

# Contemporary Hedonism: An Exploration of Consumer Lifestyles and Pleasure in Global Culture

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## Abstract

The development of the times in Indonesia since the beginning of independence until the reform era has been influenced by globalization, which causes the influx of foreign cultures and affects people's lifestyles. Globalization, a phenomenon that reflects the complexity and interconnectedness of today's world, has a significant impact on the political, economic, social and cultural spheres. This study aims to investigate and analyze the influence of globalization, particularly on university students, especially in the context of consumptive behavior and hedonistic lifestyles. This research uses communication campaign theory to understand the consumption patterns of university students who are influenced by global culture and social pressure. Globalization brings an influx of western culture that affects consumptive behavior, especially among college students who tend to adopt a hedonistic lifestyle. Social media plays an important role in shaping trends and influencing students' consumption decisions. Students sometimes just follow the trends that appear on social media for fear of missing out (FOMO). Their consumptive behavior tends to exceed essential needs and is more related to satisfying personal desires and pursuing a hedonic lifestyle. This research also links the concept of hedonism with consumerism among university students.

**Keywords:** Globalization, Students, Hedonism, Consumptive Behavior, Social Media, Communication Campaign, Consumer Culture.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The development of the times from the beginning of independence to now that has entered reform. The development of the times continues to increase with the existence of many traders who enter the territory of Indonesia also affecting one's lifestyle. A person's lifestyle also depends on how they see a culture that continues to enter. The cause of the culture that continues to enter the territory of Indonesia is globalization. Globalization, a phenomenon that encompasses many facets of human

life today, is at the center of global attention. The term reflects the complexity and interconnectedness of today's world, where changes in one place can have significant impacts in another. The purpose of this research is to investigate and analyze various aspects of globalization, with the aim of understanding how this phenomenon is shaping our world in the political, economic, social, and cultural realms. Globalization as a widespread phenomenon has touched many facets of human life today, undergoing changes that cover the political, economic, social and cultural spheres. Along with the widespread access to western culture that enters in contrast to the existing local culture, it increasingly affects the desires and lifestyle of a person including students.

Conversely, the emergence of hedonism is also from a desire and lifestyle that some people want to try and show. Usually just want to get a personal pleasure and happiness that can turn someone into the nature of hedonism. Which usually this trait is rarely realized by some people and usually also becomes a common thing to do by some people without seeing a culture that exists beforehand. This consumptive nature tends to be seen in the form of behavior or tendencies that involve the consumption of goods and services with a level of satisfaction that exceeds essential needs. Individuals who exhibit consumer behavior tends to buy or use products and services in larger quantities than are actually necessary to meet their basic needs. The primary motivation in this behavior is the drive to satisfy personal or lifestyle desires that go beyond basic needs. Consumer behavior can manifest in various aspects of life, such as the use of luxury goods, fashion tendencies, entertainment, as well as the adoption of technology. Factors such as consumer culture, the impact of advertising, and social pressure can influence a person's consumptive behavior patterns. Consumer behavior involves a form of tendency or behavior associated with satisfaction, where the use of goods and services exceeds basic needs. Individuals who exhibit consumer behavior tends to buy or use products and services in larger quantities than are actually necessary to meet their basic needs. The main driver behind this behavior is to satisfy personal and lifestyle desires that exceed basic needs. Manifestations of consumer behavior can be observed in various aspects of life, such as the use of luxury goods, following fashion trends, entertainment, and technology adoption. Various factors such as consumer culture, advertising influence, and social pressure can influence a person's consumption behavior.

Students also sometimes only follow a trend on social media. Students who are usually FOMO about this have a fear of being left behind with trends on social media. So that hedonism behavior cannot be avoided from a student environment that is more concerned with a lifestyle than the student's priorities. Students make purchases not solely because of the need for these goods or services, but rather an effort to achieve certain values contained in a product. This includes improving social standing, achieving a certain image, symbolic power, and also other related values, starting from the choice

process to ownership of a product. Typically, students primarily care about satisfying their own demands in order to keep up with the latest fashions, cuisine, and branded products on social media, which they do just for their own gratification.

This research relates to the theory of communication campaigns that are in accordance with the case raised. The concept explains consumption patterns, but along with the dynamics of globalization with the entry of western culture into Indonesia makes consumerism that develops among students. Consumerism that occurs among student consumers is based on hedonism. The shift in the consumption patterns of students who originally consumed in accordance with the goods and services that were usually purchased because of a need, has now turned into students who consume excessively caused by various factors such as lifestyle, social media influence and prestige for a product that must be obtained. With this research, students realize a trait that they think is normal so as not to get caught up in excessive consumption so that any trends on social media do not all have to be followed or obtained excessively.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The pursuit of a hedonistic life can be a person's aspiration to get out of the grip of poverty that he has been facing, so for some people, the hedonistic lifestyle is no longer considered a social issue Setiawan Rizki (2023). In the context of globalization and the development of the concept of human life needs, organized communication campaigns are increasingly influencing consumer culture, especially among students. Along with hedonistic views, university students tend to be exposed to lifestyles that promote personal satisfaction, especially in terms of consumerism. With reference to a quote from 2023, which states that 'the public sphere is now filled with invitations and incentives to continue consumptive behavior,' this research aims to investigate the impact of overexposure to hedonistic values and consumerism on the living patterns of university students. The core research question involves the extent to which hedonic lifestyles influence consumerist behavior, particularly in relation to the excessive purchase of products such as perfume, clothing and games among university students. In this context, the research will also explore whether the adoption of this hedonic lifestyle can bring negative impacts, such as self-centeredness and uncontrolled spending of financial resources, as well as how it affects students' social relationships with people around them. Thus, this research aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the relationship between hedonism, consumerism, and student life patterns, as well as their implications for the well-being of individuals and society at large. Explaining that hedonism is a form of core value inherent in all living beings. However, if hedonistic values excessively dominate an individual, it can have a negative impact on him. The individual tends to become self-centered and spend time and financial resources to fulfill their personal satisfaction, without considering the effect on

those around them. Hedonism can be interpreted as a lifestyle that directs an individual's activities towards achieving happiness in life. For example, this includes more active involvement outside the home, enjoying leisure activities, enjoying busy urban life, purchasing expensive items solely to fulfill personal desires, and aspiring to always be the center of attention. Hedonism becomes a part that is difficult to separate from lifestyle, where students become born hedonists. Because the resulting lifestyle can affect the pattern of life of these students. Further study raised the issue of hedonism and consumerism referring to a specification on a product obtained in consumerism behavior, namely perfume, clothing and excessive game purchases.

### **3. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The method used in this research is a qualitative method, to analyze the behavior and lifestyle of student hedonism. Objects and subjects of research are consumer students, in the study are active students. The data used is qualitative data, as well as primary and secondary data sources. By using data collection techniques in this study include interviews and document studies. Observation is done directly involving researchers in observing household consumption behavior of automotive products as part of hedonic behavior. Meanwhile, the depth interview data collection technique involves direct interaction between researchers and informants to obtain data.

The research participants consisted of students from various majors and semester levels in a university. Participants were purposively selected to ensure a variety of cultural backgrounds, genders, and education levels covering the student population. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and participatory observation. The main focus in the interviews was the concept of hedonism, the impact of organized communication campaigns, and its influence on consumptive behavior, specifically in the excessive purchase of perfume, clothing, and games.

Consumption can be defined as an industrial period characterized by mass production of goods and services by producers. During this period, students used consumption to fulfill their daily needs and were based on the use value of the product. Over time, consumption patterns shifted to consumer behavior based on hedonistic desires. This transition is influenced by internal factors such as age and income, as well as external factors such as environment and reference groups. Tracing the existence of hedonism in the behavior of a consumptive society is expected to contribute to the development of critical thinking, understanding students as economic agents, and the role of the government as a regulator.

#### **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Through an approach using communication campaign theory, the qualitative findings on hedonism among university students provide valuable insights for designing relevant communication strategies. College students' deep understanding of the concept of hedonism provides the foundation for creating more appropriate campaign messages. The importance of integrating cultural and social elements in communication messages to effectively reach college students was emphasized by the influence of the world culture and social context identified. Determinants of hedonic behavior, such as academic pressures and identity exploration, can be incorporated into the campaign narrative to create resonance with students' lived experiences.

The analysis of hedonism in college students presents conceptual understanding, the influence of cultural and social context, determinants of behavior, impact on psychological well-being, the role of communication, impact on education and personal growth, and provides recommendations for further research. Students explore the concept of hedonism with a unique approach, influenced by their cultural background and personal experiences. Influences from global culture and social pressures shaped students' perspectives on pleasure-driven lifestyles. Factors such as academic pressure and identity exploration drive the adoption of hedonistic behaviors. However, the research findings suggest that the relationship between hedonism and long-term psychological well-being is complex. The role of communication, especially through social media, is recognized as a key factor in shaping college students' perception of hedonism. This discussion also has significant implications for college students' education and personal development, while highlighting the need for further research to evaluate the impact of digital environments and social interactions on college students' views of hedonism. The impact on mental well-being, which emerges as a potential consequence of hedonistic behavior, provides an opportunity to highlight the benefits of a healthy lifestyle through persuasive communication. The role of communication, especially through social media, is crucial in designing campaigns that build a positive understanding of healthy and sustainable enjoyment. Communication campaigns can emphasize the positive values and positive impacts of a balanced lifestyle.

Discussion of the implications for education and personal development highlighted the potential role of communication campaigns in guiding students towards a balanced understanding of enjoyment and responsibility. Recommendations for further research, particularly regarding the impact of digital environments and social interactions, provide important direction for the development of communication campaigns that can adapt to changing digital dynamics and social trends. Therefore, integrating qualitative insights with communication campaign theory will enhance our

in-depth understanding of university students' views on hedonism and enable the development of more effective and relevant communication strategies.

#### ***4.1 Consumer public profile***

The group of individuals who chose goods based on need, taste or price mostly stated that taste was the main basis for purchase. Some also said that the reason for choosing goods based on taste was due to the belief that goods purchased according to personal taste would have longer durability and usefulness. Furthermore, a number of students thought that purchasing goods should be based on need, with the belief that priority should be given to what is truly necessary rather than just satisfying personal taste.

Regarding their views on students who adopt hedonistic lifestyles that are not in line with reality, the majority expressed sympathy, especially for the parents of these students. They regret the use of money given by parents for college on things that are not considered important, and such actions are considered a waste that does not match the expectations of parents.

The last question asked by the researcher to the students related to the motivation that drove them to adopt a hedonic lifestyle. Most responded that the main motivation was prestige, to get recognition from others, to look fashionable, and to follow trends. However, there are also those who argue that as long as we are able to manage our finances wisely and have principles, there is no problem in establishing friendships with individuals who have a hedonistic lifestyle or have material wealth.

Without realizing it, "consumers" have engaged in acts of consumption that they do not actually need. This phenomenon is also influenced by the dominance of advertisements that seem to spoil consumers and eliminate rationality in choosing products for consumption. Advertising acts as an external stimulus that influences consumers sharply and significantly in the choice of brand, product type, price, and place of purchase. The pattern of advertisements displayed in the media provides color and attractiveness to consumers, whether through print, audio, visual, or digital or electronic media available. The act of advertising shows enthusiasm and increases consumer motivation to consume goods. This means that the more often advertisements are displayed, the greater the level of product consumption by consumers. Thus, advertising has a positive impact on consumers. The communication campaign theory taken in this study also shows that the influence of the media on student behavior patterns is also very influential. With the media, individuals are able to show the goods or services they offer to consumers. The existence of media also

affects how a person sees a product that is usually not needed but is bought only because of the prestige of wanting to have it too and usually does not have such an important use for the future.

Communication campaign theory is a theory that is relevant to the reality that occurs in students, Communication campaigns are organized communication efforts targeted at an audience within a certain period of time with the aim of achieving certain results (Gudykunst & Mody, 2002). Hedonism plays an important role in justifying and reinforcing individual ethical behavior. It is further explained that emotional experiences become a source of value for individuals in carrying out hedonic consumption actions. Typically, one should simply consider quantity rather than quality. However, some of the students interviewed saw the quantity side. Taking an example of a video game that usually has a bad impact, but for some students it can be a place to reduce the effects of stress on the daily life they have gone through.

The results of the study show that the hedonic lifestyle in college students is influenced by internal factors, such as the desire to get attention from others and the unwillingness to lose in this regard. On the other hand, there are external factors that also play a role, namely the lack of awareness from students who force themselves to match the hedonistic lifestyle of others, without considering the economic capabilities possessed by the individual. All have positive and negative impacts depending on how the product is used. It depends on each individual who uses products, goods and services. The media also has positive and negative impacts depending on how we respond to a problem that is being faced.

#### ***4.2 Global cultural transformation in consumer behavior***

This condition influences the thinking patterns of students to see a product in the media by paying attention to a quantity. The hedonism side is giving a desire to have something seen in the appearance that consumers do. Global cultural transformation has had a significant impact on consumer behavior, especially when we talk about hedonism. A significant impact on consumer behavior, especially regarding hedonism, has emerged as a result of global cultural transformation. Hedonism, which focuses on the pursuit of pleasure and happiness as the primary goal of life, manifests in consumers' desire to fulfill personal needs and desires through the use of goods and services that provide sensory and emotional satisfaction.

Several aspects of global cultural transformation influence consumer behavior around the concept of hedonism. First, globalization has removed geographical restrictions, giving consumers greater access to a wide array of hedonistic products

from around the world. Secondly, social media serves as a platform where consumers can share hedonistic experiences, create trends and influence others to adopt similar lifestyles. Social validation is also a key element through positive responses to consumer posts.

In addition, the influence of popular culture, such as movies, music and celebrities, contribute to shaping the hedonistic image. Brand collaborations with famous personalities create a connection between the hedonistic lifestyle and a particular brand. Changing values and priorities in a connected and hurried society encourage the search for immediate enjoyment and fulfilling experiences. Lifestyle changes are reflected in consumers' tendency to choose products and services that offer sensory experiences, such as travel, fine dining and entertainment. The importance of self-image and personal expression also leads consumers to see hedonistic products and services as a means to express their identity.

In the face of this global cultural transformation, companies and brands need to understand shifting consumer values and preferences. Adapting marketing strategies is essential to fulfill the ever-growing hedonistic desires of modern consumers. Often, attention is only focused on how much or how much of something, without considering its quality. However, in interviews with some students, it was found that some pay more attention to quantitative aspects. For example, video games are often considered to have a negative impact, but for some students, it can be a means to reduce the stress they experience on a daily basis. Every product, be it goods or services, has both positive and negative impacts, depending on how it is used. This depends on each individual's approach to the products, goods and services used. Media also has positive and negative impacts, depending on how we respond to the situation or problem at hand.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The conclusion of the research described in the analysis of hedonism among university students using the communication campaign theory approach is that global cultural transformation is closely related to consumer behavior, especially in seeking pleasure and happiness. This means that these changes have a significant impact on consumer behavior. Factors such as globalization, social media, the influence of popular culture, changing values and priorities, and changing lifestyles are key elements in shaping consumer perceptions and behavior in the context of hedonism.

This analysis also highlights the importance of understanding the factors that influence hedonic behavior, such as academic pressure and students' identity exploration. In addition, the results show that media, especially social media, plays a

central role in shaping students' perceptions of hedonistic lifestyles. Global cultural influences and social pressures shape students' perspectives on pleasure and hedonistic lifestyles. The impact on psychological well-being, the role of communication, and the impact on education and personal development are also important aspects in this analysis.

The findings demonstrate the complexity of the relationship between hedonism and long-term psychological well-being, as well as the crucial role of communication, especially through social media, in shaping students' perceptions. Taking into account changes in global culture, values and consumer preferences, more effective and relevant communication strategies can be developed. Recommendations for further research, especially related to the impact of the digital environment and social interaction, provide guidance for the development of communication campaigns that are able to adapt to the dynamics of digital change and social trends.

Thus, the results of this analysis contribute to a deeper understanding of college students' views on hedonism and open up opportunities to develop better communication strategies in response to global cultural changes in consumer behavior.

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