

The way to the healthy and effective consumption at the foundation of functional equivalence theory

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Abstract

To consume it is to fulfill the needs arisen. It is supposed that every need is development of an imbalance caused by an overflow of informational, physical, and chemical factors that emerges over the course of life and cannot be eliminated by the organism independently without the risk of structure disturbance. Satisfaction of each need is a search for "channels" of equivalence establishment including consumption, in other words, increased or decreased number of informational, physical, and chemicals stimulus for elimination of this overflow. Elimination of each imbalance is limited by individual potential. Modern society interested in creation of a "qualified consumer" forms additional imbalances that are often unnecessary, within a person via means of mass media. At the same time, advertisement offers "channels" of eliminating these artificially-created imbalances through purchase of goods and services. If needs are not fulfilled, a stress appears accompanied by negative emotions. Prolonged lack of possibility to eliminate imbalances in case a person is out of individual potential, leads to such consequences as neurosis, psychosomatic diseases, and finally, lifespan shortening. As a result, development of economy through growth in sales volume can lead to degradation in population health and cause considerable economical losses. That is why a healthy and efficient consumption suggests mutual responsibility of seller and customer, and means not only sales promotion but also health promotion to provide adequate conditions to satisfy needs in future. It is proved that with the help of psychotherapy the ways of consumption could be made healthier.

1. Introduction

For ages the development of the economy implies a continuous increase in the volume of goods and services consumed. Ideally, everything that is produced should be consumed with a subsequent increase in production for even greater consumption. This scheme assumes a constant increase in the amount of consumed resources of the Earth with the risks for their complete exhaustion. This situation is of great concern to the defenders of nature. In developed countries, there is a constant talk of responsible consumption. At the same time ideology of "consumerism" is wide spread though new consumption schemes more safe for nature are being proposed and evaluated. It should be noted that although the growth in consumer activity may lead to the formation of dependence on the purchase of goods and services, any restriction of consumption is considered an attempt on personal freedom (Reith, 2004). But now there are the talks about "consumer detox" have started. One of the most authoritative people calling for the restriction of consumption can be called the Dalai Lama. In one of his interviews, he wrote: "Some desires are positive – for example, the desire for happiness... Some desires are very useful. However, at some point, desires may become unreasonable. As a rule, this leads to trouble. So, for example, now I sometimes visit super-markets. I really like it there, as I see so many beautiful things. When I look at all this variety of objects, I have a desire and an initial impulse like "oh, I want this; I want that" Then, thinking about it, I ask myself: "Do I really need this? The answer is usually no. If we follow this first wish, our pockets will quickly empty. Reasonable desires, that belong to another level and are based on primary needs – the need for food, clothing and a roof over your head..." According to the Dalai Lama, there are two methods of

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achieving inner satisfaction. The first is to get everything we want and desire-money, houses, cars, a perfect partner, a perfect body. The Dalai Lama points out the disadvantages of this approach; if we lose control of our desires, sooner or later we will stumble upon something that we want but cannot get.

The second, more reliable method of achieving satisfaction, is not to have what we want to have, but to both want and appreciate what we have. (Dalai-Lama, 2004).

Is the Dalai Lama right? Is it possible to find scientific confirmation of the correctness of his reasoning? What to buy? How much to buy? How long could we buy safely? We should not forget that economic development requires, on the one hand, that consumption be optimal in terms of resource use especially in the situation of starting Deglobalization we have now. On the other hand, a person must consume goods and services produced for as long as possible, which requires certain efforts to preserve his or her health and extend the life expectancy. In this article, I offer approaches to answer the questions mentioned, and propose how to optimize human consumption and consumer behavior according to the theory of functional equivalence.

2. Definition of need in terms of the theory of functional equivalence.

The basis of consumer behavior has traditionally been the presence of needs. At the same time, usually, under the necessity is understood both what a human being needs in order to provide vital activity, and specific force of living organisms, and deviation of organism indices from normal values. What is the meaning of needs? We try to find the answer to this question within the framework of the theory of functional equivalence, which I am developing. I believe that information, physical, and chemical effects on the body should be equivalent to the sum of information, physical, and chemical components of vital activity transformed in the body and isolated from the body (Avilov, 2019). Thus, in my opinion, the need is the development of imbalance of different degree of severity, caused by the excess of information, physical and chemical factors formed in the process of vital activity, which cannot be removed by the organism independently, without the risk of structure disturbance. And satisfaction of needs is a search of "channels" of equivalence establishment, that is increased or decreased quantity of information, physical and chemical stimuli for elimination of this excess. The final result of needs satisfaction is equivalence establishment due to transformation of information, physical and chemical components surplus of vital activity into functional and structural changes in organism. These include, for example, the excretion or synthesis of certain substances, cellular renewal, mass and volume changes in organs and tissues, and changes in motor activity and behavior of a person. The process of establishing equivalence can go in stages. In this case, the sum of physical, chemical and informational changes in the body after meeting the needs is equivalent to that before meeting. Only ratios between physical, chemical and information components of vital activity process change.

Formation and elimination of imbalances occurs continuously during a life course. From the point of view of my theory the imbalance exists already at the level of zygote, and is defined by initial level of disequilibrium. The step-by-step process of equivalence formation allows slowing down the process of approaching the full equilibrium - death. Elimination of imbalances, including such a greatest imbalance as the meaning of our life, without consequences for vital activity processes is possible only in that volume and pace, which are mainly determined by genetic features of the organism with the main aim to change the time of death. In fact, death is the realization of an individual's potential in full. At the same time, the potential cannot but be realized in the process of development of a living organism. It's just a matter of how fast it happens, how quickly the body "self-actualizes" due to potential (Avilov, 2021). A life in society assumes that the disequilibrium and, consequently, the severity of the imbalances will increase constantly. For example, society imposes to the population that time of the beginning of the work and its duration, which absolutely do not correspond to the possibilities of the majority of society members to eliminate imbalances without risk for health. The fatigue after a work shows that imbalances appeared, and equivalence is not established. The need to follow fashion and a certain style of consumption activity in order to maintain one's position and income level may lead to the same consequences. Daily contact with sources of information such as close people and work colleagues, the Internet, television and radio can increase the imbalance in our body. The list of such examples can be continued. In my opinion, it is worth noting the role of consciousness in the process of forming and eliminating imbalances. On the one hand, consciousness at the expense of concentration of attention on significant, in the opinion of an individual, individual problems and goals is able to increase the information consequences of life processes, that is, the degree of imbalance development. On the other hand, a person can consciously avoid those situations which increase individual disequilibrium and, especially in preliminary preparation, can quickly find "channels" for establishing equivalence. Needs are formed in the fetus as early as the womb. After birth, further development of the needs system takes place on both the unconscious and the conscious level.

In the process of education in the family and in educational institutions of different levels, the individual learns the skills to eliminate emerging imbalances through the formed "channels" of equivalence. Modern society, which is interested in creating a "qualified consumer", creates additional imbalances in a person through the

mass media, most often completely unnecessary imbalances. At the same time, with the help of advertising, "channels" are imposed to eliminate artificially created imbalances by purchasing goods and services. In case individual potential is great, increased consumption could not lead to health problems. Moreover, consumption could help to use additional part of the potential, if a person has no other "channels" to spend it. In case there is a lack of individual potential compared with new imbalances created in society that are to be eliminated both physical and mental health might be affected.

As a result, economic development through sales incentives may lead to a reduction in health and life expectancy (Avilov, 2020). In addition, constant participation in the consumer race may prevent a person from satisfying the metaphysical needs according to A.H. Maslow, as well as finding his meaning of life. At the same time, it is very important to know which needs could be most easily formed by the mass media. In order to preserve a person's health, one should know one's individual potential, which imbalances are most likely to be corrected by means of consumer behavior, which imbalance most likely could lead to exceeding the individual potential of the prevailing part of the population. There is, so to say necessity to follow not only healthy lifestyle but "mental hygiene" and "consumer wisdom."

3. A main reason for most consumer behavior is a need for safety

One of the most important needs that define many aspects of human consumption is the need for safety. I believe that the fear of death in its various manifestations is the imbalance that is the basis of the need for security. The satisfaction of this need, which manifests itself in the form of a search for "channels" for establishing equivalence, depends on the cultural and psychological characteristics of the individual, the level of his education and the degree of success of previous experience in eliminating imbalances. At the same time, the intensity of activities to eliminate imbalances is determined, as it was said, by the potential of a person (Avilov, 2019). The search for "channels" for establishing equivalence can be seen at the individual, group, and population level. We have identified several main "channels" to eliminate the imbalance associated with a lack of a sense of security. At the same time, the data of the "channel" can be determined by the characteristics of the individual's behavior. The first such "channel" is the desire to belong to a certain group of people, in particular like-minded people, or relatives. The meaning of the association was very clearly expressed in one of the poems of Russian poet V. V. Mayakovsky (1948): "It is bad for a person when he is alone. Woe to one, one is not a warrior, - each is a stout master to him, and even the weak, if two... One is nonsense, one is zero, one, even if it is very important, will not raise a simple five-peaked log, especially a five-story house..." In my opinion, human reproductive behavior also reflects the process of establishing equivalence in order to ensure personal safety. Since ancient times, the large number of children in a family has meant an increase in the strength of the family and, therefore, in personal safety. High fertility in developing countries confirms that old traditions are longstanding, especially when the State is not performing its functions.

Material well-being in developed countries has been accompanied by a decline in the number of children in the family. Although conditions for the birth and upbringing of children are improving considerably, and an increase in fertility could be expected. But the opposite situation can be observed. In my opinion, this is largely due to the fact that the sense of security is achieved through the work of state structures: the army, police, health care system, social protection system, the more children it has, the safer each family member is. Judging by this safety criterion, it can be understood that residents of developing countries, who usually have many children, feel less safe than residents of developed countries, where families are much smaller. This can be explained, in particular, by the fact that in developed countries, the state, with the help of a system of laws, the army, and the police, assumes the function of ensuring the safety of citizens.

The second "channel" of establishing equivalence with a lack of a sense of security can be called imitation, in one form or another, of those whom a person considers stronger. Imitation can be expressed in the form of training in the gym to become stronger to counter possible dangers. Some people start practicing certain martial arts, so that, if necessary, they can behave like movie characters. Part of the population believes that only the possession of cold or firearms, and the skills to use them, can help, as it follows from films and novels, to ensure personal safety. You can also imitate the manners and clothing of the inhabitants of those countries that are considered strong and influential. Since ancient times the time many people of Asia and Africa have been forced to believe that, in comparison with them, the inhabitants of Europe are more intelligent, skilled, and successful. Therefore, initially there was an imitation of the Dutch and Germans in everything then the French, the British, and finally the Americans. Imitation can be seen in the use, even without the need, of a foreign language. This is expressed in particular in the use of English for the names of shops, business centers, and neighborhoods of the city. At the population level, imitation of the "strong" can be seen in the transition of a number of countries of the former USSR from Cyrillic to Latin.

The third "channel" of establishing equivalence, in my opinion, is the creation of different stocks. This includes the accumulation of food and medical supplies for a "black" day or the acquisition of more and more new properties. To a certain extent constant shopping is made to feel more sure and safe. The desire for as much money as possible, even if it does not seem necessary, is also an attempt to eliminate the lack of a sense of security. Nevertheless considering the features of modern society speaking about production and consumption, it is possible to find not only the "channels" to get safety but also a certain order of both the formation of imbalances and their elimination. The imbalance of the first level is associated with the need to constantly be in a safe, comfortable environment. The imbalance of the second level occurs when a person has to look for objects, things, food necessary for a safe life. If a person is unable to provide himself with everything he needs for a safe existence, there is an imbalance of the third level – the desire for money. The need to do something, to get something, to study something in order to get money is an imbalance of the fourth level. At the same time, we can earn money as employees, or we can independently create something for subsequent sale. In the latter case, an imbalance of the fifth level is formed – the desire to sell manufactured goods or services. The elimination of this imbalance is possible only if we are able to create imbalances related to the demand for our goods or services from potential buyers. Advertising can make unnecessary things necessary and, in case of its excessive impact on a person, lead to additional, not natural imbalances. But advertisers, sellers usually do not care much about possible health problems of buyers who are eager to buy something. The main thing is to sell! Sales of manufactured goods and services are the elimination of the imbalance of the fifth level. Receiving money after the sale –it is eliminating the imbalances of the fourth and third levels. The purchase of necessary goods and services with the help of money, including after stimulation by advertising, means the elimination of the imbalance of the second level. And only the feeling of being safe, in a state of physical and mental comfort can talk about eliminating the imbalance of the first level and establishing full equivalence. Getting rid of imbalances of different levels is always accompanied by the development of positive emotions.

The fourth "channel" of establishing equivalence is the acquisition of power. Many people think that the more power they have, the safer they are. Judging by the numerous examples of power struggles at different levels, this "channel" of establishing equivalence is considered very effective.

And, finally, the "fifth channel" This "channel" is to get a sense of security by obtaining new and new knowledge. It is well known that a knowledgeable, prepared person can ensure their safety in various situations, and be an example for others in difficult times. Knowledgeable, competent specialists are also most in demand in the labor market.

Satisfying the need mentioned (or, according to my theory, correcting an appropriate imbalance) always comes at the expense of changing behavior in general and consumer behavior in particular. The purpose of consumption change is to establish equivalence. So, the need for security in many cases determines expected consumption. At the same time, in order to make consumption more optimal, it is necessary to know what "channels" at what levels are used to establish equivalence, to know the indicators of both the emergence of needs and their satisfaction,

4. The role of emotional stress as an indicator of needs satisfaction.

In all situations when the human body encounters something new, unusual or dangerous, stress occurs, which may lead to serious changes in the functional state of the person (Selye, 1952; Kozłowska, 2013). From the point of view of functional systems theory, emotional stress is formed in all conflict situations in which the subject cannot satisfy his needs (Sudakov, 1993). But according to the theory of functional equivalence, the view on the causes of stress can be somewhat different. In my opinion, the meaning of a stress reaction is an answer to a situation when the rate of imbalance development due to the impact or sudden absence of impact of informational, physical or chemical factors exceeds the rate of establishing equivalence. In this case there is an attempt of emergency formation of equivalent response through different "channels". As a result there is a change in functioning of practically all systems of an organism. But in connection with the fact that organism's response is urgent, stress in this phase of development is accompanied by significant disintegration in the work of functional systems and negative emotions (Sudakov, Yumatov, Tarakanov, 1996). This type of stress, also called acute stress, occurs when the imbalance is very pronounced and forms suddenly, for example, when trying to escape in a fire. If the imbalance exists for a long time, chronic emotional stress develops in order to find "channels" to establish equivalence. In my opinion, its manifestations against the background of negative emotions can be described as a state of frustration, anxiety, cognitive dissonance.

If we are talking about imbalances connected with attempts to satisfy higher demands (Maslow, 1963) or to find meaning of life, we can speak about "existential vacuum" according to V. Frankl (Frankl, 1966), or even about remorse. I believe that it is the prolonged absence of elimination of imbalances through the establishment of equivalence that leads to such consequences as emotional burnout syndrome, chronic fatigue syndrome, neurosis, psychosomatic diseases, and, as a result, to shorter life expectancy. But needs can be met, and the

meaning of life is found. In case of establishment of equivalence in full positive emotions are formed in the person, and there is a transition from disorganization to coordination in work of functional systems. At the same time, positive emotions conceal a certain danger. These emotions are capable to push the person to statement of new and new purposes, to conscious formation of imbalances, not so much to receive desirable, as to receive positive emotions after elimination of imbalances. A kind of dependency may arise with the risk of exceeding a person's capacity to establish equivalence. "Addictive consumption" is a significant problem for developed countries (Reith, 2004). Such suboptimal consumption may be an important factor in generating of family stress (Boss, Bryant, Mancini, 2017).

Is it possible to change a style of consumption? To answer this question, I investigated the consumer behavior of three married couples aged 30-36 years. All three women complained about overwhelming dependence on shopping and constant problems with the family budget. Measuring the stress levels of all six people using the methods of K.V. Sudakov and co-authors (Sudakov, Yumatov, Tarakanov, 1996) showed that emotional stress reached high values. All three married couples were also studied for their specific consumer behavior. Further, based on the recommendations of A.T. Beck (Beck, 1970) three sessions of cognitive therapy were conducted with all married couples within a month, a new hierarchy of needs was constructed, and more optimal models of consumer behavior were recommended. From the point of view of functional equivalence theory, I evaluated the severity of imbalances in families, determining the level of such an emergency equivalence mechanism as stress. I then individually selected the "channels" for establishing equivalence, checking their compliance with the task of eliminating imbalances associated with consumption. A month after the start of cognitive therapy sessions, it turned out that all six people (men and women) had reduced their emotional stress levels, changed their consumption preferences, significantly improved their mood, and lost an overwhelming desire to make new and new purchases. I believe that this was a sign of the elimination of imbalances and the establishment of equivalence (Avilov, 2020).

In our previous study 157 students of higher educational institutions were asked to make a rating of needs based on their subjective significance (Avilov, 2021). Students also subjectively assessed their emotional stress as well as, severity of the feeling of joy and happiness (with the help of specially developed scales) in connection with the needs put on the first place in rating. The students with the need to have a broad outlook, deep professional values, constantly developing their creative abilities as the main need showed the least degree of emotional stress and the greatest degree of positive emotions. At the same time it was shown that the largest number of students (63) with severe emotional stress, and, at the same time, the smallest number of students who experienced feelings of joy and happiness, was observed under the assumption of such a need as the need to have a large amount of money and (or) movable and immovable property. It is obvious that these students chose the third "channel" mentioned above, they thought best one, of establishing equivalence to get sense of safety. I suppose that these students were stimulated by advertising without a possibility to establish equivalence due to too many additional imbalances or to the lack of individual potential. This situation, as was said before, could lead to some consequences for students' health. After restrictions of COVID19 had been canceled students of this group were asked to come to decrease the level of emotional stress they were still suffering from. Only 17 students out of 63 agreed to come. Other I believe decided that there is nothing to change in their list of needs. To make corrections in the rating of needs for students, who felt excessive emotional stress, there were conducted three sessions of group cognitive psychotherapy within one month. Testing with the same scales was made before and after sessions. I managed to change significance of needs of 15 students. They started to put the need to find meaning of life, to have deep professional knowledge, to develop their creativeness on the first place. Moreover, they have made real efforts to meet this need. As a result in a month the stress level of 14 persons significantly decreased, and level of happiness increased. I believe it was caused by right found "channels" of equivalence establishment that were in accordance with students' individual potentials and optimal ratio between "higher" and, so to say, "lower" needs.

Therefore, in my opinion, consumer behavior and needs can be corrected and "addictive consumption" can be eliminated. In my opinion, the risk of psychosomatic pathology in three families as well as in 14 students has been significantly reduced. Their models of consumption became more healthy and effective. They got "consumer wisdom." So I could agree with Dalai Lama to much extent.

5. Conclusion.

So, the theory of functional equivalence helps to change the point of view on the cause of needs. Needs are constantly arising imbalances in the body that cannot be eliminated by one's own efforts and require a change in the action of information, physical and chemical factors of the human environment. The individual potential influences the possibility to meet needs. Under the potential of a living system, I understand the innate capabilities of the organism and its individual systems determined by the initial disequilibrium, to eliminate the

manifestations of imbalance that arise in the course of life. The potential cannot fail to be realized in the process of individual development. It's just a matter of how fast this happens, how quickly the body "self-actualizes" due to the potential. In the case when the severity of the imbalance is minimal, that is, when the excess of information, physical and chemical manifestations of the results of functioning is removed with the necessary speed with the help of stimuli coming from the external and internal environment of the body, the reduction of the potential, in my opinion, is minimal. That is, the movement from disequilibrium to equilibrium slows down.

In the case of a decrease in the flow of information, physical and chemical stimuli for some time, due to the potential of the body, the functioning is maintained at the same or even increased level, including for the search for missing stimuli, but always equivalent to the situation and (or) its significance, which is determined subjectively. If the stimulation of the body remains reduced, or completely stops, either the death of the body occurs, as for example, in the absence of air oxygen supply or a compensatory, equivalent decrease in the volume and mass of the body's tissues, as well as a change in the nature of functioning. Such a variant of establishing equivalence can be observed, for example, in patients who stay in a supine position for a long time. On the other hand, with an excessive supply of information, physical and chemical stimuli from the external and, sometimes, also the internal environment of the body, the potential is additionally spent on achieving equivalence by gradually forming an increased volume and mass of tissues, which in this case represent the main "channels" for establishing equivalence. Such changes can be observed, for example, during sports training. In addition, it is well known that drowsiness occurs when a large amount of food is received, this fact we regard as an emergency provision of equivalence by removing the information component of the results of vital activity. And with insufficient and excessive input of incentives, an increased level of spending potential can lead to both diseases and death of the body. Since, the movement from disequilibrium to equilibrium occurs at an accelerated pace. But, in general, the establishment of equivalence is a form of slowing down the movement to the equilibrium state, and not working against the equilibrium. At the same time, by increasing "abilities" (by establishing equivalence through a particular "channel"), we lose "capabilities" to a certain extent (by reducing the level of disequilibrium, or the potential of the body and its individual organs and systems). In my opinion, people with a high level of potential are more likely to suffer from an insufficient supply of incentives. In this regard, they are looking for different ways to realize their potential, very often they are what we call "engines of progress". People with a medium or low level of potential are most likely to experience problems associated with excessive input of stimuli from the external environment.

The process of Advertising could make these people try to "be like everyone else", even at the risk of health. With the help of advertising, the need to buy new and new goods and services is imposed on a person. Advertising can further reinforce the imbalances associated with a lack of a person's sense of security. Because of this, the desire to be in someone's "team", the desire to accumulate something, to imitate, to get money, the power, or knowledge can be sharpened. At the same time, the desire for knowledge may be the main imbalance easily eliminated, or it may be only a step by which other imbalances can be removed. Modern society, with the help of mass media, is creating more and more imbalances in the human body that are the cause of consumer behavior. I suppose that majority of the motives for consumption are related to attempts to correct imbalances caused by a lack of sense of security. At the same time, on the one hand, thanks to advertising, "channels" of establishment of equivalence, in other words, the goods and services with the help of which it is possible to eliminate the imbalances and to form an equivalent response become known. On the other hand, also thanks to advertising, a person is under constant emotional stress caused by the consumer race.

Stress is, in my opinion, a mechanism with the help of which the organism tries to urgently find "channels" to establish equivalence. But if the person does not know, what exactly purchases can eliminate available imbalances, or if he or she knows what exactly he or she would like to buy, but experiences shortage of financial resources for making purchases, chronic emotional stress develops. As a result, the risk of psychosomatic pathology increases significantly especially in case individual potential is not high. The degree of emotional stress in consumers can indicate both the presence of imbalances and their full or partial elimination, in other words, the establishment of equivalence through consumption. When working with families experiencing emotional stress associated with shopping addiction, as well as students with not optimal ratio of needs, it has been shown that cognitive therapy can optimize consumption with subsequent reduction of stress levels. Society should be interested not only in short-term improvement of economic indicators related to the stimulation of consumption of goods and services. If consumption exceeds a person's individual capacity to establish equivalence, there may be serious health consequences and even a reduction in life expectancy, leading to significant economic losses. In this regard, society should be interested in ensuring that individual consumption lasts as long as possible. This is possible if producers of goods and services as well as advertisers act responsibly. They should warn people about the risks of "Addictive consumption", to train them to have optimal, healthy and durable consumption. Forming a motivation to maintain healthy behavior and "mental hygiene" also could help to solve this problem (Baccman, Wastlund, 2022). We suppose that schools for "wise consumers" could be recommended. Active teaching and learning practices that proved to be effective (Bileti, 2022), could

be good for the purpose mentioned. One should be able to know their potential, to know their imbalances (needs), to know when emotional stress appears and what are its manifestations, to know how to decrease stress level finding right “channel” to eliminate imbalances, and this way to help themselves to keep healthy, avoiding aggressive advertisement. It can be assumed that the use of resources with mutual responsibility of producers and consumers of goods and services could also be optimized. Thus, I suppose that concerning necessity of effective consumption theory of functional equivalence could be used as a tool to consider the problem from different distances helping to provide the way of healthy consumer behavior.

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