

UDC 330+316.7

DOI 10.31733/2786-491X-2023-1-40-47



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INFORMATION CULTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF MANAGING CONSUMER NEEDS

Abstract. The article is devoted to the study of the content features of the conceptualization the interaction between economic and socio-cultural needs. It was found that the management of consumption needs is determined by economic, socio-cultural, informational and communication factors. In the course of the study, it was established that the conceptual sphere of consumer needs is considered by modern researchers as a system of structuring types of needs based on the consumers' wishes and preferences, establishing a level hierarchy of needs, determining the types of economic behavior and the nature of the interaction between economic and socio-cultural needs.

It is noted that one of the defining features of the socio-cultural development of the post-industrial age is the dominance of the mass and its orientation towards comfort and spectacle, which leads to the preference of a specific type of consumption, the characteristic features of which are stereotyping, demonstrativeness, homogeneity, uniformity and fetishization of material needs. This type of consumption is called demonstrative, it is compatible with irrational forms of consumer behavior, which is characterized by symbolic values of consumption as manifestations of prestige, status, well-being, ownership, following fashion or trend, as well as simulativeness as a shift of emphasis from the object of consumer interest to its perception. On the contrary to this type of consumption, rational economic behavior is justified, which is traditionally defined by such features as taking into account the maximization of benefits and the minimization of costs and risks.

Attention is drawn to the fact that the complexity of consumer behavior is explained by the large amounts of information spreading in modern economic space, which is an important need of a person, as well as a construct of the information-network economy and, therefore, is on the top of strategic importance. Besides, it was noted that freedom of accessing information not only increases the possibilities of consumer choice, but also contains potential risks of misinforming and unconscious choices due to manipulative psychological influence.

Keywords: *needs, consumption, consumer, management, information culture, socio-cultural sphere, symbols, simulation, simulacra.*

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Introduction. Information culture, infrastructurally providing the economy as a sphere of human activity, becomes an important factor in the formation, regulation and satisfaction of consumer needs. Its role is especially strengthened in the conditions of an informatized, globalized and networked socio-cultural space through the context of defining such concepts as status, fashion, brand, and image. As far as the problematic field of information and network transformations is concerned, there is a transition from the priority of the producer to the priorities of the human consumer and his needs. Apart from, under the influence of information technologies, the system of consumer preferences is changing. In particular, a new model of the consumer is being formed with characteristic guidelines for meeting the needs of the intangible dimension, which is complicated in the context of a multivariate choice. Nevertheless, the management of needs system by ICT can acquire in the cultural dimension threatening forms of manipulation of the consumers' desires, interests and goals through advertising, marketing operations, fashion, mass media, branding, etc.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The cogitation of the phenomenon of consumption in the conditions of information culture as the main subject of research and a separate scientific problem in economic and socio-cultural aspects is getting proper coverage. In particular, considerable attention in the sociological discourse is paid to the problem of needs interpretation. One of the most common interpretations is the understanding of needs as formed under the influence of social relations, the laws of social development and social conditions, regardless of the psychophysical characteristics of the individual (Chatriot, Chessel, 2017). This point of view is supplemented by V. Moskalenko, E. Hlukhachev, who affirm a dichotomy in the problem of consumer needs, which is constituted due to a contradiction that arises "between a social subject (a person, a social group, class, society as a whole) and the objective conditions of his life activity" (Moskalenko, 2013, Hlukhachev, 2005). That is, there is a combination of social determinants of needs with subjective factors determined by the individual's psychophysical characteristics. These definitely reasonable trends in the study of this issue must be the basis of our research, in which the main thesis is that a person is the only and unique being who not only has needs, but is also able to realize and shape them and not only satisfy them, but also critically rethink and limit himself.

In light of, it is important to investigate not the relevant institutions or society as a whole, but individual factors, which become the main in the formation of consumer needs. Therefore, it should be assumed that individual goals and preferences are the driving force of socio-cultural development.

The purpose of the article is to find out the content features of the concepts of the interaction between consumer economic needs and the socio-cultural, socio-economic and psychological conditions of managing consumer choice, as well as to establish markers of consumer behavior in conditions of spreading information in the economic space and probable reasons for manipulating their behavior.

Formulation of the main material. The need, as something necessary for human life, initially provide in its foundations needs of a higher level, namely, the personal formation and self-realization of an individual. As you know, in the hierarchy of needs proposed by A. Maslow, primary physiological requests are replaced by a set of material needs, which are reduced to the needs

for safety and security (Maslow, 2013).

In fact, needs can appear as desires, intentions, aspirations, urges, but the functioning of the "economic man" requires, first of all, the satisfaction of the primary physiological needs of strengthening health and the necessary preliminary material conditions that will ensure the existence and activity of the subject of consumption. Instead, economic needs, in turn, give way to an even higher level of needs: creative self-realization. Their satisfaction guarantees the establishment of social needs of love, friendship, self-esteem, etc. It should be noted that focusing only on rational economic interests and the logic of capital limit the individual's freedom of choice and justify the morally dubious market. This is a strong incentive to conceptualize the ideas of the interaction of economic needs with social, cultural, and religious needs, which not only form consumer behavior models, but also determine the directions of his activity in general.

In particular, D. Hodgson as a representative of institutionalism (Hodgson, 2004; Hodgson, 2001) speaks of the need to distinguish in the plane of economic analysis the concept of "needs" as objective requests of a general nature, related to the conditions of human existence, and subjective requests ("wants") as desires, whims and passions. It is about social conditions for meeting individual needs such as needs of goods production and their distribution in the economic system, in the system of education and upbringing, in the developed network of communications, political power, etc. The main goal of such activity is the establishment of "healthy and educated individuals" who, taking care of themselves and each other, are able to "maximize their creative potential in an honest way" (Hodgson, 2004).

In actual fact, institutionalism emphasizes social needs and according to it, certain changes in the structure of needs determine the development of institutions (family, state, industrial enterprises, etc.), and in this manner stimulate the emergence of new needs. So the concept of rational consumer, which is focused only on material needs, is a subject to critical rethinking. Moreover, D. Hodgson offers a dynamic concept that argues for transformational changes, "presupposing the flexibility of institutions that determine needs and give them an assessment and sensitivity to individual requests and public debates" (Hodgson, 2004, p. 358), reducing the subjective nature of all needs to a "deceptive thesis". In this connection, the relativism and subjectivity of A. Maslow's needs (the hierarchical model of needs) and the theory of economic individualism are subjected to special criticism. The pyramid of needs proposed by A. Maslow as a necessary condition for the physical and psychological state of any individual is replaced by a complex web of social needs in the context of the sociocultural dimension of existence.

Furthermore, in accordance with H. Marcuse, E. Fromm the dominance of the mass and its orientation towards comfort and spectacle become the main characteristic of modern society (Marcuse, 2013; Fromm, 2003) and become one of the defining features of the socio-cultural development of the post-industrial age (Baudrillard, 2010; Consumer society 2016, 2008; Foucault & Fontana, 2005). Consumption is identified with omnivorousness, standardization of "lifestyles", which M. Weber considers as "a criterion of social stratification, a factor that unites a certain social group and at the same time prevents the transition of a person from one group to another" (Weber,

2019), stereotyping of opinions regarding the formation of ideas about consumer goods, demonstrativeness, homogeneity, uniformity, etc. The fetishization of the role of material needs as objects of consumption leads to the replacement of interpersonal relations with relations between things, objects, which, in agreement with J. Baudrillard, causes a "deep mutation" in social development.

A peculiar phenomenon of replacing the true purpose of a thing and its value, is observed, and the satisfaction of needs is replaced by the irrational consumers' desires related to prestige, power, fashion, possession, which are quite easy to be manipulated (Murphy, 2016; Sassatelli, 2007). All in all, the outlined additional symbolic meanings supersede the quality of goods, their primary purpose and function, and therefore set the rhythm of a person's life, that is determined by his or her dependence on the things of the surrounding world. It must also be acknowledged that shopping is regarded a highest value, its connection with the mythologizing of achieving a welfare through the purchase of goods, services, and experiences is obvious. In the socio-cultural environment, the absolutization of the modern human consumer, who falls under the power of external manipulative influences, is noticed.

However, the consumer's willingness to pay is subjected to various ways of managing and manipulating by consumer's desires and needs and making him or her impossible to control personal preferences. For instance, P. Heine in his work "Economic Way of Thinking" demonstrates on the basis of examples how marketing adjustment of market prices affects the willingness of consumers to purchase the certain product. This can be a discount on several packages of yogurt when purchasing a large volume, the introduction of a tax on a certain type of product, a reduction of tax on another type of product, and other marketing actions that affect demand.

Quite often, the irrational desire to obtain immediately something cheap and unnecessary as well as overestimate things that are more expensive but actually have no value are triggered. Meanwhile, wise and meaningful decisions referring to attempts of rational assessment, calculation for the sake of making a choice are changed by the realities of specific situations in life itself. Indeed the rationality of the "economic man" is replaced by irrational principles, since in specific situations people are guided by irrational principles of behavior, irrational manifestations, which can be reduced to certain models, and therefore, consumers become completely predictable.

In this context, it is worth paying attention to the research of D. Kahneman, who in his interview reveals the forces that influence the multiplicity of variations of irrational behavior, preventing their attribution to a single theoretical model. The author reduces the peculiarities of behavior to two main aspects of the irrational:

- "a person does not understand himself, and therefore loses the opportunity to make the right decision";
- "it is naturally for humans to simultaneously have disproportionate desires or strive for conflicting goals" (Dyson, 2011).

And that is why the consumer goes beyond the scope of the "logically thinking automaton" and makes the final decision not due to the taking into account the maximization of benefits and the minimization of costs and risks, but rather on account of a whole series of factors that go beyond the bounds of rationality.

It is also worth noting the complexity of consumer behavior and providing the choice of needs process in the conditions of spreading information in the economic space. For example, information can be understood in the context of the fundamental property of reality as a degree of the open systems organization. The main properties of information are: dimensionlessness in space and time; the ability of new connections through the possibility of embeddedness in old ones (additivity); indifference of information to physical carriers; emergence of new qualities under the condition of its quantitative accumulation (emergency); entropy of information as a measure of randomness, its uncertainty, probability and unpredictability (Soni & Goodman, 2017).

We emphasize that information at all stages of economic development played a significant role in the socio-cultural space, however, in the network economics, it reaches the level of strategic value. After all, information and time are declared to be the primary and determining condition for the formation of a new economic system. Information is used in various spheres of human existence, and therefore, it is an extremely important need. The participants of economic relations are involved in the society information resources due to the information and communication technologies.

It is significant that at the initial stages of the World Meeting at the highest level devoted to the issues of society informatization, held in Geneva (2003), Tunisia (2005), a lot of questions were raised about the reduction of digital inequality and the need for the information and communication infrastructure at the national and regional levels. Some of the issues related to the human rights providing and free access to information based on the maximum using of ICT in the discussion and decision-making projects.

However, in marketing activities, information involves the prompt arrival of data that ensure the successful operation of the enterprise and communication links between entrepreneurs and consumers (Cohen, 2017). It is mainly focused on consumers, their needs, preferences, features of economic behavior. In addition, marketing information is aimed at ensuring adaptation to changes in the market environment, sales stimulation, demand formation, organization of an advertising company, improvement of commercial activity results.

At the same time, the motives and preferences of consumers are not explained only by the phenomenon of a rational subject. The psychological foundations of consumers' economic behavior also matter. Typically, managing the consumer choice, which is concerned to meeting needs, presupposes, first of all, the implementation of intelligent procedures for comparing requests with one's ability to pay.

However, the presence of neuronal systems of the brain influence the behavior of individuals, acting as essential decision-making mechanisms (Demchenko, 2022) and reactions. That is why a number of psychological and neurobiological studies related to the study of consumer behavior substantiate the essential role of psychological and emotional factors in their ability to inhibit the requirements of common sense for making a rational and effective decision (for instance, owning credit cards leads to the phenomenon of loss of self-control in impulsive, unconscious processes of spending credit funds, etc.).

What is more, the needs associated with utility and those associated with the experience of pleasure activate different neural areas. That is why the neurophysiological methodology makes it possible to exert a targeted influence

on the consciousness of the subject, to stimulate the purchase of the appropriate product or service, manipulating the economic behavior of consumers. We have to admit the effectiveness of such sources of obtaining information by the consumer as advertising, trademark, marketing services.

It is clear that there are an increase of potential opportunities for consumer choice due to free access to the world's global computer networks, diversification of offers and expansion of the assortment – on the one hand, and the risks of misinformation, unconscious choice, when the emotional criterion largely determines the behavior of consumers and reduction of incomes of the population of Ukraine, etc., – on the other hand.

The activity of humans economic behavior and the desires of consumers are largely determined by advertising and marketing strategies, and the egocentric focus on consumption becomes habitual, prominent characteristic of a person in a "consumer society" (Baudrillard, 2010; Baudrillard, 2016; Consumer society, 2016, 2008). On that basis, Z. Bauman analyzes a society in which an individual experiences doubts about the correctness of the choice, "willless towards objects of desire, which quickly lose their attractiveness and changes in appearance in accordance with the requirements of fashion" (Bauman, 2013).

As a consequence, the new industrial society of the second generation, which is established as post-industrial, makes some adjustments to the traditional understanding of demonstrative consumption. In the semantic space of demonstrative consumption, the struggle for status in society and attachment to symbols that contribute to obtaining a higher status position in society are tracked. After all, the sign-symbolic understanding of the consumption process (Bourdieu, 1992; Baudrillard, 1994; Baudrillard, 2016; Consumer society, 2016) takes the consumer beyond the traditional boundaries of the problem of human needs and ways of satisfying them. In this case, the emphasis is shifted to the consumer's attitude toward other people, things, and nature. The problem of the symbolism of goods and ways of manipulating them becomes especially important, since the goods are not reduced to an object of consumption, but a sign that has a much higher price than the one aimed at covering the cost price and making a profit.

Things consumed by subjects become expressions of status and prestige. That is why consumption acquires a symbolic expression, and the consumer is considered not so much from the standpoint of meeting the necessary needs of life, but as an "object of design, marketing, merchandising" (Baudrillard, 2016). Symbolic exchange is based on the understanding and possession of symbolic codes and the awareness of the comprehensive role of design, which penetrates into all spheres of human living space – from living spaces, things and spectacles to the most intimate depths of human existence.

Actually, the defining role in the information society is played by symbolism (a sign that carries certain information) both in production and consumption, and simulativeness (shifting the emphasis from the object to the peculiarity of its perception). As a matter of fact, the creation of a computerized, cybernetic and informational mass media space often leads to the loss of personal identity and immersion in virtual reality, fragmentary clip culture with the establishment of a game principle.

According to J. Baudrillard and G. Deleuze, reality is transformed into an image, a sign, a simulacrum, leading to the elimination of the ability to distinguish the real world of human existence from the simulative and imaginary. In

particular, J. Baudrillard speaks of the displacement of reality by the pseudo-reality of the simulacrum as a pseudo-thing and a pseudo-image, and G. Deleuze defines a simulacrum as "an image devoid of similarity" (Deleuze, 1990).

In this case, the need to create and transmit information in order to reflect the real state of affairs is being modernized to include it in the process of creating simulacra and building a new hyperreality. The truth of the matter is that human dissolves in the flow of information and a comprehensive visualization of the world due to the penetration of advertising images into the human consciousness, which distance a person from reality. As a result, the symbolic environment crowds out a human beyond any factuality boundaries.

Conclusions. To summarise, information culture is the sphere where communicative processes of human life take place, a market of needs is formed, among which the needs of status and prestige become the most prioritized in the life of society. Viewed in this way, the phenomenon of satisfying human needs is considered not from the standpoint of vital consumption, but from the perspective of prestige, image, and demonstrability. This would mean that there is a clear desire to show one's status, well-being or create the appearance of its existence through the demonstrative consumption of both material goods (things) and immaterial goods (the sphere of services, the spiritual sphere, the educational sphere).

Information culture appears as the sphere of simulacra production and simulations, symbols mainly act as mediators of interactions in both the socio-cultural and economic spheres. It is the usefulness and functionality of consumption that is complemented by its symbolic meaning, giving goods and services socio-cultural measurements. The possession of symbolic objects of status, power and prestige determines human role and place in society, its hierarchy and structure. This also contributes to the explanation of consumers differentiation on the basis of unequal opportunities to acquire material and immaterial goods as well as the social tension of social inequality, and an orientation towards consumption as a dominant value.

There are some factors of information culture that influence consumer needs such as advertising, fashion, and branding. They can regulate the psychological, hedonistic, and image-based economic behavior of consumers to some extent, reflecting those transformations that take place in the information network and social cultural space. Therefore the main consumer orientation is not on needs, but on symbols, among which there are symbols of social position, status, lifestyle and the dominance of intangible emotional needs.

Conflict of Interest and other Ethics Statements

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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ІНФОРМАЦІЙНА КУЛЬТУРА У КОНТЕКСТІ УПРАВЛІННЯ ПОТРЕБАМИ СПОЖИВАЧІВ

Анотація. Стаття присвячена вивченню змістових особливостей концептуалізації ідей взаємодії економічних потреб із соціокультурними. З'ясовано, що управління потребами споживання зумовлене економічними, соціокультурними та інформаційно-комунікаційними факторами.

В ході дослідження встановлено, що концептосфера потреб споживача бачиться сучасними дослідниками як система структурування видів потреб на основі бажань, уподобань і преференцій споживача, встановлення рівневої ієрархії потреб, визначення типів економічної поведінки та характеру взаємодії економічних потреб із соціокультурними. Відмічається, що однією із визначальних особливостей соціокультурного розвитку постіндустріальної доби є домінування людини маси та її зорієнтованість на комфорт та видовища, що зумовлює перевагу специфічного типу споживання, характерними рисами якого є стереотипність, демонстративність, однорідність, уніфікованість та фетишизація матеріальних потреб.

Даний тип споживання називається демонстративний, він сумісний з ірраціональними формами поведінки споживача, для якої властиві символічні значення споживання як прояви престижу, статусності, матеріального добробуту, володіння, слідування моді чи тренду, а також симулятивність як зміщення акцентів з об'єкта споживчого інтересу на особливість його сприйняття. На противагу даному типу споживання обґрунтовується раціональна економічна поведінка, яку традиційно визначають такі риси як урахування максималізації вигоди та мінімізації витрат та ризиків.

Звертається увага на те, що складність поведінки споживачів пояснюється насиченістю сучасного економічного простору інформацією, що є важливою потребою особи, а також конструктором інформаційно-мережевої економіки й, відтак, набуває рівня домінуючого стратегічного значення. Водночас, зауважено, що вільний доступ до інформації не лише збільшує можливості споживчого вибору, але й містить потенційні ризики дезінформування споживачів, схиляння до неусвідомленому вибору через маніпулятивний психологічний вплив.

Ключові слова: потреби, споживання, споживач, управління, інформаційна культура, соціокультурна сфера, символи, симуляція, симулякри.

Submitted: 04.02.2023

Revised: 10.03.2023

Accepted: 25.03.2023