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The Quest For Perfection: Consumer Behavior In The Age Of Optimization

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Abstract: The concept of optimization has its roots in technology. Today consumers are trying to optimize each aspect of their lives to maximize productivity, improve health, enhance lifestyle, manage time often though the products and services which promise efficiency and better results. But this relentless pursuit of optimization comes at many costs. This paper argues that chasing of optimization, driven by the promises of perfect efficiency, has unintended psychological and social consequences for consumers. The study explores how an overemphasis on optimization culture has shifted consumers' focus away from more meaningful, unstructured experiences that contribute to a fulfilling life, ultimately affecting their consumption patterns, well-being, and overall satisfaction.

Index Terms - Optimization, Consumer behavior, Efficiency, Psychological and social costs , Technology.

I. INTRODUCTION

We're living in an era where technology plays a huge role in shaping our lives. As technology keeps advancing, there's a growing push for people to be more productive. The idea of optimization is becoming more and more important in today's consumer culture. The use of cutting-edge technology and biohacking products in everyday routines has really changed the way people shop and make purchasing decisions (Schmidt, 2014; Meyer & Marx, 2019).

In their quest for increased productivity and efficiency, people have placed more and more expectations on brands and companies to provide them with tools that will help them do more while spending less time or energy (Finkelstein, 2019). But this continuous desire to achieve more may lead to much bigger problems like emotional fatigue, heightened levels of stress, and the feeling of being disconnected from much more satisfying and fulfilling experiences. This paper examines the psychological and sociocultural aspects of optimization of consumption and suggests that, instead of striving for an impossible ideal, consumers should, and can, adopt less extreme but more meaningful lifestyles (Gibson, 2019; Tims et al., 2017).

2. THE RISE OF OPTIMIZATION IN CONSUMER CULTURE

2.1 Optimization as a Consumer Value

The technological revolution has emphasized the importance of efficiency, speed, and resource maintenance (Cunningham et al., 2017; Peterson & Thelen, 2020). There is a blast of digital goods in the market. There are numerous products available in the market that claim to maximize their time, simplify and enhance productivity. The growth of subscription-based products offering continuous support for optimization, e.g., personalized workout programs or curated mental wellness resources, underscores the escalating demand for optimized solutions that promise constant improvement (Binkley, 2014). There are smart wearable devices such as fitness trackers that are sold as devices that assist people in various activities such as tracking their physical well-being, maximizing their fitness routines, and monitoring sleep patterns, promising not only

health improvement but also optimized time use (Santos et al., 2015). Shoppers' increasing demand for instant gratification and measurable outcomes has propelled the expansion of self-quantification technology, in which individuals can monitor, examine, and improve various dimensions of their existence, ranging from calorie consumption to work productivity, in real time (Lupton, 2016).

More and more, consumers are looking to invest in products and services that promise to improve both their personal and professional lives, especially by optimizing their physical fitness and mental sharpness (Kemp & Varty, 2017). For example, things like nootropic supplements, which are marketed as ways to boost brain function, are becoming more popular. This trend reflects a growing societal focus not just on physical health, but also on enhancing mental abilities (Kuklinski et al., 2018). There's also no shortage of productivity tools designed to help manage tasks and track time, giving people the chance to become more efficient and organized in their work (Finkelstein, 2019).

This rise in products and technologies points to what's being called "optimization culture," where people are constantly trying to improve efficiency, performance, and maximize their potential. The media and the health industry play a huge role in pushing this trend, linking peak performance with success and personal fulfillment (Gibson, 2019; Liu & Zhang, 2021). Consumers are choosing products not just for immediate use but with the hope of long-term improvements in their habits, skills, and overall well-being (Bergström & Beukel, 2020). We're seeing a new reality where consumerism and optimization are merging, with companies positioning their products as not just easy to use but essential for success in a fast-paced, efficiency-driven world (Liu & Zhang, 2021). This demand for optimization tools is boosting technological advancements and promoting well-being. However, there's another side to this shift.

Critics of this culture argue that the constant drive for maximum efficiency can actually create feelings of inadequacy or stress. The pressure to always be improving can lead to anxiety and lower well-being, making people feel like they’re never doing enough to make the most of their lives (van Doorn, 2021; Binkley, 2014). The obsession with "doing more with less" might end up sacrificing genuine, meaningful experiences, as people prioritize productivity over things like pleasure, creativity, or real connections with others (Bauman, 2007). In the end, the very culture of optimization that many are drawn to can lead to a cycle of dissatisfaction and burnout, where the pressure to always work harder never truly lets up.

2.2 Consumption of Optimization Tools

The consumer trend in the use of optimization tools has created a full-fledged industry dedicated to optimizing people's own performance and finding "peak" efficiency in a number of parts of their existence. Fitness wristbands, medicine apps, and time-management gadgets are some illustrations of products geared towards monitoring, quantifying, and optimizing an individual's personal performance (Meyer & Marx, 2019). The increasing popularity of these devices is a symptom of a wider cultural trend toward self-optimization, as consumers aim to simplify their habits and get more out of their time. This cultural phenomenon is further boosted by the "quantified self" movement, which promotes the application of data and technology to monitor, analyze, and optimize personal habits, behaviors, and well-being (Lupton, 2016).

At a macro level, companies in industries like technology, wellness, and personal development offer consumers a gateway to more success, happiness, and effectiveness through their services and products (Bergström & Beukel, 2020). For instance, firms such as Apple have for a long time promoted their gadgets not only as communication devices but as part of a productivity-enhancing system, highlighting aspects such as time management, health monitoring, and organizational tasks (Park & Kim, 2020). Apple's incorporation of health and wellness features into its devices, like the Apple Watch's fitness monitoring and mindfulness software, is evidence of an increased overlap between technology and well-being (Choi et al., 2020).

Wellness companies like Bulletproof, selling supplements and services designed to enhance brain function, physical health, and mental acuity, exploit further the emerging demand for tools of self-optimization (Miller et al., 2020). The firms sell products but also spread an implicit ethos of self-transformation and achievement of "peak performance" (Gibson, 2019). By positioning their products as necessary to attaining personal excellence, wellness brands have become a key component of the broader story about the optimization of the human experience.

The success of such industries is complemented by a wider cultural expectation of the ability to transform oneself through technology and self-improvement regimes. This is echoed in the wide availability of apps aimed at productivity improvement, for example, time-management software, habit-tracking tools, and goal-setting applications, which promise to enable users to do more with less time (Gershon, 2021). Thus, consumers are increasingly driven not just by the need to use products but by a profound belief that their lives can be continually improved, and that technology tools are the solution to unlocking their highest potential (Harris, 2020).

Moreover, this self-optimization movement meets with the emergence of the "hustle culture," where people are pushed to continuously aim higher in terms of output and achievement (Marwick, 2021). Hustle culture's ideology perpetuates the idea that one's individual value is innately tied to production, continuing to push consumers toward embracing practices and tools that guarantee efficiency and self-enhancement. This is consistent with the research of academics who contend that consumerism, especially in the technology and health industries, has become a way of not only enhancing one's existence but defining one's self in terms of striving for perfection (Fournier & Avery, 2011; Bauman, 2007).

Skeptics argue that commodification of self-optimization via consumer goods can result in a type of "performative well-being," wherein the focus on external measures of success (e.g., productivity indexes or body

optimization) undermines a more comprehensive or sustainable well-being (Binkley, 2014; van Doorn, 2021). The prevailing discourse, however, is still one of permanent improvement and the guarantee that optimization tools can enable consumers to have a more satisfying and successful existence. Overall, consumer use of optimization technology is motivated by both technological and cultural change, wherein consumers are now seeking means of measuring, monitoring, and optimizing different dimensions of their existence.

3. PSYCHOLOGICAL AND BEHAVIORAL IMPLICATIONS OF OPTIMIZATION IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

3.1 The Efficiency Paradox in Consumer Choice

Even though optimization tasks promise to enhance effectiveness and productivity, increasingly it has been seen that people who pay a lot of heed to optimizing their activity and time may have negative psychological and emotional outcomes (Tims et al., 2017; Peterson & Thelen, 2020). This has been called the "efficiency paradox," where the more individuals are using optimization software, the more anxious, stressed, and displeased they feel with their outputs (Schmidt, 2014). The quest for increased efficiency, instead of bearing the expected dividend of enhanced productivity and well-being, tends to result in negative returns as human beings struggle to cope with constantly managing and maximizing their time (Meyer & Marx, 2019; Kuklinski et al., 2018).

The efficiency paradox arises as consumers are overwhelmed with more and more devices and products meant to streamline their work, well-being, and personal lives. The more they get optimization devices—ranging from fitness watches to productivity apps—the more likely they are to be swamped by the number of tasks that they feel the need to monitor and optimize. This paradoxical state occurs when customers, rather than being empowered, start feeling overwhelmed by the continuous requirement of effectively utilizing these tools and satisfying the lofty expectations of optimization promises (Schmidt, 2014). For instance, the utilization of productivity apps might seem to provide more time management at first, but when users fail to keep a flawless record of their work or stick to a strict schedule, the pressure of perfectionism takes over, destroying their well-being (Santos et al., 2015).

A study by Van Boven et al. (2010) also delves deeper into the emotional impact of the efficiency paradox, positing that although consumers are initially empowered by the assurance of improved performance, they tend to have negative emotional experiences since they cannot live up to the high performance standards that these products guarantee. The chase after perpetual betterment can be an experience of feeling inadequate or being frustrated as individuals come to see that they cannot meet the idealized efficiency picture presented by such products (Finkelstein, 2019). This becomes a pattern of self-blame and tension in which customers increasingly feel unsatisfied with their performance even after using tools intended to enhance it.

The dynamic between technology and well-being is not one of straightforward progress, since the premise that more tools and more information equal better results is frequently undermined by the inefficiency of too much self-monitoring. Too much tracking, various scholars argue, can result in "tracking fatigue," whereby the process of measuring and quantifying individual data becomes a source of anxiety instead of empowerment (Lupton, 2016). For example, devices such as fitness trackers are meant to help people maximize their exercise and health, but some become anxious with each step, calorie burnt, or minute of exercise causing stress and burnout (Kuklinski et al., 2018). This resonates with the study of Tims et al. (2017), which comments that excessive focus on optimization instruments can lead to lower mental health and more stress.

Moreover, the efficiency paradox acknowledges the psychological cost of a culture obsessed with productivity. The pressure always to be more efficient can lead to the erosion of a sense of leisure and enjoyment since individuals who employ optimization methods sacrifice the ability to enjoy unstructured time or periods of relaxation. Bauman (2007) explains the process of commercialization of self-improvement and time building a continuous culture of busyness where individuals are forced to work continuously at their own expense. The continuous "hustle" mentality is bound to build consumer dissonance between their individual goals of personal optimization and the actuality of their happiness and satisfaction.

Furthermore, while optimization tools can be framed to lead to increased productivity and performance, the added mental stress of needing to use multiple optimization tools can add to burnout in its own right. Consistent with studies, the mental effort spent in using and constantly keeping an eye on optimization tools will tend to siphon cognitive resources that otherwise would go into creativity, relaxation, or socialization (Binkley, 2014). As people are forced to incorporate such a broad set of instruments in their daily life, they may naturally interrupt their own cadences and, as a consequence, become emotionally drained with decreased quality of life (Tims et al., 2017).

3.2 Burnout and Mental Health in the era of Optimization

One essential nature of over-optimization culture is how it has been linked to consumer fatigue. It is an age when time is perceived as precious, and commodities and services are promised to make every second matter. Consumers are made to feel guilty or anxious whenever they are not being "productive" (Maslach et al., 2001; Smith & Cooper, 2018). And this relentless quest for productivity can result in persistent pressure where people feel they need to maximize everything around them, ranging from work life to well-being behaviors.

The feeling of "never enough" is something many of us can relate to, as we push ourselves to do more and more, often at the cost of our mental health and relationships (Tims et al., 2017). Burnout in the age of optimization is a bigger issue than it might seem. Studies show that the pressure to constantly perform at our best is taking an emotional toll. Tools like time-management apps, wellness trackers, and productivity hacks are meant to help us, but they can sometimes make things worse. People often end up feeling stressed or not good enough when they can't meet the high standards these tools set (Santos et al., 2015). This can lead to mental exhaustion, higher stress, and emotional burnout (Maslach, 2001). The constant chase for productivity makes it hard to unwind and enjoy downtime, creating a cycle of overwork and burnout (Kuklinski et al., 2018).

Relying too much on optimization tools might actually be making burnout worse. Research shows that using them too often can add to the mental load of managing everything in our lives (Binkley, 2014). Tracking every little thing—like how much we work, how much we rest, or how much we exercise—can end up making things feel even more exhausting, rather than helping us feel better (Lupton, 2016). Ultimately, the push for more efficiency and constant improvement can take a serious toll on our emotional well-being, setting the stage for burnout (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989).

Social Comparison and "Hustle Culture"

The culture of pressure on constant productivity and optimization is further fueled by "hustle culture," which believes in non-stop achievement and self-betterment. Social media sites and advertising campaigns usually present an idealized portrait of success, whereby people are goaded to work harder, take risks, and maximize every part of their day (van Doorn, 2021). This perpetual comparison to others' staged images of success can heighten feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and loneliness, as consumers try to meet unrealistic productivity and success standards (Fournier & Avery, 2011).

Burnout under the culture of hustle is also attributed to the poisonous belief that one's self-esteem is directly linked to his or her capacity to optimize and succeed (Binkley, 2014). As human beings keep striving to become more productive, their emotional and mental well-being becomes secondary, hence the sense of failure when they are no longer able to maintain the high level of production requisite in an optimization society. As Bauman (2007) explains, this relentless quest for accomplishing more with less time may result in deep unhappiness, since the person will feel disconnected from more substantial or more leisurely experiences that could contribute to improved well-being.

The psychological impact of the culture is very important. According to a study by Tims et al. (2017), individuals who are heavily engaged with optimization tools and techniques experience higher stress levels and worse mental health outcomes. The pressure can create an isolating effect where individuals view themselves as not being multifaceted human beings but mere productivity machines. This dehumanization is

also responsible for undermining social bonds because the chase for efficiency comes before the value of interpersonal relation and authentic experience (Santos et al., 2015).

Mental Health Consequences and Coping Strategies

The psychological impact of over-optimization has been extensively researched, with results indicating higher levels of anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion among people who put great pressure on themselves to optimize their time and activities (Schmidt, 2014). Burnout, a condition of long-term stress and exhaustion, is arguably one of the most common results of this culture, and it is usually worsened by using productivity tools to an excessive degree. Burnout, according to Maslach et al. (2001), occurs when chronic stress exceeds a person's coping ability. The chronic surveillance and refinement of one's performance—whether by digital means or physical improvement techniques—drains the emotional resources required for well-being.

Coping strategies to deal with this emerging mental health concern highlight the importance of balance. Scholars such as Lupton (2016) recommend more cautious methods of optimization, where individuals are prompted to apply tools sparingly and provide time for recovery and introspection. This line of thinking indicates that while optimization tools can be beneficial, they need to be utilized in a manner that complements, but not supplants, substantial human contact and self-care routines. The marketing of "slow living" or "digital detoxes" has picked up speed as a means to counteract the deleterious effects of continuous optimization, asking people to disengage from their technology and build a richer sense of well-being independent of performance metrics (Meyer & Marx, 2019).

4. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DYNAMICS: THE PRICE OF PERFECTION

4.1 Embracing Minimalism and Avoiding Over-Optimization

As more people realize the emotional and psychological toll of constantly optimizing, many are turning to counterculture movements that promote a more mindful, present way of living. Trends like slow living, minimalism, and digital detox are gaining popularity as consumers look to escape the endless chase for efficiency and productivity that defines today’s consumer culture (Hawkley et al., 2014; Finkelstein, 2019). These shifts encourage moving away from the "more-is-better" mindset and embracing the idea that a simpler, less cluttered life with less work pressure and more unstructured time can lead to greater happiness and well-being (Santos et al., 2015; Park & Kim, 2020).

Minimalism, in particular, focuses on the idea that by getting rid of material possessions, people can free themselves from the constant cycle of consumption and focus on more meaningful experiences. It challenges the belief that happiness and success are measured by what we own or how efficient we are. Instead, it suggests that a simpler life can lead to deeper relationships, creativity, and better health (Kabat-Zinn, 2005). The minimalist movement is increasingly seen as a form of resistance to the pressure of consumerism and optimization, offering an alternative way of living well without always striving to improve (Park & Kim, 2020).

The Concept of Slow Living and the Pursuit of Mindfulness

Along with minimalism, slow living promotes a slower, more intentional lifestyle that values quality over quantity. This mindset encourages people to be present, enjoy their experiences, and focus on activities that nourish the mind, body, and soul rather than just chasing productivity (Hawkley et al., 2014). Similar to minimalism, slow living offers an alternative to a culture obsessed with over-optimization, where people feel the need to constantly measure, track, and improve every part of their lives. Slow living, however, reminds us that not everything needs to be optimized, and that some of life’s most fulfilling moments come from simply being, not doing.

A big part of slow living is mindfulness, which has become a key practice for those trying to balance the pressures of constant optimization with the need for rest and presence (Brown & Ryan, 2003). As Meyer & Marx (2019) point out, incorporating mindfulness into slow living reflects a growing understanding that true happiness comes from being aware of and appreciating the present moment, not from being constantly busy. These perspectives challenge the idea that we need to dedicate all our time to hyper-productivity, offering instead an invitation to slow down and enjoy life without the constant pressure to achieve (Finkelstein, 2019).

Digital Detoxing

A notable aspect of this cultural shift is the emergence of the digital detox movement, which encourages individuals to unplug from their digital devices and social media to rejuvenate themselves, reconnect with nature, and strengthen interpersonal relationships. The omnipresence of smartphones, continuous connectivity, and the relentless influx of digital information have collectively contributed to feelings of mental exhaustion and burnout, prompting individuals to seek moments of disconnection (Lupton, 2016). As optimization tools have become deeply integrated into daily life, many consumers have realized that the drive to automate everything—from fitness routines to online social interactions—can be overwhelming and detrimental to their well-being (Hawkley et al., 2014).

Digital detox advocates suggest that people should take breaks from their devices. This can save time, reduce stress, and help us reconnect with our surroundings. Finkelstein (2019) points out that scheduling tech breaks can improve mental health, boost creativity, and strengthen our relationships with others. In a world where everything is about constant optimization, this idea encourages us to take back control over our well-being by embracing "unproductive" time, free from the pressure to always be performing or engaged.

Aiming for a More Meaningful Life

Together, these movements reflect growing frustration with a life that's always about optimizing. They call for lifestyles that focus on being intentional, mindful, and fostering personal growth, rather than just trying to be more efficient. In this way, these countercultural movements challenge the idea that more technology, productivity tools, and consumption automatically lead to happiness and fulfillment.

. By adopting minimalism, slow living, and digital detoxing habits, people are making efforts to take back their time and mental well-being, choosing instead a presence- and simplicity-oriented life (Binkley, 2014).

Additionally, rejection of over-optimization is also being adopted by different sectors, where well-being brands market relaxation, self-care, and mental wellness as a counter-narrative to the cult of perpetual self-optimization. These sectors are changing their narrative from constant improvement to acceptance and are providing goods and services for emotional wellness without the burden of always being "on" (Santos et al., 2015).

4.2 Social Disconnect and the Decline of Natural Interaction

The ubiquitous culture of optimization has far-reaching consequences for social conduct and human relationship. Consumers increasingly preoccupied with optimizing their productivity end up planning out every waking moment in the day, from professional activity to leisure, with hardly any room for spontaneous social engagement or idleness (Van Boven et al., 2010; Peterson & Thelen, 2020). Optimization software, meant to maximize efficiency, also accidentally limit the spontaneity-driven, organic interchanges that best create deep human connections. As a consequence, is a loss of ability for on-the-spot exchanges, informal hangouts, and periods of non-structured enjoyment—activities all necessary for sustaining and developing affective bonds as well as helping mental health (Miller et al., 2020).

As individuals grow more concerned with productivity, they more and more fill their days with a specificity that leaves little room for unprogrammed, "unproductive" time, such as unplanned hangouts with friends or gossip with co-workers (Bergström & Beukel, 2020). Unprogrammed interaction, traditionally seen as inefficient in an optimization culture, is vital time for stress relief, emotional release, and social bonding. A work by Santos et al. (2015) reveals that focus on ongoing efficiency leads to the decay of the quality of social interactions as people become more focused on the achievement of tasks than building relationships. This shift not only drains the richness of social connections but can also contribute to an increased sense of loneliness and social isolation, as individuals feel more disconnected from one another even though digital technologies are ubiquitous and intended to connect them more closely (Bergström & Beukel, 2020).

The erosion of spontaneous interaction is particularly apparent in the workplace. The ubiquity of time-tracking software, productivity applications, and efficiency-based management systems has the side effect of reducing opportunities for casual interactions between co-workers, which are commonly understood to be at the heart of collaboration, creativity, and a convivial work environment (Meyer & Marx, 2019). The obsession to maximize work hours can make a culture where individuals become hyper-sensitive to the achievement of tasks and overlook the informal interactions that create bonds and belonging (Santos et al., 2015). As Peterson & Thelen (2020) have reasoned, if performance and efficiency are the sole motivating factors, social bonding tends to be secondary, which leads to more burnout and discontent.

Decline of "Unproductive" Moments: A Loss of Connection

Perhaps the most profound impact of this optimization culture is the erosion of "unproductive" moments—those breaks or idle times that do not have a specific function but are essential to social and emotional well-being.

Lupton (2016) suggests that unstructured, spontaneous time is key for building relationships and recharging emotionally. Simple activities like chatting with a friend, taking a walk in the park, or having an easygoing coffee can help form strong bonds and social networks. But in today's efficiency-driven world, people often see these moments as wasted time and try to cut them out (Kuklinski et al., 2018). This shift can lower the quality of social interactions and increase feelings of isolation.

While social media is supposed to help us stay connected, it's often criticized for creating shallow relationships instead of deeper, in-person ones (Fournier & Avery, 2011). Even though these platforms keep us in touch across distances, they often lack the emotional depth and authenticity of face-to-face conversations. A study by van Doorn (2021) shows that social media can lead to "connected isolation," where people know what others are doing but don't really engage in meaningful ways. This can lead to loneliness, as people may have lots of online connections but few real, fulfilling in-person relationships.

Isolation and the Emotional Costs of Over-Optimization

The over-optimization culture inadvertently encourages individuals to consider their time as something that needs to be spent cost-effectively. Individuals therefore waive easy socializing for ostensibly more useful purposes and thereby contribute towards social isolation and loneliness. Miller et al. (2020) report that this ongoing pursuit of optimization can destroy social well-being, as individuals become increasingly intent on maximizing their performance at the cost of valuable interaction with other people. This can lead to the disintegration of social connections, with negative effects on mental health and satisfaction with life(Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989).

The loss of spontaneous social encounters is especially concerning because these interactions are often linked to positive emotions like happiness, contentment, and a sense of connection (Brown & Ryan, 2003). As the drive for optimization becomes more dominant, socializing starts to feel more like a task to complete, rather than a source of relaxation and emotional bonding. This shift in how we engage socially creates a paradox: even though we remain connected through technology, people might end up feeling more isolated and disconnected from one another (Santos et al., 2015).

5. THE FUTURE OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR: EMBRACING BALANCE AND IMPERFECTION

5.1 Balancing Consumption and Life

While optimization will continue to shape consumer behavior, it's important for consumers to recognize the value of balance (Schmidt, 2014). The pursuit of efficiency and productivity shouldn't come at the expense of personal well-being or social connections. Instead, consumers can benefit from embracing products and services that encourage balance, mindfulness, and rest (Park & Kim, 2020). This approach allows for a healthier, more sustainable way of navigating the demands of daily life.

For example, relaxation, self-care, and mental health wellness products are becoming more popular, as consumers understand that optimization must also involve periods of rest and contemplation (Meyer & Marx, 2019). A study by Tims et al. (2017) has discovered that when consumers emphasize balance in life, they experience increased well-being and satisfaction.

5.2 The Mental Benefits of Imperfection and Unstructured Time

An increasing body of research indicates consumers are enriched through the acceptance of imperfection and the integration of unstructured time into their daily lives (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989; Van Boven et al., 2010). Relaxation, creativity, and spontaneous consumption products and services are on the rise as consumers increasingly look to be more satisfied. By adopting a more philosophical and less structured way of living, consumers can provide room for qualitatively distinct experiences that are not quantifiable or optimizable (Santos et al., 2015). In the end, the attention needs to move away from perfection and towards optimizing and instead towards living a well-balanced life that has both productivity and personal satisfaction (Miller et al., 2020).

6. CONCLUSION

The consumerist compulsion towards optimization, which offers the promise of greater productivity and achievement, perhaps at the cost of individual health, social relations, and satisfaction with life overall. As consumers increasingly recognize the psychological cost that optimization can exact, there is growing interest in embracing more equitable strategies for consumption and living. By embracing imperfection, free time, and prioritizing wellness over perfection, consumers can rediscover a feeling of agency and meaning in life. The consumer future may be one of greater mindful optimization, where the value of productivity and leisure are equally valued as vital to long-term well-being (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989; Tims et al., 2017).

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