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The influence of consumerism on university students

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Abstract

Consumerism is a problem that affects young people, although it is not given so much relevance. Consuming products is really necessary, since it is important to eat, dress, wear shoes, among others; however, when this becomes excessive and unnecessary purchases are made regularly, we speak of consumerism that can affect both the person and society and the environment. Many times, companies influence this with their marketing strategies, since they study the psychology of the consumer, which has been done for a long time, to know the tastes and

preferences of people and know how to offer and sell their product. Thus, the main objective is to know how the psychology of compulsive consumerism influences young people. Likewise, the phenomena will be evaluated through statistics, determining whether consumerism is actually a social problem. This can lead to excessive or unnecessary consumption by people. That is the importance of this topic, because people do not know that they have a problem of consumerism, and they believe that buying others is fine.

Keywords: Advertising, Consumerism, Marketing, Psychology, Society

Introduction

Consumerism is a bigger problem than is believed, because people buy unnecessary things and this harms both the person and the environment. Many times, people who suffer from this do not know that they have a problem, because they believe that buying others is very normal. Most of the time it's because the ads entice people to want products they don't need. This is where consumer psychology comes in, since it studies the factors that influence this decision-making and helps to recognize the patterns that consumers have to know what they need and/or prefer, this is where certain strategies can be manipulated to sell more regardless of whether the person needs the product or not.

Knowing how these two factors are related and how much influence psychology has on consumerism is of the utmost importance, because in this way you can try to avoid falling into this, therefore, throughout this work we will explain more thoroughly about these factors. factors and their importance. The present investigation was chosen because it is a topic of interest, since consumerism is a problem that affects a large number of societies, mainly young people, where it can even present a pathology, where psychology comes to have an influence on this. It is interesting to know how and why psychology can influence consumerism, because it is a societal problem that not only affects people's lives but also the ecosystem. It is important to know the importance of this topic, in order to try to avoid or reduce this action. Thus, we want to give a broader view of this issue, mainly with consumerism in young people and make known the great problems that this can cause.

Consumer psychology

Consumer psychology is a discipline which scientifically studies consumer behavior at a cognitive and emotional level, with the purpose of having a better understanding of the process by which decisions are made in the area of economy and consumption, because when analyzes this, later it is possible to know how some factors such as market prices, resource allocation or business divisions influence (Siachoque, n.d.) [14]. This area emerged in the sixties, the objective was to develop marketing strategies to obtain positive results, it was necessary for companies to understand most of the purchasing attitudes and behaviors that the consumer had. And it is thanks to this that companies currently know the needs and perceive the possibilities of satisfying what consumers or clients require (Barbosa, 2016) [1].

In this way, there are psychological factors that influence the consumer to buy what he buys, these can be divided into motivation, perception, learning, beliefs and attitudes. All these variables are the ones that influence behavior (Barbosa, 2016) ^[1]. According to Da Silva (2021) ^[3], there are different consumer theories that can help to better understand this, such as:

- Behavior of consumers individually and in groups.
- Explanation of why behaviors change according to the products and services they purchase.
- When they may be most likely to make a purchase.
- What objectives help purchasing decisions.

A very clear example of how it works is when there is a promotion of receiving a free chocolate cake for every ten orders, it is very likely that the person will become a customer. Personalizing offers creates that a person becomes a customer of a certain place and constantly buys because he will receive something in return. However, many times they do not realize that they may be making people buy to buy (Da Silva 2021) ^[3].

When the psychological factors of the consumer are understood, it is easier to make a business work, in addition to obtaining certain benefits, such as: Increased sales, conquest of loyal customers. It is important to know all these behaviors, because they will help the company to have more clients, which means more sales, in the same way it is necessary to be careful, because thanks to this knowledge, it can be manipulated and make it fall into consumerism, buy for buy (Da Silva 2021) ^[3].

Consumerism

It is necessary to consume products and services to have a good quality of life, however, consumerism is a practice by which a person buys more than what they really need, regardless of whether the income level is sufficient and there is no problem with acquire it (Westreicher, 2020) ^[16].

According to Westreicher (2020) ^[16], he mentions that the concept of consumerism is very recent, dating back to the 20th century with the origin of capitalism, in which the basis of the consumer society is created. Thanks to the appearance of advertising spaces, digital marketing and improvements in practically everything related to marketing, as well as knowing the tastes of consumers, they have contributed to carrying out this practice. There are several reasons why this exists: purchase on credit, advertising, product design (planned obsolescence), social pressure. In the same way, consumerism has consequences, in table 1 the ones with the greatest impact are represented, both in the person, in society and in the environment.

Table 1: Consumerism and its consequences

• Negative impact on the environment.
• Extra products are used.
• Preference of what is processed.

Source: Own elaboration based on Cumbre Pueblos (2018) ^[2]

With the development of web stores today, the consumption of products has increased by allowing people to purchase products and/or services from their homes, without having to go out, and at any time. In 2009, sales in Latin America increased by 106%, a very high amount (Diaz, 2021) ^[4]. Likewise, Mexico is considered one of the main investment

capitals in the economy, since this lies in the growth of the economy, the size of the market and the purchasing power. It is considered as a possible world power for the year 2050, thanks to the economy it manages (Diaz, 2021) ^[4].

Problem statement

Psychology is very important in marketing, because it helps to know how the human mind works taking into account the different factors of the environment, this is how it influences the purchase decisions of potential consumers, however, sometimes, using these techniques ends up falling into excessive consumption by people (Eserp Bunises & Law School, 2022) ^[6]. All brands have a personality and consumers commonly choose their favorite according to the one that most resembles theirs, which is why the target market must be known very well in order to influence potential people in this way; therefore, companies have too much influence on people's decisions, which can feed consumerism (Ponce, Hernández and Rodríguez, 2020) ^[10].

On the other hand, consumption is necessary in people's lives, because it helps to satisfy needs, doing it responsibly helps humans survive, but when it becomes excessive, it is considered irresponsible consumption, which has various consequences, such as worsening the quality of all natural resources due to their production, resulting in a loss of biodiversity, in addition to the fact that it can generate discrimination and social bias, to name a few (Márquez, 2021) ^[8].

All this represents a problem in society, especially young people. It is estimated that there are 400,000 people who are addicted to shopping, where 40% buy in excess and 17% suffer from this pathology (Sánchez, 2017) ^[13], which is considered a syndrome in which they want to fill the existential void in the societies. Also, it is known that the majority of these compulsive buyers are of the female gender. Thus, it has been reaffirmed that this problem begins to appear at younger ages such as adolescence and youth, and in many cases, it does not come alone, as other disorders accompany it. All this generates a serious problem both for the people who suffer from it and for society in general (Sánchez, 2017) ^[13]. Therefore, buying compulsively is influenced by psychology, since the strategies used are in order to win customers, where many times excesses are reached, which brings with it various consequences.

General objective

Know how the psychology of compulsive consumerism influences young people. Likewise, the phenomena will be evaluated through statistics, determining whether consumerism is actually a social problem.

Research question

What is the consumer's motivation to reach the excesses of purchases?

Methodology

The research is of a quantitative type with a descriptive approach, that is, it tries to collect and analyze numerical data, it is ideal to be able to identify trends and averages, in addition to making certain predictions and obtaining general results from large populations (QuestionPro, 2022) ^[11]. It is a structured method of collecting and analyzing information obtained through different sources. It is carried out through statistical and mathematical tools in order to quantify the

problem that is being discussed in the research (QuestionPro, 2022)^[11].

According to Rus (2021)^[12], quantitative research has certain characteristics such as:

- The data used is numerical, which allows it to be measurable.
- Usually, the process to obtain them is fast.
- The conclusions drawn are accurate and supported by statistics.
- There is a lower chance that the results will be biased.
- Some types of behavior of the population being studied can be predicted.

From the above, descriptive quantitative research is designed to provide systematic information about a phenomenon. The collection of information requires a careful selection of the units being studied and the measurement of each variable (Thesis and Masters, 2022)^[15].

Study area

The research was carried out in the Academic Unit of Social Sciences belonging to the Autonomous University of Nayarit, even more specifically in the academic psychology program.

Sample

To obtain the sample, the convenience sampling technique was applied, which is a type of non-probabilistic sampling that is applied when the universe is known, so the environment close to the researcher is selected, without taking into account specific requirements. This makes the researcher's job easier. No type of process is usually applied to select those who will make it up, on the contrary, the availability of people and the ease of accessing them are taken into account (Editorial Grudemi, 2018)^[5]. Taking this into account, a sample of 34 students was obtained to survey.

Instrument

The instrument used in the research is the questionnaire with closed questions online, being the most appropriate and suitable. The questionnaire is a procedure that is already considered a classic within research to obtain and record data, because it is very versatile and can be used as a research and evaluation instrument. This allows you to consult a large population quickly. The questionnaire uses a set of questions, which were systematically taken care of about what you want to investigate, it can be applied to groups or sent by email (García, 2003)^[7]. Therefore, we speak of a closed questionnaire when the answers to the questions are brief, specific and delimited. Here one or more items (options) are marked in a list of responses (Osorio, n.d.)^[9]. That is why this type of instrument will be used, since the information to be collected is necessary to obtain statistics in addition to being more accessible.

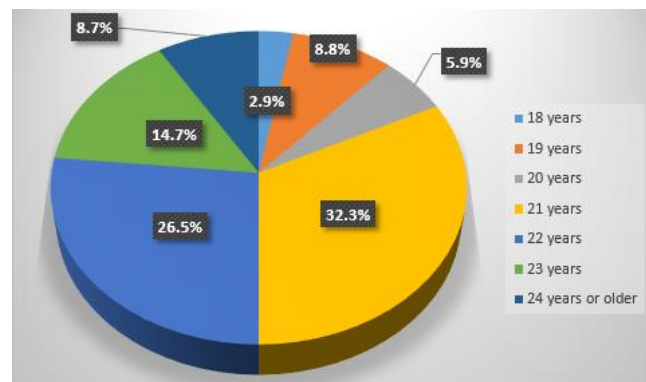
Data processing

To carry out the survey more quickly and easily, Google Forms was used, an application that carries out simpler surveys, once finished, it was sent by email, WhatsApp and social networks, making it reach people directly. to be part of the sample more quickly. In addition to processing the

data more quickly, this application has the collection of automatic responses, revealing the results with their respective graphs.

Results and discussion

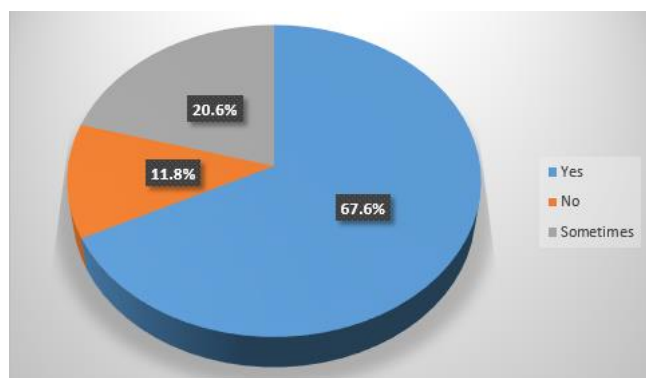
The ages that were mentioned the most were 21 (32.3%) and 22 years of age (26.5%), but there are also young people with 19 (8.8%) and 20 years (5.9%), the second most repeated ages, as shown see in fig 1.



Source: Elaboration through google forms

Fig 1: Age of the students

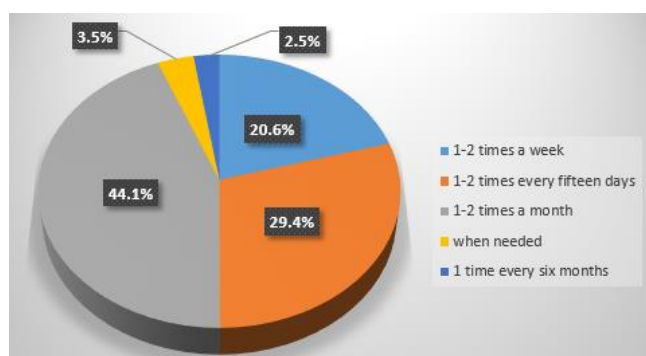
Thus, 67.6% of the young people surveyed like to go shopping, and 20.6% like to go sometimes, as shown in fig 2.



Source: Elaboration through google forms

Fig 2: Do you like to go shopping?

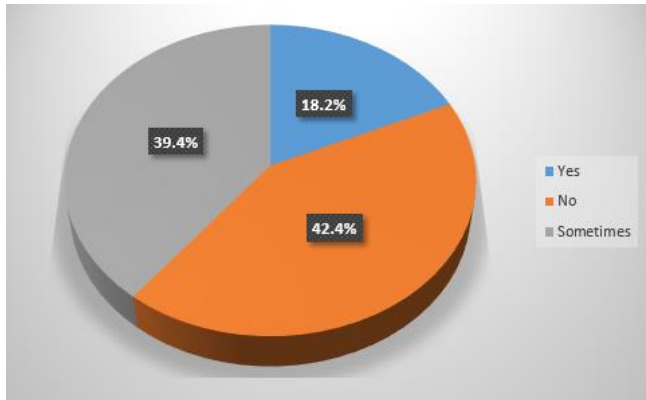
Likewise, with a higher percentage of 44.1%, people go shopping 1 to 2 times a month, which is not constant, however, 29.4% do it every fifteen days, as can be seen in the fig 3.



Source: Elaboration through google forms

Fig 3: How often do you go shopping?

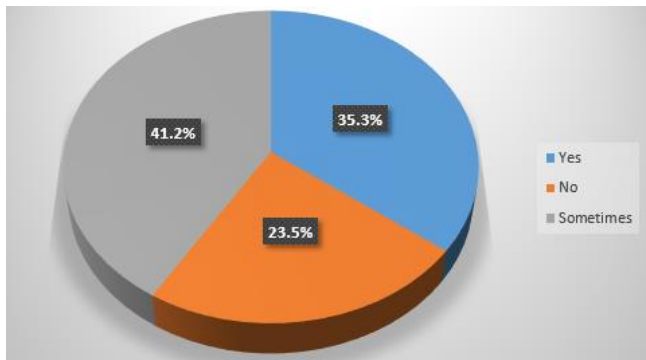
Do you find yourself constantly buying things you don't need? 39.4% say that they sometimes buy unnecessary things and only 18.2% buy them constantly, as shown in fig 4.



Source: Elaboration through google forms

Fig 4: Do you consider that you constantly buy things that you do not need?

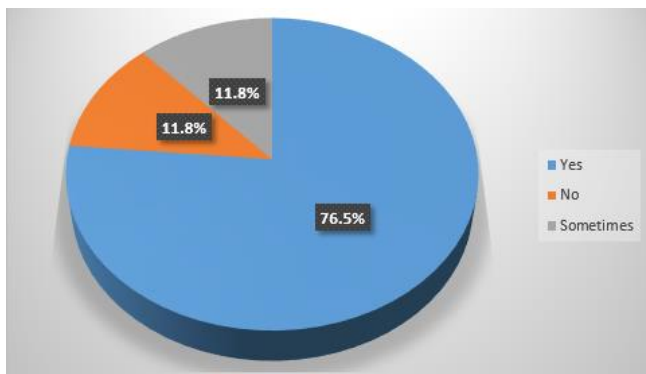
In this question, the result was that 41.2% shows that young people buy products just because, because "it's nice", which makes it an unnecessary product, as seen in fig 5.



Source: Elaboration through google forms

Fig 5: Do you buy products because they are beautiful or do you deserve a recurring treat?

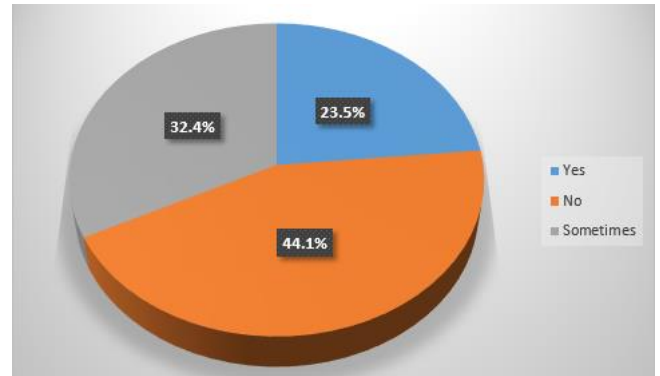
In the following question it can be seen that people get a lot of publicity about the products they like on the Internet and social networks, a large percentage of 76.5% affirms it and only 11.8% mentions that sometimes it does not appear to them, as seen in fig 6.



Source: Elaboration through google forms

Fig 6: Do social networks and the internet send you a lot of advertising about the products you like?

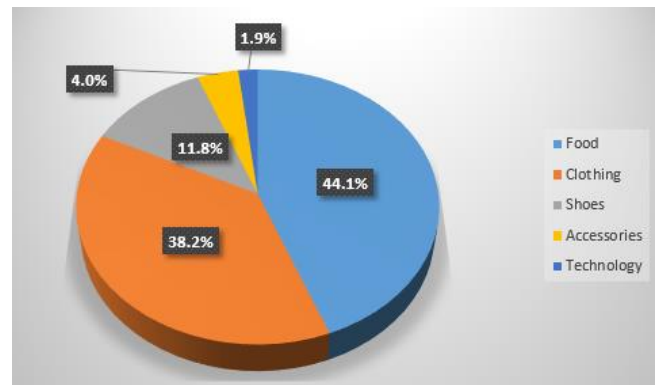
The next question that was asked was: Do you buy products because there is a lot of advertising about the product? it is shown that only 23.5% of people allow themselves to be influenced by advertising about certain products, being a relatively small percentage, as can be seen in fig 7.



Source: Elaboration through google forms

Fig 7: Do you buy products because there is a lot of advertising about the product?

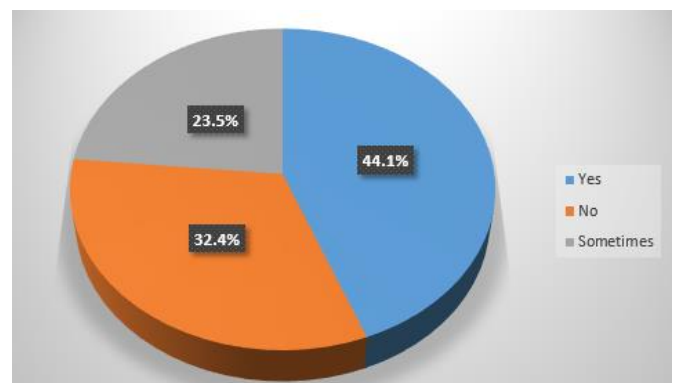
Likewise, it is known that the products that people buy the most with 44.1% is food, followed by 38.2% is clothing and 11.8% shoes, as seen in fig 8.



Source: Elaboration through google forms

Fig 8: Products that people consume and buy the most

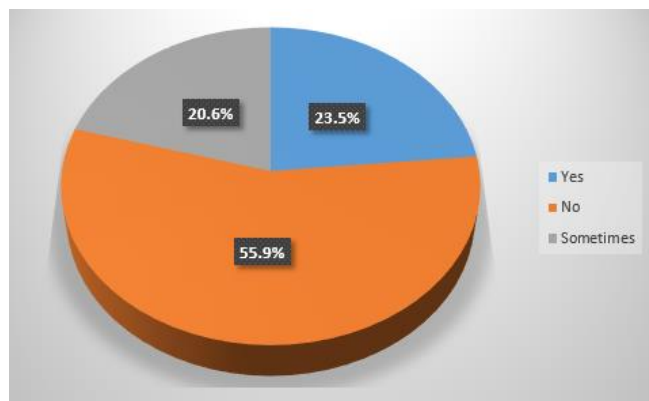
With a higher percentage of 44.1%, young people buy unnecessary products and are aware that they do so, with a percentage of 32.4% they do not carry out this type of practice, as can be seen in fig 9.



Source: Elaboration through google forms

Fig 9: Are you aware that you do not need the product, but still buy it?

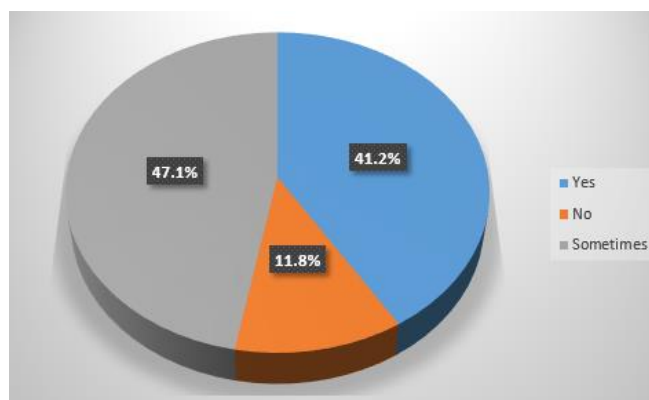
Only 23.5% of people have received comments from people close to them commenting that they buy many unnecessary things, and 55.9% of young people who do not receive this type of comment, as shown in fig 10.



Source: Elaboration through google forms

Fig 10: Have your family and friends told you that you buy too many things that you don't need?

Finally, there is 47.1% of young people who consider that companies sometimes know what their tastes are and 41.2% consider that they do know all the time, as can be seen in fig 11.



Source: Elaboration through google forms

Fig 11: Do you think that companies know your tastes and preferences?

Conclusion

Throughout the investigation, consumerism was discussed and how psychology influences this, because by knowing people's tastes and preferences, it is easier to make them buy what they sell. Generally, the information collected from university students and their influence on consumption shows that 57.6% consume or make unnecessary purchases, on the other hand, the non-food products that they consume the most are clothing (38.2%) and shoes. (11.8%), thus, fast food (44.1%) is a basic and necessary product on a day-to-day basis, however, food advertising brands emerge as a great influence on their consumption. Therefore, there are people who do not really need a product and still consume it, where 67.6% answered affirmatively. In addition, many young people receive a lot of publicity about the products of their choice, managing to be attracted by marketing strategies, and effectively the companies only offer the products they like.

Finally, psychology influences unnecessary purchases

(consumerism), often unconsciously, affecting a certain part of society. Taking into account the research question; What is the motivation of the consumer to reach the excesses of purchases?, the following answer is given, it is easier to understand the relationship between both concepts, because at the moment that the preferences, tastes and needs of people are known, it is easier for companies to create marketing strategies that encourage consumers to purchase their products, with the consequence of falling into consumerism, this being the cause and motivation of buying excessively.

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