

# Causes and effects of consumer culture

[Business](#), [Marketing](#)



Causes and Effects of Consumer Culture In the mid-nineteenth century, the global business market had been improved by the introduction of mass production and management for the industries. With the increase of income and level of education, the consumers had higher purchasing power to fulfill their needs as well as their desire (Miller 1981, quoted in Featherstone 1991, 172). The consumer culture was later brought by the various advertising paths in 1920s (Featherstone 1991, 172). Consumer culture is the global trend which most people are aspired to buy goods and services that are not necessary for life (Belk 1988, quoted in Varman and Manohar Vikas, 3). The three causes of the consumer culture are motivation of advertisements, materialism among nations and the growing of high standard of living. The first cause of the growing consumer culture is the misleading of advertisements. Consumers are bombarded with many advertisements from different sources of media. According to Appadurai (1996), quoted in Varman and Manohar Vikas, pg4, media is powerful to cultivate the cultural flow among people. Companies have granted this opportunity to grab attention and interest of consumers. To encourage consumptions, company leaders tend to use ambiguous images and words to relate their products and the consumer's lifestyle in the advertisements. Consumers will be more concerned and grow strong desire to own the products to make their life better. False needs created by the advertisements are the main root that consumers get trapped into massive consumption. Besides, materialism also leads to the modern consumer behavior today. Nowadays, people are influenced by the unrealistic images of life shown by the media. Consumers often lose their logical thinking and judge that the fulfillment of materials can

bring happiness to life. Working populations start to struggle for more money to meet their excessive desire (Schudson 1984, quoted in L. Richins, 1987, 352-356). People misunderstand the value of materials in their life. They view materials as the most important aspect and leave out the need to develop other features of life. Materialism has spread globally even the consumers with shortage of capitals also tend to be involved as the participants of consumer culture (Varman and Mohanar Vikas, 3). The consumer culture is also affected by the growing standard of living among nations. Developed countries are where this culture is growing rapidly. The local population has gained benefits from the growing economy in the country. High income population is likely to have high purchasing power to pleasure their life. People not only concern on their basic needs but go for higher level of consumptions such as branded goods and services (Onsongo, 4). The growing market also increases the choices of products and services for consumers. Thus, consumers with high capitals can afford to buy the luxuries other than basic goods to upgrade their social level (Onsongo, 4). The previously mentioned causes of consumer culture lead to 3 effects: misuse of recourses, growth of monopolies in countries and the increased financial problems among nations. Firstly, the uncontrolled consumer culture results in wastage of resources. The high demand of consumptions has led to the increase of supply in industries. To produce large quantity of market goods, natural resources and non-renewable energy have been used with unlimited control. According to Japp and Japp (2002, 82), the consumers view of 'more is better' shows nature as an important element to support the necessity and desire for quality life. However, this belief has encouraged

buyers to purchase more and dispose more. Massive consumption leads to excessive waste. The resources are depleting due to wastage in the production. This portrays the sense of irresponsibility of consumers towards the environment. The consumer culture can also promote monopolies in a country. With high purchasing power among consumers, many industries start to practice mass production. The profitable market also benefits most industries to capitalize their revenue for expansion of business system. For example, many of the local small pubs have been replaced by lounge pubs. This is because the high standard of living stimulates consumers to be actively involved in leisure activities and promote social interactions (Clarke et al 1979, quoted in Featherstone 1991). High demand of the market also encourages more people to join the industries. Thus, monopolistic competition is growing rapidly and globally to fulfill the supply and demand in the industries. Furthermore, buyers also will be trapped in financial problems with the growth of consumer culture in themselves. Due to the cultivation of consumer culture, consumers have changed their perception towards the capitals. Although money is essential especially for American college students, they seem uncontrolled in the use of credit cards (Ritzer 1995, quoted in Roberts and Jones 2001). Pre-debt offers have encourages consumers to overspend in luxuries and to fulfill their desire (Schor 1998, quoted in Roberts and Jones 2001). Most consumers neglect the importance of managing their capitals in daily life. In this case, most buyers suffer from financial debt and even go for bankruptcy. According to McBride 1997 (quoted in Roberts and Jones 2001), approximately 9 percent of people less than 35 years old were facing financial debt and they covered 8.7 percent of

the personal bankruptcy cases. In conclusion, the consumer culture is caused by misrepresentation of advertisements, growing materialism and increase of quality life among consumers. The consequences of spreading consumer culture are wastage of materials for productions; promote monopolistic competitions in countries and increase financial difficulties among nations. To combat the stimulation of consumer culture, business organizations should practice ethical advertising and avoid exploitations towards consumers. Besides, consumers should understand their needs but not too concern on fulfilling their extra longings. Buyers are also encouraged to plan their expenditure to avoid overspending. It is important to monitor the spreading of consumer culture to ensure a balance between a healthy economy growth and life quality for global nations. (800 words)

Reference List

Featherstone, Mike 1991. "The Body in Consumer Culture" *The Body: Social process and cultural theory*: 170-196. <http://smile.solent.ac.uk/digidocs/live/Hines/Featherstone>. PDF

M. Japp, Phyllis and K. Japp, Debra. 2002. "Purification through Simplification: Nature, the Good Life, and Consumer Culture". *Enviropop: Studies in Environmental Rhetoric and Popular Culture*, edited by Mark Meister, 81-82. United States Of America, Greenwood Publishing Group, Itc. [http://books.google.com/my/books?hl=en&lr=&id=yLzbfVTa9YkC&oi=fnd&pg=PA81&dq=consumer+culture+misuse+natural+materials&ots=3cGdbQ5Rjd&sig=38\\_4MFzL\\_O\\_UbNuT1gFUKsA9tOwM#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com/my/books?hl=en&lr=&id=yLzbfVTa9YkC&oi=fnd&pg=PA81&dq=consumer+culture+misuse+natural+materials&ots=3cGdbQ5Rjd&sig=38_4MFzL_O_UbNuT1gFUKsA9tOwM#v=onepage&q&f=false)

Onsongo, Erick Nyakundi. 2012 "The effect of consumer behavior on consumerism among consumers in Kis II Country, Kenya- Case Problem" Kis ii University College. Accessed August 14, <http://www.aibuma.org/proceedings2011/aibuma2011->

submission237. pdf Richins L., Marsha. 1987. " Media, Materialism, and Human Happiness. " *Advance in Consumer Research* (14): 352-356. Roberts, James A. and Jones, Eli. Winter 2011. " Money Attitudes, Credit Card Use, and Compulsive Buying among American College Students" *Journal of Consumer Affairs* 35(21): 213-215. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1745-6606.2011.tb00111.x/pdf> Varman, Rohit and Monohar Vikas, Ram. 2012. " Media, Rising Consumer Culture and the Working Class". Department of Industrial and Management Engineering Indian Institute of Technology — Kampur. Accessed August 14, <http://www.management.ac.nz/ejrot/cmsconference/2005/proceedings/criticalmarketing/Varman.pdf>