



Lifestyle Persistence under Financial Constraints: Experimental Evidence on Women's Financial Behavior

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Abstract

This study aims to examine how women manage lifestyle-related consumption under financial constraints from a behavioral accounting perspective. Using an experimental approach, data were collected from a purposive sample of female university students a demographic frequently exposed to social lifestyle pressures despite limited finances and analyzed using descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations, and Pearson's chi-square tests. The results demonstrate that financial pressure does not deter women from maintaining certain lifestyle expenditures, particularly on cosmetics. Instead of prioritizing savings or other non-essential items, participants consistently favored cosmetic purchases, illustrating complex trade-offs between basic needs, savings, and lifestyle spending. Notably, chi-square analyses revealed no significant difference in budget allocation for cosmetics between the experimental and control groups, indicating that financial constraints do not fundamentally alter women's tendencies toward lifestyle consumption. Ultimately, the study implies that personal financial decision-making extends beyond strict economic rationality, highlighting the necessity for behavioral accounting models to consider how social pressures and personal priorities consistently override purely logical budget allocations.

Keywords: *financial constraint, lifestyle persistence, financial decision, behavioral accounting, cosmetics industry*

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1. INTRODUCTION

In theory, financial constraints are expected to encourage individuals to adjust their spending behavior rationally. Within traditional economic and financial framework, when resources are scarce, individuals will prioritize basic needs, reduce non-essential consumption, and exercise greater caution in making financial decisions (Zhu et al., 2025). These adjustments reflect efforts to maintain financial stability through more efficient budget allocation. Thus, financial constraints are viewed as conditions that reinforce financial discipline and guide individuals toward more rational and long-term-oriented decisions (Bai, 2023; Bawalle et al., 2024). However, the behavioral accounting perspective suggests that financial decisions do not always follow this rational logic (Egiyi & Ogbodo, 2023). Under financial constraints, individuals may not always substantially reduce their consumption; rather, they make adjustments by maintaining their lifestyle (Y. Wang et al., 2025) through smaller expenditures that continue to hold symbolic value. Such decisions suggests that the budgeting is not based solely on economic considerations but is also influenced by the psychological and social needs inherent in financial behavior.

This phenomenon raises an important question in behavioral accounting: Why do individuals maintain their lifestyle even when facing financial pressure? From a rational perspective, limited resources should prompt individuals to reduce spending that does not support financial stability. However, in practice, some individuals continue to allocate funds to symbolic consumption after their basic needs have been met (Akarsu et al., 2025). Such decisions reflects trade-offs in budget allocation, whereby individuals choose to maintain certain lifestyle choices even though doing so may reduce their ability to save or build financial reserves (Batham et al., 2025; Harahap et al., 2022). This suggests that financial decisions are not based solely on economic optimization, but also on non-financial considerations that influence how individuals prioritize their spending. In this context, lifestyle persistence can be understood as the result of a financial decision-making process influenced by psychological factors, rather than merely as a form of consumer behavior.

Although this phenomenon has received attention in the consumption literature, most previous studies still frame it as symbolic purchasing behavior (Agustiarmaputri, 2025; Barbosa & Rincon, 2022) or compensatory behavior (Chen et al., 2024; R. Wang & Tian, 2025), rather than as a financial decision. Previous research has primarily focused on the emotional motivations, self-identity, and psychological satisfaction that drive consumption under constrained economic conditions. This approach tends to separate consumption behavior from the framework of financial decision-making, and thus does not explain how individuals allocate limited resources to maintain their lifestyle. In fact, maintaining a lifestyle under financial constraints is a form of financial decision-making that involves choosing between current consumption and future financial stability. Thus, the existing literature has not fully explained lifestyle persistence as a phenomenon in behavioral accounting related to budget allocation and financial priorities.

Previous research has generally suggested that financial constraints encourage individuals manage their financial resources more cautiously by prioritizing essential needs and reducing discretionary consumption (Simonse et al., 2024; Zhu et al., 2025). This assumption has not been fully tested, as individuals may continue to make non-essential expenditures even when under economic pressure (Argun et al., 2025). This finding suggests that financial constraints do not always reinforce financial rationality, but can lead to compensatory budget allocation decisions. From a behavioral accounting perspective, such decisions reflect a deviation from the rational model, in which individuals continue to maintain certain lifestyle elements as part of their financial preferences (Chandrawati et al., 2023). This suggests that financial constraints do not always lead to thrifty behavior, but may instead encourage individuals to maintain certain spending patterns that are considered psychologically or socially important. However, the literature remains limited in explaining how financial constraints influence financial decisions that lead to the persistence of lifestyle.

Another limitation of previous research lies in the methodological approach, which has largely relied on perception-based surveys or observational data. Such approaches have not been able to directly identify changes in financial decisions when individuals face financial constraints. Without manipulating financial conditions, it is difficult to determine whether individuals actually adjust their budget allocations or continue to maintain a certain lifestyle. Furthermore, observational

approaches tend to capture general preferences rather than actual decisions made under resource-constrained conditions. Therefore, an experimental approach is needed to simulate financial constraints and directly observe how individuals make financial decisions when choosing among basic needs, savings, and lifestyle-related expenditures.

This study aims to analyze lifestyle persistence as a form of women's financial decision-making under financial constraints through the perspective of behavioral accounting using an experimental approach. This study is important to fill a gap in previous research, which has largely framed lifestyle persistence as a symbolic or compensatory consumption, rather than as a financial decision from a behavioral accounting perspective. Furthermore, the dominance of survey and observational approaches has not been able to directly observe how individuals make trade-offs among basic needs, savings, and lifestyle consumption under financial constraints. To address these gaps, this study employs an experimental approach to directly observe women's budget allocation decisions when they are faced with choices among basic needs, savings, and lifestyle consumption. This study aims to answer questions regarding why women maintain lifestyle expenditures despite financial pressure and how financial constraints influence budget allocation decisions between basic needs, savings, and lifestyle consumption. Thus, this study seeks to demonstrate lifestyle persistence is a key aspect of women's financial decisions-making under financial constraints.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Behavioral Accounting

The behavioral accounting perspective explains that individuals' financial decisions are not always based on perfect economic rationality (Mahapatra & Mishra, 2020). In traditional accounting approach, individuals are assumed to make the most efficient decisions to maximize utility and maintain financial stability. However, behavioral accounting approach views the decision-making process is also influenced by how individuals understand, assess, and respond to the financial conditions they face (Charline et al., 2025; Mahapatra & Mishra, 2020). Psychological factors, personal experiences, social environments, and emotional pressures can influence how individuals determine spending priorities and the use of financial resources (Ryu & Fan, 2023). Therefore, financial decisions do not always reflect objective economic calculations but are also influenced by individuals' perceptions and preferences regarding a particular expenditure. Thus, behavioral accounting places human behavior as a crucial component in explaining financial decisions and budget allocation.

From a behavioral accounting perspective, individuals often continue to maintain certain expenditures even when their financial resources are limited because those expenditures hold personal or symbolic value (Bai, 2023). Individuals consider not only the economic function of consumption but also the psychological and social benefits derived from such expenditures (Agustiarmaputri, 2025; Shovmayanti et al., 2024). Under financial constraints, financial decisions often involve trade-offs among basic needs, savings, and lifestyle-related consumption. This situation indicates that the budgeting is not focused entirely on economic efficiency but also on efforts to preserve self-confidence, comfort, and self-identity. In this study, cosmetics are understood not merely as consumer goods but as a means of social representation and an expression of women's self-image.

2.2 Financial Constraints

Financial constraints refer to conditions in which individuals face limited financial resources and must prioritize spending among competing needs and wants (Simonse et al., 2024; Y. Wang et al., 2025). In traditional financial theory, financial constraints are assumed to encourage individuals to prioritize essential expenditures and reduce discretionary consumption. Thus, financial constraints are viewed as a mechanism that strengthens rationality in financial decision-making (Y. Wang et al., 2025). Individuals are assumed to be more cautious in using financial resources because budget constraints increase the risk of future financial instability. These conditions lead to spending decisions that are more focused on essential needs and those with clearer economic benefits (Y. Wang et al., 2025). From this perspective, financial constraints are understood as economic pressures that drive individuals to spend more efficiently and reduce consumption considered less essential.

However, from a behavioral accounting perspective, financial decisions do not always follow this rational logic

(Charline et al., 2025; Mahapatra & Mishra, 2020). Individuals consider not only economic aspects but also psychological and social factors when determining their expenditures. Under financial constraints, individuals may continue to maintain certain expenditures because they are linked to self-identity, self-esteem, and social acceptance (Chandrawati et al., 2023). This suggests that financial constraints do not always lead to reduced consumption instead, they may produce more complex financial decision-making patterns that are not entirely rational.

2.3 Lifestyle Persistence

Lifestyle refer to patterns of behavior, consumption preferences, and the ways in which individuals express their identity in everyday (Brivio et al., 2023). Lifestyle is not only related to the fulfillment of functional needs but also reflects the values, social symbols, and self-image that individuals wish to project within their social environment (Cheng et al., 2022). In the context of consumption, lifestyle is often manifested through particular product choices, forms of appearances, and activities that are perceived as representing status, self-confidence, or personal comfort. Over time, lifestyle does not always change easily when individuals face economic pressures because certain consumption patterns tend to be maintained as part of identity and social habits—a phenomenon known as lifestyle persistence.

Lifestyle persistence refer to an individual's tendency to maintain certain consumption patterns and lifestyles despite facing changes or pressures in economic conditions (Shah & Asghar, 2023). This concept suggests that consumption is not always easily adjusted in a rational manner when financial resources decline, as lifestyles have often become part of an individual's self-identity and social habits. Under financial constraints, individuals may adjust the types and amounts of their expenditures but continue to maintain certain consumption patterns deemed personally or symbolically important (X. Wang & Sim, 2025). Lifestyle persistence also reflects efforts to maintain psychological comfort, self-confidence, and social acceptance through consumption related to one's lifestyle.

From a behavioral accounting perspective, lifestyle not only reflects consumption preferences but also financial decisions regarding budget allocation. Individuals may prioritize lifestyle-related expenditures, and continue to maintain them even when resources are limited (Gilly et al., 2025). Such behavior indicates that financial decisions are not always directed toward optimizing financial stability but toward fulfilling psychological needs (Gilly et al., 2025; Ryu & Fan, 2023). Under resource constraints, individuals tend to make trade-offs by continuing to allocate a portion of their budget to lifestyle expenditures after their basic needs are met. Thus, the persistence of lifestyle reflects financial decisions that are not entirely rational but are influenced by non-economic preferences.

2.4 Hypothesis Development

2.4.1 Financial Constraints and Lifestyle Persistence in Financial Decision-Makings

From a behavioral accounting perspective, financial constraints do not always result in significant changes in individual spending patterns (Hidayat & Hermawan, 2025). Although individuals are theoretically expected to reduce non-essential consumption, in practice, certain expenditures that hold psychological value are maintained (Charline et al., 2025; Kim & Chang, 2023). This suggests that financial decisions are not entirely determined by financial capacity but also by the need to maintain personal identity and satisfaction (Kalender, 2021). Thus, financial constraints do not always lead to a decline in lifestyle-related consumption but may encourage individuals to maintain certain spending patterns in a more affordable form.

Furthermore, under resource constraints, individuals tend to make adjustments without eliminating lifestyle elements they consider important (Bahl et al., 2022; Bardey et al., 2023). These adjustments are reflected in changes in the type or amount of spending, rather than in the complete elimination of spending itself. This indicates that lifestyle persistence is a component of financial decision-making that is maintained despite financial pressures (Shah & Asghar, 2023). Thus, financial constraints do not significantly reduce individuals' tendency to maintain their lifestyle in financial decision-making.

H1: Financial constraints do not fully reduce lifestyle persistence in women's financial decision-makings

2.4.2 Financial Constraints and Budget Allocation for Lifestyle Maintenance

Under financial constraints, individuals face resource limitations that require them to prioritize their spending (Malika et al., 2022). However, from a behavioral accounting perspective, individuals do not allocate all their resources to basic needs

or savings. Instead, they set aside a portion of their budget for lifestyle-related expenditures (Chandrawati et al., 2023; Gilly et al., 2025). This indicates that lifestyle-related consumption remains a financial priority even under conditions of financial constraints. Such decisions reflect a trade-off between financial stability and non-financial satisfaction in budget allocation.

Furthermore, budget allocations for maintaining one's lifestyle indicate that individuals are not only driven by economic needs but also by psychological and social needs (Akarsu et al., 2025; Batham et al., 2025). Among women, social pressures related to appearance and self-identity can reinforce this tendency, so that lifestyle expenditures are maintained even when resources are limited (Bharathi & Dinesh, 2019; Rodgers et al., 2024). Thus, the persistence of lifestyle is reflected in individuals' decisions to continue allocating a portion of their budget to lifestyle expenditures as part of their financial decisions.

H2: Under financial constraints, women continue to allocate a portion of their budget to maintain their lifestyle

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a quantitative approach using experimental methods to analyze women's financial decisions under conditions of financial constraint. The experiment was used to directly observe how individuals make budget allocation decisions when faced with financial pressure. This study utilized a between-subjects experimental design with two groups: an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group was given a scenario depicting financial constraints, while the control group was given a scenario without financial pressure. The focus of this study is on respondents' decisions regarding budget allocation after basic needs are met, specifically regarding lifestyle-related expenditures such as cosmetics.

The study involved 180 female undergraduate students as research participants. Female students were chosen because they often experience limited financial resources while remaining actively engaged in consumption practices associated with lifestyle maintenance. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on prior experience with cosmetic consumption and lifestyle-related expenditures. A total of 90 participants were assigned to the experimental group and 90 participants to the control group.

3.2 Experimental Procedure

This study used two financial decision-making scenarios presented to different groups. The experimental group was given a scenario depicting financial constraints, in which respondents were faced with a limited amount of money to allocate among basic needs and other spending options. In this scenario, respondents were asked to decide how to use the remaining budget, including the possibility of purchasing cosmetic products as part of their lifestyle. Meanwhile, the control group was given a scenario without strict financial constraints. Respondents in this group were provided with more flexible financial conditions and asked to determine their spending choices provide to the experimental group. Respondents' choices regarding combinations of expenditures served as indicators of lifestyle persistence under financial constraints.

Lifestyle persistence was operationalized as respondents' willingness to maintain cosmetic expenditures when faced with competing financial priorities. The measurement focused on spending decisions involving basic needs, cosmetic purchases, and savings. These categories were selected because they reflect the trade-off between economic rationality and lifestyle-related consumption under financial constraints. Cosmetic products were chosen as a lifestyle indicator because prior studies have shown that they carry symbolic, psychological, and social meanings beyond their functional value. Consequently, maintaining cosmetic expenditures under limited financial resources reflects the persistence of lifestyle preferences in financial decision-making.

3.3 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using comparative descriptive analysis to compare the respondents' decisions between the experimental group and the control group. In addition, this study used cross-tabulation to examine the distribution of spending choices within each group. Cross-tabulation was used to identify patterns in respondents' budget allocation, particularly their decisions to purchase cosmetics after their basic needs were met. Next, the Pearson chi-square test was used to determine

whether there was a difference in spending behavior between the experimental group under financial constraints and the control group with normal financial conditions.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 RESULTS

This study aims to analyze women's financial decisions under conditions of financial constraints, specifically regarding lifestyle persistence through the purchase of cosmetics. A total of 180 students participated in the case scenario, with an equal distribution between the experimental and control groups. Female students were selected as the research sample because these students tend to face financial constraints due to limited income sources and dependence on family support or other specific source of funding. Nevertheless, female students remain in a social environment that encourages the need to maintain their appearance and lifestyle. These conditions make female students a relevant group for observing how individuals make financial decisions when facing financial pressure while continuing to maintain lifestyle-related consumption. Additionally, female college students are at a stage of life in which they are actively developing self-identity and social representation, making lifestyle-related expenditures more prominent in their consumption patterns. The case scenarios were distributed both online and offline, accompanied by detailed explanations regarding how to respond to the cases to elicit comprehensive responses. The Analysis was conducted using expenditure choice distributions and cross-tabulations to examine respondents' financial behavior.

Table 1 | Distribution of Respondents' Spending Preferences

Top Priority	Experimental Group (%)	Control Group (%)
Cosmetics	17	18,7
Basic necessities	5	18,6
Savings	3,4	5,1
Combination	74,6	57,6
	100	100

Source: processed data, 2026

Based on Table 1, the majority of respondents in the experimental group fell into the "combination of financial priorities" category at 74.5%, which was higher than the 57.6% in the control group. This finding indicates that under financial constraints, respondents tend to combine expenditures on basic needs, lifestyle, and savings rather than prioritizing just one type of expenditure. This suggests that women's financial decisions under financial constraints are adaptive and involve various considerations in budget allocation.

In addition, 17% of respondents in the experimental group prioritized cosmetics exclusively, a figure relatively similar to the 18.7% recorded in the control group. However, only 5% of respondents in the experimental group prioritized basic needs exclusively, a figure significantly lower than the 18.6% in the control group. These findings indicate that the experimental group did not direct their spending solely toward essential needs despite facing financial constraints. Respondents who prioritized savings in the experimental group accounted for 3.4%, which was lower than the 5.1% in the control group. This suggests that under financial constraints, respondents tend to maintain their lifestyle spending rather than increasing their savings.

Table 2 | Lifestyle Persistence by Group

Category	Experimental Group (%)	Control Group (%)
Choosing cosmetics after basic needs	59,4	45,8
Not choosing cosmetics after basic needs	40,6	54,2
	100	100

Source: processed data, 2026

According to Table 2, 59.4% of respondents in the experimental group continued to purchase cosmetics after meeting

their basic needs, a higher percentage than the 45.8% recorded in the control group. These findings suggest that although respondents faced financial constraints, most respondents continued to spend on cosmetics as part of their lifestyle. This indicates that financial constraints do not directly eliminate lifestyle-related expenditures.

Meanwhile, 40.6% of respondents in the experimental group did not choose cosmetics after meeting their basic needs, compared with 54.2% in the control group. These percentages indicate that the control group tended to allocate more of their spending to needs other than cosmetics than did the experimental group. Conversely, the experimental group showed a greater tendency to maintain spending on cosmetics despite limited financial resources. These findings demonstrate the persistence of lifestyle in women's financial decisions.

Table 3 | Budget Allocation After Basic Needs

Allocation After Basic Needs	Experimental Group (%)	Control Group (%)
Purchasing cosmetics	59,4	45,8
Purchasing other lifestyle items	16,9	20,3
Saving	23,7	33,9
	100	100

Source: processed data, 2026

Based on Table 3, 59.4% of respondents in the experimental group chose to purchase cosmetics, which was a higher percentage than the 45.8% in the control group. This finding indicates that, even under financial constraints, the majority of respondents still allocated a portion of their budget to purchasing cosmetics after their basic needs had been met. Respondents in the experimental group who chose to purchase other lifestyle items accounted for 16.9% which was lower than the control group's 20.3%. This suggests that when facing financial constraints, respondents tended to be more selective in maintaining lifestyle expenditures. Cosmetics appeared to be prioritized over other forms of lifestyle spending. This finding indicates that respondents did not completely eliminate lifestyle consumption but adjusted the types of spending they consider more important, both symbolically and personally.

In addition, 23.7% of respondents in the experimental group chose to save, which was lower than the 33.9% in the control group. This indicates that, even under financial constraints, respondents did not fully redirect their remaining budget toward financial stability through savings. Instead, most respondents chose to maintain their discretionary spending rather than increasing their savings. These findings indicate a trade-off in women's financial decisions, in which lifestyle expenditures were maintained even under financial pressure.

Table 4 | Cross-Tabulation of Cosmetics Purchases and Basic Needs Fulfilment

Cosmetics Purchases	Meets Basic Needs	Does Not Meet Basic Needs	Total
Purchases cosmetics	42,4	17,0	59,4
Does not purchase cosmetics	37,2	3,4	40,6
Total	79,6	20,4	100

Source: processed data, 2026

According to Table 4, 42.4% of respondents purchased cosmetics while also meeting their basic needs. Meanwhile, 17.0% of respondents purchased cosmetics without meeting their basic needs. These findings indicate that the majority of respondents continued to spend on cosmetics even though they had to allocate their budget to essential needs. Additionally, 37.3% of respondents did not purchase cosmetics but still met their basic needs, while only 3.4% of respondents did not purchase cosmetics and did not meet their basic needs. This indicates that the majority of respondents continued to prioritize basic needs, but under certain conditions still maintained cosmetic spending as part of their lifestyle.

Table 5 | Cross-Tabulation of Cosmetics Purchases and Saving Decisions

Cosmetics Purchases	Saving	Not Saving	Total
Buying cosmetics	0	59,4	59,4
Not buying cosmetics	15,3	25,3	40,6
Total	15,3	84,7	100

Source: processed data, 2026

According to Table 5, 59.4% of respondents in the experimental group purchased cosmetics and did not save. Meanwhile, no respondents both purchased cosmetics and saved at the same time. This finding indicates that respondents who maintained their spending on cosmetics tended not to allocate their remaining budget to savings. This suggests a trade-off between lifestyle spending and financial stability in the respondents' financial decisions. Respondents who did not purchase cosmetics but chose to save accounted for 15.3%, while those who neither purchased cosmetics nor saved accounted for 25.3%. These findings suggest that some respondents preferred to allocate resources toward other needs rather than savings or lifestyle expenditures. However, the proportion of respondents who continued to purchase cosmetics remained higher than those who chose to save.

Table 6 | Cross-Tabulation of Cosmetics Purchases and Saving Decisions

Tested Variables	χ^2	df	Sig. (p-value)
Decision to continue purchasing cosmetics	2,694	1	0,101
Budget allocation after basic needs	3,154	2	0,207

Source: processed data, 2026

Based on Table 6, the results of the Pearson's chi-Square test indicate that there was no significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in their decisions to maintain cosmetic purchases or budget allocation after basic needs were still met ($p > 0.05$). These findings suggest that financial constraints do not entirely alter women's tendency to maintain lifestyle-related expenditures. Although the experimental group was under financial pressure, respondents still showed a tendency to maintain cosmetic consumption as part of lifestyle persistence in financial decisions (see Table 2 and Table 4). This condition shows that financial constraints are not strong enough to eliminate expenditures that hold personal, symbolic, and social value for women.

4.2 DISCUSSION

Findings regarding the distribution of spending priorities show that respondents in the experimental group maintained a spending mix that included both basic needs and lifestyle-related consumption, rather than focusing their spending solely on essential needs or savings (Table 1). This tendency to maintain a balanced spending mix indicates that respondents sought to strike a balance between functional needs and personal needs. Basic needs are still met because they are related to the continuity of daily activities, while lifestyle expenditures are maintained to preserve self-confidence, comfort, and self-satisfaction (Bardey et al., 2023). This finding suggests that financial constraints do not always result in spending behavior that is entirely defensive or focused on total savings (Nusir et al., 2025; Simonse et al., 2024). Instead, respondents still make room for consumption that is perceived to hold personal value in their daily lives (Argun et al., 2025; Ryu & Fan, 2023). Financial constraints tend to drive adjustments in spending patterns rather than completely eliminating lifestyle persistence. Lifestyle, as expressed through appearance and specific consumption, has become a social standard that influences acceptance, self-confidence, and one's position within the social environment (Maney & Mathews, 2021). Consequently, even under financial constraints, lifestyle-related spending was maintained because social pressure often outweighs the impulse to prioritize economic rationality entirely. The results of the Pearson Chi-Square test indicate that there was no significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in the decision to continue purchasing cosmetics (Table 6). These findings suggest that financial constraints do not entirely alter women's tendency to maintain lifestyle-related expenditures.

Despite being under financial pressure, respondents in the experimental group still exhibited a relatively high proportion of cosmetic purchases as part of lifestyle persistence (Table 2, Table 3, and Table 4). This indicates that women's financial decisions are not entirely driven by economic rationality but are also influenced by the psychological, symbolic, and social needs inherent in lifestyle consumption. Thus, financial constraints tend to lead to adjustments in spending patterns rather than a complete elimination of lifestyle-related consumption.

The results of the cross-tabulation and budget allocation patterns indicate a trade-off in women's financial decisions between meeting basic needs, saving, and lifestyle expenditures (Table 2, Table 3, Table 4, and Table 5). Despite facing financial constraints, respondents in the experimental group still showed a tendency to maintain cosmetic purchases after basic needs were met rather than redirecting the remaining budget toward savings or other non-essential consumption. Cosmetic spending remained a priority because it was viewed as having value beyond ordinary consumption functions (Alozian & Shatila, 2023; MacDonald & Dildar, 2020). This finding suggests that lifestyle persistence is maintained through forms of consumption considered most important on a personal and social level. Financial constraints did not eliminate the overall tendency to purchase cosmetics, but rather shifted consumption priorities toward forms of spending that best represent identity and psychological needs. Individuals tend to prioritize consumption that provides the greatest emotional and social benefits over other expenditures deemed less urgent (Kalender, 2021; Y. Wang et al., 2025). Furthermore, maintaining certain aspects of one's lifestyle serves as a means to preserve psychological stability amid financial pressures. Consequently, lifestyle in this study does not manifest as excessive consumer behavior but rather as a form of symbolic consumption that is selectively maintained through the allocation of a portion of the budget (Agustiarmaputri, 2025; Kalender, 2021).

The research findings confirm that financial decisions are not always driven solely by economic rationality. Individuals facing financial constraints continue to maintain certain expenditures because they are linked to self-identity, self-image, personal satisfaction, and psychological needs (Barbosa & Rincon, 2022; Sahin & Nasir, 2022). Cosmetics serve not only as consumer goods but also as symbols representing women's lifestyles (MacDonald & Dildar, 2020). Women's spending decisions are influenced by efforts to maintain self-image, psychological comfort, and social representation through specific consumption, which means that financial constraints do not entirely eliminate lifestyle persistence in financial decisions. This finding is supported by the results of the Pearson Chi-Square test, which also showed that there was no significant difference in budget allocation after basic needs had been met between the experimental group and the control group (Table 6). Women under financial constraints still allocated a portion of their budget to maintaining their lifestyle rather than direct all spending toward savings or financial stability. This tendency indicates that financial constraints drive adjustments in budget allocation patterns rather than the total elimination of lifestyle consumption.

The research findings reinforce the behavioral accounting perspective, which emphasizes that individuals' financial decisions are not always based on the principle of economic rationality but are also influenced by psychological, social, and symbolic factors in the use of financial resources (Espín & García-Martínez, 2026). Behavioral accounting suggests that individuals' financial behavior may not always be rational. This aligns with research findings which show that women continue to maintain cosmetic spending even under financial constraints. Rationally, financial constraints should encourage individuals to focus spending on basic needs and increase savings (Bai, 2023). However, the research results indicate that respondents still allocated a portion of their budget to lifestyle-related consumption and did not completely eliminate cosmetic spending. This finding suggests that spending decisions are influenced not only by economic needs but also by efforts to maintain self-image, psychological comfort, and social representation (Ngo et al., 2025). Furthermore, the tendency of respondents to prioritize cosmetic consumption over savings indicates that individuals did not always fully prioritize financial stability when facing economic pressures. These findings reinforce the behavioral accounting view that the use of financial resources is often influenced by subjective preferences and the personal meaning attached to specific consumption (Shah & Asghar, 2023). Therefore, financial constraints in this study did not entirely eliminate lifestyle persistence but rather encourage adjustments in budget allocation patterns within women's financial decisions.

5. CONCLUSION

This study indicates that financial constraints do not entirely diminish lifestyle persistence in women's financial decisions-makings. Even when facing financial limitations, women continue to allocate a portion of their budgets to maintaining their lifestyle, particularly through the consumption of cosmetics. The findings reveal that respondents did not entirely redirect their spending toward basic needs or savings, but instead maintained consumption that was perceived to hold personal and symbolic value. From a behavioral accounting perspective, this suggests that financial decisions are influenced not only by economic rationality but also by psychological factors, self-image, and personal satisfaction. Thus, financial constraints tend to drive adjustments in budget allocation patterns rather than leading to the complete abandonment of their lifestyles in women's financial decisions.

6. LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study is limited to short-term spending decisions and does not examine how financial behavior changes when financial constraints persist over a longer period of time. In addition, factors such as income level, peer pressure, and the influence of social media were not specifically analyzed. Future studies should use a longitudinal approach to observe changes in women's financial behavior and lifestyle persistence over time while under continuous financial pressure. Further research could also compare different demographic groups, such as students, working women, and married women, to identify variations in lifestyle maintenance behavior. Moreover, incorporating psychological variables such as self-esteem, social comparison, financial stress, and social media exposure may provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing women's financial decision-making under financial constraints.

This study has the theoretical implication that women's financial decisions cannot be fully explained by economic rationality alone, but are also influenced by psychological, symbolic, and social factors within a behavioral accounting perspective. The findings indicate that financial constraints lead to adjustments in consumption priorities rather than to the complete abandonment of one's lifestyle. This finding expands the scope of behavioral accounting research by demonstrating that lifestyle persistence remains even when individuals face financial pressure. Practically, the results highlight the importance of financial literacy approaches that not only emphasize spending efficiency but also consider the emotional and social aspects of women's consumption behavior. Therefore, effective financial management should focus on the ability to balance financial and psychological needs in financial decision-making.

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