



**A STUDY OF PRESENT CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOR OF
COLLEGE STUDENTS IN DALIAN**

**YANG HANG
6417195420**

**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
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This Independent Study has been Approved as a Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements of the Degree of Master of Business Administration

Advisor: 

(Dr. Zhang Li)

Date: 12 / 6 / 2024

..... 
(Associate Professor Dr. Jomphong Mongkhonvanit)
Dean, Graduate School of Business Administration

Date: 27 / 6 / 2024

Title: A Study of Present Consumption Behavior of College Students in Dalian
By: Yang Hang
Degree: Master of Business Administration
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Advisor:

.....
(Dr. Zhang Li)
12 / 6 2024
.....

ABSTRACT

In recent years, the number of works on the consumption behavior of university students has been increasing, marking a new stage in the study of the consumption behavior of university students in China. This has led to controversies between the Chinese and the Western views of consumption, with high consumption, over-consumption, blind imitation, illegal consumption, and other irrational consumption becoming a topic of social concern. This study investigated the consumption behavior of university students in Dalian against the backdrop of China's rapid economic development, which presents unique consumption patterns among these students. The main problem addressed was the alignment of their behavior with the current economic and emotional theories. The objectives include the following: 1) To explore the influence of family monthly income on the consumption behavior of university students in China. 2) To assess the role of consumer emotions in shaping the consumption behavior of university students.

Utilizing the Consumer Behavior Theory and the New Consumer Theory, the study employed the questionnaire-based quantitative research method, with a sample of 550 students from four universities in Dalian, achieving an 86.9% valid response rate. Through correlation analysis, the findings indicated: 1) a significant relationship between family monthly income and consumption behavior and 2) a significant influence of consumer emotions on consumption behavior.

The study concludes that both economic and emotional factors are critical in shaping consumption behavior, warranting educational strategies that promote financial

literacy and emotional intelligence among students. The findings of this study offer several avenues for future research to build upon the understanding of university students' consumption behavior in Dalian. While the current study has established the significant roles of family monthly income and consumer emotions in influencing the consumption behavior, further research could elaborate these findings by addressing some of the limitations encountered.

Keywords: consumption behavior, family income, consumer emotions

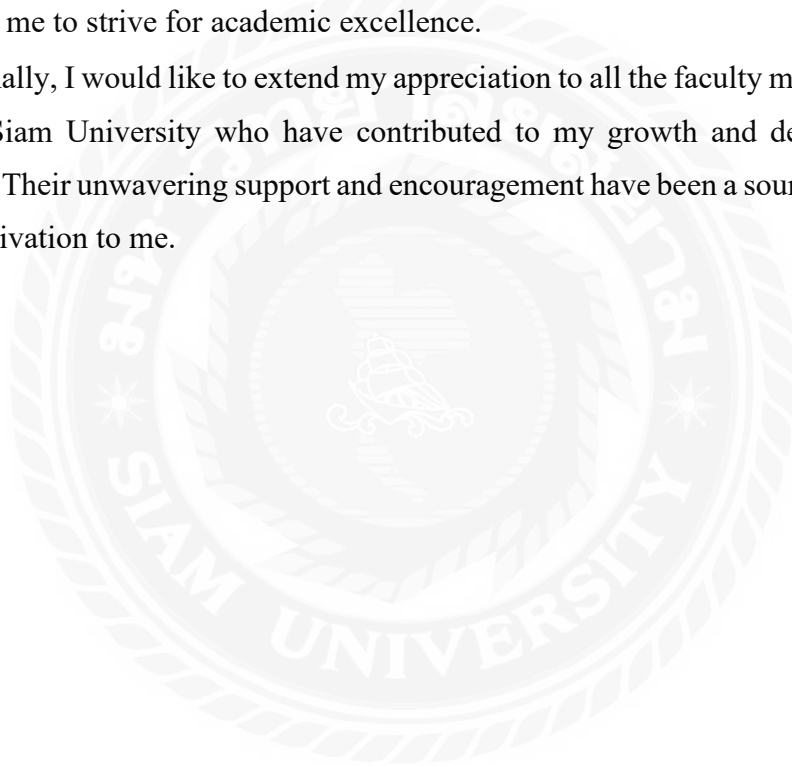


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Declaration

I, YANG HANG, hereby certify that the work embodied in this independent study entitled “A STUDY OF PRESENT CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOR OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN DALIAN” is result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

(YANG HANG)

APR 9, 2024



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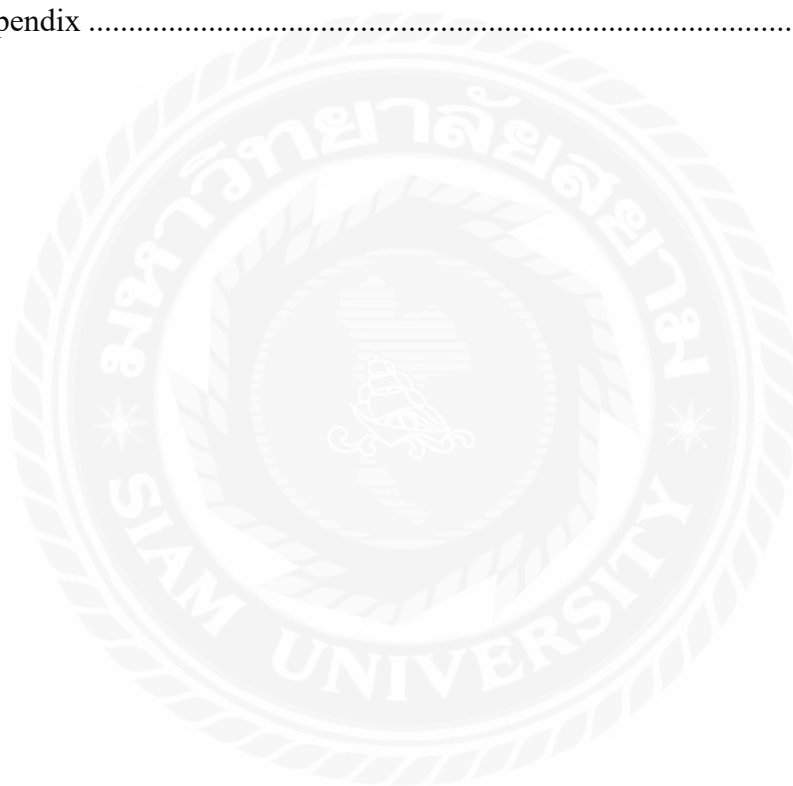


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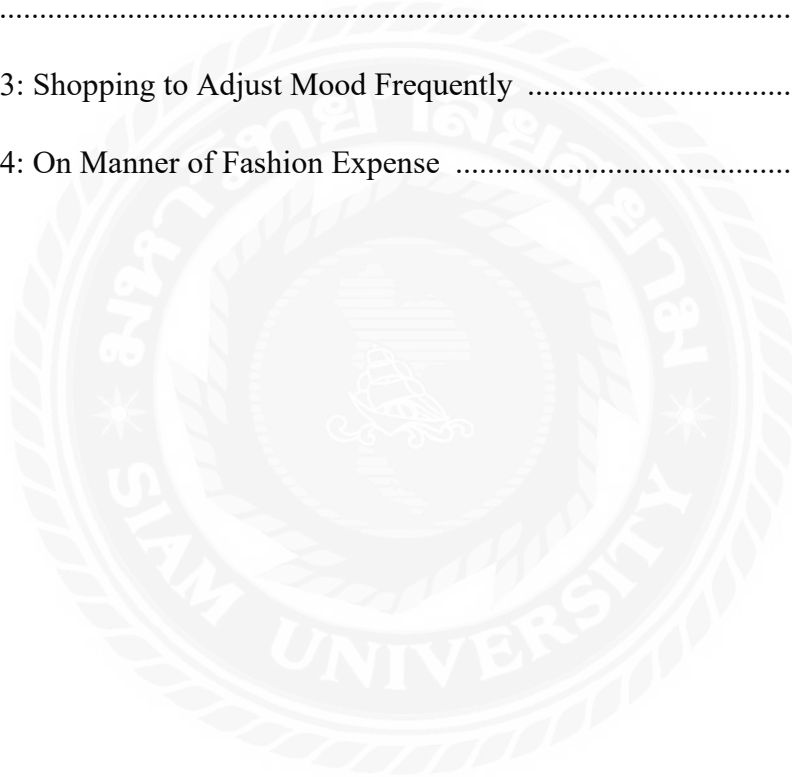


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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

The consumption behavior of university students is an important reflection of their values. In a domestic environment where the economy is developing rapidly and the scale of universities is expanding, university students, as a group of consumers who receive higher education and decide the future development of the country, have a profound influence on the whole country and society whether their consumption behavior is reasonable or not (Dai & Song, 2006). The guidance and education of students' consumption behavior is an important part of their education. It is the responsibility of society to establish the correct consumer attitudes of university students, and education on consumer attitudes is a huge and complex systemic project that cannot be achieved overnight. It is the responsibility of the whole society to establish a correct consumption concept among university students (Jiang, 2002). In recent years, the number of works on the consumption behavior of university students has been increasing, marking a new stage in the study of the consumption behavior of university students in China. It is of great practical significance and theoretical value to analyze and study the current situation of college students' consumption behavior, identify the unreasonable factors among them and provide guidance and education.

The landscape of consumer behavior has been evolving rapidly, particularly in the context of university students in China. This demographic, often characterized by unique consumption patterns, represents a microcosm of broader societal shifts.

The Consumer Behavior Theory, as pioneered by scholars such as Zhou and Wang (2018), posits that economic factors like family monthly income significantly impact consumption choices. This theory suggests that income levels dictate not only the ability but also the manner of consumption, aligning with traditional economic models (Li & Zhao, 2017). In contrast, New Consumer Theory, with its roots in the works of Chen (2019), shifts the focus to psychological factors. It emphasizes that consumer emotions play a pivotal role in shaping consumption behaviors, echoing sentiments found in Western literature, such as those by Smith and Johnson (2016).

In synthesizing these theories, this study aims to explore the dynamic interplay between economic and emotional factors in shaping the consumption behaviors of

university students in China. This exploration is crucial in an era marked by rapid economic development and cultural shifts, particularly in a society where consumerism is increasingly prevalent (Zhang & Liu, 2020). By understanding these variables, this research seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on consumer behavior, offering insights that are pertinent not only to academics but also to marketers and policymakers.

1.2 Problems of the study

University students are an important part of the consumer group in society, with higher education, broader knowledge, more complex knowledge structures and deeper theoretical levels. They are the most active, the most responsive and the least conservative group of intellectuals and are the driving force of future social development. In times of rapid social change and transformation, the values of university students often determine the direction of social change (Deng, 2005). The exemplary effect of Western consumerism and hedonistic consumption concepts and lifestyles is particularly strong and widespread among contemporary university students in China, which has led to new characteristics of university students' consumption behavior in the era of globalization, as well as to confusion in the convergence and collision of Chinese and Western consumption views (Cui, 2004). This has led to a controversies between the Chinese and the Western views of consumption, with high consumption, over-consumption, blind imitation, illegal consumption, and other irrational consumption becoming a topic of social concern. Therefore, it is necessary for us to analyze and study this special group of consumers objectively and scientifically, to explore the characteristics of consumption of contemporary university students, and to clarify the interrelationship between various social factors affecting the consumption behavior of contemporary university students, to do a good job in educating university students and correctly guiding their consumption (Li, 2006).

1.3 Objectives of the study

1. To explore the influence of family monthly income on the consumption behavior of university students in China.

2. To examine the role of consumer emotions in shaping the consumption behavior of university students.

1.4 Scope of the study

The scope of this study was specifically tailored to understanding the consumption behaviors of university students in Dalian, China. This geographical focus was chosen due to Dalian's unique position as a major city with a diverse student population and a dynamic economic environment. The study explored how family monthly income and consumer emotions influence student spending habits within this urban context.

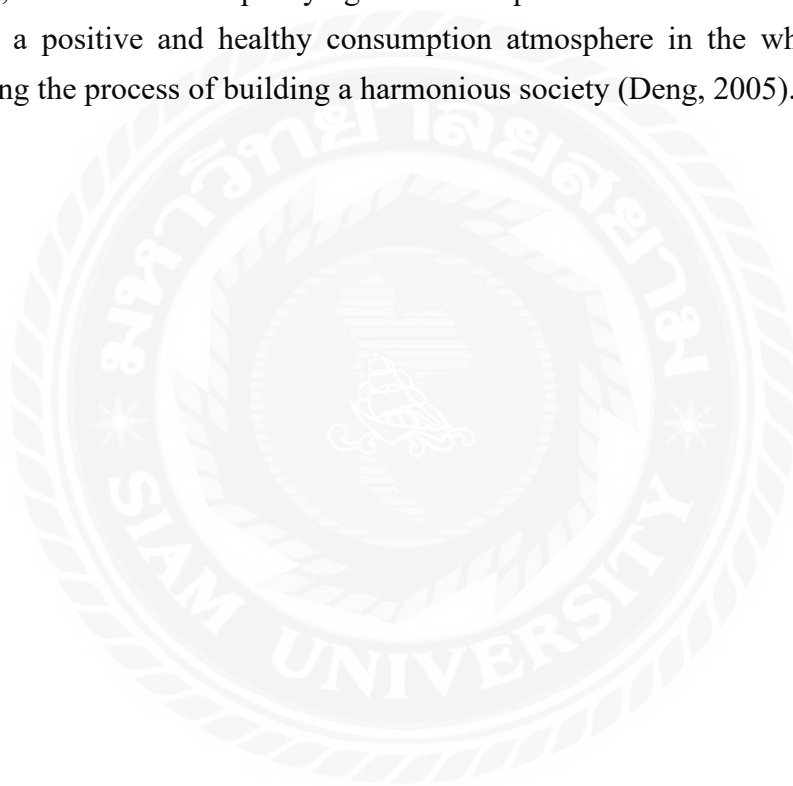
While the research provides insights into the broader trends of youth consumer behavior in China, its findings are primarily applicable to the student demographic in Dalian. The study did not extend to other cities or rural areas, nor did it delve into other age groups. This focused approach allows for a deeper, more contextual understanding of the factors influencing consumption among university students in this specific urban setting.

1.5 Significance of the study

The formation of values is closely related to the usual behavioral habits. Some students have the idea of extravagant consumption and hedonism, and some of them even talk about such verbal phrases as "life is short, enjoy it in time", which highlights the lack of education and guidance for students' consumption. This highlights the current situation of insufficient education and guidance for university students on the concept of consumption. Therefore, analyzing the consumption structure of university students, identifying the problems in their consumption and guiding them in a reasonable way is a process of cultivating values based on behavioral education, which is highly relevant to the current stage of university students' unreasonable consumption structure and unhealthy consumption concepts (Cui, 2004). Through the cultivation and guidance of consumption and money concepts, students will understand the importance of healthy and positive consumption concepts, which will play an extremely important role in the development of correct values and will also play an important role in promoting the overall development of students.

Under the situation of rapid expansion of universities, the number of college students' consumption groups in China is increasing, and under the influence of many factors, the consumption structure of college students is also changing, and some

students have the phenomenon of unreasonable consumption structure, which brings greater burden to their families and society (Lin, 2001). The study of the consumption behavior of university students, the identification of their consumption patterns, and the formulation of rational suggestions for their problematic consumption are conducive to improving their consumption structures and concepts, thereby reducing the economic burden on their families, and are of great importance to the construction of a harmonious society. At the same time, by constructing a reasonable consumption structure and reducing unnecessary losses and waste in the consumption of university students, it is conducive to purifying the consumption environment on campus, thereby creating a positive and healthy consumption atmosphere in the whole society and promoting the process of building a harmonious society (Deng, 2005).



Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Consumption and Consumer Behavior

Understanding consumption and consumer behavior, particularly among university students in Dalian, necessitates a nuanced approach that considers both economic and emotional dimensions. The concept of consumption, as defined by Zhang and Liu (2019), is not merely a transactional act but a reflection of deeper socio-economic and psychological processes. This viewpoint is especially relevant in the context of university students, whose consumption patterns are often influenced by a blend of financial constraints and emotional motivations.

The influence of family monthly income on consumption behavior has been well-documented in Chinese academic literature. Studies by Wang and Zhou (2020) highlight how income levels among families directly correlate with students' spending habits, affecting everything from necessities to luxury items. These economic constraints and opportunities shape the consumer landscape in significant ways.

Complementing this economic perspective is the role of consumer emotions in driving behavior. According to Li and Chen (2018), emotional factors such as peer influence, status-seeking, and personal gratification play a substantial role in shaping the consumption decisions of young adults. This emotional dimension adds a layer of complexity to the understanding of consumer behavior, as it transcends purely economic considerations.

Consumption is defined in a broad sense and in a narrow sense. Consumption in a broad sense includes production consumption, which refers to the consumption of tools, raw materials, fuel, manpower and other means of production and living labor in the production process, and personal consumption, which refers to the consumption of various material means of subsistence, labor, and spiritual goods by people to satisfy their own needs (Lu & He, 2003). Consumption in a narrow sense refers to personal consumption. In general, when we talk about consumption, we mean consumption in the narrow sense, i.e., personal consumption. Individual consumption has a dual nature, being both a natural process and a social process (Guo, 2007). On the one hand, people consume all kinds of consumer goods and services to satisfy their physiological and

psychological needs, such as food to relieve hunger and clothing to protect themselves from the cold, which reflect the natural process of consumption (Ma, 2006). On the other hand, people's consumption activities are always carried out in the context of certain social relations and cannot be carried out in isolation from society, which is why they are social in nature (Wang, 2006).

Consumption behavior is the sum of people's behavior in acquiring and consuming goods to satisfy their material and cultural needs in their daily lives (including clothing, food, housing, transport and labor), and in accordance with their income conditions, and it includes the ways and means of consumer behavior, the process of behavior and its changes (Xu, 2003). It includes the ways and means of consumer behavior, the process of behavior and its changes (Cui, 2004). Consumption is mainly characterized by the act of buying, which is the process by which people buy goods to satisfy their needs. It has the following characteristics:

Consumer behavior is a means of satisfying a need or desire. The act of consumption is the product of mental activity. It is a process. Consumer behavior is not something that happens now when a consumer pays money or uses a credit card to obtain certain goods or services, it is a process (Shi & Huang, 2004). According to individual economic theory, the process of consumer behavior can be divided into six stages: 1. Awareness stage: discovering the existence of the product; 2. Understanding stage: learning about the usefulness of the product; 3. Liking stage: developing a favorable impression of the product; 4. Preference stage: extending the favorable impression of the product to other aspects; 5. Conviction stage: developing a desire to buy due to preference, believing that buying is a wise choice; 6. Purchase stage: the change from attitude to actual action. These stages are closely linked and inseparable (Ma, 2002). These six stages follow on from each other in time and coexist in space. It is a circular, spiraling process that always starts with the need to consume and the need to consume and ends with the satisfaction of the need to consume through various choices of purchasing activities.

In synthesizing these perspectives, this study aims to construct a comprehensive view of consumption behavior among university students in Dalian, factoring in both the tangible influence of family income and the intangible impact of consumer emotions.

2.2 Consumption Behavior of University Students

The consumption behavior of university students is usually defined as the process of consuming material and spiritual goods during their daily life, in order to satisfy their own needs and in accordance with their economic conditions (which mostly depend on the economic conditions of their families). The consumption behavior of university students meets all the characteristics of general consumption behavior. Compared to the average consumer, university students are a special group of consumers (Zhang, 2003).

First, university students are at an age when they are young, physically, and mentally mature and can work. However, as they are enrolled in higher education, they spend most of their time and energy on their studies and are not able to work full time and therefore do not have a stable economic income (Ruan, 2005). Secondly, students have stable financial resources (Zhang, 2001). Their living expenses are either brought to school from home in a lump sum each semester or sent home every month. Even families with modest incomes do their best to meet their students' spending needs. In addition, most of the university students are studying away from home, living relatively independently and without the restraint of their parents, so they have absolute control over their own living expenses (Guo, 2007). This is a special feature of university students' spending.

The consumption behavior of university students, particularly in a vibrant city like Dalian, is a multifaceted phenomenon that demands a closer examination in relation to family income and emotional factors. Liu and Huang (2017) emphasize that university students, often experiencing independence for the first time, exhibit unique spending patterns influenced by their socio-economic background. This includes essentials such as food and accommodation, as well as discretionary spending on entertainment and technology.

In addition, the emotional aspect of consumption among students is a critical area of study. Zhao and Li (2019) highlight that emotional drivers such as the desire for social acceptance and personal satisfaction significantly influence students' purchasing decisions. These decisions often reflect a blend of rational economic considerations and emotional impulses, suggesting a complex interplay of factors at work.

By focusing on these aspects, this study aims to unravel the intricate web of influences that shape the consumption behaviors of university students in Dalian, thereby contributing valuable insights into this significant demographic.

2.3 New Consumer Theory

The New Consumer Theory, a pivotal aspect of this study, explores the intricate relationship between consumer emotions and their purchasing behavior, particularly in the context of university students in Dalian. As highlighted by Zhang and Wei (2021), this theory delves into the psychological underpinnings of consumption, asserting that emotional factors often outweigh traditional economic considerations in consumer decision-making processes. This approach is particularly relevant in understanding the behavior of young consumers, who may place significant value on emotional satisfaction and social trends.

Incorporating insights from both Chinese and Western scholars, this section explores how emotional drivers such as the need for self-expression, peer influence, and the pursuit of happiness shape the consumer behavior of university students. This exploration is crucial for comprehending the holistic consumer profile in the modern Chinese context, especially in urban settings like Dalian.

The American scholar David Lewis introduced the concept of the new consumer. He points out that the past few years have seen a rapid development and increase in the economic importance of a group of consumers whose attitudes, aspirations and buying patterns are different from those of any previous consumer group - the new consumers (Dai & Song, 2006). They are called new because they have a very distinctive style of consumption.

The authors point out that the new consumers are more individualistic, focused, independent, and well-informed. Firstly, the new consumers are much better able to see and describe things with their eyes, to adapt and make sense of complex situations, to move their eyes very quickly from computer games, pop records, TV commercials and films, i.e. they can adapt quickly to the rapid movement of their vision and make sense of certain information more easily; the new consumers are independent thinkers, with an increasing dominance of the consumer as an individual and a relative reduction in

the importance of society(Cui, 2004). The new consumers are independent thinkers and are increasingly dominant as individuals, while the importance of society is relatively low; the new consumers demand product uniqueness while still ensuring practicality. In addition, the new consumers are in an era of rapid social development, where the internet and the telephone are so widespread that they are particularly well informed about products (Ruan, 2005).

These characteristics are very much in line with the consumption characteristics of today's university students, and it is therefore necessary to analyze the consumption behavior and philosophy of university students in China based on the new consumer theory.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is guided by theoretical insights into the relationship between two independent variables – family monthly income and consumer emotions – and their influence on the dependent variable, consumption behavior of university students in Dalian. Guided by the Consumer Behavior Theory, family monthly income is posited to have a direct influence on consumption choices, where higher income levels potentially lead to greater spending capacity (Zhang & Wang, 2018). In contrast, the New Consumer Theory suggests that consumer emotions play a pivotal role in shaping purchasing decisions, potentially overriding economic constraints (Chen & Liu, 2020). This framework aims to explore how these variables interact, revealing the complex dynamics of student consumption behavior.

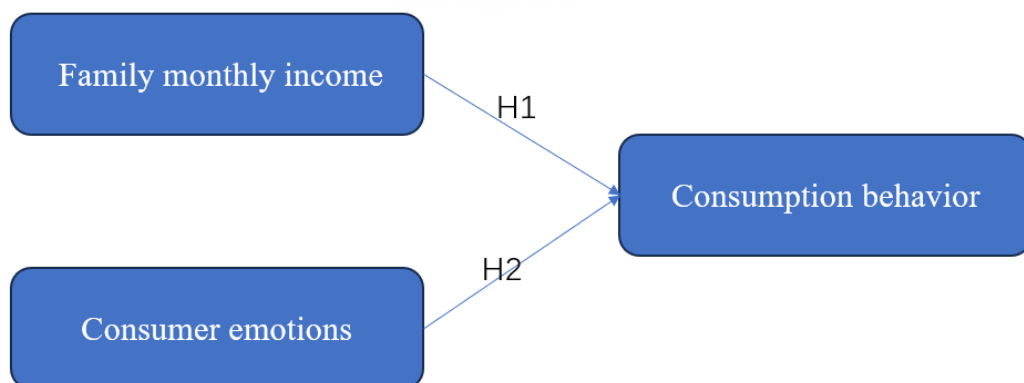


Figure 1 Research framework

So, Based on the conceptual framework of this study, the following two hypotheses were proposed.

H 1: There is a significant relationship between family monthly income and the consumption behavior of university students in Dalian.

H 2: Consumer emotions significantly influence the consumption behavior of university students in Dalian.



Chapter 3. Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This study used the quantitative research method. The study was based on a review of literature and theoretical knowledge of consumer behavior and consumer psychology. The questionnaire was designed to investigate and analyze the structure of university students' consumption behavior and their attitudes towards consumption, to understand in detail the current situation of university students' consumption behavior in Dalian.

The study was based on theories of consumer behavior, theoretical knowledge of consumer psychology, the rapid development of China's market economy and the fact that the consumption level in Dalian is relatively high among the cities in China.

3.2 Research design

Based on the characteristics of contemporary college students' consumption behavior, a questionnaire on the current situation of college students' consumption behavior was prepared with reference to relevant materials. Using non-probability sampling, 550 copies of the questionnaire were distributed in four universities in Dalian.

The questionnaire for this study was developed according to the meaning and characteristics of university students' consumption, with reference to the results of previous research studies by scholars and in-depth analysis. The questionnaire is self-administered and consists of three parts. The first part of the questionnaire is a survey on the basic information of the subject. The second part is a survey on the basic consumption of university students, mainly on their consumption structure, including three questions on monthly consumption (in order of total monthly consumption, normal monthly spending on food and other consumption), one question on personal fashion consumption, six questions on social and recreational consumption (including love consumption), one question on personal development consumption, and one question on financial habits. 5 questions on financial management habits. The third part is a survey on the attitudes of university students towards consumption, including emotional consumption, brand consumption, fashion consumption and face-saving consumption.

The questionnaire is in a closed-ended format. A closed-ended questionnaire is one in which the researcher has designed the questions and the possible answers in advance, and the respondents can only choose one or a few ready-made answers from among the alternatives.

3.3 Sampling and Data Collection

A total of 550 students from four universities in Dalian, Liaoning Province, were selected for this survey. The reason for choosing these four schools is that Dalian is a young, open and modern city, located on the coast, with rapid economic development, and is representative of cities of the same level in China. The study was conducted in Dalian University of Technology and Dalian University of Science and Technology. This study selected full-time undergraduate students at Dalian University of Technology, Dalian Maritime University, Dalian University and Dalian Jiaotong University. The selection of schools was divided into key institutions (Dalian University of Technology and Dalian Maritime University) and general institutions (Dalian Jiaotong University and Dalian University), and students of different levels and majors were covered. The questionnaires were distributed by non-random sampling, and 550 questionnaires were returned, of which 478 were valid, with a valid return rate of 86.9%.

Table 3.1 Questionnaires distributed

Number of Questionnaires Distributed	Number of Valid Responses	Valid Response Rate (%)
550	478	86.9

3.4 Reliability and Validity Analysis of Questionnaire

As shown in Table 1, we analyzed the reliability of the obtained data using SPSS22.0. The Cronbach' Alpha reliability coefficient was greater than 0.7, which is a desirable level.

Table 3.2 Reliability test

Variable	Cronbach 'Alpha
monthly consumption level	0.713
consumer attitudes	0.754

SPSS 22.0 software was used to study the questionnaire and the data obtained was analyzed with the help of KMO values. The results of the survey were valid and the questionnaire had good structural validity and could be analyzed for the next phase of the study.

Table 3.3 Validity test

	monthly consumption level	consumer attitudes
KMO	0.731	0.686

3.5 Data Analysis

This study selected the correlation analysis to test two hypotheses: H1 and H2. Correlation analysis is a statistical method employed to measure the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables.

Firstly, the correlation analysis revealed the relationship between variables in an intuitive manner. For hypothesis H1, which states that "There is a significant relationship between family monthly income and the consumption behavior of university students in Dalian," the correlation analysis quantified the association between family monthly income and consumption behavior. This helped in determining whether income levels have significantly influenced consumption behavior. Similarly, for hypothesis H2, which posits that "Consumer emotions significantly influence the consumption behavior of university students in Dalian," the correlation analysis identified the degree of association between emotional changes and consumption behavior, thus elucidating the role of emotions in consumer decision-making.

Secondly, the results of correlation analysis is easy to interpret and present. The correlation coefficients demonstrate whether there is a positive or negative correlation between family monthly income and consumption behavior, as well as between consumer emotions and consumption behavior. This not only aided understanding of the research questions but also provided a basis for subsequent in-depth analyses.

Lastly, the correlation analysis is relatively simple yet effective. It has been well-suited to existing data structure and provides initial validation of relationships for further regression analyses and more complex models.



Chapter 4. Findings

4.1 Analysis of the relationship between family monthly income and consumption behavior

Monthly spending is the average monthly cost of living for students during their time at university. This includes the normal monthly expenses for basic food, clothing, housing and transport as well as other expenses such as socializing, entertainment and leisure. Understanding the monthly consumption of university students helps us to grasp the general characteristics and structure of consumption of contemporary university students.

In a survey of the total monthly consumption of university cattle, we found that 62.4% of university students spend between RMB 500 and 1200 per month; 25.7% spend less than RMB 500 per month, and 5.9% of students in difficulty spend even less than RMB 300 per month; on the other hand, 13% of students spend more than RMB 1,200 per month. On the other hand, 13% of students spend more than RMB 1,200 per month.

Table 4.1 Relation between Total Consumption per Month and Family Locus

		Total monthly consumption					total
		Below 300 RMB	300-500 RMB	500-800RMB	800-1200RMB	Above 1200RMB	
Home Location	Large and medium-sized cities	6	0	42	54	44	146
		21.4%	0%	30.9%	33.3%	71%	30.5%
	towns	0	44	66	90	18	218
		0%	48.9%	48.5%	55.6%	29%	45.6%
	Rural	22	46	28	18	0	114
78.6%		51.1%	20.6%	11.1%	0%	23.8%	
Total		28	90	136	162	62	478

In the correlation analysis, Pearson's product distance correlation coefficient (abbreviated as r) was used to describe the correlation analysis of each factor. 0.90 is a significant correlation; and 0.90-1 is the highest correlation. In the analysis, it was

found that the total monthly consumption of university students was not correlated with gender, major, grade and whether they were only children, but was correlated with family location and monthly family income.

Table 4.2 Symmetric Measures between Total Consumption per Month and Family Locus

		Value	Asymp . Std . Error(a)	Approx . T(b)	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson'S R	- 0.502	0.037	-12.664	0.000
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	- 0.492	0.037	-12.320	0.000
N of Valid Cases		478			

The location of a university student's family has an influence on the total amount of monthly consumption. Among the students who spend more than RMB 1200 per month, 71% of the students whose families are in large and medium-sized cities and 29% of the urban students, while no rural students spend more than RMB 1200. 68.4% of the students in large and medium-sized cities and urban students spend more than RMB 800 per month. In contrast, 88.9% of rural students spend less than RMB 800 per month. This shows that there is a correlation between the location of the family and the total monthly consumption of university students.

4.2 Analysis of the relationship between consumer emotions and consumption behavior

In a survey on whether university students often use shopping to regulate their mood, 51.7% of students chose "yes" and "quite yes", indicating that This shows that university students' consumption is clearly influenced by their moods. In the correlation analysis of the variable "often use shopping as a way to regulate my mood", we found the strongest correlation between this variable and gender. 69.5% of the female students chose "very much" and "quite often", while 38.2% of the male students chose both.

Table 4.3 displays the frequency and percentages of students who shop to adjust their mood. Notably, 24.3% of respondents shop consistently well to adjust their mood, and when combined with the 27.4% who do it consistently, over half of the students

use shopping to influence their emotional state. This indicates a significant relationship between mood and shopping frequency, suggesting that emotional factors like seeking emotional gratification or stress relief through shopping are prevalent among students.

Table 4.3 Shopping to Adjust Mood Frequently

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	consistent well	116	24.3	24.3	24.3
	Fairly consistent	131	27.4	27.4	51.7
	Average	79	16.5	16.5	68.2
	Quite inconsistent	65	13.6	13.6	81.8
	Very inconsistent	87	18.2	18.2	100.0
	Total	478	100.0	100.0	

Most contemporary university students are in their twenties, and they are at the forefront of the times, pursuing new and different ideas, and keenly grasping fashion, lest they fall behind the trend of the times. In the survey, we found that 45.2% of the students said that they were willing to spend more money on brand name products for the same quality of products because they could bring them a sense of satisfaction and self-confidence. Another 36.4% of students like to pursue fashionable and trendy products and are always proud to be the first to be the leader in the consumption of a product that is newly promoted by a merchant or seen in a fashion magazine. Table 6 relates to the willingness to pay more for brand-name products of the same quality. A total of 13.4% of students are consistent in their willingness to pay more for brand names, with 31.8% doing so consistently. This behavior reflects a tendency towards emotion-driven consumption where brand names, often associated with social status and self-esteem, can influence spending habits, supporting the idea that emotional factors, such as the desire to feel good about oneself or to fit in with peers, are significant in driving consumer behavior.

Table 4.4 On Manner of Fashion Expense

Willing to pay more for a brand name product of the same quality		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	consistent well	64	13.4	13.4	13.4

	Fairly consistent	152	31.8	31.8	45.2
	Average	72	15.1	15.1	60.3
	Quite inconsistent	110	23	23	83.3
	Very inconsistent	80	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	478	100. 0	100. 0	
I pursue popular and fashionable products	Frequency		Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	consistent well	36	7.5	7.5	7.5
	Fairly consistent	138	28.9	28.9	36.4
	Average	130	27.2	27.2	63.6
	Quite inconsistent	106	22.2	22.2	85.8
	Very inconsistent	68	14.2	14.2	100.0
	Total	478	100. 0	100. 0	

The evidence from both tables underscores the substantial role that consumer emotions play in the purchasing decisions of university students in Dalian. The tendency to engage in shopping for emotional regulation and the preference for brand-name products for their emotional appeal confirm that emotional factors are pivotal in shaping consumer behavior, thus supporting Hypothesis 2: Consumer emotions significantly influence the consumption behavior of university students in Dalian.

4.3 Recommendations Based on Research Findings

Given the validation of both research hypotheses—that family monthly income and consumer emotions significantly influence the consumption behavior of university students in Dalian—there are several recommendations and measures that can be proposed to guide student consumption effectively and enhance educational efforts.

Firstly, educational institutions should implement financial literacy programs that aim to teach students about budgeting, saving, and responsible spending habits. These programs could include workshops, seminars, and courses that focus on personal finance management, emphasizing the importance of aligning consumption with one's financial reality. This approach addresses the established impact of family monthly income on student consumption behavior by equipping students with the skills to make informed economic decisions.

Secondly, considering the substantial role of consumer emotions in student spending, universities should offer counseling services that focus on emotional well-being and its connection to consumption. By providing support for emotional regulation and stress management, students can learn healthier strategies to cope with negative emotions rather than resorting to consumption as a form of relief.

Thirdly, creating awareness campaigns around the psychological tactics used in marketing can empower students to make choices that are not solely influenced by emotional appeals. Such campaigns could dissect common advertising strategies that target emotional triggers and provide students with the critical thinking skills necessary to discern and resist manipulative marketing practices.

Moreover, to foster a campus culture that values non-materialistic forms of fulfillment, universities can promote and facilitate a wide range of extracurricular activities. These could include sports, arts, community service, and other group activities that provide emotional satisfaction and a sense of belonging, reducing the reliance on consumption for emotional gratification.

Lastly, it is recommended that universities collaborate with parents to ensure a cohesive approach to guiding student consumption. This could involve parent education programs that encourage discussions about family financial values and expectations, thereby supporting students in making consumption choices that are both financially prudent and emotionally sound.

By adopting these recommendations, educational institutions can play a pivotal role in shaping the consumption behavior of university students, ensuring that their choices are both economically viable and emotionally healthy.

Chapter 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

The present study aimed to investigate the consumption behaviors of university students in Dalian, with a particular focus on the effects of family monthly income and consumer emotions. The research findings provided substantial evidence supporting both hypotheses. It was observed that family income does indeed have a significant impact on the consumption decisions of students, validating Hypothesis 1. Students from higher-income families exhibited a tendency towards a more diverse and higher quantity of consumption.

Equally important, Hypothesis 2 was confirmed by revealing the profound influence of consumer emotions on purchasing behavior. Emotional factors such as mood regulation and brand association were found to significantly drive consumption choices, often transcending the limitations set by economic constraints. This underscores the complexity of consumer behavior which is shaped by an interplay of financial ability and psychological needs.

In light of these findings, it is evident that consumption among university students in Dalian is a multifaceted phenomenon. Effective educational strategies focusing on financial literacy and emotional well-being could be instrumental in guiding students towards more prudent and fulfilling consumption habits. This would not only contribute to their personal development but also to the creation of a more conscious and sustainable consumer culture within the university setting and beyond.

These insights contribute to the broader understanding of consumer behavior theories and offer a valuable perspective for stakeholders in education and marketing to devise approaches that resonate with the unique needs of this demographic.

The study's implications extend to the way universities can support their students in becoming more informed and emotionally intelligent consumers. The recommendations provided are steps towards nurturing a generation of consumers who are both financially savvy and emotionally aware, capable of making decisions that benefit their long-term well-being and that of the society they are part of.

5.2 Recommendation for future study

The findings of this study offer several avenues for future research to build upon the understanding of university students' consumption behaviors in Dalian. While the current study has established the significant roles of family monthly income and consumer emotions in influencing these behaviors, further research could enhance these findings by addressing some of the limitations encountered.

Firstly, future research could expand the demographic scope to include students from a wider range of socio-economic backgrounds and from other cities comparable to Dalian. This would help to ascertain whether the observed patterns hold true across different contexts or are unique to the setting of Dalian. Secondly, longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how consumption behaviors evolve over time, particularly as students transition from university to full-time employment. Such research could also examine the long-term effects of financial literacy education and emotional well-being programs on consumption patterns. Thirdly, qualitative research methods, such as in-depth interviews or focus groups, could be employed to gain a richer understanding of the motivations behind students' consumption choices. This approach could uncover nuanced emotional drivers and personal values that influence spending habits, which might not be fully captured through survey methods. Additionally, it would be beneficial for future studies to incorporate psychological assessments that measure specific emotional states and traits to see how these correlates with different types of consumption behaviors. This could include looking at the role of materialism, impulsiveness, and social influence in the context of consumer behavior. Exploring the impact of digital marketing and online consumerism on students' spending would also be a valuable area of research, given the increasing prevalence of e-commerce and digital advertising targeted at younger demographics. Lastly, research could investigate the effectiveness of different financial education models and emotional well-being interventions in universities. This would involve assessing the impact of these programs on students' consumption behaviors to identify best practices and areas for improvement.

While this study has contributed to the field of consumer behavior, particularly regarding university students in Dalian, the recommendations for future research highlight the potential for a more comprehensive and diverse understanding of the factors that drive consumption among young adults. By addressing these gaps, future

research can further inform educational strategies and policy-making, ultimately fostering a more financially and emotionally savvy generation of consumers.



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Appendix

Questionnaire on College Students' Consumption

Dear Students: Hello! This is an anonymous questionnaire designed to understand the consumption of college students at your university. The information in this questionnaire is for academic research only and is absolutely confidential, so please feel free to fill it out. In order to ensure the validity of this survey, please complete all the questions independently according to your own actual situation. Your assistance is sincerely appreciated.

Wish you good health and work well!

A. The basic personal information (please fill in the options in line with your basic situation in parentheses after the title)

1. Your gender: () A. Male B. Female
2. Your grade: () A. First grade B. Second grade C. Third grade D. Fourth grade
3. Your major: () A. Science B. Engineering C. Economic management and grammar D. Others
4. Whether you are an only child: () A. Yes B. No
5. Location of your family: () A. Large and medium-sized cities B. Towns C. Rural areas
6. What is the average monthly income of your family? () A. Below 1,000 yuan B. 1,000--2,000 yuan C. 2,000--3,000 yuan D. 3,000--5,000 yuan E. More than 5,000 yuan
7. Your main source of income: () A. Support from family or friends B. My own labor income C. Scholarship D. Loan

B. Basic Consumption

8. Your average monthly consumption during your school years: A. <300 yuan B. 300-500 yuan C. 500-800 yuan D. 800-1200 yuan E. >1200 yuan
9. Monthly cost of normal meals by yourself: A. <200 B 200-300 C 300-400 D 400-600 E >600
10. Select three and according to the average monthly consumption in descending order (multiple choice): () A. Communication, Internet costs B. School supplies, books C. Tutoring and certification fees (such as foreign language classes and various certification fees) D. Recreation and entertainment (such as fitness, travel, movies, etc.)

E. Clothing, shoes, hats and cosmetics F. Cigarettes, alcohol, snacks G. Socializing (dating, treating classmates and friends to dinner or entertainment)

11. Which of the following do you spend money on: () A. Easy to be influenced by advertisements, promotions, etc. B. Influenced by mood C. Influence of classmates and friends D. Influence of parents and relatives E. Rational consumption, spending within the limits of revenues F. Casual purchases

12. What kind of goods do you own ()(Multiple choice) A. Computer B. Digital camera C. Cell phone D. MP3 E. MP4

13. Have you ever invited your friends out for dinner or entertainment? () A. Yes B. No

14. If yes, how much do you spend on this on average each month? () A. Below 20 dollars B. 20-50 dollars C. 50-100 dollars D. 100-150 dollars E. 150-200 yuan F. More than 200 yuan

C. consumer attitude survey

This part of the main understanding of your consumption attitude, according to your actual situation, according to your degree of conformity with each sentence to make a choice. The degree of conformity is divided into five levels: "very consistent, relatively consistent, general, relatively inconsistent, very inconsistent". Please don't stay too long when answering each question, just answer according to your first feeling.

15. I often use shopping as a way of adjusting my mood. () A. Very much B. Quite much C. Fairly much D. Quite little E. Little

16. I am willing to spend more money on brand-name products of the same quality. () A. Much B. More C. Generally D. Less E. Much less

17. I have extra confidence in using brand-name products. () A. Much in line with B. More in line with C. Average D. Little in line with E. Little in line with

18. I am looking for popular and fashionable things. () A. Much in line with B. More in line with C. Average D. Little in line with E. Little in line with

19. I like to try to buy newly released or new products from manufacturers. () A. Much B. More C. Generally D. Less E. Very little

20. I feel disgraced if I don't have what everyone else has. () A. Much in line with B. More in line with C. Generally in line with D. More in line with E. Little in line with

21. Students who fall in love spend much more money than those who don't fall in love on the same terms. () A. Much B. More C. Generally D. Less E. Much less

22. It's no big deal to waste money. () A. Much B. More C. Average D. Less
E. Very little
23. How much money I spend is my personal business, and it has nothing to do with others. () A. Much B. More C. Generally D. Much less E. Much less
24. If my classmate invites me to dinner, I must find a chance to invite him again. () A. Very much B. Comparatively C. Generally D. Quite not E. Very much not
25. Now that times have advanced, the spirit of "hard work" is outdated. ()
A. Much B. More C. Generally D. Less E. Very little
26. Using credit cards to spend money makes people feel very stylish. () A. Much
in line with B. More in line with C. Generally in line with D. Less in line with E. Little
in line with
27. Besides studying, you should save as much as you can. () A. Much in line
with B. More in line with C. Generally in line with D. Less in line with E. Less in
line with
28. When I buy things, I like to shop around. () A. Much B. More C. Generally
D. Less E. Much less