

An Investigation and Analysis of the Motivation for Joining the Communist Party among "Post-00s" College Students Based on Motivation Theory

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Abstract: Universities are crucial venues for developing student party members. The emergence of issues such as diversification, utilitarianism, and passivity in the motivations for joining the Communist Party among "Post-00s" college students poses challenges to party-building work in universities. This paper systematically analyzes the current status, types, and influencing factors of the motivations for joining the Communist Party among "Post-00s" college students, and concludes that these motivations are influenced by both intrinsic motivations such as self-actualization and extrinsic incentives from the state, society, schools, and families. It is recommended to rectify the motivations for joining the Communist Party among college students by strengthening education on the history of the Communist Party, firming beliefs and faith, promoting correct values to avoid utilitarian tendencies, leveraging exemplary roles to overcome vanity, and cultivating independent thinking to prevent blind obedience.

1. Introduction

As socialism with Chinese characteristics enters a new era, the continuous absorption of outstanding young people into the party holds profound significance (Li Yanping, 2022) [1]. Nowadays, the abundance of information and diverse values have a tremendous impact on the value

orientations, ways of thinking, and ideals and beliefs of college students (Ren Ruiqi, 2020) [2]. According to the latest intra-party statistics from the Central Organization Department, 2.771 million students were newly developed as party members in 2023 (Central Organization Department of the CPC, 2024) [3]. Considering the age criteria for joining the party, college students constitute the absolute majority of newly developed student party members. Educating and guiding college students, rectifying their motivations for joining the party, and cultivating outstanding student party members are not only key aspects of party-building work in universities but also important ways to cultivate excellent party members (Jin Xinxin & Du Juan, 2021) [4]. Therefore, understanding the motivations for joining the party among college students and their influencing factors is of great significance, both for the development of ideological education for college students and for the cultivation of excellent party members.

Motivation is the internal force that initiates individual activities, sustains initiated activities, and drives activities towards a certain goal (Zhang Chunxing, 1994) [5]. Motivation is the key to determining one's behavior (Wang Mengyao, 2022) [6]. The motivation for joining the party refers to the fundamental reason and ultimate purpose for an applicant to apply for party membership (Zhan Yi, 2022) [7]. Motivation theory has been applied to research in multiple areas of student ideological education; however, these studies are mainly focused on theoretical analysis, with relatively few empirical investigations based on motivation theory. The "Post-00s" generation, also known as the "Z generation," has unique characteristics distinct from previous generations. This study focuses on the new generation of "Post-00s" college students and explores the current status and influencing factors of their motivations for joining the party through a questionnaire survey and analysis of 2,200 undergraduate students.

2. Analysis of the Current Status of Motivation for Joining the Party

2.1. Research Method

This survey conducted a questionnaire among undergraduate students at a local undergraduate university in Guangdong Province. A total of 2,200 questionnaires were distributed, with 2,090 valid responses collected, yielding an effective response rate of 95%. The sample covers a comprehensive range of genders and grades. Among the survey sample, 10% are CPC members (including probationary members), 72% are members of the Communist Youth League, and 18% are non-party members. Additionally, 72.25% of the respondents have submitted an application for party membership.

2.2. Survey Results and Analysis

2.2.1. The motivation for joining the party among "Post-00s" college students is generally strong.

According to the survey results, 79.91% of college students expressed a relatively strong willingness to join the party in terms of their personal intention to join. Additionally, 73.21% of students believe that many of their classmates have an intention to join the party, while only 0.95% believe that very few of their classmates have such an intention. This indicates that both the "Post-00s" college students' own intention to join the party and their perception of others' intentions are relatively strong.

In terms of enthusiasm for joining the party, 67.94% of college students are actively seeking to join, while only 10.05% are indifferent to or unwilling to join the party.

It is worth noting that the gap between enthusiasm and intention to join the party (see Figure 1)

suggests that there are situations where individuals have the desire but have not translated it into a positive willingness that can drive action.

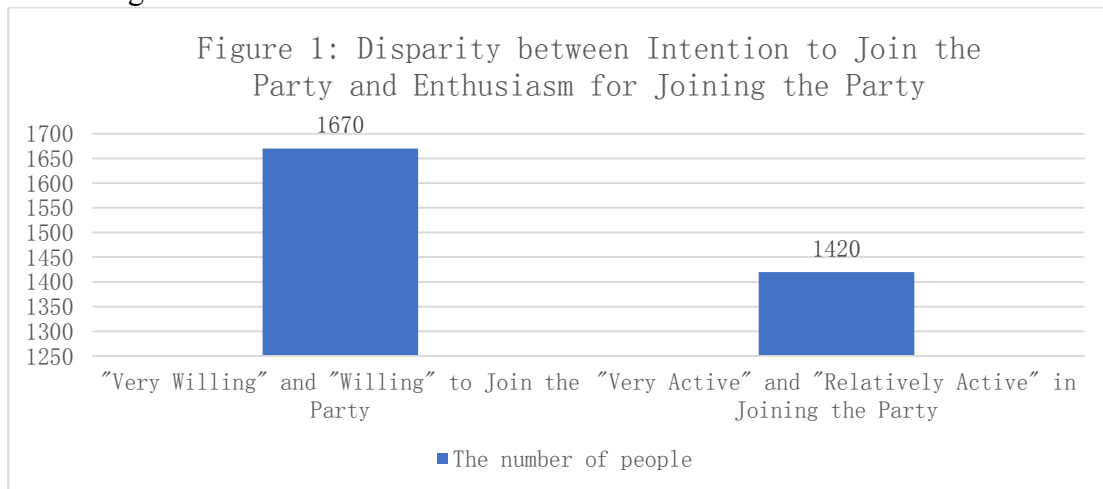


Figure 1: Disparity between Intention to Join the Party and Enthusiasm for Joining the Party

2.2.2. Diversified Motivations for Joining the Party Among "Post-00s" College Students

According to the survey findings, the motivations for joining the party among college students exhibit a diversified trend, which can be mainly categorized into four types: ideal and belief-oriented, interest-driven, self-vain, and blindly following the crowd.

Ideal and Belief-Oriented: 75.12% of college students believe that "joining the party can realize their ideals and beliefs", indicating that the majority of students hold a healthy, positive, and correct attitude. These students are willing to strive to meet the standards of party members for their own ideals and beliefs.

Interest-Driven: 68.42% of college students believe that "joining the party can help in employment", and 45.93% believe that "joining the party can provide special bonus points in award evaluations". This motivation is driven by interests and exhibits a utilitarian tendency.

Self-Vain: 38.28% of college students believe that "joining the party is a matter of great honor and prestige", and 38.76% believe that "joining the party is to live up to the expectations of their family members". These students view joining the party as a capital to show off.

Blindly Following the Crowd: 29.67% of college students believe that joining the party is "influenced by their classmates". When their classmates all apply to join the party, they feel the need to take action as well, lacking a deep understanding of the party and blindly following the crowd.

Most students have more than one motivation for joining the party, demonstrating a trend of diversification and complexity. Some students have utilitarian motivations for joining the party, and there is also a certain degree of passive psychology.

3. Analysis of Factors Influencing the Motivation to Join the Communist Party Among "Post-00s" University Students

Human activities are driven by certain motivations, which, when aroused, generate a driving force that propels organisms to pursue the satisfaction of their needs. However, the arousal of these needs can stem from either internal demands or external stimuli, or from the combined effect of both (Fu Guoqun, 2021) [8]. According to surveys, 68.42% of university students are motivated to

join the Communist Party due to the "interaction between internal motivations, external incentives, and self-coordination." Therefore, this study believes that university students are influenced by internal motivations (individuals' higher needs for respect and self-actualization) and external incentives (impacts from the national level, social environment, school education, and family factors). Through self-coordination, they develop the motivation to join the Communist Party of China (see Figure 2).

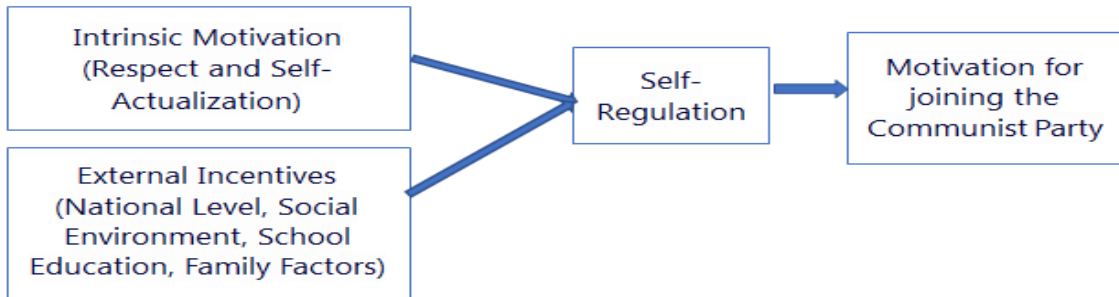


Figure 2: Factors Influencing the Motivation for Joining the Communist Party Among University Students

3.1. Intrinsic Motivation

Maslow believed that individuals have higher needs for respect and self-actualization. In the survey, 90.91% of university students agreed that "joining the Communist Party is driven by the need for respect and self-actualization." The lofty significance of being a party member is a need for university students to become party members and realize their ideals and beliefs.

3.2. External Incentives

According to the survey, most students believe that their motivation to join the Communist Party is influenced by a combination of external factors, including the national level, social environment, school education, and family factors (see Figure 3).

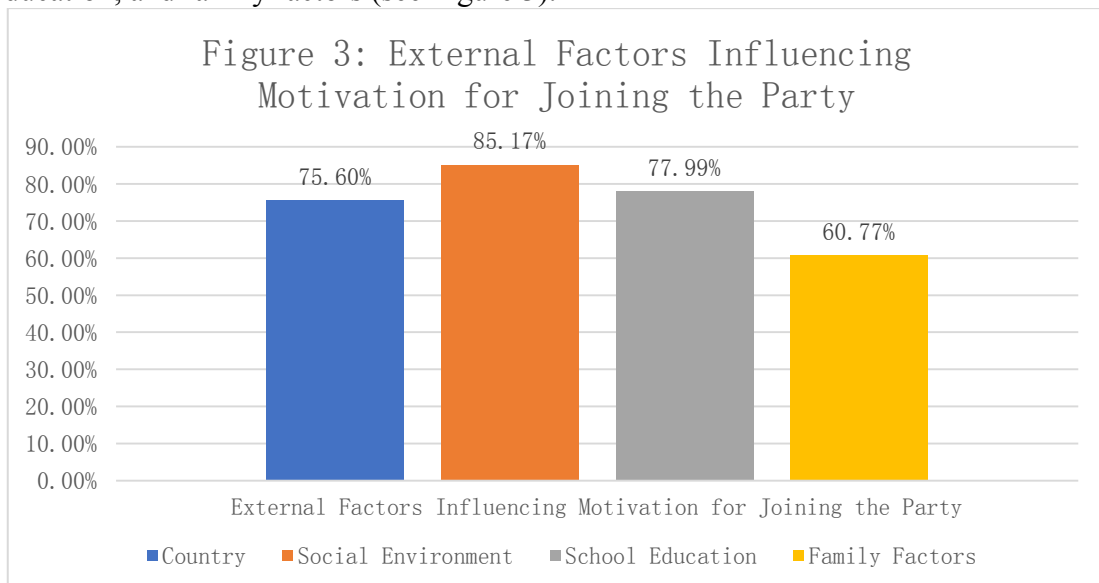


Figure 3: External Factors Influencing Motivation for Joining the Party

1. **Impact at the National Level:** The CPC Central Committee attaches great importance to the construction of the party membership, emphasizing that student party members are the backbone among students and that the construction of student party members is a foundational project for party building in universities (Jiao Xin, 2013) [9]. By the end of 2023, the total number of CPC members was 99,185,000, an increase of 1,144,000 from the previous year. Nationwide, there were 20,980,000 applicants for party membership and 10,547,000 activists (Organization Department of the CPC Central Committee, 2024) [10]. As their sense of identity and belonging to the country and the party's cause deepens, university students' motivation to join the party becomes stronger.

2. **Impact of the Social Environment:** On the one hand, with the heroic deeds of many party members being vigorously promoted, the social environment has effectively guided positive values. On the other hand, university students face enormous employment pressure. Many employers, for the purpose of selecting outstanding talent, stipulate in their recruitment that party members are preferred or must be CPC members. Driven by interests, university students exhibit a trend of utilitarian motivation.

3. **Impact of School Education:** Both ideological and political education in universities and the construction of student party organizations can affect students' motivation to join the party. Universities generally place ideological and political education and party branch construction in important positions, greatly enhancing students' enthusiasm for joining the party. However, issues such as the low status of ideological and political courses in students' minds, uneven teaching quality, and imperfect construction of student party branches have impacted students' motivation to join the party.

4. **Impact of Family Factors:** Family members' values can influence university students' motivation to join the party. The words and deeds of parents, relatives, and friends plant the seed of a lofty belief in the party in students' minds from a young age. At the same time, out of the hope that their children can find a good job after graduation, some parents may urgently require their children to join the party during university, leading some students to join with utilitarian purposes (Zhang Yu, 2021) [11].

The question of motivation is about why a person behaves in a certain way (Luo Lifang, 2013) [12]. The motivation to join the party is not formed or matured due to the influence of a single factor. When individuals are influenced by external environmental incentives, they develop an internal spiritual need to join the party. Through self-coordination between internal motivations and external incentives, individuals form different motivations to join the party.

4. Countermeasures and Suggestions Universities have a direct impact on the motivation of students to join the Communist Party, and guidance should be provided from the following perspectives.

4.1. Strengthen Education on Party History to Strengthen Faith and Beliefs

President Xi pointed out, "Studying the history of the Party is a required course for adhering to and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics and for continuing to push forward various causes of the Party and the country. This course is not only required but must also be excelled in" (Xi Jinping, 2021) [12]. Universities should fundamentally value party-building activities for university students, reform educational methods, leverage the main role of ideological and political courses, and integrate ideals and beliefs into the motivation for joining the Party.

4.2. Promote Correct Values and Avoid Utilitarian Tendencies

The influence of values on students should be emphasized. By vigorously promoting the spirit of

dedication and the overall situation, students should be educated not to solely pursue personal value realization but to closely link their destiny with the destiny of the country and the socialist cause.

4.3. Exert a Model Role to Overcome Vanity

Grassroots party members in universities should fully play a leading role as party pioneers. Teacher party members should lead by example, guide students to establish correct values, and help them overcome vanity.

5. Cultivate Independent Consciousness to Prevent Blind Obedience

Cultivate students' independent consciousness, help them think and solve problems independently, and make them realize that joining the Party should be based on their own mature ideological preparation rather than blindly following others.

It is the mission of university party organizations to infuse fresh blood into the party organization and cultivate high-quality student party members. Universities should address the four different types of motivations for joining the Party among the "post-00s" generation of university students by deepening the depth of faith through strengthened education on party history, promoting correct values to avoid utilitarian tendencies, exerting a model role to overcome vanity, and cultivating independent consciousness to prevent blind obedience, thereby cultivating qualified successors for the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

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