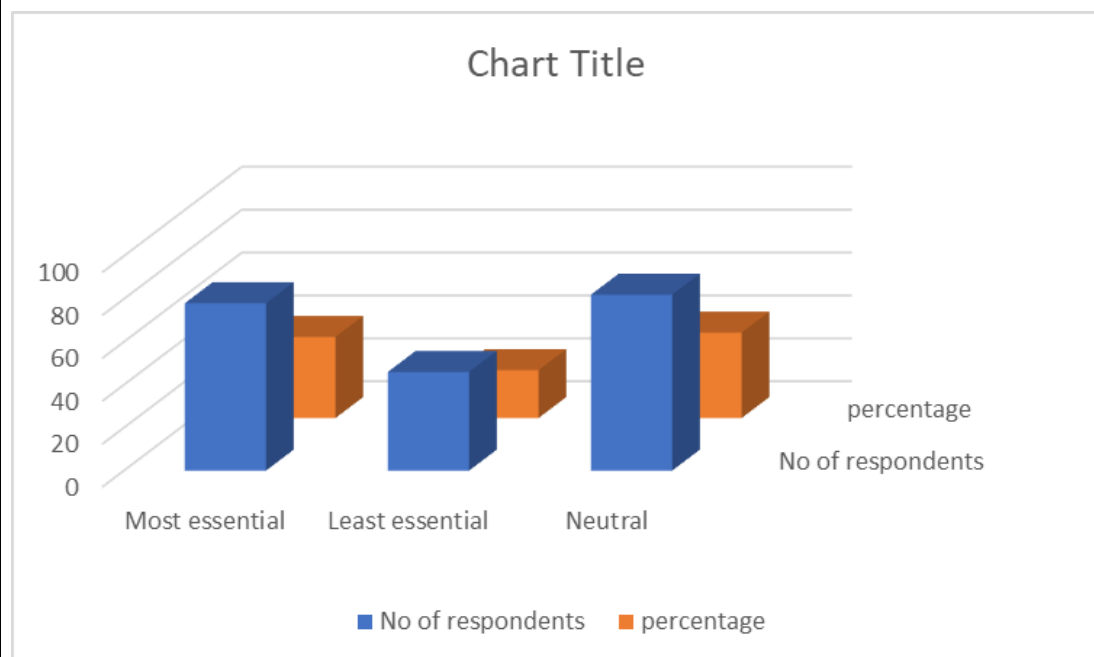
INTERPRETATION

The table shows respondents' views based on 205 responses. The majority are neutral (40.2%), indicating mixed opinions. 38.3% consider it most essential, showing strong importance among many respondents, while 21.3% view it as least essential. Overall, opinions are divided, with a slight inclination toward neutrality.

Table 4.19.2 This table presents respondent's opinion on factors to be included in ideal cafe (outdoor or green seating)

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Most essential	78	37.8
Least essential	46	22.3
Neutral	82	39.8
TOTAL	206	100

Figure 4.19.2 : This figure presents respondents' factors influencing on customer's loyalty to a cafe (outdoor or green seating)



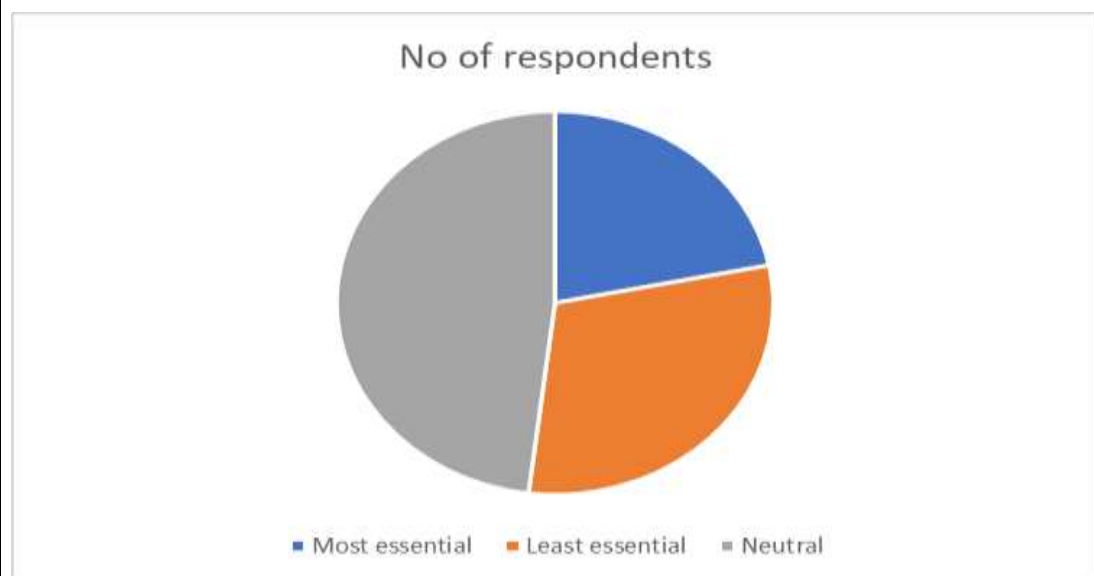
INTERPRETATION

The table presents respondents' opinions based on a total of 205 responses. The largest group of respondents (39.8%) expressed a neutral opinion, indicating uncertainty or a balanced view regarding the importance of the factor. A substantial proportion (37.8%) consider it most essential, showing that many respondents attach high importance to it. In contrast, 22.3% regard it as least essential, reflecting a smaller but notable group that perceives it as less important.

Table 4.19.3 This table presents respondent's opinion on factors to be included in ideal cafe (live music or Art events)

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Most essential	45	21.8
Least essential	62	30.1
Neutral	99	48.1
TOTAL	206	100

Figure 4.19.3 : This figure presents respondents' factors influencing on customer's loyalty to a cafe (live music or Art events)



INTERPRETATION

The table summarizes responses from 206 respondents regarding the importance of the factor. Nearly half of the respondents (48.1%) expressed a neutral opinion, indicating uncertainty or indifference toward its importance. 30.1% of respondents consider it least essential, suggesting that a considerable proportion do not view it as important. Only 21.8% regard it as most essential, reflecting comparatively lower perceived importance.

CHAPTER 5

**FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATION &
CONCLUSION**

5.1 FINDINGS

1. The study sample is predominantly composed of young adults, with the majority of respondents (62%) belonging to the 18-22 age group, indicating that the "latte lifestyle" is most actively engaged with by the youngest urban demographic.
2. Students form the largest segment of premium café patrons in the sample, constituting a significant majority (62%), followed by salaried professionals (27%).
3. A large majority of respondents are single (77%), suggesting that the premium café culture is more prevalent among individuals without marital commitments.
4. For respondents, the most defining characteristic of a 'premium' café is an aesthetically pleasing and comfortable interior (31%), surpassing factors like high-quality ingredients (14%) or employee knowledge (10%).
5. While café visits are a regular part of social life, the most common pattern is occasional visitation, with more than half of the respondents (55%) visiting cafés only occasionally.
6. Cafés are primarily viewed as social venues, as most respondents visit with friends or social groups (62.9%) or colleagues (26.3%), rather than alone or with immediate family.
7. The most common spending range per café visit is ₹150 – ₹250, with more than half of the respondents (54.1%) falling into this bracket, indicating a norm of moderate expenditure.
8. The strongest motivations for visiting premium cafés are trendiness/Instagrammability (45.9%) and ambiance/aesthetics (38.5%), highlighting the role of social influence and experiential consumption.
9. Balanced diet menu options are the most influential sustainability practice for café choice among respondents (52.2%), indicating that personal health is a stronger driver than packaging or waste reduction initiatives.

10. An overwhelming majority of respondents (99%) acknowledge that social media influences their choice of café, underscoring its critical role in shaping consumer preferences.
11. Respondents hold a generally moderate view, with the majority expressing neutral opinions across various statements about the lifestyle's significance, suggesting it is an occasional experience rather than a deeply embedded identity.
12. A significant majority of respondents (70%) perceive premium café culture as equally aspirational and accessible, indicating its normalization as a mainstream leisure activity.
13. For most respondents (59%), expenditure on premium cafés has remained the same over the past year, suggesting stable consumption habits within this demographic.
14. The majority of respondents (61%) allocate 10–20% of their monthly leisure or social budget to premium cafés, confirming its status as a regular, but not dominant, leisure expense.
15. While ethical practices are valued, conditional willingness prevails, as most respondents (50%) are only sometimes willing to pay more for cafes supporting local artisans or sustainability.
16. Chain or branded cafés are the most visited type, preferred by nearly half of the respondents (49.8%), due to factors like familiarity and consistency.
17. Pleasant staff behaviour is the most important factor influencing customer loyalty to a particular café, cited by nearly one-third of responses (31.7%).
18. Respondents believe the most significant change in youth café culture in Ernakulam over five years is that it has become more influenced by social media (49%).
19. Opinions are divided on the essentiality of quiet zones for work/study, with the largest group being neutral (40.2%), though a significant portion considers it most essential (38.3%).

5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Premium cafés should focus on aesthetic interiors, ambience, and comfortable seating, as these strongly influence consumer perception and preference.
2. Active social media engagement and visual marketing should be prioritized, given its significant role in café selection among young consumers.
3. Cafés are encouraged to offer innovative, visually appealing menus to enhance the overall experience beyond brand reputation.
4. Group-friendly and work-conducive spaces should be designed to support social interaction and professional meetings.
5. Pricing should remain moderately premium (₹150–₹250) while offering higher-value options for frequent and high-spending patrons.
6. The inclusion of health-conscious and sustainable practices can strengthen appeal among increasingly aware consumers.
7. Café branding should position outlets as lifestyle and self-care spaces, emphasizing relaxation, emotional well-being, and social connection.

5.3. CONCLUSION

This research into the "Latte Lifestyle" in Ernakulam, Kerala, reveals a consumer culture where premium cafés have transcended their functional role to become vital socio-cultural hubs. The findings confirm that this lifestyle is predominantly embraced by urban youth, particularly students aged 18-22, who frequent cafés primarily for social and experiential reasons rather than daily necessity.

The study highlights several defining characteristics: the overwhelming influence of social media and aesthetics on café choice; the role of cafés as "third places" for socialization and networking; and a pattern of moderate, stable spending that frames café visits as affordable luxuries. While consumers value sustainability and ethical practices, this concern is often secondary to factors like ambience, price, and personal health.

Ultimately, the latte lifestyle signifies a shift toward experiential consumption, where value is derived from identity expression, social belonging, and curated aesthetics. It reflects a generation navigating modernity through small, symbolic indulgences—turning the simple act of visiting cafes into a statement of contemporary urban identity.

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ANNEXURE

ANNEXURE

Sipping in Style: Exploring the Latte Lifestyle and Spending Habits in Premium Cafes

Dear Respondent,

We, Abiya K R, Aliza Therese, Sana Muhammed Ashereff, and Fiza Siraj, B.Com Third Year students of St. Teresa's College, are conducting a research study on the topic "Sipping in Style: Exploring the Latte Lifestyle and Spending Habits in Premium Cafes."

We invite you to participate in this brief 5-minute survey. Your responses will be used solely for academic purposes.

Participation is voluntary, and all responses will remain anonymous and confidential.

Thank you for your valuable time.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Age*(Select one)

- 18–22
- 23–27
- 28–35
- 36–45

2. Current Status*(Select one)

- Student
- Salaried Professional
- Self-Employed
- Business Owner

3. Marital Status*(Select one)

- Single
- Married

4. What does “premium” mean to you in the context of a cafe?*(Tick all that apply)

- High-quality, artisanal ingredients
- Aesthetically pleasing and comfortable interior
- Well-trained and knowledgeable employees
- A strong, recognizable cafe name
- Unique or signature menu items
- A quiet, exclusive atmosphere
- A form of self-care and relaxation
- Social interaction

Section B: Cafe Visiting Behavior & Frequency

5. How often do you visit premium cafes in Ernakulam?*(Select one)

- Daily
- 3–5 times a week
- 1–2 times a week
- Once every 2 weeks
- Occasionally

6. Who do you usually take along on your cafe visits?*(Select one)

- Alone
- Friends / Social group
- Colleagues / Business associates
- Partner / Spouse

- Family

7. On an average, how much do you spend per visit at a premium cafe?*(Select one)

- Less than ₹150
- ₹150 – ₹250
- ₹251 – ₹400
- More than ₹400

Section C: Consumer Preferences & Influencing Factors

8. Which of the following best describes why you visit premium cafes?*(Tick all that apply)

- To socialize with friends
- For work / studying
- To relax or de-stress
- As a date spot
- To experience new drinks / food
- For the ambience / aesthetic
- Because it is trendy / Instagrammable
- To network professionally
- Variety in menu
- Social media presence / influence

9. Which of the following sustainability practices influence your choice of cafe?*(Tick all that apply)

- Use of biodegradable packaging
- Portion reduction options

- Waste reduction initiatives
- Vegan / plant-based menu options
- Balanced diet menu

Section D: The “Latte Lifestyle” & Cultural Dynamics

10. Does social media influence your cafe choices?*(Select one)

- Yes
- No

11. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the “latte lifestyle”?*(Mark only one option per statement)

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Drinking at premium cafes is a status symbol	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It reflects a modern, urban identity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It is part of my social routine	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel more productive when working from cafes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It helps me stay connected with trends	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section E: Spending Patterns & Economic Impact

12. Do you perceive premium cafe culture as more aspirational than accessible?*(Select one)

- Yes, definitely aspirational

- Somewhat aspirational
- Equally aspirational and accessible
- Mostly accessible
- Not aspirational at all

13. Have your cafe expenditures increased over the last year?*(Select one)

- Yes, significantly
- Yes, slightly
- Remained the same
- Decreased slightly
- Decreased significantly

14. Approximately what percentage of your monthly leisure/social budget goes to premium cafes?*(Select one)

- Less than 10%
- 10–20%
- 20–30%
- 31–50%
- More than 50%

Section F: Brand Perception & Loyalty

15. Would you be willing to pay more for a cafe that supports local artisans or sustainable practices?*(Select one)

- Yes, always
- Yes, sometimes
- Only if the quality matches

- No, price is more important
- Not sure

16. Which premium cafes do you visit most frequently?*(Tick all that apply)

- Chain / Branded cafes (e.g., Starbucks, Costa Coffee)
- Art cafes
- Health-focused cafes
- Sustainability-focused cafes
- Ethnic / Cultural cafes

17. What makes you loyal to a particular cafe?*(Tick all that apply)

- Consistent food quality
- Pleasant staff behaviour
- Membership / rewards program
- Proximity to home / work
- Unique menu items
- Atmosphere / music
- Free Wi-Fi and charging points

Section G: Deeper Insights & Open Reflections

18. In your opinion, how has cafe culture changed among youth in Ernakulam over the past 5 years?*(Select one)

- Become more popular and widespread
- Shifted towards remote work culture
- More influenced by social media
- Increased focus on health-conscious options

- No significant change
- All of the above

19. If you could design your ideal premium cafe, what three features would be essential?*(Mark one option per feature)

Feature	Most Essential	Neutral	Least Essential
Quiet zones for work / study	☐	☐	☐
Outdoor / green seating	☐	☐	☐
Live music or art events	☐	☐	☐

Thank you for your time and valuable insights.

Your participation contributes meaningfully to understanding urban consumer culture in Ernakulam.