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Digital Desire: The Psychology of Overconsumption in the Age of Social Media

Hippocrates once stated, "Everything in excess is opposed to nature." Consumerism, which became popular in the early twentieth century, is the concept that the excessive consumption of goods benefits the economy and that businesses should produce items and services that consumers want. Overconsumption, supported by this ideal, occurs when people consume more than they need, exceeding the planet's sustainable capacity.

Since its inception, social media has had a significant impact on human behaviour in a variety of ways, ranging from our clothing choices to the food we eat. These influences are stronger in those between the ages of 13 and 24. There has been a surge in content displaying overconsumptive behaviour, such as buying replacements for functional goods, restocking with surplus plastic containers, self-care rituals that use far more product than necessary, influencers wearing excessive cosmetics to elicit remarks, and more. The impressionable youth see and emulate these wasteful habits leading to more pollution.

This trend can be countered by making the youth aware of the long-term negative effects of this unsustainability. Popularizing environmentally aware creators and giving them a platform to positively influence the youth would yield positive results and raise a generation of people committed to living sustainably.