

Analyzing Conspicuous Sports Consumption Among College Students

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Abstract: *This study explores the conspicuous sports consumption behavior of college students in China, examining the factors that drive this consumption. Using a combination of literature review, questionnaire surveys, and expert interviews, the study identifies key elements such as status, socialization, and enjoyment as significant motivators. Through quantitative analysis, the research reveals that physical and participatory types of conspicuous sports consumption are prevalent among college students. The findings suggest that while conspicuous consumption can be positively oriented, it also highlights the need for guiding rational consumption behaviors among college students.*

Keywords: college students, conspicuous consumption, sports behavior, social status, consumer psychology

1. Introduction

With the policy guidance of the state to the sports industry and national fitness, sports consumption is gradually becoming a new economic growth point. As more and more college students devote themselves to physical exercise, and sports-related expenses are rising as well. In recent years, there are many college students wearing expensive sports clothes to participate in sports exercise, and there are also students pursuing "sneaker fever", as well as the phenomenon of "punching cards" of many niche sports or sports equipment with unaffordable prices on social media platforms. However, with the prevalence of materialism and hedonism, many college students' sports consumption is changing towards conspicuous consumption [1]. The investigation and research on the conspicuous sports consumption behavior of contemporary college students and its influencing factors is conducive to further improve the theoretical research on conspicuous sports consumption of college students, optimize the consumption concept of college students, promote the reasonable consumption behavior of college students, and curb the fermentation of bad atmosphere such as vanity comparison, extravagance and waste. Guide college students to form a healthy, green, simple, moderate sports consumption concept. At the same time, we should objectively and comprehensively analyze conspicuous sports consumption, properly grasp its scale, promote the reasonable development of positive factors in conspicuous sports consumption, and promote the beneficial development of social and economic value of conspicuous

sports consumption [2]. The findings from this study provide insights into the social and psychological factors influencing college students' consumer behavior. Understanding these influences may help shape educational programs that promote responsible consumption among students.

2. Research objects and methods

Using the methods of literature, expert interview, questionnaire survey, mathematical statistics, logic analysis and so on, taking the conspicuous sports consumption behavior of college students as the research object, the questionnaire star was used to investigate the college students, and 632 questionnaires were collected, 608 of which were valid, with an effective rate of 96.2%.

3. Results and analysis

3.1 Questionnaire information of conspicuous sports consumption behavior of college students

3.1.1 Validity test of questionnaire

Validity refers to the degree to which the dimensions to be measured are accurately measured. The data of 632 questionnaires were input into SPSSAU software for data processing and analysis, and the validity analysis results are shown in Table 1. It can be seen that the KMO value of 0.864 indicates high validity, making the data suitable for analysis.

Table 1: Validity analysis results

Observational variable	Factor loading		Common degrees (common factorial variance)
	Factor1	Factor2	
A symbol of success, honor, status	0.987	-0.025	0.975
It shows my higher social status	0.987	-0.025	0.975
Show me my social circle	0.987	-0.025	0.975
It makes me feel more comfortable in social situations	0.987	-0.025	0.975
That's what people are doing now, so I'm leaning that way	0.97	-0.028	0.941
If you don't, you will lose face and be looked down upon	0.97	-0.028	0.941
It shows off my unique taste and personality	0.97	-0.028	0.941

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Can reveal my deep and different connotation	0.978	-0.048	0.96
Good things always have a high price, and I deserve better	0.978	-0.048	0.96
I like expensive sports to give me a better experience	0.978	-0.048	0.96
I'm willing to spend money on conspicuous sports consumption	-0.22	0.975	1
If conditions permit, I will choose better sports consumption for myself	-0.22	0.975	1

According to the results of principal component analysis of the data in this study, a total of 6 public factors were selected in this study, representing most of the information of the 12 observed variables. The above 6 public factors were successively named as status, social interaction, conformity,

personal taste, enjoyment and conspicuous sports consumption. And the corresponding factor loadings are all greater than 0.5, which meet the standard and can be further analyzed.

Continue to Table 1: Validity analysis results

Observational variable	Factor loading		Common degrees (common factorial variance)
	Factor1	Factor1	
Characteristic root value (before rotation)	9.76	1.843	-
Explain variance rate % (before rotation)	81.33%	39.62%	-
The cumulative variance explained rate % (before rotation)	81.33%	120.95%	-
Characteristic root value (after rotation)	9.688	1.915	-
Explain variance rate % (after rotation)	80.74%	15.96%	-
The cumulative variance explained rate % (after rotation)	80.74%	96.69%	-
KMO value	0.864		-
Bart spherical value	null		-
df	86		-
P	null		-

3.1.2 Reliability test of questionnaire

Reliability refers to the correctness, accuracy, consistency and stability of a measurement tool. In order to ensure that the measurement items of all variables have a high degree of consistency in the factors to which they belong, Cronbach coefficient is generally used for reliability test. Cronbach's α value was above 0.70, indicating high reliability of the data. The Cronbach coefficient was used to test the consistency reliability of the scale. As shown in Table 2, the Cronbach's α coefficient of the scale was 0.968, which was greater than 0.9, indicating that the reliability of the research data was of high quality. For "CITC value", the CITC value of the analysis items is all greater than 0.4, indicating that there is a good correlation between the analysis items and a good reliability level.

In summary, the high reliability coefficient (>0.9) confirms the consistency and reliability of the research data, and can be used for further analysis.

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Table 2: Cronbach reliability analysis

Observational variable	Total correction terms Correlation (CITC)	Item deleted α coefficient	Cronbach α coefficient
A symbol of success, honor, status	0.954	0.961	0.968
It shows my higher social status	0.954	0.961	
Show me my social circle	0.954	0.961	
It makes me feel more comfortable in social situations	0.954	0.961	
That's what people are doing now, so I'm leaning that way	0.885	0.963	
If you don't, you will lose face and be looked down upon	0.885	0.963	
It shows off my unique taste and personality	0.885	0.963	
Can reveal my deep and different connotation	0.94	0.962	
Good things always have a high price, and I deserve better	0.94	0.962	
I like expensive sports to give me a better experience	0.94	0.962	

I'm willing to spend money on conspicuous sports consumption	0	0.976	
If conditions permit, I will choose better sports consumption for myself	0	0.976	

Cronbach α coefficient: 0.947□

3.2 Investigation and analysis of the current situation of conspicuous sports consumption behavior of college students

Table 3: College students' conspicuous sports consumption behavior

Category	never	rarely	average	more	many
Physical	1%	3%	11%	58%	27%
Spectatorial	42%	37%	13%	7%	1%
Information	51%	38%	9%	1%	1%
Participation	0	1%	2%	50%	47%

3.2.1 Status quo of physical conspicuous sports consumption behavior

Physical conspicuous sports consumption refers to the consumption that occurs when college students buy expensive or rare niche or celebrity-accented sports equipment or appliances, such as sportswear, fitness equipment, rackets, etc., and obtain obvious conspicuous experience from them [3]. This kind of sports consumption has become a hot spot for college students' conspicuous sports consumption because of its externality and display nature. As shown in Table 3 and Figure 1, among the college students surveyed, 99% of them have such consumption behaviors, among which 58% of them said that they have more such consumption behaviors and 27% of them said that they have a lot of such consumption behaviors.

3.2.2 Status quo of spectatorial conspicuous sports consumption behavior

Spectatorial conspicuous sports consumption refers to the consumption generated by college students through the purchase of tickets to watch and enjoy sports activities, and unlike general ordinary spectatorial sports consumption, these tickets are often more expensive and scarce, and college students pay more attention to the sense of superiority or special status obtained from them, rather than paying much attention to the sports competition itself [4]. As shown in Table 3 and Figure 1, among the college students surveyed, 42% reported never engaging in such consumption behavior, 37% and 13% of them said that such consumption behavior is little or average, and only 7% and 1% of them said that such consumption behavior is more or a lot. It can be seen that the current college students spend less on spectator-type show-off sports consumption, which is due to the many additional requirements for such consumption activities, such as round-trip transportation costs or

familiarity with the rules of sports competition, on the one hand; on the other hand, it is due to the epidemic prevention requirements that bring more worries for college students.

3.2.3 Status of information-based conspicuous sports consumption behavior

Information-based conspicuous sports consumption refers to the consumption generated by college students when they get sports information, such as fine sports newspapers, sports magazines, sports books, sports video VIP membership, etc. As shown in Table 3 and Figure 1, among the college students surveyed, 51% of them have never had such consumption behaviors, 38% and 9% of them said that such consumption behaviors are rare or average, and only 1% of them said that such consumption behaviors are more. It can be seen that the current college students spend less on information-based show-off sports consumption, which is due to the fact that college students in the Internet era tend to get sports-related information on the Internet or TV, while the VIP membership of Internet video is not applicable to display, and it is difficult to play the effect of show-off. Therefore, the current college students are not enthusiastic about information-based show-off sports consumption.

3.2.4 Status of participation-based conspicuous sports consumption behavior

Participation-based conspicuous sports consumption refers to the consumption generated by college students' personal participation in a certain sports activity, and college students prefer higher consumption sports interactions, such as gym, yoga class, sports club, private training, sports tourism, etc., compared with free sports activities. As shown in Table 3 and Figure 1, 99% of the college students surveyed had such consumption behaviors, of which 50% and 47% said that such consumption behaviors were a lot or more, and 2% and 1% said that such consumption behaviors were average or rare. These activities allow college students to gain a sense of participation and experience, and also make it easy to punch cards to commemorate and share to show off, so this kind of sports consumption is the key content in college students' show-off sports consumption. Among them, sports tourism is an emerging branch of bragging sports consumption industry, including hiking, cycling, wilderness adventure, etc.

3.2.5 Summary and of show-off.

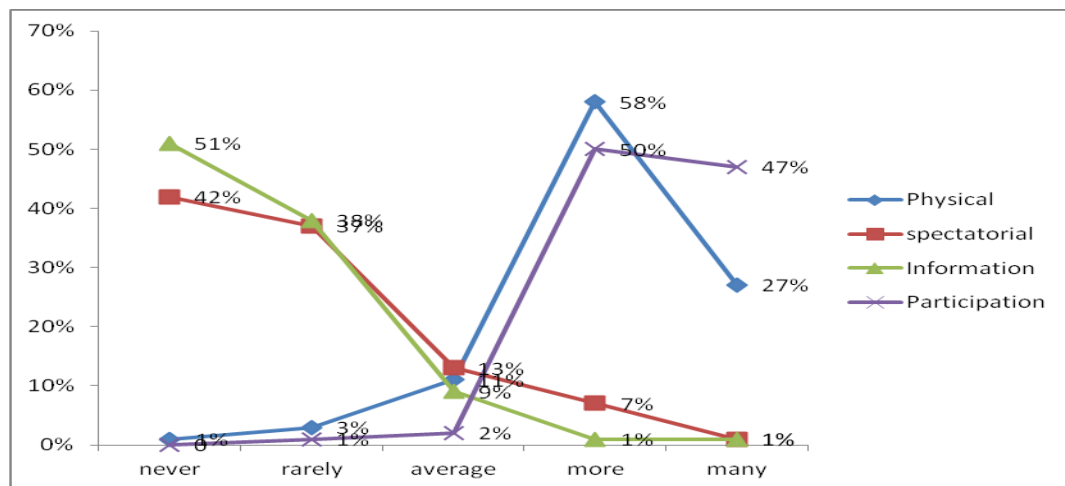


Figure 1: College students' conspicuous sports consumption behavior

In summary, it can be seen (Figure 1) that among the current status of college students' conspicuous sports consumption behaviors, physical and participation conspicuous sports consumption behaviors are more prominent, while information and ornamental conspicuous sports consumption behaviors are more shrinking. It can be seen that the current college students pay more attention to whether the show-off

sports consumption can be conveniently displayed and shared to play the effect of show-off for the dem

3.3 Analysis of factors influencing college students' conspicuous sports consumption behavior

3.3.1 Scale Development

Table 3: Question items measuring factors influencing college students' conspicuous sports consumption behavior

Variable	No.	Measurement Question	Source
Status	1	A symbol of success, honor, status	Leisa, R.F., et.al (2016)
	2	It shows my higher social status	
Social	3	Show me my social circle	Leibenstein
	4	It makes me feel more comfortable in social situations	
Subordination	5	That's what people are doing now, so I'm leaning that way	Du daoli
	6	If you don't, you will lose face and be looked down upon	
Personality Taste	7	It shows off my unique taste and personality	Shi zhi
	8	Can reveal my deep and different connotation	
Enjoyment	9	Good things always have a high price, and I deserve better	In this paper
	10	I like expensive sports to give me a better experience	
Conspicuous sports consumption	11	I'm willing to spend money on conspicuous sports consumption	In this paper
	12	If conditions permit, I will choose better sports consumption for myself	

3.3.2 Sample description

Comprehensive interviews and questionnaires, combined with specific sample case descriptions to explore in depth the factors that influence college students' conspicuous sports consumption, to provide the basis for subsequent conclusions and countermeasures.

(1) "Status" factor

After entering university, college students obviously feel the difference between the university stage and the previous study stage, which is more free and unrestrained. As university is a mini-society, many college students have gradually awakened their social consciousness and role orientation, which has led to the subconscious pursuit of their status [5]. In the case of conspicuous sports consumption, college students can satisfy their own status and identity to a certain extent.

Case 1: I am a college student, not a high school student, I should be an adult, and an adult with certain economic power and status. Therefore, I need to buy brand-name shoes to decorate myself and match myself.

As shown in Case 1, college students enhance and show their status through conspicuous sports consumption, which is a pursuit of status.

(2) "Social" factor

Most of the contemporary college students are only children, they maintain a certain degree of independence, but at the same time, they are eager for interesting social activities. Because of the spotlight effect, they can be sought after to a certain extent and are more likely to integrate into a certain social circle.

Case 2: It is popular to buy this yoga clothes and that yoga ball in our yoga class now, it is very expensive but cool,

everyone is discussing this topic, so I am going to buy them too and communicate with everyone.

As shown in Case 2, many social circles will be formed in the conspicuous sports consumption, and in the social activities it is inevitable to integrate into them autonomously or passively and choose conspicuous consumption.

(3) "Herding" factor

In order to make better profits, merchants will influence consumers from consumer consciousness, such as forcing symbolic labels on goods, or creating differences between two goods to form selling points. When consumers are inclined to such symbols or selling points, they are easily controlled to buy such goods by subtle brainwashing [6].

Case 3: This sneaker is especially popular in recent years, it is a running foot protection tool, very light and airy, everyone buys this, if I don't buy this, I can't keep up with the trend.

As shown in Case 3, consumers are influenced by the consumption gimmicks designed by merchants, and behind their self-perceived autonomous consumption behavior, they actually consume sports in an ostentatious manner under "herdism".

(4) "Individual taste" factor

In the new era, everyone is pursuing their own unique personality and taste, and there is such a kind of conspicuous sports consumption, that is, neither the use function of the goods themselves nor the high price of the goods is important, but the unique personality or taste that the goods can show, whether it can show the reflection of the consumer's own personality and taste.

Case 4: I don't like to buy expensive sporting goods that look stupid and rich, but I must buy sporting goods that

match my own personality and taste, so that I can show my difference.

As shown in Case 4, although this kind of show-off sports consumption is not based on price, its core essence is still a kind of show-off, a kind of show-off of one's own personality and taste, a kind of differentiated show-off that "everyone is drunk and I am awake alone". But this kind of flaunting based on personality and taste, with more individual uniqueness and scrutiny, is a way for contemporary young people to pursue individuality and self, and is also an effective way to promote the return to rationality of high-priced flaunting sports consumption, that is, to give more exclusive symbolic value to goods from self-needs.

(5) "Enjoyment " factor

In the era of material abundance, many college students also start to pursue pleasure. Since they have not yet entered the society, most of them lack a clear understanding of their social value, and they mistakenly overestimate themselves and think they should live a hedonistic life early.

Case 5: I'm just great, so I have to use the best things, those cheap things really don't match my personal temperament. I must have a personal trainer with me to achieve the best results.

As shown in Case 5, this kind of conspicuous sports consumption is based on the pursuit of hedonism, which is a subtle ideological trend under the conspicuous pursuit of money, pleasure and material things in contemporary economic society.

3.3.3 Structural Equation Modeling

(1) Structural equation model construction

The structural equation model is constructed as shown in the following figure.

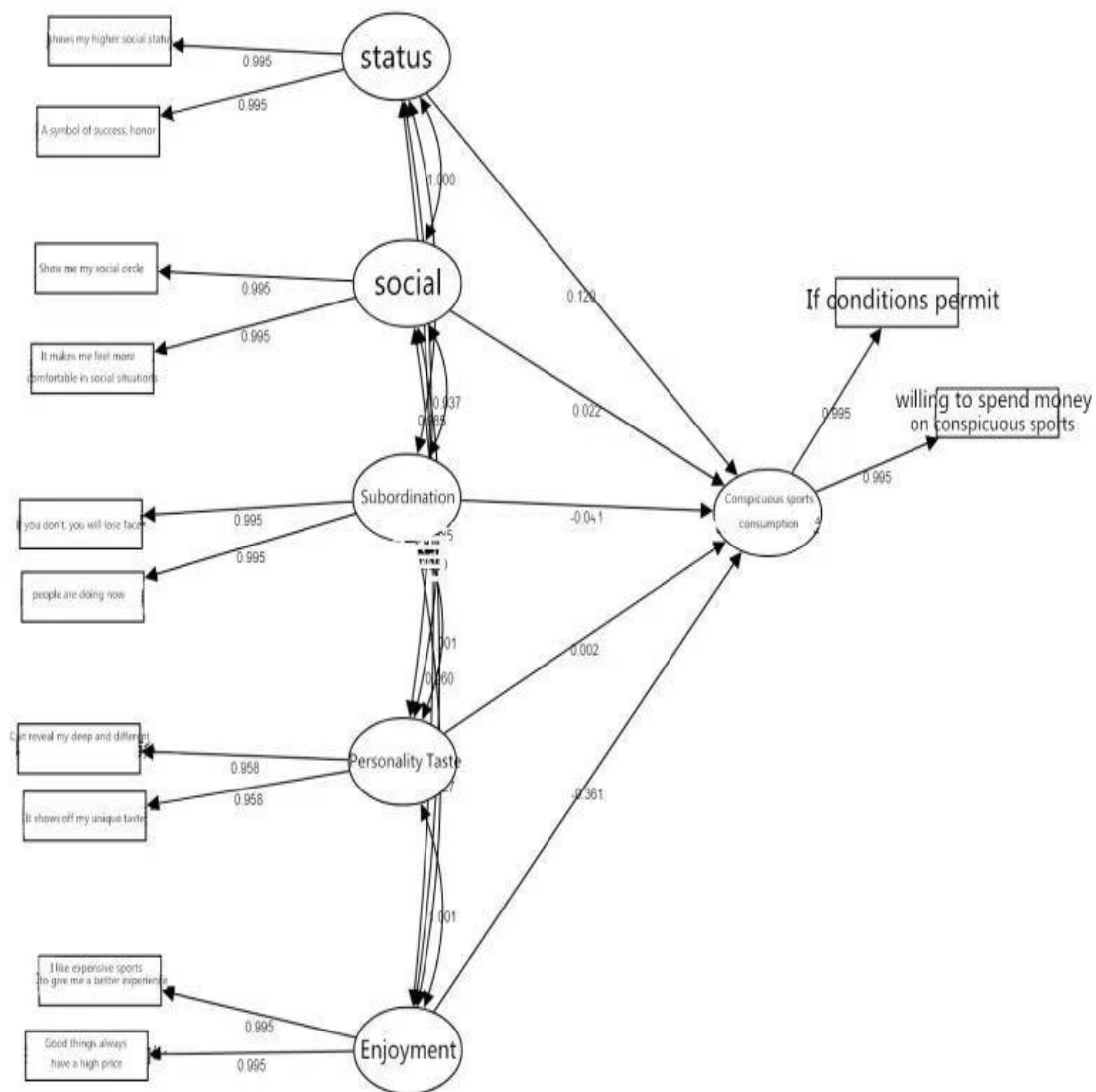


Figure 2: Structural equation model

(2) Fit analysis of the structural equation model

Table 4: Model fitting indicators

Common indicators	χ^2	df	p	χ^2/df	GFI	RMSEA	RMR	CFI	NFI	NNFI
Judgment Criteria	-	-	>0.05	<3	>0.9	<0.10	<0.05	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9
Value	772.728	39	0.10	1.814	0.979	0.06	0.01	0.956	0.954	0.925
Other indicators	TLI	AGFI	IFI	PGFI	PNFI	SRMR	RMSEA 90% CI			
Judgment Criteria	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	<0.1	-			
Value	0.925	0.959	0.956	0.940	0.963	0.002	0.193 ~ 0.218			

Default Model: $\chi^2(66)=16652.568, p=1.000$

In order to measure whether the ideal values in the hypothetical model are basically consistent with the actual values, the fit indices of the structural equation are used to evaluate the data quality and the fit of the hypothetical model. In the structural equation model, model fit indicators such as parsimonious fit index, absolute fit index and value-added fit index are mainly used to measure the fit between the sample data and the structural equation model. As shown in Table 4, all the indicators meet the judgment criteria, indicating that the structural equation model has a

good fit.

3.3.4 Summary

Through structural equation modeling, it is found that college students' conspicuous sports consumption is mainly influenced by factors such as status, socialization, subordination, personality taste, and hedonism. The influence of traditional factors such as status, socialization, and subordination still exist, while emerging values such as personality taste and hedonism are valued.

4. Conclusions and Suggestions

4.1 Conclusion

Based on the synthesis of the influencing factors of previous studies on college students' conspicuous consumption behavior, this paper updates the measurement of variables according to the changing situation of the times, and draws the following conclusions through the steps of literature research, model and scale construction, questionnaire distribution, data collection and analysis test.

4.1.1 The current physical and participation categories of conspicuous sports consumption of college students are more prevalent, and the information and ornamental categories of conspicuous sports consumption tend to be silent.

4.1.2 Factors such as status, socialization, herding, personality taste and enjoyment directly influence college students' conspicuous consumption behavior.

4.1.3 The conspicuous sports consumption of college students cannot be judged only by the high price of consumption, but low price may also be conspicuous sports consumption behavior.

4.1.4 The conspicuous sports consumption behavior of college students is not always derogatory, and the positive elements in it should be actively explored to promote the return of conspicuous sports consumption behavior to rationality.

This study synthesizes the previous research models on conspicuous consumption, comprehensively examines the situation of factors influencing college students' conspicuous consumption under the joint action of various factors, and draws meaningful conclusions that are enlightening, while further promoting the richness of theoretical research on contemporary college students' conspicuous sports consumption in China.

4.2 Suggestions

The study confirms that conspicuous sports consumption among college students is influenced by factors such as status, socialization, and personality. While some forms of conspicuous consumption may seem superficial, they can offer positive benefits such as social bonding. The study emphasizes the need to guide students toward a balanced consumption mindset, focusing on individuality and responsible consumerism.

4.2.1 The society should strengthen the call for rational consumption culture, advocate scientific and reasonable consumption suitable for individual situation, and avoid over-consumption and show-off consumption. At the same time, it should strengthen the segmentation of ostentatious sports consumption and explore the positive elements in it, such as the ostentatious consumption driven by the pursuit of individual taste is not equal to high-priced consumption,

and promote the return of ostentatious consumption to rationality.

4.2.2 Schools should strengthen the education of college students in culture and sports, encourage their independence of thought, not to be encouraged by the concept of social commercial consumption, and guide students to deeply understand and think about the theory of social consumption symbols, so as not to be lost in the clamor of commercial symbols.

4.2.3 Parents should strengthen the education on the concept of money and consumption among members within the family, and do a good job of modeling for students and propagating the concept. Cultivate children's financial intelligence from a young age and prevent them from getting into trouble.

4.2.4 College students should strengthen self-examination and reflection, return to the essence of consumption according to their actual situation, and avoid indulging in the illusion of vanity and beauty brought about by ostentatious sports consumption.

Ethical Statement

In accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, this study was approved by the Biomedical Ethics Review Committee of Zhaoqing College (No2024023). All participants in this study were informed about the purpose and characteristics of the study, participation was voluntary, students were assured of confidentiality, and an informed consent form was signed. Faculty and student consent was obtained during testing.

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