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The Path Selection of Integrating Chinese Traditional Integrity Culture into Integrity Education of Vocational Undergraduate Students

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Abstract: Traditional Chinese integrity culture embodies core principles of "self-discipline, public service, people-oriented governance, and prudence in solitude and minor matters," serving as a valuable cultural resource for integrity education in vocational undergraduate programs. As a key platform for cultivating high-level technical professionals, vocational education prepares graduates for roles in enterprise management, technical supervision, and grassroots services. Early implementation of integrity education plays a vital role in preventing occupational corruption and fostering professional ethics. However, current integrity education in vocational undergraduate programs faces challenges such as fragmented content, monotonous formats, and disconnection from professional contexts, which hinder the full realization of traditional integrity culture's educational value. This paper explores the core tenets of Chinese integrity culture, identifies its alignment with integrity education in vocational undergraduate programs, analyzes existing educational challenges, and proposes concrete integration strategies through three dimensions: curriculum system development, practical scenario design, and cultural atmosphere cultivation. The findings provide theoretical references and practical solutions for vocational colleges to enhance the effectiveness of integrity education and cultivate technically skilled professionals with moral integrity.

Keywords: Chinese traditional integrity culture; vocational undergraduate; integrity education; technical and skilled personnel; professional ethics

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1. The Core Connotation and Educational Value of Chinese Traditional Integrity Culture

Chinese traditional integrity culture has been cultivated over thousands of years, forming a rich system grounded in moral cultivation, human-centered philosophy, and institutional constraints. Its core connotation aligns closely with the integrity qualities required of vocational college students, offering abundant ideological resources for integrity education.

1.1. The Value Pursuit of "Self-discipline and Public Service": Cultivating Students' Professional Responsibility

The notion of "self-restraint for the public good" represents the core values of traditional integrity culture, emphasizing the suppression of personal desires in favor of collective interests. From Confucius' moral maxim in *The Analects*: "When one's conduct is upright, no orders are needed to achieve compliance; when one's conduct is corrupt, even orders will not be obeyed," to Fan Zhongyan's ideal of "worrying before the world worries and rejoicing after the world rejoices," and Lin Zexu's unwavering commitment: "If it

benefits the state, I will risk life and death-why should I avoid or pursue fortune?"-these examples all reflect the principle of prioritizing public service over personal gain. This philosophy resonates with the professional responsibilities of vocational college students. In technical supervision, students are expected to uphold quality standards and resist temptations, while in service-oriented roles, they must safeguard public interests and prevent abuse of power. Integrating the ethos of "self-restraint for the public good" into integrity education can help students establish clear boundaries between public and private interests, fostering a mindset that proactively resists corruption [1].

1.2. The People-oriented Thought of "People as the Foundation of the State": Cultivating Students' Initial Aspiration of Service

The principle of "the people as the foundation of the state" emphasizes prioritizing public welfare and serving the community, forming a fundamental aspect of traditional integrity culture. The *Book of Documents* states, "The people are the foundation of the state; with a solid foundation, the state will be at peace." Mencius highlighted, "The people are the most important; the state comes second; the ruler is the least significant." Zhu Xi advocated governance guided by virtue, likening it to the North Star that remains fixed while other stars revolve around it. Such perspectives stress that serving the people is an essential duty [2]. This principle extends naturally to professional practice: students in technical, managerial, or service-oriented careers fundamentally aim to create value for society. Mechanical engineering students must ensure product safety to protect users, finance students must maintain integrity to safeguard assets, and education professionals must uphold fairness to protect student rights. Embedding the concept of "people as the foundation of the state" into vocational education enables students to clarify the service-oriented nature of their careers and remain committed to integrity as their guiding principle.

1.3. The Method of Self-Cultivation of "Being Careful in Solitude and in Detail": Strengthening Students' Self-Discipline

The principle of "cautious solitude and meticulous attention to detail" reflects the practical wisdom of traditional integrity culture, emphasizing ethical vigilance and risk prevention in unmonitored circumstances. The *Doctrine of the Mean* states, "Nothing is more evident than hidden actions, nor more apparent than subtle details; thus, the noble person remains vigilant even in solitude," highlighting the importance of moral integrity when no one is watching [3]. Liu Bei's admonition, "Do not commit evil because it seems minor, nor neglect good because it appears insignificant," reinforces the need to cultivate virtue through attention to detail. This guidance is particularly relevant for vocational college students, who may face minor temptations or seemingly harmless infractions in their future careers, such as falsifying expense claims, accepting small gifts, bypassing safety protocols, or leaking non-critical data. By teaching students the value of "cautious solitude and meticulous attention to detail," integrity education encourages the development of self-discipline, enabling students to prevent minor lapses from escalating into significant ethical violations and internalize integrity as a consistent daily practice [4].

2. The Realistic Dilemma of Integrating Chinese Traditional Integrity Culture into Integrity Education of Vocational Undergraduate Students

Although some vocational colleges have attempted to incorporate traditional integrity culture into their integrity education programs, the integration process still faces significant challenges. These challenges stem from limitations in educational philosophy, resource allocation, teaching methods, and systemic support, making it difficult to fully realize the potential of cultural education. Without addressing these issues, the value of traditional integrity culture as a guiding framework for students' professional and moral development remains underutilized.

2.1. Fragmented Content Integration with Lack of Systematic Design

At present, the incorporation of traditional integrity culture is often fragmented rather than structured as a coherent system. Three major issues are particularly prominent. First, the integration channels are limited, heavily relying on ad-hoc events such as integrity lectures and themed class meetings. These activities often focus on narrating stories of historical integrity figures, but they lack deeper analysis, critical reflection, or relevance to contemporary professional life [5]. As a result, students may recognize the moral exemplars but struggle to relate them to modern workplace ethics or personal conduct. Second, there is insufficient alignment between educational content and professional contexts. The materials rarely address field-specific integrity risks, such as procurement malpractices in mechanical engineering or financial misreporting in accounting. This disconnect reduces the practical applicability of the teachings, leaving students ill-prepared for ethical challenges in their respective careers. Third, the design of integrity education lacks stratification. Current programs typically deliver uniform content to freshmen and senior interns alike, without considering students' progressive development from foundational career awareness to practical professional performance. Consequently, the step-by-step cultivation of integrity, which requires gradual internalization and contextual application, is largely absent, diminishing the overall effectiveness of the educational approach [6].

2.2. The Education Form Is Monotonous and Lacks Immersive Experience

The majority of institutions continue to rely on the traditional "lecture + case study" approach, which insufficiently engages students emotionally or encourages proactive participation. Three critical issues emerge in this regard. First, teaching remains largely one-directional, with instructors focusing on explaining abstract concepts of traditional integrity rather than facilitating discussions on practical implementation within professional contexts. Second, hands-on opportunities are scarce. Students rarely participate in experiential learning activities, such as visiting integrity education bases, analyzing family integrity precepts, or performing integrity-themed skits. This lack of immersive experience prevents students from transitioning from passive receivers of knowledge to active, reflective learners who can internalize the principles of integrity. Third, digital and technological tools are underutilized. Modern platforms such as short-form videos, interactive virtual simulations, and gamified scenarios are rarely employed to recreate historical or traditional integrity situations—for example, ancient officials adjudicating ethical cases—resulting in missed opportunities to engage the "digital native" generation and bridge traditional concepts with contemporary learning modes. Introducing these interactive elements could significantly enhance both comprehension and retention, making integrity education more relatable and impactful.

2.3. Lack of Evaluation Mechanism and Continuous Guarantee

The integration of traditional integrity culture into education is further hindered by inadequate evaluation mechanisms and weak continuity in implementation. Three major problems are evident. First, evaluation criteria are often vague and superficial, focusing primarily on student participation or submission of reflective reports while neglecting comprehensive quantitative or qualitative assessments of the actual impact on integrity awareness or moral internalization. Second, the evaluation process is overly unilateral. It relies mainly on counselors or ideological and political educators, without incorporating feedback from diverse stakeholders such as industry mentors, peers, or family members. This narrow perspective fails to provide a holistic understanding of students' integrity literacy and practical ethical competence. Third, long-term safeguards are lacking. Integrity education is often treated as a series of phase-based activities rather than a continuous component of talent development plans. There is rarely a structured, closed-loop mechanism of "education-practice-feedback-optimization," resulting in temporary or

superficial gains rather than sustained improvement in students' ethical behavior and professional responsibility. Without establishing a systematic evaluation and reinforcement process, the potential benefits of integrating traditional integrity culture into vocational education remain limited and difficult to sustain.

3. Specific Path of Integrating Chinese Traditional Integrity Culture into Integrity Education of Vocational Undergraduate Students

In light of the challenges discussed above, vocational colleges should construct a comprehensive integration path across three dimensions-curriculum, practice, and culture-transforming traditional Chinese integrity culture into tangible, practical, and internalized qualities for students. This approach ensures that integrity education is not merely theoretical but deeply embedded in students' professional development and daily behavior.

3.1. Constructing a "Culture + Specialty" Curriculum System to Achieve Systematic Integration of Content

Focusing on traditional integrity culture and aligned with professional requirements, a progressive curriculum system is designed to integrate integrity education throughout the talent development process.

General education courses lay the cultural foundation: Core courses such as "Introduction to Traditional Chinese Integrity Culture" and "Integrity Cultivation and Career Development" provide a structured exploration of principles including "self-restraint for public service," "the people as the foundation of the state," and "prudence in solitude and attention to details." Case-based comparative teaching-linking historical examples such as Bao Zheng's "impartial adjudication" to modern corporate compliance management, or Hai Rui's refusal of bribes to contemporary workplace resistance to temptation-allows students to connect traditional ethical concepts with modern professional practice. Situational discussions further deepen understanding, encouraging debates on practical dilemmas such as applying the principle of "prudence in solitude" to minor workplace ethical challenges, thereby fostering critical thinking and ethical judgment.

Specialized courses with job-specific reinforcement: The curriculum embeds a "job integrity module" tailored to the specific risk profiles of different disciplines. For example, the Mechanical Design program incorporates anecdotes of integrity-driven procurement from historical officials into its Equipment Procurement and Management course, demonstrating real-world lessons in purchasing ethics. Finance courses employ examples of principled bookkeeping from antiquity to emphasize professional integrity in financial management, while Early Childhood Education programs use historical educators' philosophies on impartiality to guide students in promoting equity and rejecting inappropriate gifts or favors from parents. This targeted approach ensures that integrity education is directly relevant to students' future professional roles.

Internship programs emphasize practical application: The course "Professional Integrity in the Workplace," offered prior to graduation internships, provides students with opportunities to apply traditional integrity principles in real work environments. Corporate mentors illustrate practical applications, such as using the "people as the foundation of the state" principle to guide client interactions or employing "cautious attention to details" in operational processes. Students maintain an "Integrity Practice Log," documenting instances where traditional integrity principles are applied to counter potential ethical dilemmas. Faculty and mentors jointly review these logs, enabling the transformation of cultural values into habitual professional conduct.

3.2. Creating the Practice Carrier of "Culture + Scene" to Achieve Immersive Experience

By leveraging academic and corporate resources, diversified practical platforms are established to immerse students in authentic scenarios reflecting traditional integrity culture, promoting both emotional resonance and practical competency.

Campus practices cultivate a cultural atmosphere: Initiatives such as the "Traditional Integrity Culture Festival" include activities like the "Integrity Family Admonitions Copying Contest," replicating ethical maxims from historical family guides, "Integrity-themed Drama Performances," reenacting stories such as "Gong Yixiu's Rejection of Fish" or "Yu Qian's Two Sleeves of Integrity," and "Integrity Debate Competitions" exploring the effectiveness of principles like "Shen Du" in preventing corruption. These activities foster active engagement, encouraging students to internalize integrity principles through participation and reflection. Additionally, the "Campus Integrity Supervision Post" enables students to monitor their own and peers' behaviors, applying traditional concepts such as "Shen Wei" to maintain ethical standards.

Corporate practice aligned with career needs: Partner enterprises collaborate to create "Integrity Education Practice Bases," where students engage in activities including visits to corporate integrity culture exhibitions, on-the-job training with integrity role models, and "Integrity Risk Screening" exercises that identify potential ethical vulnerabilities in professional roles. Mid-to-senior managers share real-world case studies demonstrating how traditional integrity culture informs career development, enhancing the relevance and persuasiveness of education.

Social practice for cultural enrichment: Students are guided to visit integrity education bases, such as Ancient Integrity Officials Memorial Halls or Modern Integrity Museums, where they experience traditional integrity culture through exhibits, reenactments, and virtual reality simulations. Programs like "Integrity Culture in Communities" engage students in spreading ethical values through lectures, performances, and interactive outreach, cultivating a sense of social responsibility and reinforcing the practical significance of traditional integrity culture beyond the campus.

3.3. Improving the "Culture + Long-term" Guarantee Mechanism to Achieve Sustainable Integration of Education

To ensure sustained integration of traditional integrity culture, a scientific evaluation framework and long-term safeguard mechanisms are essential.

Evaluation system: An "Integrity Literacy Assessment Index" assesses students across three dimensions: "Cultural Awareness" (understanding of traditional integrity concepts), "Behavioral Performance" (application in campus and internship settings), and "Emotional Attitude" (endorsement of integrity in professional behavior). A hybrid quantitative-qualitative approach is employed, combining knowledge tests and internship evaluations with integrity practice reports, peer assessments, and mentor interviews. Stakeholders including corporate mentors and community representatives participate, providing a comprehensive evaluation of students' integrity literacy.

Long-term safeguard mechanism: Integrity education is integrated into the talent development programs of vocational institutions, with clearly defined objectives, content, and instructional hours. An "Integrity Education Task Force," composed of ideological and political educators, subject teachers, and industry representatives, oversees curriculum design, practical implementation, and assessment. A dedicated "Special Integrity Education Fund" supports course development, operation of practice bases, and teacher training, ensuring the continuity and effectiveness of educational initiatives.

Campus culture integration: Traditional anti-corruption elements are embedded into the campus environment, such as creating an "Integrity Culture Corridor" displaying historical figures and quotes, and establishing an "Integrity Culture Zone" in the library containing classical texts and modern educational materials. Regular dissemination of "Integrity Stories," such as the tale of Liu Chong, the "One-Coin Magistrate," along with

integrity tips through campus media, ensures that students are continuously exposed to cultural values, gradually internalizing integrity as a professional and personal ethos.

4. Discussion

The integration of traditional Chinese integrity culture into vocational undergraduate education presents both opportunities and challenges that merit deeper reflection. Firstly, the multidimensional nature of traditional integrity culture-encompassing moral cultivation, people-centered philosophy, and meticulous self-discipline-provides a rich framework for shaping students' professional ethics. However, its effective transmission requires careful contextualization: abstract moral principles must be translated into specific, discipline-relevant scenarios to ensure comprehension and practical applicability. Without such contextualization, students may recognize historical examples of integrity yet struggle to relate them to contemporary workplace challenges.

Secondly, the interplay between curriculum design, practical application, and campus culture highlights the importance of synergy among educational dimensions. Curriculum alone, no matter how comprehensive, cannot guarantee internalization of integrity values; experiential learning and immersive cultural practices are critical for reinforcing theoretical knowledge. Likewise, creating a supportive campus environment that continuously exposes students to integrity concepts enhances both awareness and emotional engagement. This underscores the necessity of a holistic, system-oriented approach rather than isolated interventions.

Thirdly, the discussion of evaluation mechanisms reveals the complexity of assessing integrity literacy. Traditional metrics such as participation rates or written reflections are insufficient for capturing nuanced ethical development. A multidimensional evaluation framework incorporating quantitative knowledge tests, qualitative reflections, peer feedback, and mentor observations offers a more comprehensive picture of students' moral growth. Moreover, involving multiple stakeholders-from educators to corporate mentors-ensures that the assessment reflects real-world ethical competencies and not just academic performance.

Finally, the practical implications of integrating traditional integrity culture extend beyond individual professional development. By instilling principles such as "self-discipline for public service," "people as the foundation of the state," and "prudence in solitude and minor matters," students are equipped to navigate ethical dilemmas, prevent minor lapses from escalating, and contribute to transparent organizational practices. This suggests that integrity education grounded in traditional culture not only benefits students personally but also has broader societal significance, fostering a professional workforce capable of upholding ethical standards and promoting trust within communities and institutions.

Overall, the discussion highlights that the integration of traditional integrity culture into vocational education requires deliberate design, continuous reinforcement, and multidimensional evaluation. It emphasizes that ethical cultivation is a dynamic, lifelong process, and educational strategies must be adaptive to both the evolving professional context and the inherent values embedded in cultural heritage.

5. Conclusion

The traditional Chinese culture of integrity serves as the "root" and "soul" of integrity education for vocational undergraduate students. Its embedded values and practical wisdom play an irreplaceable role in cultivating high-level technical professionals who excel in both skills and ethics. Vocational colleges must overcome the current challenges of fragmented, monolithic, and short-term integration by establishing a "culture + specialization" curriculum system, creating "culture + scenario" practical platforms, and improving "culture + long-term" safeguard mechanisms. This approach enables the deep

integration of traditional integrity culture throughout the entire integrity education process. Not only does it help students develop a sense of integrity through "self-discipline, public service, and prudence in solitude and minor matters" to prevent future professional corruption risks, but it also instills "moral motivation" for their long-term career development. This fosters "new-era craftsmen" with both technical competence and noble virtues, providing solid talent support for creating a clean and upright workplace environment and promoting high-quality social development.

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