

The Feasibility Study of Integrating the Education of College Students' Consumption Concept into Ideological and Political Education

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Abstract: China's consumption is upgrading with new trends and features, and the «Z generation» has become a major force in the consumer market. Education on the consumption concept among college students is an imperative approach to address the challenges posed by Western pluralistic values and consumerism discourse, thereby facilitating a more professional and scholarly expression in line with the requirements of Nature journal. This educational intervention aids students in comprehending the essence of consumerism, augmenting their cognition of self-value, and guiding them towards a rational and wholesome perspective on consumption that prioritizes individuals as well as national interests. The consumption outlook education of college students resonates with and complements ideological and political education, exhibiting a remarkable consistency across various dimensions. This congruence establishes a robust foundation for the integration of consumption outlook education into ideological and political education.

Keywords: Education on the consumption concept; Ideological and political education

The Second Session of the 14th CPPCC National Committee pointed out: China's consumption upgrading has shown new trends and characteristics, with the consumption concept changing from conformity to "conformity + personality"; the consumption type changing from survival to both development and enjoyment; the consumption mode changing from traditional to green and digital; and the consumption subject, accounting for 19% of China's total population, is gradually becoming the main force of the consumer market. The current college students are what we call "Generation Z", whose growth is accompanied by the development of mobile payment and online shopping, as well as the prevalence of Western consumerism. Whether the consumption concept of this group is correct, rational and scientific is not only related to the sustainability of China's economic development and consumption recovery, but also related to the ideological security of China.

1. Connotation of consumption concept education

The consumption view refers to the fundamental attitude and perspective of consumers towards consumption, encompassing various aspects such as consumption patterns, behaviors, choices, credit biases, and more. It is an integral part of the value concept and represents its manifestation in the realm of consumption. According to Marxism, human social development unfolds through a continuous process of production and consumption. Material resource production serves as a prerequisite for engaging in consumption activities that ultimately aim at satisfying needs. Undoubtedly, consumption plays a crucial role in driving economic and societal progress; however, it is crucial to remain vigilant against an excessive pursuit of materialism that overlooks the intrinsic value created solely through labor, thereby raising concerns regarding the ideology of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

The objective of educating college students on their consumption outlook is to facilitate the establishment of a correct perspective on consumption and values, impart fundamental economic knowledge, rectify orientations towards consumption values, and broaden channels for making informed choices regarding consumption. From a goal-oriented standpoint, this education aims to deepen college students' sense of responsibility towards society, family, and ecological resources while fostering a propensity for moderate consumption.

In terms of the content aspect, considering the characteristics and consumption habits of college students, particularly in light of national policies aimed at stimulating domestic demand, it is not advisable to advocate blind frugality and saving. It is crucial to both respect the consumption patterns of young individuals and foster a proper and sustainable outlook on consumption. Education regarding college students' consumption outlook should encompass aspects such as consumption structure, psychology, culture, and finance. Consumption structure refers to the relationship between different types of consumer products in terms of quantity and monetary proportion. For instance, the Gini coefficient serves as a typical tool for describing consumption structure. By incorporating education on consumption structure and financial matters, college students can effectively allocate their income while striving to assess the value derived from various categories of expenditure. Given the influence of diverse cultures and rampant consumerism trends, it is inevitable that college students may engage in excessive spending driven by superficial comparisons or an inclination towards brand endorsements or scene-based purchases. Consequently, psychological understanding related to consumption behavior along with cultural education becomes indispensable for enabling college students to resist Western cultural influences.

2. The significance of consumption concept education for college students

College life represents a crucial phase for college students, characterized by their integration into society and the development of essential skills. During this stage, it is imperative to provide accurate guidance and correction in order to foster a strong cohort capable of contributing towards national rejuvenation through the cultivation of sound consumption concepts.

On one hand, educating college students about their consumption outlook is a necessary strategy to address the challenges posed by Western pluralistic values and the influential discourse power of consumerism. Developed countries not only achieve early capital accumulation and global expansion of modern capitalism but also engage in cultural infiltration through powerful media discourse and well-established cultural industries. This value infiltration particularly occurs within the realm of consumption, where consumerism, hedonism, and nihilism continue to exert influence on college students' values. Consumerism leads many college students to solely prioritize individual-level value meanings while disregarding multidimensional values and evaluations. Consumerism restricts college students' perception to an "ego" sense with a narrow vision focused on the interests of a small minority group, thereby channeling people's pursuit of happiness primarily into daily consumption. College students exhibit deviations in their value cognition, perceiving money as paramount and exerting dominance over everything. To acquire wealth, they detach individual worth from labor, separate personal conduct from emotions, and willingly commodify themselves, displaying a pronounced inclination towards commercialization. Consequently, ideological and political education within colleges and universities should confront the adverse influence of consumerism on students' values and perspectives on consumption. By means of cultivating a consumption outlook through education, college students can gain profound insights into the essence of consumerism, enhance their understanding of self-value cognition, transcend limited perspectives, and embrace Marxist consumption outlooks as well as socialist core values.

On the other hand, college students' education on consumption outlook significantly impacts their overall quality and value, as well as the future of the country. Implementing comprehensive education on college students' consumption to compensate for the inadequate attention given to their ideological and political education regarding consumption outlook and personal lifestyle is crucial. This will enable college students to effectively navigate through a complex and ever-changing social landscape, empowering them to firmly resist various external temptations while assuming a leading role in shaping societal trends. By guiding students towards a rational and scientifically informed healthy consumption outlook rooted in both individual aspirations and national interests, they can better adapt to prevailing economic conditions and international circumstances.

3. The basis of integrating consumption concept education into ideological and political education

As a crucial component of ideological and political education in higher education institutions, the integration of college students' consumption outlook education with ideological and political education demonstrates an inherent alignment at a profound level. This is primarily manifested through their shared objectives, complementary content, and consistent educational approaches.

Firstly, the two goals are mutually reinforcing. In terms of the overarching objective, both aim to cultivate competent builders and successors for socialism with Chinese characteristics, while fostering college students' transformation into new individuals aligned with contemporary demands. The education of consumption concept should be guided by Marxism, and in terms of ideological and political education, it is crucial to recognize that "the issue of consumption behavior and its values extends beyond mere adaptation to the market economy's operational system; rather, it represents a historical category within

pedagogy constrained by specific institutional factors and ideologies.” Specifically, through cultivating individual consumption literacy, the education of consumption concept enables individuals to reflect on their societal responsibilities during the process of consumption—a notion consistent with the emphasis on social responsibility and civic consciousness in ideological and political education.

Secondly, the two contents complement each other. Consumer education constitutes an indispensable element of ideological and political education. From a dialectical perspective, the education of consumption concept represents an embodiment of ideological and political education in the micro field of consumption. It provides theoretical support and value guidance for the education of consumption concept, offering essential knowledge and a theoretical framework regarding consumption ethics and law that are required by such educational efforts. By complementing each other in content, these two forms of education contribute to establishing a comprehensive and systematic educational system that promotes all-round development among college students.

Thirdly, the two approaches are congruent. The objective of college students’ consumption concept education is not to undermine the existing curriculum system of ideological and political theory, nor does it aim to establish a new operational framework. Its true purpose lies in delving deeply into and integrating elements and practical connections related to the current resources of ideological and political education in order to address blind spots and deficiencies within colleges and universities’ ideological and political work. This integration at the methodological level promotes collaboration between these two domains. In terms of fundamental attributes, college students’ consumption concept education still falls under the purview of ideological-political education with moral education as its core. These two aspects complement each other synergistically while facilitating holistic student development.

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