

# The effects of mcdonaldisation and disneyfication on organisational life essay sa...



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Ritzer defines McDonaldisation as “ the process, which the principles of the fast-food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as of the rest of the world.” (G. Ritzer, 2002. Pg 7).

McDonaldisation is a development of Fordism, Taylorism and Weber. Fordism produced production for the mass market, Taylorism simplified work practices and brought about mass production and Weber’s ideal bureaucratic organisation was designed for efficient and predictability. (Dubrin and Ireland, 1993)

Ritzer breaks McDonaldisation in to of four principles, efficiency, calculability, predictability and control, each with a similar basis to Ford, Taylor and Weber’s theories. Efficiency is one of the most important elements of McDonald’s success. The whole process has been streamlined with the implementation of the best way to do things. “ Organisational rules and regulations also help ensure highly efficient work.” (Ritzer, 2002. Pg16).

Taylor believed in efficiency he believed that all work processes could be analysed in to discrete tasks and that by scientific method it was possible to find the one best way to perform each task. Each job was broken down in to component parts, each part timed and parts rearranged in to the most efficient method of working. (Mullins, 1999) In McDonalds the drive through offers the customer an efficient way of obtaining food. In a society where people rush, usually by car, from one spot to another the efficiency of a fast food meal, perhaps even not having to leave their cars by driving their way along the drive through lane, often proves impossible to resist. (Ritzer, 2002)

McDonald's also states " it provides the best available way to get from being hungry to being full." (Ritzer. 2002. Pg 16)

Calculability can be measured by McDonald's emphasis on the quantitative aspects of the products sold. " As a culture, we tend to believe that bigger is better" (Ritzer. 2002. Pg. 16). Customers are made to feel that they are getting a bargain, are therefore can justify spending their money on a particular item. Another example of an establishment that uses calculability is the NHS. They are more concerned with numbers on waiting lists than the care given as opposed to the private service.

A key feature of the McDonald's brand is the way in which all of their outfits are predictable, staff, surroundings and products. Production line techniques are applied in restaurants to achieve the fast preparation of uniform quality products. With a limited menu and patented formulas, it is ensured that products remain the same where ever and when ever, similarly to Ford and his assembly lines producing for the masses. The fixtures and fittings of restaurants are largely identical throughout the world.

The McDonalds model exerts an enormous amount of control over customers and employees. Customers are subtly controlled by the uncomfortable seating and standardised menus. This reflects the quantitative aspects of the quick-service food industry, increasing the number of customers by reducing idle time. Employees in McDonaldisation businesses are also controlled by being trained to only be able to do a limited number of tasks in a certain way which is reinforced by the technology used for example the drink machine that stops itself when the correct amount has been poured.

There are disadvantages to this rational system employed by McDonald's. The first oversight being that this type of system constantly generates irrational consequences. The environment is becoming affected by chemicals, which are essential in order for the standardisation, uniform shape, size and quality of the products desired in this modern society. Developing countries are also being put at risk by the effects of deforestation. It is also quite ironic that some less developed countries, where most children are undernourished, are actually exporting their staple crops as animal feed. This feed is then used to fatten cattle for the production of burgers for sale in developed countries. Millions of acres of the best farmland in underprivileged, developing countries are being used for developed countries benefit.

The finest element of the McDonaldisation lies in its rationality, and this aspect should be considered by businesses looking for a model to follow. However, as stated earlier, rational systems tend to generate irrational consequences, and it is the impact on society as a whole that a business must consider before adopting a similar code of practice. If too many businesses follow this model, it wouldn't make the world a better place, but simply a place for exploitation, pollution, and suppression. If McDonaldisation spreads, the world could become too standardised, causing losses in national identities and cultural differences.

Disneyfication is parallel to McDonaldisation specifically when relating to the culture of consumerism. It describes how the real world is becoming more and more like a theme park – like Disneyland. Disneyland is a world that's safe and entertaining; a world where there are no unpleasant surprises and <https://assignbuster.com/the-effects-of-mcdonaldisation-and-disneyfication-on-organisational-life-essay-sample/>

where everything is sanitized. But Disneyfication takes away the life and variety of the real world. In the Disney world, everything everywhere is the same.

Like McDonaldization by Ritzer, Bryman also divides Disneyfication into four parts: theming, de-differentiation of consumption, merchandising, and emotional labour. These elements fit into the many similar Theme parks that are becoming a prototype for towns and commercial development.

Everywhere, you can find chain restaurants, giant shopping malls, and modernized city centres that all follow the same pattern.

Theming accomplishes many things; it makes us feel as if we are getting away from life's problems. "The physical design of Disney World reflects the social structure, that is, the organisation and relationships between different categories of workers and the patrons they serve." (D. Johnson, 1981)

De-differentiation of consumption is the distortion of boundaries between consumption activities and organisations; this takes place in the theme parks when customers are forced to walk through the gift shops at the end of a ride. This form of Disneyfication does not only occur in theme parks but in other situations such as hotels that also accommodate casinos, going to see a football match and having a gift shop at the stadium with the clubs merchandise in it. Another example is the JJB superstores that also have gyms in them.

The Disney theme parks have two points of significance in relation to merchandising as a component of Disneyfication. First they provide sites for selling the selection of Disney merchandise. The layout of the theme parks <https://assignbuster.com/the-effects-of-mcdonaldisation-and-disneyfication-on-organisational-life-essay-sample/>

maximises the opportunity for the persuasion of customers to buy merchandise. Secondly they provide their own merchandise. This occurs in many situations not just in theme parks but films, sports and restaurants.

Emotional labour is in many ways demonstrated by the Disney theme parks. Johnson (1981) describes employees as “ well-groomed and scrubbed, very polite, smiling endlessly while repeating the canned speeches tailored to the various rides and exhibits they are tending.” The employee’s role is to see visitors through the rides as promptly and effectively as possible.

Although not listed by Bryman there is one other principle of Disneyfication, control. Like McDonaldisation holds a large amount of control over visitors to the park and employees. Visitors are having a controlled experience it has its own currency that can only be spent in the theme park, physical territory, special laws, restrictions on access and services. (Johnson, 1981) The employee’s behaviour is also controlled as mentioned before by scripts.

As this kind of development spreads, there is less and less space for other values and other ways of doing things. The problems caused by businesses are mostly ignored: ecological problems, dehumanising work, and ‘ third world’ exploitation.

Both McDonaldisation and Disneyfication have taken the organisational strategies of Ford, Taylor and Weber one-step further. McDonaldisation in particular is not only applied in factories like Fords assembly line but throughout many sectors and Disneyfication to a lesser extent. Both provide an environment of order and efficiency and predictability that shields outside influences. On significant advantage of McDonaldisation is that  
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organisational and technological innovations are more quickly and easily diffused through networks of homogeneous operators, as one format is suitable.

McDonaldisation and Disneyfication can be applied everywhere even in the home with ready meals that can be cooked within minutes in the microwave. The theory of McDonaldisation certainly will be around for a while longer as it is reflective of today's society and its wants and needs.

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