

# Investigation and Reflection on Consumption Status of College Students—Take Xiamen University of Technology as an Example

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**Abstract.** College students, as a kind of giant and potential group, have their special consuming characteristics. The undergraduates in Xiamen University of Technology were surveyed by means of questionnaires to analyze the consumption spending, consumption planning, consumption structure, social consumption, information consumption, level of consumption in order to propose thoughts on cultivation path of three-in-one consumption concept of college students: family serves as the primary factor; school as the basis; college students themselves as the inner core.

## 1. Introduction

Since the reform and opening-up, the rapid growth of China's economy has benefited thousands of households, and the people share the fruitful results brought by reform. Products in the market are more diverse in category, household income has increased than before and people's living standards have been improved, resulting in the change of consumption level and pattern. In particular, with the popularizing of the Internet and the rise of e-commerce in recent years, on-line shopping, beauty-appreciation, tourism, leisure and other consumption patterns are increasingly focused by consumers.

College students are a potential consumer group, as well as a favorite of merchants. They are getting more and more attention from all walks of life. However, just as the quality of products provided by merchants is uneven, the consumption behavior of college students also varies greatly. Recently, a lot of issues like "Is it enough for college students to live on one thousand yuan per month?", "College students are not affordable to their loans", "nude loan", wealth gap, flaunt wealth, comparing phenomenon, etc., have occurred among college students, which reminds educators to guide effectively college students' consumption concepts and behaviors. How to guide college students to establish correct consumption concepts and develop rational consumption patterns has become an important issue in education.

## 2. Survey on college students' consumption status

Students studying at Xiamen University of Technology were chosen as subjects. 350 freshmen, sophomore, junior and senior students in total were surveyed on their consumption status. Among them, 128 were male, accounting for 36.57%, and 222 were female, accounting for 63.43. %; Freshman 53, accounting for 15.15%, sophomore 89, accounting for 25.43%, junior students 97, accounting for 27.71% and senior students 111, accounting for 31.71%. In addition to the basic information, the questionnaire also covers issues such as their monthly living expenses, using condition of living expenses, consumption habits, consumption psychology, consumption behavior, propensity to consume, information consumption, etc.

### **3. Analysis on college students' consumption status**

#### **3.1 College students have a high consumption quota, but their consumption desire is not fully satisfied**

From the survey of college students' monthly living expenses, we can see that: 66.29% of college students have a monthly living cost of more than 1,500 yuan, and 24.86% have a monthly living cost of more than 2,500 yuan. The survey of college students' satisfaction on the amount monthly living expenses shows that: 33.14% of the students are not satisfied with the amount of monthly living expenses, and think that it is not enough, and 3.71% of college students think that it is almost enough. Based on the consumption level around Xiamen University of Technology, the monthly living cost of 1,500 yuan is taken as the average level. It can be found that a large part of the students' monthly living expenses is higher than this level, and some are far beyond, and even 33.14% of college students think that the cost of living is not enough. Their desire to consume has not been fully satisfied. However, some students majoring in art and engineering spend more on learning, which may account for their higher cost of living.

#### **3.2 College students' consumption planning is arbitrarily and lack of rationality**

Among the students surveyed, 62.86% of them said they made a plan on how to spend money each month, but only 24.86% persisted. 52.86% of them spend money whenever needed directly. In daily life, most students want to plan their own consumption. However, their optional consumption behavior and irresistible temptation and other factors often leave the plan without concrete result. In terms of post-consumption bookkeeping, 45.43% of college students have no record of usual consumption, and 29.43% only record a few consumptions of large amount. The survey shows that college students are lack of rationality in consumption and their plans on consumption often change in actual situation. They don't have the habit of planning and bookkeeping. They often can't recall what the money is spent on and sometimes they spend more money on some items, which shows instability and the tendency to blow money of college students in consumption. College students are blind and perceptual in consumption. They are more willing to spend money on items they like. According to the consumption planning, if without planning the impulse to buy if they want to bring irrational consumption. 51.71%-60.29% of college students will be affected by discounts and online shopping activities, which is inseparable from the interest of going shopping with friends and the convenience of online shopping. 54.57% of college students consume in the control of feelings. This shows that college students pay more attention on their own experiences and feelings when they consume. More than 50% of college students' spending is more likely to be driven by marketing tools and mood. 92% of them spend more on their favorite areas, and 25.71% of them often spend more on what they like.

#### **3.3 College students' consumption structure is diverse and the Engel's Coefficient is low**

Engel's Coefficient refers to the proportion of expense on food in total consumption expense. It is an important indicator to evaluate whether the change of consumption level and consumption structure is reasonable in a country or region.<sup>[1]</sup>By comparing the monthly food expenses with the monthly living expenses, we can see that college students' food costs are relatively low, only occupying about 50% of their living expenses and making college student's consumer Engel Coefficient at a low value. Due to the relatively low proportion of food cost, college students have more disposable expenses, which has increased the purchasing power of college students. In addition to purchasing daily necessities, they began to pay attention to and consume high-value goods. From the survey data, it can be seen that college students' resistance to market promotion and online shopping activities becomes lower and emotional consumption begins to increase. For example, the proportion of aesthetic consumption, leisure consumption, tourism consumption and interpersonal relationship consumption gradually increases, especially leisure and aesthetic consumption that accounts for nearly half of the total. Under the premise of maintaining basic life, college students have a greater need for leisure, entertainment and aesthetic consumption. This shows that undergraduates are in the middle of school and society and begin to pursue life quality.

### **3.4 College students' social consumption makes living cost higher**

The survey found that: 95.43% of college students have the need for gathering for meals, treating guests, and giving gifts, of which 23.71% of college students have a high frequency in these aspects. In terms of the amount of money spent each time, 95.42% of college students spend more than 50 yuan each time, and half of college students spend more than 100 yuan. In terms of the frequency of spending on interpersonal relationships and social activities, college students generally said that they would have dinner party once or twice a week. From this type of consumption, it can be seen that college students spend a relatively large amount of money in human relations and interpersonal relationships, and also maintain a high level of consumer demand. At the same time, it is found that college students focus on cheaper price and higher level when they gather for meals, treat guests, and give gifts. With the increasing shared time, the maintenance of classmate relations becomes more important, the amount of activity participation is higher, and the quality of life is pursued more. Therefore, the consumption of college students in maintaining interpersonal relationships and social activities has increased the cost beyond living.

### **3.5 College students' information consumption is common and popularity of electronic products is high**

Information consumption refers to consumption activities that directly or indirectly consume information products and information services.<sup>[2]</sup> It has become an important consumption segment for all ages, especially for college students. Electronic products such as mobile phones, laptops, desktops, PADs, video cameras, digital cameras, etc. account for a large proportion of consumption amount, and include the use of data and the data realization consumption. Almost every college student has a mobile phone, 40.57% of college students have mobile phones worth more than 5,000 yuan, of which iPhones account for 64.29%. 91.41% of college students owns laptops, and 71.43% of college students' computers valued at a high price of 3000-7000. 58% of college students' monthly data consumption is greater than 2.5G, of which 24.29% of college students use more than 4G data per month. Even in the case of wide WiFi coverage, cases of using large amounts of data still accounts for the vast majority.

### **3.6 College students' consumption level has increased over time**

77.71% college students said their monthly expense on consumption has increased over time compared to that when they just entered the university. With the development of interpersonal relations in school, college becomes socialized. Changes in their psychology and lifestyle lead to the increase of their living cost. Expenses on cloths, comparisons, cosmetics and interpersonal relations rise significantly. Regarding the consumption of surrounding students, 39.29% of college students think that it is slightly higher than their own. From the psychological aspect of comparison or social aspect, college students often want to catch up with their classmates' consumption level, which often enhances the implicit consumption of college students and encourages the pre-consumption concepts such as lending and installment to enter the campus.

### **3.7 College students' loan consumption tends to rise**

As college students' consumption is perceptual, it will inevitably happen that they want to buy something but lack of money. 77.43% of college students would choose to get money from parents or save their own money to buy what they need; 43.43% of college students would choose to give up; but some college students would choose to pay by installment or take a loan, which is rare in traditional consumption and reflects the younger-age trend of lending. It can be seen that lending, installment and excessive consumption have entered the campus. College students with perceptual consumption are vulnerable to temptation, which may lead to excessive consumption. But some students don't have the ability of repayment, for this reason, they may face financial stress and some other situations. College students will tend to be forced to take a lending and installment as college students are vulnerable to temptation when they consume perceptually. Therefore, a series of issues may be triggered. College students get their most money from parents, so the repayments

will be borne by parents in the end. In this regard, how to teach college students to deal with loan consumption rationally is the main solution to solve the problem of campus loan.

#### **4. Building a cultivation path for college students' three-in-one consumption concept**

##### **4.1 Family is primary for building a cultivation path for college students' three-in-one consumption concept**

The family is the fertile soil for personal growth, the first place where individuals receive education and is the first school in life. Also, parents are the first teachers of this school. Therefore, parents' attitude towards money, daily consumption habits and methods will have a subtle influence on their children's consumption concept. The diligent and thrifty family environment and effective family education influence are the prerequisites for college students to be excellent and the primary factors for cultivating correct consumption concepts.<sup>[3]</sup>At present, most college students are the only children in their family, and they often live at home with a good life that free from worries about food and clothing. Parents offer their children the best material needs instead of teaching the basic living skills, which strengthens children's dependence. Although the body age is mature, the psychological age is lagged behind, and cannot correctly locate their own family economic conditions and the corresponding level of consumption. The growth of college students is deeply influenced by the family environment, and parents should care about their children instead of spoiling them. They need to abandon over-protection and monopolization, appropriately allow children to take on the labor they can, exercise practical ability, cultivate independent living ability, master interaction abilities, and help their children establish a rational view of money and consumption.

##### **4.2 School is the basis for building a cultivation path for college students' three-in-one consumption concept**

As an important place for teaching, educating and cultivating talents, the school shoulders the glorious and arduous task of nurturing the successors of the socialist cause with Chinese characteristics in a new era. Therefore, the school is the basis for cultivating the correct consumption concept of college students. Specifically, first, gratitude education must be strengthened. Through gratitude education with "knowing, appreciating, repaying and offering kindness" as its mainline, college students are taught to calculate their education cost, follow the footprint of love, be filial to their parents, respect teachers, care for others, cherish the present, work diligently, study assiduously, feel grateful, forge ahead, and become a talent as young as possible. Second, financial management ability should be developed. "If one does not manage finances, he will be ignored by money". Fostering financial management ability has become a new fashion now. Schools can open related financial management courses and analyze scientific financial management cases for college students in order to establish their reasonable consumption concepts, let them orderly and effectively plan living expenses, and cultivate their positive financial awareness. Third, interpersonal skills should be cultivated. In colleges, interpersonal communication is becoming more and more important, and it is a necessary quality for entering the workplace. Schools should set up interpersonal communication related courses to teach college students how to use healthy and reasonable methods to correctly handle interpersonal relationships, avoid being deeply affected by the erosion of social unhealthy practices, eliminate the spread of purposeful dinner inviting which increases the financial burden for college students.

##### **4.3 College students themselves are the core of building a cultivation path for college students' three-in-one consumption concept**

The principle of internal and external factors of Marxist dialectical material reveals that contradiction is the motive force for the development of things. The development of things is the result of internal and external factors. The internal factors are the basis and the external factors are the conditions. The external factors work through internal factors.<sup>[4]</sup>Therefore, college students

themselves are the core of building a cultivation path for college students' three-in-one consumption concept. Specifically, the first is to focus on study. The vast majority of college students rely on their parents financially. College students should focus on their academic works, concentrate on learning knowledge, understand the difficulties of their parents' work, and establish a thrifty consumption concept instead of comparing better clothing and wealth or pursuing interpersonal relationships. College students should consciously resist the influence of social bad habits, be aware of the disadvantages of comparisons in consumption and lending, and cultivate mature and robust consumption concepts. The second is trying to be self-support. In addition to time in classroom, college life has relatively abundant free time. College students should make full use of their spare time, actively participate in work-study programs, part-time jobs, or start a business. In this way, they can earn their living expenses through their own labor, experience the hardships of labor and making money, try to support themselves, help their parents, as well as accumulate social experience for a good foundation for future graduation and social life.

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