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THE INFLUENCE OF MEDIA, ADVERTISING, AND SOCIAL NETWORKS IN SHAPING CONSUMPTION STYLES AMONG YOUTH

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Annotation: this article explores the impact of mass media, advertising, and social networks on the formation of consumer culture among youth through a philosophical and scientific lens. It analyzes how advertising and branded products influence young people's consciousness and contribute to shaping consumer behavior. The study emphasizes the role of moral education and ethical values in developing a conscious and responsible consumer identity in the context of the contemporary information society. It also discusses the social environment of youth, the manipulative nature of advertising, and the development of consumer culture through branding, based on philosophical principles.

Keywords: advertising, brand, online platforms, television, radio, social networks, values, moral education.

Introduction. In contemporary society, consumption has evolved into a complex cultural phenomenon that reflects both individual needs and broader social trends. With the rapid development of global markets and communication technologies, individuals – especially youth – are increasingly exposed to media content that shapes their consumption choices. Although progress has been made in promoting rational and needs-based consumer behavior, the influence of mass media and branded advertising continues to challenge ethical and aesthetic values.

Advertising plays a central role in cultivating a consumer society by promoting products under recognizable brand identities. In today's globalized context, branding not only stimulates demand but also shapes identity. "A brand, therefore, is not simply a marketing tool – it represents a set of associations and meanings rooted in consumer consciousness" [1]. The commodification of nearly all aspects of life through media platforms has contributed to a

cultural shift where the act of consumption is often equated with social integration and personal fulfillment.

Literature Review. Perspectives related to the development of consumer culture can also be found in the work *Regrets on Parting with My Old Dressing Gown* by the French philosopher Denis Diderot (1713–1784). The philosopher articulated the following concise idea that has endured through history: “The act of acquiring a new item often initiates what scholars refer to as a ‘consumption spiral, whereby one purchase triggers a series of subsequent acquisitions”[2]. Dependence on objects, possessions, and even people can be disastrous. This phenomenon was later termed the “Diderot Effect” Diderot’s acceptance of a 25-year salary in exchange for his library – and his rapid consumption of that wealth – reflects the relationship between the consumer and the credit card. In essence, it represents a transaction in which imaginary money not yet earned is exchanged for future labor, production, and time – that is, a sale of the future. Today, when household budgets often fail to align with market realities, this leads many people to experience depression, financial burdens, and emotional distress.

Zygmunt Bauman conceptualized consumerism as a framework in which every problem can be solved through consumption. According to Bauman, solutions are commodified and marketed, reinforcing the idea that purchasing is a legitimate way of addressing personal and social challenges [3].

Clayton Alderfer, in his ERG theory (1969), consolidated Maslow’s hierarchy of needs into three categories: existence, relatedness, and growth needs. This theory highlights the multidimensionality of human needs and the role of consumption in fulfilling psychological and social aspirations [4]. A.N. Haydarov emphasized that consumerism emerges not only from material capability but also from the psychological desire for possession. This desire, when unmet, may result in dissatisfaction and anxiety within social groups [5].

Research Methodology. This study employs an interdisciplinary approach, integrating philosophical analysis with empirical observation and content analysis. The research draws on sociocultural and ethical frameworks to examine how media messages and branding strategies influence youth consciousness. Additionally, the role of moral education in shaping value-based consumption is explored through the lens of contemporary communication and behavioral theories.

Analysis and Results. Mass media – including television, radio, print, and digital platforms – serve as influential channels in disseminating consumer ideologies. Advertisements targeting youth frequently equate personal success, attractiveness, and happiness with the

acquisition of specific goods. With the rise of algorithm-based advertising, companies tailor messages to individual user preferences, further deepening their psychological impact. Television shows, films, and online media depict consumerism as a desirable lifestyle. Music videos, celebrity endorsements, and influencer content reinforce materialistic values and promote peer-based consumption patterns. On platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, youth encounter constant exposure to idealized lifestyles and branded content, which they often emulate and reproduce.

Influencers play a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior. Through product placements and sponsorships, they present consumption as an integral part of self-expression and social belonging. User-generated content, such as product reviews and "haul" videos, fosters a participatory consumer culture where young people reinforce brand identities among their peers. Technological advancements have transformed advertising into an aesthetic practice, using visual and psychological techniques to attract attention. Bright colors, dynamic designs, and emotional appeals target youth's cognitive and emotional sensitivities. As a result, fashion and branding have become dynamic and rapidly changing, leading to overconsumption and waste of still-usable goods.

The commercialization of art and aesthetics has further normalized the market logic in cultural sectors. Artworks are often treated as commodities, with their market value influencing public perception. This shift reflects the broader tendency of viewing all aspects of life – including identity formation – through a consumerist lens. Furthermore, media content is increasingly designed to provoke emotional responses rather than encourage critical thought. This underscores the urgent need for media literacy programs that foster analytical skills and value-based decision-making among youth.

Conclusion and recommendations. In conclusion, mass media and advertising have a profound influence on the consumption patterns and identity formation of youth. Consumption has become a means of self-expression and social validation. However, this also presents risks of manipulative influence, emotional dependency on material goods, and ethical degradation. To address these challenges, the following recommendations are proposed:

Ethical Media Content: Media producers should increase the share of content promoting ethical, aesthetic, and spiritual values relevant to youth development.

Educational Interventions: Schools and universities should integrate media literacy and critical thinking programs to equip students with the ability to analyze and resist manipulative advertising strategies.

Regulatory Measures: State and civil society institutions should collaborate to regulate advertising content, ensuring alignment with public ethical standards and youth development goals.

Content Creation Support: Experts in education, psychology, and communication should be engaged in producing socially responsible content on digital platforms, aimed at promoting well-being and conscious consumption among youth.

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