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Consumption Standards of the Population in A Consumer Society

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ABSTRACT

The article presents a theoretical analysis of the transformation of consumer attitudes and orientations of the population in a consumer society from sociological, economic, and psychological perspectives. The development of society through industrialization and the unprecedented growth of production has intensified competition among enterprises in the sale of goods. This situation generates a need in socio-economic life for management that corresponds to the process of consumer society development, as well as for the valorization of consumption norms of the population. At the same time, in the formation of a consumer society, producers increasingly employ various manipulative methods to stimulate consumer behavior. As a result, specific consumer habits are formed in people's behavior and mindset, such as strolling through markets and shopping malls, observing and purchasing goods. In foreign scientific literature, the definitions and interpretations of consumer society were comprehensively developed by Erich Fromm and Jean Baudrillard. In 20th-century economic theory, scholars conducted scientific analyses of the three waves of industrial development of the consumer society. In this sense, the aim of the article is to bring into scholarly discussion the concept of the "consumption norm" as a social value in the context of the New Uzbekistan, taking into account its ethno-confessional characteristics. Furthermore, the article reveals the influence of the consumer society on the moral and spiritual profile of the individual in the development of society.

KEYWORDS: Consumer Society, Consumption Norm, Post-Industrial Society, Goods And Services, Christian And Muslim Consumer Ethics, Frugality, Income And Rational Spending.

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INTRODUCTION

Consumer society is usually characterized by the industrial revolution in socio-economic development, an unprecedented increase in the production of products and the transition of marketing services to an industrial level in the sale of products. With the improvement of the lifestyle of the average person in a consumer society, the opportunities for using goods and services expand. This creates a need to update food, clothing, and household appliances. In this case, in the conditions of fierce competition among manufacturers in the sale of products, the desire to "stupid" the consumer into using goods or services by manipulating the consumer not only morally but also psychologically increases.

In all scientifically, technologically and economically developed countries, the development of a consumer society has led people to feel happy by walking around shopping malls in the city. In the 40s and 50s of the last century, the USA was characterized by mass production of goods and services, the widespread availability of the most socially important consumer goods, on the one hand, a significant increase in the real incomes of the majority of the country's population, a several-fold increase in effective demand, the desire of ordinary people to previously unattainable levels of comfort and personal well-being in everyday life, as well as the desire to constantly buy new things, which firmly established consumer sentiment. In other countries, a state of socio-economic development corresponding to the main features of a consumer society appeared somewhat later than in the USA, and in many cases much later. First, Western Europe, then Australia, Japan, South Korea, etc. joined them. Today, we can say that in many countries of the world, including Uzbekistan, there is a consumer society **[1].**

LITERATURE ANALYSIS AND METHODOLOGY

Foreign and national scientific sources and data were used in the study of consumer society. In the socio-philosophical analysis and interpretation of the article, general theoretical methods were used, along with induction and deduction methods. In the scientific literature of Western countries, the main aspects of consumer society were actively studied in studies on sociology, economic theory, political science and social philosophy. They do not use the term "consumer behavior", but chronologically first

focus on the problem of turning a commodity into a fetish. Scientists based the class division of society on economic criteria, the main of which was the attitude to the means of production, and they considered changes in productive forces and production relations as the main factor in changing the social structure. It is argued that the main class distinction in capitalist society is between the bourgeoisie and the wage laborers (owners and non-owners of the means of production). Social classes are fundamentally different in the nature of consumption, since capitalist society, for the first time in human history, began to produce significantly more than is necessary to satisfy basic human needs, but all surplus products are appropriated by the ruling class, while those who do not own the means of production continue to consume at a physiological minimum **[2].**

DISCUSSION

Max Weber also talks about social classes, but in a certain sense he is somewhat different from the Marxist one. From his point of view, a class is a group of people who have a similar status in the social structure of a market economy society and who have similar opportunities for life in general, in particular the opportunity to obtain surplus products. The nature of consumption also depends on the ability to dispose of surplus products, but according to Weber, classes in capitalist society are not static. On the contrary, they are very mobile, numerous, constantly moving from one to the other, like individuals who are able to move between classes, rather than organizing revolutions in order to replace the ruling and oppressed classes. Weber's general approach to consumerism remains the definition of classes based on property relations, which allow the disposal of goods and services, which gives access to surplus production and excess consumption. But such opportunities are opened not by an initially given position in the social structure of society, but by external conditions and life experience, if the management of financial, material and human capital (although Weber did not speak about the latter) within the framework of existing economic relations are allowed. This gives the right to consume more than others, but it is not initially granted and is not strictly defined in the social structure, and the classes themselves are not something very stable, once and for all consolidated. According to Weber, it is not classes that are more stable, but rather properties that can be based on classes, but are not associated with them. Classes are simply the ability to own and dispose of material or other goods and to direct the benefits derived from such disposal, including excess consumption **[3].**

The concepts of T. Veblen ("Theory of Prestige Consumption"), G. Simmel ("Theory of Fashion"), and W. Sombart ("Theory of Luxury") and a number of other philosophers of the early 20th century can also be considered a significant contribution to the development of the field of knowledge under consideration, which refers to a period earlier than the emergence of the consumer. Tolstein developed the concept of visible consumer behavior, which separately considers the issue of the relationship between consumer behavior and social inequality. Initially, the emergence of various consumer practices was considered to be associated with social inequality, but later in sociology the idea spread that consumer practices themselves cause such inequality. That is, consumption is not an end in itself, but rather a means to implement complex social strategies of status differentiation (both class and property). Such strategies were described by Veblen in his classic work The Theory of Leisure Classes **[4].**

Simmel drew attention to the tendency of consumers to copy each other's behavior. His theory of fashion can also be seen as a means of class differentiation. Fashion is an imitation of a certain model, therefore it satisfies the need for the individual to belong to a social group that is important to him, including only in his consciousness, ideas and values. But to the same extent, fashion also satisfies the need for differentiation, the desire to somehow separate oneself from the social environment or part of it, to stand out from the crowd. That is, Simmel identifies two main functions of fashion: integration and differentiation, since an individual can simultaneously strive to belong to some groups and distance himself from others, and both are often achieved through the consumption of one type of goods or services (typical for one group and completely unacceptable for another group). That is, fashion is a means of uniting one circle of people (as well as recognizing them) and separating it from others. People often unite with those who are equal in social status or strive to emphasize their belonging to higher positions, as a result of which isolation usually occurs in lower groups. Simmel explains this fact by the fact that fashion spreads from the top to the bottom, but not vice versa. Having reached the lowest status, he says that it ceases to be fashionable **[5].**

RESULTS

Weber's concepts had a significant impact on the subsequent development of the concepts of consumer society and consumer behavior. Thus, the Marxist idea of "commodity fetishism" was continued in Baudrillard's works, many of whose provisions serve as a theoretical basis for scientific and ideological criticism of consumer society today. Baudrillard's ideas themselves are rather weakly connected with the concept of Karl Marx and in some places even contradict each other. For example, according to Baudrillard, unlike Marxism, the main stimulating factor for the development of a capitalist economy is not production, but consumption (i.e., more consumption than production and more production than consumption). In turn, Weber's concept of consumption conditioned not by class, but by property, was continued in Pierre Bourdieu's "Class Fractions", which is still used today in sociological, sociocultural and socio-philosophical concepts devoted to the conditionality of the behavior of individuals and groups. Many researchers believe that property, at least in status or symbolic form, exists in modern society and largely determines the nature of consumption.

Bourdieu and Baudrillard have carried out fundamental research in the field of the sociological study of consumer behavior and consumer society within the framework of the modern stage of conceptual development. In an attempt to explain the formation and reproduction of consumer behavior, Bourdieu relies on the concept of 'habitus' as an "acquired system of generative schemes" and questions the purposiveness of consumer behavior, since the illusion of purpose and the organization of consumption are reflected in its stability, but not clearly defined goals and strategies. In other words, people consume any goods and services not because they want to save money, gain status or achieve prestige, but because they are irrational and out of habit. Habitual practices shape the lifestyle of social groups due to the uniformity of their lifestyles. The structure and volume of consumption is also influenced by cultural capital, which allows an individual to recognize the strategies and principles of action of other people. For example, with an increase in income, the volume of consumption may not increase due to the norms of behavior accepted in a particular local community or information group **[6].**

According to Baudrillard's concept, objects of consumption constitute a system of signs that distinguish individuals. According to the scientist, at a certain stage, consumption ceases to be a process aimed at satisfying needs. There is already a clearly expressed systematic activity and a set of universal reactions to external influences and stimuli, which are based, among other things, on culture and social relations. In Baudrillard's concept, the meaning of the consumption process changes, since its object is no longer goods or services, but signs. Thus, consumption is a systematic manipulation of signs. In this process, the object becomes a sign, with the help of which the individual communicates to others his belonging to a certain class, the status he occupies, the roles he plays, his needs and value orientations. Such signs are understandable to others, as a result of which a certain attitude towards the subject transmitting them is formed, and in modern society it is no longer possible to consume without taking into account such attention from others. In this sense, consumption also performs a communicative function, since by mutual reading of the transmitted signs, people make the process of interaction with each other much simpler and more predictable. Baudrillard notes that the manipulation of signs turns the need to own certain goods into infinity, and consumer behavior into limitations. In such conditions, consumption changes its content and becomes a process of interpreting signs. The transition to symbolic consumption gradually eliminates the boundaries between social strata established by groups of previously purchased goods or services. In the context of the information society, inequality is determined not by consumption patterns, but by the use of information technologies, as well as communication resources. Baudrillard believes that in a consumer society, people deceive themselves and try to survive the destruction of progress under the guise of abundance rather than true human culture. Alienation reinforces consumerist moods and goals in all areas of a person's life, except for productive activities **[7].**

Erich Fromm condemned the degradation of the spiritual world of man in a consumer society, not the real need for a person to satisfy physical needs through the senses with aesthetic taste, but artificial needs. He introduced the term "consumer society" into scientific circulation. Fromm justified the fact that a person is surrounded by goods and products, a world of goods, and becomes "lonely", caught between "healthy living and materialism" with the theory of social alienation **[8].**

The great philosopher's idea of a consumer society can be compared to the understanding of a happy life with the possession of unnecessary things in everyday life, such as "materialism", "indulgence of the ego". The greatest contribution to the "new theory" of consumption was made by scientists G. Becker, K. Lancaster and J. Stigler during this period. In their work, the consumer is transformed from a passive "profit maximizer" to an active actor. Becker's interest was primarily in the study of the consumption process itself, rather than the attributes of goods. He also focused on reducing the dependence of the economic theory of consumption on the psychological theory of taste **[9].**

Lancaster attempted to overcome the inability of the marginalist theory to consider the many characteristics inherent in the product. To solve this problem, he analyzed individual demand for a product, divided it into component elements, and built models of such demand in relation to individual characteristics. Lancaster argued that goods are a set of parameters and criteria, therefore, the consumer's demand for them should be understood not as a need for a specific product in general, but as a need to have a product due to certain characteristics **[10].**

Stigler developed the so-called "search theory", according to which the consumer should search for the lowest-priced product until the costs of such a search exceed the benefits of buying at a lower price. The approach he developed began to be used not only in the study of consumer behavior, but also in state or municipal administration, as well as in the work of commercial enterprises (for example, in the study of logistics processes or in the creation of optimal inventories)**[11].**

Dusenberry and Friedman tried to explain why consumption volumes grow faster than income, but when incomes decrease, consumption levels fall much more slowly. According to them, the hypothesis was put forward that consumers derive utility not from the absolute level of their income, but from their income relative to a reference group to which they associate their social status or aspire to belong. When income decreases, consumers begin to spend from the accumulated funds in order to maintain the previously achieved high level of consumption. According to Dusenberry, current consumption is largely due to habits that have been formed for a long time and do not change quickly. That is, consumer behavior is largely determined by the desire of an individual or household to imitate a certain model that may not exist in the social environment, but remains significant for a particular participant **[12].** When explaining this effect, Friedman used the permanent income hypothesis, according to which consumption is conditioned by the average level of income of an individual throughout his life. According to the researcher,

current income is the sum of permanent and temporary income, and according to the hypothesis he put forward, if consumption depends on permanent income, then savings and loans can be used to smooth out temporary income fluctuations **[13].**

CONCLUSION

In Western Europe, the stages of pre-industrial, industrial and post-industrial development of cultural civilization, the development of science and technology, consumerism traditions and the decline of the spiritual and educational factor are negatively affecting the prospects of humanity. The development of any state, along with the balance of production and consumption, the reasonable expenditure of the state budget, creates a need to form a unique consumer culture of the population on an ethno-confessional basis. This is possible through the rational use of energy resources, especially the economical use of electricity, water and other food products, based on the culture of thrift among young people in all areas of education. In general, it can be noted that the sociological concepts of the study of consumer society and consumer behavior are closely related to psychological concepts, which present irrational consumption and choice models based on the emotional characteristics of the consumer as an actual subject. Purchases bring not only profit, but also pleasure, therefore the consumption process cannot be explained only by satisfying needs determined by the socio-cultural context, but psychological factors, including habits, should also be taken into account. The economic component cannot be ignored in the study of consumer behavior, since personal consumption is part of the economic subsystem of society and the sum of its economic relations. Many researchers recognize that, in some sense, consumer behavior is usually autonomous, decisions are made independently by the individual, but at the same time, many factors are involved.

Consumer behavior is the process by which a subject acquires information about goods or services available to him, his actions in searching for, purchasing, using, reselling and disposing of them, his own attitude to the purchase and the evaluation of such reactions by significant social circles or reference groups, as well as the formation of a stable opinion about future purchases. Over the past century, a significant number of theoretical and methodological concepts have been created in the fields of sociology, cultural studies, psychology, economics, marketing, as well as in other scientific and practical fields of activity, necessary for the study of consumer behavior and consumer society. It has been established that there are many factors of consumer socialization and the formation of consumer behavior, which differ significantly from each other in the scope and nature of their influence on the acting subject. These factors should be studied and researched for use in both commercial enterprises and in the activities of state and non-state administration.

Classical concepts of the phenomenon of consumption and consumer behavior arose even before the emergence of this concept itself, as well as the entire consumer society and marketing as a science or field of practical activity. Consumption within the framework of the specified stage was often considered as a product of class or property, and its most prominent representatives can be seen in the works of Marx (Class Consumption), Weber (Property Consumption), Sombart (Luxury Theory). Further research on consumer behavior began to be carried out mainly in the early 20th century within the framework of economic theory, behavioral economics, and marketing. The Marxist idea of "commodity fetishism" in the works of Baudrillard (Critique of Consumer Society) and Weber's concept - (the 2nd half of the 20th century) Bourdieu's ideas in the so-called "Class fractions" and Fromm's "Man is Alone" - today occupy a very important place in sociological, socio-cultural and socio-philosophical studies of human behavior in general and consumer behavior in particular. The "New Theory of Consumption" was proposed by Becker, Lancaster and Stigler, while Friedman and Dusenberry formulated the concepts of permanent income and sustainable consumption practices to explain "Advanced Consumption".

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