

The Difference in Consumption Between China and the West: Taking Real Property and Children's Expenses as Examples

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Abstract: With the prevalence of cross-cultural exchanges, people need to understand the cultural differences of different countries to avoid contradictions. This paper aims to study the differences between China and the West in terms of consumption concepts. By reading a lot of literature, this research analyzed the historical background of China and the West, specifically understood the important role of several important consumption changes in the formation of today's consumption concept. In terms of consumption objects, the specific analysis of the two contrasting examples of real estate and children in the fields of Chinese and Western consumption is used. Chinese people do not like to rent a house. People think a house that belongs to them is very important for the family. While the West tends to rent a house. People think that loan is a normal thing. Westerners will invest more in themselves, rather than treating their children as their full world. Around the world, Westerners think that themselves are the most important, while Chinese people, under the influence of Confucianism, believe that family is very important, and children are the future of the family. Most Chinese people believe that children are more important than themselves. Generally speaking, there are great differences in the concept of consumption in China and the West, which is influenced by both historical factors and modern policies. People should understand and respect the cultural and consumption differences of different countries and jointly promote the development of cross-cultural exchanges.

Keywords: concept of consumption, consumer behavior, real property, children's consumption, customer value.

1. Introduction

With the development of the times, exchanges between countries have become more and more frequent, and transnational activities have become the daily life of many people, but different cultural backgrounds have led to many different ideas, which also caused many unnecessary contradictions, and consumption is a necessary behavior, so understanding the consumption behavior of different countries is of practical significance in transnational activities.

Through reading different literature, in the field of cross-cultural communication, a large number of documents have studied the historical background of consumption in China and the West. With the rise of housing prices, a large number of scholars pay attention to the field of real estate

consumption, and the study of children's consumption can be seen in the literature of Wang Jinlan, Xu Shiyuan, and other scholars. The literature of these scholars analyzes in detail the consumption views of China or the West in terms of historical background and expenditure objects, but there is a lack of literature to compare China and the West, and there is no specific analysis of the difference between Chinese and Western spending in the field of real estate or children.

This paper analyses the historical background of China and the West in detail and lists several consumption changes that have led to the current consumption concepts in China and the West. Through the examples of real estate and children, it compares and studies the different consumption concepts of China and the West on the same consumption objects, to summaries the differences in consumption concepts between China and the West. This paper can help people to carry out cross-cultural exchanges, help people understand different consumption concepts caused by different cultural backgrounds, avoid unnecessary contradictions arising therefrom, and help promote friendly cross-cultural exchanges.

2. Chinese consumption view

2.1. Historical background

China's feudal society lasted for more than two thousand years. Under the oppression of imperial power, capitalism had no soil to take root and sprout, and the mass class could not show its personality in consumption [1]. China's long-term small-farm economy has made people accustomed to self-sufficiency and formed a conservative concept of consumption [2]. Traditional culture breeds the idea of great unification, which is also the origin of Chinese collectivism [3]. The exploiting class has occupied most of the resources of society for a long time, the exploiting class has been extravagant and wasted for a long time, while the bottom class is living in poverty. Moreover, under the influence of Confucianism, it is popular in China to take thrift as a virtue to resist excessive consumption extravagance, and waste. In modern times, China has implemented a socialist system. In the era of a planned economy, the general economic development of the country is poor, and people pay attention to practicality and restrain demand. With the reform and opening-up and the development of the socialist market, China's economy is improving. Opening up to the outside world enables luxury goods to enter China. In the eyes of some people, holding luxury goods means entering the upper class [4], [5]. People's pursuit of the symbolic attributes of goods is gradually higher than the attributes of production, and many young people will buy a luxury with a few months' salary just to look good. In modern times, with the rise of e-commerce, people have gradually changed from focusing on the symbolic attributes of commodities to the high-cost performance of commodities. College students have changed from comparing who owns luxury goods in previous years to comparing who spends less money to buy good things. People begin to pay attention to sustainable consumption and green development.

2.2. The object of consumption

2.2.1. Real property

In China, especially the elderly attach great importance to the property rights of the house, many people take out loans or exhaust their life savings, just to buy a house for themselves or their children in the city, people believe that buying a house is the performance of career success [6]. The elderly can't accept the idea that children rent a house for the rest of their lives. In China, when many young people get married, a man must have a house. Some families will spend all their money to buy a house for their children to marry and have children. Some families who value boys over children are eager to marry their daughters and buy a house for their sons with their daughter's betrothal gifts, which

leads to high betrothal gifts in some areas. The daughter can't get married, and the son can't marry a wife. At present, when house prices are high and young people's wages are far from affordable, parents often invest in buying houses for their children. In this process, children need to rely on their parents and communicate with their parents, which shows an obvious trend of re-familiarization [7].

2.2.2. Children

Chinese people generally spend more money on their children than on themselves. There is a saying in China that no matter how hard a child is, no matter how poor a child is, no matter how poor an education is, it means that parents can eat less and play less so that children can live a good life and receive a good education. Chinese people attach great importance to children's education, and the expenditure on children's education has become an important part of family consumption [8]. China has been a collectivist ideology since ancient times [9]. The concept of home is deeply rooted in the hearts of the people and occupies a dominant position in society [1]. Many Chinese festivals are also related to reunion, under the influence of this idea, the child is the hope of the family, and the best things of the family are of course for the child. Another idea is that people cannot live on their own when they are old, they need children to take care of themselves, so they are very good to children when they are young, is to hope that they can rely on old age, can spend their old age in peace [10].

3. Western consumption view

3.1. Historical background

The Western concept of consumption can be traced back to the ancient Greek period, when the rational concept of consumption represented by the "sun God spirit" and the perceptual concept of consumption represented by the "Dionysian spirit" had already appeared, although these two consumption concepts had already appeared, in this period, the rational concept of consumption occupied a dominant position, and by the late Ancient Rome, The accumulation of wealth made the rich people of the upper class continue to waste their wealth, which accelerated the demise of ancient Rome, and indirectly led to the prevalence of asceticism in Europe in the Middle Ages. During the Middle Ages in Europe, the feudal system was closely combined with religious civilization. Under the rule of the church, irrational asceticism prevailed, which was also a kind of counterattack to the luxury of ancient Rome [11]. Time entered the early modern period, the West entered the capitalist society, capital needed to carry out the primitive accumulation of capital in the early period, and asceticism based on reason was popular in this period. In the modern period, the West was popular with conspicuous consumption and advocated the supremacy of consumption, while the rapid development of mass media provided an environment for the growth of capitalism [12]. In the post-modern period, the use of attribute of commodities decreases, the symbolic attribute gradually takes the upper hand, and the rapid development of the economy leads to the failure of people to establish the correct concept of wealth, which provides the value basis for the development of capital [13]. Consumption has changed from economic behavior to cultural behavior, which has caused a lot of energy waste. In the contemporary West, due to the large amount of unnecessary waste caused by capital in the previous period, people began to reflect on this behavior and advocate moderate consumption and sustainable consumption [11],[12].

3.2. The object of consumption

3.2.1. Real property

Westerners do not pay attention to the property rights of houses, rather than spend many years of savings to buy a house, they are more inclined to rent a house to live in, because the Western house price and salary ratio is reasonable, the behavior of buying a house does not cross the class symbol, and the Western job transfer opportunities, people will not live in a fixed place, rent is more cost-effective [6]. Western governments pay attention to the housing rights and interests of citizens and take some active intervention measures in the real estate market [14]. Western families who buy houses, their consumption concept is to buy a house first and then repay the loan, they are used to spending ahead of time, and believe that buying a house is an investment behavior for profit [9]. In the Western concept, they pay attention to instant gratification, like to enjoy life, accept and get used to loans, so most families who buy a house will not wait for the full amount to save up to buy a house, but take out a loan to buy a house to live in, and then repay the loan.

3.2.2. Children

People believe that everyone is an independent individual and people need to be responsible for themselves, but people do not need to be responsible for other people's lives. This does not mean that Western parents are bad for their children, but compared with Chinese parents, Western parents usually don't spend more money on their children, but invest more in themselves. Part of the gap year boom in the West is that many families stop giving money to their children when they become adults, leaving them working to earn their way through school.

4. Comparison between China and the West

4.1. Historical background

In terms of social attributes, China's historical and modern social attributes are feudal society and socialist society, which are led by imperial power and socialist leaders respectively, while the West has experienced feudal society and capitalist society. Its leadership has experienced imperial power, church, and capital class, among which the church has great power in some periods. Yu Huangquan has dominated the development of society, including the consumption concept of the masses. In a capitalist society, with the vigorous development of mass media, the people's consumption concept is controlled by capitalism. In terms of ideology, China has been deeply influenced by Confucianism since ancient times. It advocates thrift and opposes waste. For the West, Since the concept of consumption is the external embodiment of values, values are the internal logic of the concept of consumption [15]. With the development of social leadership class and capital, people's consumption views have also changed. There are two main concepts: rationalism advocating thrift and luxurious that attaches importance to the value of commodity symbols. Chinese consumption is about buying for the sake of buying, and a large part of it is about fitting in, in the Chinese mind it is important not to be different, whereas the West is more self-centered [16].

4.2. The object of consumption

Due to the idea of collectivism, China spends more money on the family and consumes more conservatively. Most of the impulsive consumption is for the face. The culture of the face is very important in China. People attach great importance to keeping face to others and whether they lose face. In the West, individualism is popular. It spends more on oneself and consumes more perceptually. People are used to spending ahead of time. They like to buy experiences, not things. In

real estate, China believes that buying a house is for living. Parents often need to buy a house not only for themselves but also for their children. The West believes that buying a house is an investment, and it is more about buying their own, with less help from parents. In terms of children, Chinese people attach great importance to the concept of family and attach great importance to their children. They hope that their children can develop well. Therefore, they will invest a lot of money for their children, even more than their expenses. Under the influence of individualism in the West, everyone should take care of themselves first.

5. Conclusion

This paper aims to study the differences in consumption between China and the West at different speeds of development and cultural contexts. In the field of real estate, Westerners prefer to rent or buy a house with loans, while the Chinese prefer to pay for a lump sum, and most people do not accept renting a house for most of their lives. In terms of children, compared with Westerners, Chinese people will spend more time and energy on their children, while Westerners think that everyone is an independent individual and should pay more attention to themselves. This paper uses the research method of review, which reads and analyses several kinds of literature and summarizes them, finds out the research gaps in the differences between Chinese and Western consumption, and conducts research.

This paper studies in detail the impact of historical background on the consumption differences between China and the West, summarizes the major consumption changes in the history of China and the West, and specifically analyses and discusses the consumption differences between China and the West in real estate and children on this basis. Although this article analyses the causes of the consumption differences between China and the West in detail, it only explains two aspects, does not use more research methods, and lacks a summary of other aspects.

According to the research and shortcomings of this paper, in terms of cross-cultural communication, consumption differences in more fields such as marriage, deposits, etc. can be studied in the future. The concept of cross-cultural consumption can also be applied to the financial field to study the different policy issues that multinational enterprises can implement in different countries.

In the process of reading the literature, I found that most of the papers are separately studying cross-cultural exchanges and consumption concepts in different countries, and do not summaries and compare Chinese and Western consumption concepts together. This paper summarizes and compares the historical background of Chinese and Western consumption concepts, and discusses two Specific examples: Real estate and children, comparative research on it, and echo's the historical background to conclude.

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