

Overconsumption



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Overconsumption in the United States is a prominent characteristic of our culture. We need to constantly consume or else we are not technically living. We consume our necessities: air, food, and water, and our possessions: cars, houses, appliances, electronics, and etc. The list of necessities and possessions in our American culture can go on forever, but this regular consumption manipulates us to desire more, want more, pollute more, and even waste more. Did you know, according to smallbusiness.tips.wordpress.com and howstuffworks.com, America spends over \$14 billion on denim jeans annually? Or that Americans go through \$1.5 million Krispy Kreme Donuts in one day? How about knowing that the average electricity bill for a business is \$15,849? Here in America, every consumer seems to be caught up in this action of over-consuming. Of course, many people start to over consume because they need to be constantly updated on the latest trends in fashion, they need to be consuming the larger amount of food for a cheaper amount of money, and they need to constantly utilize resources to run a successful business.

Today's society tells us that more is better; we see it in the world of fashion, food, and business. However, when it comes to the health of our bodies and our wallets, having more is no better than having less. In the fashion industry, new trends and captivating styles catch one's attention in an instant. Brand name clothing or accessories costing over hundreds to even thousands of dollars have become the token of the fashion market. But is it truly worth it to spend all of that money on one article of clothing or one piece of jewelry?

According to the peer reviewed journal, “ A Cross-Cultural Analysis Of Consumers’ Conspicuous Consumption of Branded Fashion Accessories” by Nizar Souiden, Bouthaina, M’Saad, and Frank Pons, the authors report that possession of branded fashion clothing and accessories are what motivate consumers to buy more and more branded items. They also include that purchasing these branded fashion items, will increase one’s social status, appearance, and self-esteem.

This shows how consumers in the fashion scene can easily lead to over consuming in these overpriced items, because one will waste money and even purchase more to make one think he or she is higher than another person. This leads to why consumers are so eager to stay up to date, and purchase new clothes within weeks of their last purchase, but what happens to all the clothes, styles, or trends that get overlooked so easily? This notion is considered to be “ fast fashion”. As clothes nowadays are being produced in a larger mass, the quality for the clothes ends up becoming cheaper than others.

For example, from the article, “ In Trendy World Of Fast Fashion, Styles Aren’t Made To Last” by Jim Zarolli, the author informs his readers that the issue of fast fashion causes a massive waste of the necessities of fuel and water. And although people contribute their old and worn out clothing to organizations for the needy, consignment boutiques, and thrift shops, the quality of fast fashion has been made so poorly that the clothes wind up on the racks not being purchased. Instead all these excess clothing tend to get recycled or even thrown out altogether, which can definitely hurt the environment.

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Which is why our society has turned a blind eye to the waste and excessiveness of the “fast fashion” industry and have accepted the impression that having more clothes to choose from as empowerment to their fashion sense. As we see the overconsumption of fashion being unhealthy our wallets and the environment, the overconsumption of food may not be healthy to our society’s bodies. America is a country that loves to eat, with numerous consumers who tend to overeat most of the time; we see the number of obese people rise.

The main reason for all of this is the huge portion size that society has to offer. When one goes into a fast food restaurant, and orders a certain combo, usually the person taking the order offers to increase the portion size for a small amount of money. This usually lures in the consumer to think that it is a better deal because they will be getting more food a great price. But in reality, people who are paying for large portions are basically adding to the obesity problem, as well as consuming a large amount of food that is not even healthy to begin with, and unfortunately, this is quite true.

According to the article, “The Contribution of Expanding Portion Sizes to the US Obesity Epidemic” by Lisa Young and Marion Nestle, both authors give a scientific representation about how Americans tend to eat larger food portions, which obviously contribute to the escalating number of overweight and obese people in the US. Also, the authors include that, through the study in which they weighed different foods from different restaurants, they showed their readers that no matter where one goes, America will over portion the food amount for a meal.

Whether it would be a fast-food restaurant, or a dine-in restaurant, every meal was over-portioned for one to consume. This is a problem with today's society: many people become delusional in a sense that getting the better deal is only way to go, especially with food. America has left its consumers with only getting the larger portion size, because many manufacturers only offer the larger size. In addition, no one wants to pay for a healthy meal, because it is more expensive. But even if one tends to eat healthy, they are still trapped by portion sizes. For example, in " Food Decision Making", Andrea Morales speaks upon how today's society. eople are caught up in consuming too much food even if the is considered to be healthy. In the article, Morales asserts that America gets attracted to the thought of eating healthy foods, that they are more prone to consume more, because in their mind, it is " healthy". Sadly, they are only racking up more and more calories. When one is supposed to eat healthy, one is supposed to mainly watch portion size. But with the psychological mindset that America has, eating a larger portion of healthy foods, makes America believe that they are changing their diet, but in reality they are added more to their consumption.

Unfortunately this is what has become of today's society, but how come when it comes to business, we see them consume so much energy, appliances and utilities like it's nothing? Businesses consume many different things on a whole different level. They probably go through hundreds of thousands of pieces of paper in a day and waste millions of dollars on all the energy that is over consumed, and the worst part about it, is that they probably have the notion of recycling at the bottom of their things to do with

the company. Businesses tend to look at how much they're making compared to how much they are losing.

They believe that as long as they are continually going over money wise, it is okay to maybe splurge on the utilities and necessities that they need to go on with their business. But all of this overconsumption affects the environment and little do they know that it affects their wallets as well. For example, based on the article, " The Ethics of Consumption Activities: A Future Paradigm? " by Rogene Buccholz, Buccholz reports that the continuous growth of overconsumption in America today, will lead to a scarce amount of resources for the near future.

Buccholz also explains that if the industrialized working force continues to consume at this rate, the standard of surviving in America, as a business, would be slim to none. This shows how businesses need to realize that if they decide to recycle or maybe at least consume less when it comes to energy, utilities, or appliances they can definitely make a difference to the Earth and also the money they deal with. But while overconsumption to a business is probably second nature, they go through so many things a day that using less amount of energy or paper does not even matter to them, but in society it definitely matters to our environment.

For example, from an article by Robert Hill, named " A Deeper Shade of Green", Hill exemplifies to his readers about how there may be an economic expansion that may assist the environment, particularly in the income of businesses. Hill discusses the future of green jobs in America, which are jobs that recycle, conserve, and reuse many appliances that businesses tend to

utilize. This environmental development will emphasize the amount of money saved for businesses, and most importantly improve the environment's condition.

The future of these green jobs will change the waste of all the appliances and utilities that businesses go through. Instead this will enhance businesses to become more productive and efficient, rather be wasteful and over consume. Today's society is filled with the constant notion of wanting and needing. But we are so caught up in the side of wanting than actually needing. Briefly, in an article by Isabella Kopton, Bruno Preilowski, and Peter Kenning, these authors speak about how America tends to over consume due to the high amount of impulsive buying.

Whether it is fashion, food, or business, impulsive buying is what makes our society believe that what we want is what we need, but in reality we don't need everything. That is just the set of mind that America has, buy and consume more. But obviously if one does not control his or her buying behavior, it will continually lead to overconsumption at an impulsive rate. Which is why America should rather stick to our necessities, and be grateful, because if we continue to need what we want, we will just be consumers who are caught in the myth of overconsumption.