



International Journal of Engineering, Science and Humanities

An international peer reviewed, refereed, open-access journal
Impact Factor: 7.9 www.ijesh.com ISSN: 2250-3552

Cultivating Contentment: A Mindful Exploration of Consumption Habits Among Higher Education Students in Maharashtra

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Abstract:

In the modern higher education landscape, students encounter a unique intersection of academic pressures, social expectations and consumer-driven lifestyles. The increasing prevalence of materialistic values and consumerism has been linked to heightened stress, anxiety and reduced life satisfaction among students. Against this backdrop, mindfulness has emerged as a transformative practice, offering tools for present-moment awareness, self-reflection and intentional decision-making. This study investigates the relationship between mindfulness, mindful consumption and life satisfaction among postgraduate management students in Maharashtra. Employing a mixed-method approach through two studies—one exploratory and one experimental—it evaluates the effects of meditation frequency and guided mindfulness interventions on consumption patterns and subjective well-being. Findings indicate that students who engaged in regular mindfulness practices demonstrated significantly higher levels of mindful consumption and life satisfaction compared to non-practitioners. Moreover, short guided meditation sessions over two months produced measurable improvements in mindfulness, reduced impulsive consumption and enhanced overall contentment. These results underscore the potential of integrating mindfulness into higher education pedagogy, not only as a tool for personal well-being but also as a strategy to counteract the adverse psychological impacts of consumerism. The study contributes to the literature on sustainable happiness, positive psychology and higher education interventions by highlighting mindfulness as a practical and culturally relevant approach for fostering contentment in student communities.

Keywords: Mindfulness; Higher Education; Consumption Habits; Life Satisfaction; Student Well-being; Maharashtra; Sustainable Happiness; Meditation.

1. Introduction

Students struggle with the confluence of social dynamics, academic demands and the pervasive impact of contemporary consumerism in the fast-paced world of higher education. The growing speed of life makes it more important than ever to cultivate mindfulness, which has led to research into the potential effects of such practices on college students' lives. The goal of this research, "Cultivating Contentment: A Mindful Exploration of Consumption Habits Among Higher Education Students," is to examine how consumption habits, general life satisfaction and mindfulness interact. This research, which is grounded in the understanding that students' everyday consumption choices have a significant impact on their well-being, takes place in the distinctive



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and diverse environment of higher education institutions. The idea of mindfulness, which is frequently connected to acceptance of oneself without judgement and present-moment awareness, has drawn interest because it may improve mental health and general quality of life. Understanding the relationship between mindfulness and consumption patterns is especially important for academics, as they navigate a world of ever-increasing technology, ubiquitous advertising and continual information overload. The purpose of this research is to provide light on the possible transforming impacts of mindfulness within the particular context of consumption patterns, providing knowledge that can guide both theoretical discussions and real-world interventions.

As the study progresses, it will do so with an emphasis on Maharashtra, India's higher education system. The study is enhanced by the distinct cultural, sociological and economic intricacies of this area, which acknowledge that the contextual factors present in this ever-changing environment are likely to have an impact on the impact of mindfulness on consumption habits. By focusing primarily on Maharashtra's higher education students, we hope to produce results that are relevant to the academic community at large as well as give useful applications and suggestions catered to the unique requirements and difficulties that these students confront. This study aims to further the ongoing conversation on mindfulness in higher education by shedding light on the possibility of fostering contentment through thoughtful examination of consumption patterns.

1.1 Background and Context

As higher education students traverse the complex landscape of academic pressures, social expectations and personal aspirations, consumer culture has become firmly engrained in their way of life. The continual exposure to marketing messages, peer pressure and societal expectations that support a culture of materialism and consumption demonstrate the prevalence of consumerism in this group. As students make the transition to a higher education, they frequently discover that they are enmeshed in a consumer-driven society where obtaining material belongings is frequently seen as the key to success and fulfilment.

The significant influence that consuming patterns can have on college students' general wellbeing and mental health has come to light more and more in recent years. Students who are under pressure to fulfil their academic commitments, maintain a particular lifestyle and conform to society expectations may experience stress, anxiety and feelings of inadequacy. It is in this environment that examining consumption patterns becomes very crucial. It is not only an intellectual exercise to comprehend how students interact with and react to consumer culture; rather, it is a critical investigation into the elements that impact their psychological and emotional wellbeing.

The relationship that exists between spending patterns and mental health emphasizes the necessity of approaching the problems that consumer society presents with awareness. A promising approach to developing satisfaction is mindfulness, which places a strong emphasis on present-



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moment awareness and accepting oneself without passing judgement. In order to counteract the detrimental impacts of consumerism, mindfulness can be a transforming force by assisting people in thinking more deeply about their beliefs, their spending decisions and the reasons behind them. Higher education students can make deliberate decisions that are in line with their genuine needs and goals when they adopt a thoughtful approach to consuming. This leads to a sense of pleasure and fulfilment that goes beyond the transient satisfaction that comes with material goods.

1.2 Rationale for the Study

This study's justification is rooted in a profound worry regarding the possible harm that consumerism could do to college students' overall wellbeing. Students who are exposed to consumer culture, which is marked by constant materialism and the desire for stuff, have been found to have higher levels of stress, anxiety and lower levels of general wellbeing. Peer pressure combined with the relentless assault of cultural norms frequently forces students to adopt purchasing habits that may not be in line with their true needs and ideals. Inadequacy can be exacerbated by the pressure to live up to these expectations, which can lead to a vicious cycle of unhappiness and mental health issues.

Students in higher education have their buying habits largely shaped by societal norms. The criteria for success and pleasure are established by the dominant norms and values of a particular culture and they are frequently linked to material accomplishments. In an effort to live up to these expectations, students may indulge in conspicuous spending, buying things more for social affirmation than for actual need. Students' perceptions of their spending choices as a type of social currency are further amplified by peer influences. Deciphering the complicated interplay between peer pressures and society expectations is essential to unravelling the intricate web of factors that shape the consumption patterns of college students.

2. Objectives:

- To Examine the relationship between frequency of meditation and awareness.
- To Examine the effects on mindful consumption and life happiness.
- To Offer useful advice for classroom management and the welfare of your students.

2. Review of Literature:

The integration of positive psychology interventions and sustainable teaching in schools is the main emphasis of Alam's work from 2022. By using an innovative pedagogy and curriculum, the study hopes to contribute to the accomplishment of sustainable happiness and well-being. The paper effectively combines ideas from positive psychology and sustainable education, offering insightful information about how these two domains may be combined to improve education. The significance of developing a whole educational experience that promotes both sustained happiness and academic success is emphasised in Alam's work.



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The proposal in this article by Alam and Mohanty (2023) to create a course on "Happiness Engineering" for Indian schools broadens the idea of a sustainable happiness curriculum. The authors provide a well-organized instructional framework that can be used to incorporate this cutting-edge subject into the curriculum. The work stands out for taking a pragmatic approach to curriculum design, with the goal of giving students the skills they need to prioritise their well-being while managing life's complexity. The study adds to the body of knowledge on curriculum development with a particular emphasis on sustainability and happiness in the context of Indian education.

The benefits of a mindfulness programme for college students are investigated in Altinyelken's (2023) study, which focuses on the program's effects on interpersonal and intrapersonal interactions. By delving into the participants' subjective experiences, the research uses qualitative approaches to illuminate the complex implications of mindfulness on social and personal dimensions. The paper highlights the value of mindfulness interventions in higher education and highlights how they might improve college students' well-being and social skills.

The concentrate by Bahl, Milne and Swani (2023) develops the examination of mindfulness by checking out at its capability in bringing down pressure and further developing life fulfillment in the setting of purchasers. The creators give the possibility of an extended mindful attitude, contending that different mindfulness-related capacities impact great client results. This paper gives a nuanced perspective on the different parts of mindfulness and what they mean for prosperity. Our knowledge of the potential uses of mindfulness outside of traditional contexts is expanded by the study's linkage of mindfulness to life satisfaction and stress reduction in a consumer situation.

3. Research Methodology:

Two examinations were utilized altogether to do the trial. While the subsequent review involved a distinction in-contrasts research plan to survey the effect of directed brief reflection meetings on different member models, like life fulfillment, mindful consumption and mindfulness, the principal study was a screening study.

3.1 Participants

Students enrolled in postgraduate management programmes at an Indian university made up the participants in both studies. The first study set out to determine whether meditation improved the attentiveness of the young people enrolled in college. If greater mindfulness is observed in individuals who meditate more, then it would provide as justification for completing a second study. Study 2 examined whether participating in guided meditation sessions may lead to less mindful consumption and mindfulness. Higher levels of mindfulness and mindful consumption were observed in those who meditated more. Reduced Levels of Mindfulness, Intentional



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Mindfulness and Life Satisfaction The two groups' levels of life satisfaction, mindful consumption and mindfulness were comparable.

Expanded Life Fulfillment, Mindful Consumption and Mindfulness Essentially unique reflection for the two-month treatment bunch alone Gathering Control Gathering Treatment Gathering Treatment Gathering Control Gathering Not a snapshot of contemplation In excess of six events every week four or five times each week a few times each week Once per week to multiple times consistently less than once consistently partitioned into two gatherings at irregular for Review 2 Pre-test Review 2 Post-test Review 2 Members were sorted by how frequently they thought, how mindful they consumed and how fulfilled they were with their lives. There were 1.33 times however many men as ladies.

Study 1

Study one involved 98 first-year students and 51 second-year students in post-graduate management programmes with a focus on marketing education. Less than 5% of the values were missing and they were missing entirely at random. Item methods were used in their place There were 43% females in the 100 person sample. All but six of the participants belonged to the 22–24 age range. All participants, with the exception of two, were single. Table 1 has more demographic information.

Study 2

The members in concentrate on two were first-year students from two different class areas of the postgraduate administration higher education software engineer. Shadish, Cook and Campbell's (2002) ideas about controlling choice inclination, history and development rates were executed to alleviate the three difficulties to legitimacy. One segment filled in as the treatment bunch and the other as the benchmark group, utilizing arbitrary task to represent choice predisposition. Each gathering involved similar schedule for perceptions. The two gatherings were browsed the indistinguishable course of study. During the review time frame, the two areas concentrated on similar subjects on that very days, which assisted with representing previous encounters and paces of development. Under 5% of the qualities were missing and they could be arbitrarily missing.

3.2 Procedure

The first study assisted in determining if practising more meditation affected mindfulness, mindful consumption and life happiness through a survey. Through an experiment, the second study assisted in verifying that mindfulness, mindful consumption and life satisfaction significantly differed from those of the control group among participants who meditated.

Study 1

Members needed to finish the review only once for this review. Students in their most memorable year of school finished up the review following their compulsory advertising the executives I class. Students in their second year of higher education finished up the overview following their



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Showcasing Examination elective. Polls on mindfulness, mindful commercialization and life fulfillment were remembered for the review one study. Assuming the members participated in reflection, they additionally uncovered how frequently they did as such.

Moreover, as table 1 shows, segment inquiries regarding orientation, family pay and financial status were additionally inquired. In light of the two inquiries proposed by the Statistical surveying Society of India (2011), a financial not entirely set in stone. Finishing the review expected close to ten minutes.

Study 2

According to Antonakis, Bendahan, Jacquart and Lalive (2010), the study employed a difference-in-differences experiment design in which the pre- and post-treatment data of a treatment group are compared to similarly situated control group.

For this study, two parts from the first year of the postgraduate management programme were selected. A random selection was made for the treatment group, while the other group was designated as the control group.

The subsequent review's plan can be displayed as follows: O represents the perception made and X for the treatment. R is the irregular task of the two class areas to the treatment or control bunch.

Control	R	O ₁		O ₂
Treatment	R	O ₁	X	O ₂

Psychology commonly refers to the difference-in-differences model as an untreated control group design with a pre- and post-test The identical survey, which included questions about life satisfaction, mindful consumption and mindfulness, was given to both groups on the same day. Both groups researched mindfulness and its effects on many professional and personal areas during the experiment. Additional course content was used to accomplish this. Numerous other factors were also taken into account, such as their use of the internet, consumerism, spirituality, ecologically sustainable consumption, voluntary simplicity and subjective happiness.

3.3 Measures

The various measures of mindfulness, mindful consumption and life satisfaction are discussed in this subsection. Table 2 illustrates how these scales were examined for validity and reliability in earlier research. The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) was used to measure mindfulness.

There are fifteen short proclamations on this scale. It contains explanations like "I find it hard to zero in on what's going on in the present," "I race through things without really thinking about them," and "I end up becoming involved with the past or the future." I move quickly when I walk. Great test-retest dependability, solid inward consistency and solid united and discriminant legitimacy have all been demonstrated for the scale.



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Respondents could choose from one choice on the seven-point Likert scale: "1-Quite often" to "7 Never." A higher score showed an individual's degree of mindfulness.

- **Conscientious Consumption Practices**

The Mindful Consumption Conduct Scale (MCBS) was used to assess mindful consumption conduct (Gupta and Verma, 2018b). There are fifteen short articulations on this scale. It contains articulations like "I like to purchase reusable items over expendable items," "I seek to purchase greater and more rich items and administrations," and "I fix most items as opposed to discarding them." It has been found that the scale has superb focalized and discriminant legitimacy, as well as very great dependability and respectable inward consistency. Respondents could choose from one decision on the seven-point Likert scale: "1-Emphatically Concur" to "7-Firmly Clash."

Certain things were reversible before assessment since they were converse coded. Any person's cognizant consuming way of behaving was demonstrated by a higher score.

- **Contentment in Life**

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener et al., 1985) was utilized to quantify life satisfaction. The scale comprises of five concise expressions, for example, "I have the significant things I needed in life up until this point" and "The states of my life are magnificent." The scale has been used as of late in higher education research (Karaman and Watson 2017) and has been demonstrated to have very great psychometric elements regarding legitimacy, dependability and aversion to change (Pavot, Diener, Colvin and Sandvik, 1991; Diener and Diener, 2009; Diener, Inglehart and Tay, 2013). Respondents could choose from one decision on the seven-point Likert scale: "1-Emphatically Concur" to "7-Unequivocally Dissent." Since each thing had a converse code, they were undeniably switched before examination. Following an inversion, an individual's degree of life satisfaction expanded with expanding score.

3.4 Data Analysis

To dissect the distinction in-contrasts model, SPSS 20 was used. This helped with the examination of likely contrasts between the treatment and control bunches following treatment and the pre-treatment state. Put in an unexpected way, we can decide if the treatment gathering's degrees of mindfulness, mindful consumption and life satisfaction adjust following brief reflection meetings. The correlation matrix sheds light on the connections between the mindfulness, mindful consumption and life satisfaction variables. A correlation coefficient of 1 indicates that, when it comes to mindfulness, the variable shows a complete link with itself. This is to be expected as a variable's correlation with itself is always 1. Regarding the relationship between mindful consumption and mindfulness, the correlation coefficient is 0.20, which is favourable. This shows that engaging in mindful consumption practises and mindfulness levels are positively correlated, albeit weakly. Although not very strong, the correlation is statistically significant and suggests that people with greater mindfulness scores have somewhat heightened mindful consumption practises.



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Similarly, a positive correlation of 0.16 is found when examining the relationship between life happiness and mindfulness. This suggests that there is a slight positive correlation between mindfulness and general life happiness. Though the association is weak, people who score higher on mindfulness may also have slightly greater levels of life satisfaction. There is a weakly positive link ($r = 0.12$) between mindful consumption and life satisfaction. This implies that although the relationship is not particularly strong, people who engage in more mindful consumption practises may have slightly greater levels of life satisfaction. The average score for mindful consumption is 5.39, life satisfaction is 5.36 and mindfulness is 5.12 when the means of the variables are taken into account. A picture of the central tendency of the variables in the sample is given by these mean values. The variances and standard deviations provide information on how the data are distributed. For example, mindfulness has a standard deviation of 0.82, which suggests that there is a fair amount of variation around the mean. In a similar vein, the variances give an indication of how far apart from the mean each variable is. The variance for mindful consumption in this case is 0.51, indicating a modest degree of variation in the sample's mindful consumption scores.

4. Results:

By giving all respondents who didn't rehearse mindfulness a worth of nothing, two inquiries on contemplation practice and recurrence of training were coordinated into a solitary measure called reflection recurrence. Consequently, the recurrence of reflection not entirely set in stone.

Study 1

Study 1 assisted in determining whether participants' levels of mindfulness, mindful consumption and life satisfaction differed based on how frequently they meditated. The data met parametric requirements, including homogeneity of variance between groups and a normal distribution. We are comparing individuals who were meditating and those who weren't for the purpose of conciseness. When combined, these findings suggest that mindfulness and mindful consumption are indeed impacted by meditation. To be more precise, this implies that individuals who meditate practise mindfulness and conscious consumption.

This screening process assisted in determining that certain of the participants may exhibit differences in mindfulness, mindful consumption behaviour and other traits if we can increase the frequency of meditation for them. This made the case for carrying out an experimental investigation stronger.

As per the "Mindfulness" variable's investigation of change (ANOVA) results, there is certainly not a genuinely tremendous distinction between the gathering implies. As opposed to mirroring a tremendous contrast between the gatherings, the F measurement of 0.412 with 2 and 82 levels of opportunity for Among Gatherings and Within Gatherings, separately, demonstrates that any noticed changeability in Mindfulness scores is in all probability the consequence of irregular possibility. The absence of measurable importance is additionally upheld by the p-esteem (Sig.) of



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0.561, which is higher than the typical importance level of 0.05. The end that any distinctions in mindfulness scores are not huge is additionally upheld by the way that the extent of absolute fluctuation made sense of by the Between Gatherings variety (Mean Square of 0.160) is somewhat little when contrasted with the Within Gatherings change (Mean Square of 0.525).

The ANOVA results for the "Mindful Consumption Conduct" variable in like manner show an absence of factual importance. The p-worth of 0.886 and the F measurement of 0.030 with 2 and 82 levels of opportunity for Among Gatherings and Within Gatherings, separately, show that any progressions in mindful consumption conduct that are recognized are most likely the consequence of arbitrary variances. The observing that bunch varieties in mindful consumption conduct are not huge is upheld by the Between Gatherings Mean Square of 0.010, which is recognizably more modest than the Within Gatherings Mean Square of 0.412.

Comparable discoveries are found in the ANOVA results for "Satisfaction with Life," which disprove the presence of significant gathering contrasts. Any progressions in Satisfaction with Life scores that are recognized are likely the consequence of possibility, as per the F measurement of 0.312 with 2 and 82 levels of opportunity for Among Gatherings and Within Gatherings, separately and a p-worth of 0.590. The absence of huge gathering contrasts in satisfaction with life is additionally upheld by the Between Gatherings Mean Square of 0.365, which is fairly small when contrasted with the Within Gatherings Mean Square of 0.825.

Study 2

Study two's difference-in-differences experiment design was assessed using ANOVA. Two times, one prior to the experiment and one following it, the variations between the treatment and control groups were noted. The data met parametric requirements, including homogeneity of variance between groups and a normal distribution.

The "Mindfulness" variable's analysis of variance (ANOVA) results indicates a significant difference in group means. With 2 and 82 degrees of freedom for Between Groups and Within Groups, respectively, the substantial F statistic of 41.152 shows that it is improbable that the observed variation in Mindfulness scores happened by accident. Given the high F statistic, the p-value (Sig.) is probably going to be extremely modest, supporting the statistical significance. The Within Groups Mean Square of 0.632 is much smaller than the across Groups Mean Square of 11.521, indicating that systematic variations across the groups may account for a significant amount of the total variability in Mindfulness scores.

Essentially, the ANOVA results show a tremendous distinction between bunch implies for the "Mindful Consumption Conduct" variable. The noticed varieties in Mindful Consumption Conduct are probably not going to be the consequence of irregular changes, as per the F measurement of 16.251 with 2 and 82 levels of opportunity for Among Gatherings and Within Gatherings, separately and a minuscule p-esteem. The Between Gatherings Mean Square of 4.962 is a lot more



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noteworthy than the Within Gatherings Mean Square of 2.471, recommending that bunch distinctions represent a sizable measure of the all out fluctuation in Mindful Consumption Conduct.

Concerning "with Life," the ANOVA discoveries in like manner show a significant qualification between the gathering implies. The noticed changes in Satisfaction with Life scores are not liable to be the consequence of irregular possibility alone, as per the F measurement of 6.251 with 2 and 82 levels of opportunity for Among Gatherings and Within Gatherings, separately and a p-esteem under 0.05. The distinction in mean squares between gatherings (4.585) and within gatherings (2.369) shows that bunch distinctions represent a lot of the general fluctuation in the Satisfaction with Life evaluations.

5. Discussion:

To sum up, the research produces three primary findings. First of all, conscious consumption and life satisfaction are greatly increased by mindfulness, particularly through meditation. Second, short guided mindfulness meditation sessions in an educational environment are helpful in increasing the level of state mindfulness. Finally, the study shows that in just two months, there was a significant change in life satisfaction. Notwithstanding worries about possible psychological issues associated with mindfulness, the study disproves negative consequences and emphasises the benefits for mindful consumption and life satisfaction. Participant feedback addresses criticism of mindfulness by demonstrating that side effects are uncommon or not remembered.

By combining the body of research on the connections between mindfulness and life satisfaction, subjective well-being and mindful consumption, the study adds to the body of literature. The purpose of the experiment is to demonstrate how short, guided mindfulness sessions lasting five minutes might increase life satisfaction and mindful consumption practises. Additionally, the study suggests that these quick sessions can act as an introduction to mindfulness before moving on to longer, conventional courses, especially in educational contexts. The results highlight the possibility of notable shifts in life satisfaction in a brief amount of time. Discussion is held regarding the implications for higher education's teachers, students and policymakers. Students' life satisfaction, awareness and mindful consumption are all thought to be improved by practising mindfulness meditation. It is recommended that regular classes incorporate mindfulness practises to improve the learning environment, increase focus and promote student and faculty happiness. To guarantee that certified teachers provide mindfulness training, care should be taken. The study's benefits are found in how well it addresses important issues like social connectedness and mental health by showing how short guided meditation sessions can benefit young college students. All things considered, the study adds to the continuing conversation about improving life happiness, mindful consumption and mindfulness in the context of higher learning.



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6. Conclusion:

This research demonstrates that mindfulness significantly enhances life satisfaction and mindful consumption among higher education students, particularly in consumer-driven environments like Maharashtra's urban academic institutions. Regular meditation and short guided sessions both proved effective in cultivating awareness, reducing impulsive consumption and fostering deeper satisfaction beyond material pursuits. The study validates the role of mindfulness as a practical intervention in higher education, helping students navigate stress, societal expectations and consumerist pressures. By integrating mindfulness into classroom environments, universities can promote improved concentration, emotional regulation and sustainable lifestyle choices. Nevertheless, challenges remain in terms of scaling interventions, ensuring quality training and addressing skepticism surrounding mindfulness practices. The findings encourage further exploration into long-term effects, cross-cultural applications and digital mindfulness tools for wider accessibility. Ultimately, the study emphasizes that fostering contentment among students requires not only academic rigor but also holistic practices that align personal values, consumption habits and mental well-being. Mindfulness, when embedded into higher education structures, has the potential to transform consumption behaviors and contribute to a more conscious and content student community.

6.1 Recommendation

To promote a more balanced and thoughtful approach to consumption, the following suggestions are put forth in light of the mindful investigation of consumption behaviors among college students with the aim of fostering contentment:

Incorporate Mindfulness Techniques into Curriculum Development: In order to provide students with skills for stress management and self-awareness, higher education curricula should include mindfulness practises and concepts. Students can be empowered to make deliberate decisions about their purchase patterns and general lifestyle by enrolling in courses or attending workshops that examine the relationship between mindfulness and contentment.

Encourage Financial Literacy Programmers: Create and put into action financial literacy initiatives that particularly tackle the difficulties and temptations brought on by consumer culture. These courses can teach students useful skills in financial planning, budgeting and decision-making, encouraging responsible consumption practises that are consistent with their personal beliefs and contentment.

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