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Practice of Ideological and Political Education Combining "Aspiration Support" and "Wisdom Support" for Financially Underprivileged Students in Vocational Undergraduate Universities

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Abstract: This study investigates the integrated practice of ideological and political education that simultaneously delivers 'aspiration support'---cultivating moral conviction, self-worth, and social responsibility---and 'wisdom support'---strengthening academic competence, vocational capability, and critical thinking---among financially underprivileged students in vocational undergraduate universities. Grounded in institutional fieldwork across six such institutions over two academic years, the research employed a mixed-methods design combining longitudinal cohort tracking, participatory classroom observation, semi-structured interviews with 142 students and 37 educators, and analysis of pedagogical artifacts including curriculum plans, reflection journals, and mentorship logs. Findings reveal that aspiration support without wisdom support risks symbolic inclusion---students internalize values but lack tools to enact them; conversely, wisdom support without aspiration support produces technical proficiency detached from ethical orientation or shared commitment. The most effective initiatives emerged where pedagogical scaffolding deliberately interweaves value-laden narratives (e.g., work dignity, social mobility through integrity) with discipline-specific problem-solving tasks (e.g., sustainable manufacturing design, community-based service projects). Structural enablers included faculty development modules linking ideological framing to vocational epistemology, peer-led 'dual-support circles', and administrative reallocation of financial aid advising toward holistic mentoring. Outcomes included measurable gains in student-reported agency, persistence rates, and alignment between career choices and socially engaged values---not as abstract ideals but as lived dispositions enacted in internships, capstone work, and civic participation. The study affirms that ideological and political education for this demographic must be neither supplemental nor instrumental, but constitutive of vocational identity formation.

Keywords: ideological education; vocational education; student support

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1. Introduction

1.1. Contextual Imperative

Vocational undergraduate universities enroll a disproportionately high share of financially underprivileged students whose academic pathways are constrained by material scarcity and sociocultural marginalization. In this context, ideological and political education cannot operate as a discrete curricular component; it must be embedded across pedagogical practices, professional training, and student--faculty interactions [1]. Traditional models that separate moral formation from cognitive development prove inadequate for learners navigating structural inequities. Aspiration support---encompassing moral anchoring, identity affirmation, and purpose cultivation---must co-constitute with wisdom support---defined by cognitive scaffolding, technical skill mastery, and epistemic confidence [2]. Neither dimension functions effectively in

isolation: aspiration without wisdom risks abstraction; wisdom without aspiration lacks ethical grounding and motivational sustainability. Structural fusion, rather than sequential delivery, ensures that ideological formation reinforces practical competence while applied learning deepens value commitment. This integration demands institutional redesign---not merely additive programming---but recalibration of curriculum architecture, faculty development frameworks, and relational support systems. The imperative is not to supplement existing structures but to reconfigure them so that equity-oriented pedagogy becomes the operational grammar of educational practice [3].

1.2. Conceptual Distinction and Interdependence

Aspiration support is rigorously distinguished from motivational rhetoric: it denotes sustained institutional practices that affirm students' inherent dignity, situate personal struggle within broader social justice frameworks, and model ethical agency through vocational role exemplars. Wisdom support, conversely, departs from generic academic assistance by embedding discipline-specific knowledge within normative reasoning, historical consciousness, and collaborative responsibility---treating technical competence as inseparable from moral deliberation. Their interdependence is empirically evident in systemic breakdowns: when aspiration support operates without wisdom scaffolding, students articulate robust values yet report acute helplessness in translating them into professional action; when wisdom support lacks aspiration grounding, students attain measurable competency but express profound alienation from vocational purpose and collective mission. Neither dimension functions effectively in isolation; each constitutes a necessary condition for the other's ethical and pedagogical integrity [4, 5]. This mutual constitution demands integrated curricular design, faculty development aligned with dual competencies, and assessment metrics sensitive to both agentic orientation and applied judgment [6]. The resulting synergy enables financially underprivileged students not merely to navigate vocational pathways but to co-construct them as sites of dignity, equity, and socially responsive expertise [6, 7].

1.3. Research Scope and Significance

This study is delimited to publicly funded vocational undergraduate universities situated in regions exhibiting pronounced socioeconomic stratification [2, 8]. It explicitly excludes elite academic institutions and non-degree-granting vocational colleges, thereby ensuring contextual fidelity to applied higher education ecosystems where technical training intersects with structural inequity [9]. The research significance resides in constructing an empirically grounded framework for ideological and political education that deliberately resists dual distortions: instrumentalization---where political formation collapses into narrow employability metrics---and abstraction---where ethical reasoning becomes detached from concrete technical practice [9]. By anchoring aspiration support and wisdom support within the lived pedagogical realities of financially underprivileged students, the work advances equity-oriented praxis in vocational undergraduate settings [3].

2. Literature Review

2.1. Historical Evolution of Support Paradigms

Early models of student support centered on economic relief and remedial instruction as separate, functionally isolated interventions. Subsequent frameworks expanded to incorporate psychosocial dimensions---self-efficacy, belonging, resilience---yet frequently conceptualized these as static individual attributes rather than dynamic, collectively scaffolded dispositions [1, 9]. Contemporary scholarship identifies a critical convergence where structural disadvantage necessitates pedagogical responses capable of simultaneously reconfiguring material conditions and reconstructing subjectivity [5]. This evolution reflects a broader theoretical shift: from deficit-oriented correction toward asset-based development; from transmission-based knowledge delivery toward co-

constructed meaning-making [6]. Such paradigmatic transitions create conceptual space for integrative approaches that treat aspiration and wisdom not as sequential or hierarchical goals but as interdependent, mutually reinforcing dimensions of holistic student formation. Aspiration support cultivates future-oriented agency and identity projection, while wisdom support grounds such orientation in critical reflection, contextual awareness, and ethical reasoning. Their integration demands institutional practices that align financial aid, curricular design, mentorship structures, and campus climate initiatives into a coherent developmental ecology. This synthesis moves beyond additive service provision toward transformative educational architecture wherein material security and epistemic empowerment co-constitute each other.

2.2. Gaps in Vocational Contexts

While general higher education literature increasingly addresses holistic student development, vocational undergraduate settings remain under-theorized [5]. Existing work tends to bifurcate: either foregrounding technical curriculum reform without ideological coherence, or prioritizing ideological messaging divorced from workplace epistemologies [2]. Missing is a framework that treats vocational knowledge itself---as embodied, situated, and ethically charged---as the primary site where aspiration and wisdom coalesce. This gap sustains fragmentation: ethics courses remain siloed, while core technical instruction rarely engages questions of labor justice, environmental stewardship, or democratic professionalism [8]. Pedagogical interventions often operate at the periphery---supplementary workshops or extracurricular counseling---rather than reconfiguring disciplinary epistemology. Consequently, financial precarity is addressed through instrumental support mechanisms alone, neglecting how vocational identity formation mediates both self-conception and moral agency. The absence of integrative models impedes alignment between skill acquisition and value internalization, weakening institutional capacity to cultivate resilient, critically reflective practitioners [6, 8]. Without reconceptualizing technical competence as inherently normative, efforts to combine aspiration support and wisdom support risk reproducing structural disjunctions rather than transforming them.

2.3. Emerging Integrative Approaches

A nascent body of practice-based inquiry identifies integrative strategies that bridge ideological and political education with vocational learning. Curriculum mapping aligns disciplinary learning outcomes with civic competencies, ensuring conceptual coherence across courses [5]. Faculty development emphasizes pedagogical translation---rendering abstract ideological constructs into discipline-specific cases, critiques, and applied problem sets [6]. Institutional policy innovations embed academic mentors directly within departments rather than centralized units, reinforcing continuity between curricular content and socio-ethical reflection [8]. Collectively, these approaches operate on a shared premise: ideological and political education becomes pedagogically effective only when it is legible, actionable, and recurrent within students' daily vocational learning experiences. Such integration resists siloed delivery and instead cultivates sustained ethical reasoning as an embedded dimension of professional formation.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Research Design and Sampling Strategy

A sequential explanatory mixed-methods design was implemented across six vocational undergraduate universities selected for regional diversity, variation in institutional size, and differing levels of existing support infrastructure. Phase one involved quantitative tracking of 1,247 financially underprivileged students---defined by national financial aid eligibility criteria---across three cohorts. Phase two employed purposive sampling to select 142 students representing varied academic disciplines, gender identities, and geographic origins for in-depth qualitative engagement [3]. Educators were sampled to ensure representation across teaching roles---including core

faculty, lab instructors, academic advisors, and ideological education specialists---as well as institutional tiers. As detailed in Table 1, the institutional and participant profile across six sites includes Southwest Polytechnic Institute with 210 students across Mechanical Engineering, Nursing, and Digital Media, seven faculty interviewees, and a standalone financial aid office only; Northeast Technical College with 198 students across Automotive Technology, Early Childhood Education, and Renewable Energy Systems, six faculty, and an embedded academic coaching unit; and Central Vocational University with 235 students across Culinary Arts, Civil Construction, and Data Analytics, eight faculty, and no formal support structure beyond tuition waivers.

Table 1. Institutional and Participant Profile Across Six Sites

Institution Name	Student Cohort Size	Disciplines Represented	Faculty Interviewees Count	Primary Support Infrastructure Prior to Study
Southwest Polytechnic Institute	210	Mechanical Engineering, Nursing, Digital Media Automotive	7	Standalone financial aid office only
Northeast Technical College	198	Technology, Early Childhood Education, Renewable Energy Systems	6	Embedded academic coaching unit
Central Vocational University	235	Culinary Arts, Civil Construction, Data Analytics	8	No formal support structure beyond tuition waivers

3.2. Data Collection Instruments and Protocols

Data collection employed three rigorously validated instruments. First, longitudinal academic and retention dashboards tracked course completion rates, GPA trajectories, internship placements, and graduation timelines across four academic years. Second, semi-structured interviews followed dual-axis protocols: one axis probed lived experiences of support---eliciting reflections on value-skill alignment---while the other examined pedagogical encounters---prompting accounts of technical assignments that triggered ethical or civic reflection. Third, artifact analysis encompassed syllabi, mentorship logs, and student reflection portfolios, systematically coded for presence, depth, and integration of aspiration- and wisdom-linked elements [2, 5]. All instruments underwent iterative pilot testing with three successive refinements and achieved inter-rater reliability coefficients exceeding $\kappa = 0.87$. As detailed in Table 2, qualitative coding for pedagogical integration comprised three categories: Narrative Anchoring, defined as explicit linkage of technical content to social values; Epistemic Bridging, defined as instructional moves connecting disciplinary methods to ethical reasoning; and Relational Scaffolding, defined as mentorship practices jointly addressing academic barriers and identity affirmation. Each category included operational definitions and empirically grounded examples drawn from field artifacts [5].

Table 2. Qualitative Coding Framework for Pedagogical Integration

Code Category	Definition	Example from Artifact
Narrative Anchoring	Explicit linkage of technical content to social values	Welding safety protocols discussed alongside worker dignity and collective bargaining history
Epistemic Bridging	Instructional moves connecting disciplinary methods to ethical reasoning	Using cost-benefit analysis in construction planning to examine

		equity impacts on low-income neighborhoods
Relational Scaffolding	Mentorship practices that jointly address academic barriers and identity affirmation	Weekly check-ins pairing software debugging support with discussion of imposter syndrome in tech fields

3.3. Analytical Approach and Rigor Assurance

Quantitative data were analyzed using survival analysis to model time-to-persistence milestones and logistic regression to estimate graduation likelihood, with rigorous control for prior academic achievement and demographic covariates. Qualitative data underwent iterative thematic analysis grounded in constant comparison methodology, facilitated by NVivo software for systematic code development and refinement. Triangulation was implemented across methodological strands: for example, a participant's narrative articulation of 'feeling seen' was systematically cross-verified against mentor documentation of feedback phrasing and syllabus-level evidence of inclusive case selection. Member checking was conducted with thirty-two participants to confirm interpretive fidelity and contextual resonance. Analytical rigor was further ensured through comprehensive audit trails documenting coding decisions, intercoder agreement protocols, and structured review of discrepant cases. All statistical models met assumptions of linearity, independence, and absence of multicollinearity; variance inflation factors remained below 2.3. Thematic saturation was confirmed after the twenty-eighth interview, with subsequent interviews yielding no new conceptual categories [2, 5]. Transparency was maintained via public deposition of anonymized codebooks and decision logs, enabling full methodological traceability without compromising participant confidentiality.

4. Results

4.1. Quantitative Patterns in Academic and Identity Outcomes

Quantitative analysis reveals robust associations between integration intensity and student outcomes. As detailed in Table 3, students in the high-integration group demonstrated a two-year persistence rate of 89%, markedly exceeding the 76% observed in the medium-integration group and the 67% in the low-integration group. Similarly, capstone project completion with civic engagement components reached 74% among high-integration participants, compared to 52% and 38% in medium- and low-integration cohorts, respectively. Self-reported alignment between vocational goals and social contribution values---measured on a five-point scale---averaged 4.2 in the high-integration group, versus 3.5 and 2.8 in the other two groups. Regression modeling confirmed that integration intensity served as the strongest predictor of all three outcomes, surpassing total support hours, baseline academic performance, and family income level in explanatory power. The effect sizes remained statistically significant across models, with $p < 0.001$ for each primary outcome. These patterns collectively indicate that structural coherence---not merely dosage---drives measurable gains in academic continuity, applied learning, and value integration among financially underprivileged vocational undergraduates.

Table 3. Comparative Outcomes Across Integration Intensity Levels

Outcome Measure	High-Integration Group	Medium-Integration Group	Low-Integration Group
Two-Year Persistence Rate	89%	76%	67%
Capstone Projects with Civic Component	74%	52%	38%
Self-Reported Value-Skill Alignment (Scale 1–5)	4.2	3.5	2.8

4.2. Qualitative Dimensions of Integration Efficacy

Qualitative analysis revealed three empirically grounded patterns distinguishing high-integration pedagogical practice. First, the "moment of resonance" denoted spontaneous ethical reflection catalyzed within technical instruction---for instance, a clinical simulation in nursing education prompting sustained dialogue on structural inequities in healthcare access. Second, "mentorship duality" characterized educators who fluidly alternated between diagnostic assessment of academic competencies and hermeneutic engagement with students' identity narratives, affirming both as co-equal pedagogical anchors. Third, "curricular layering" described syllabi deliberately sequenced across four epistemic tiers: acquisition of foundational skills, situated application within vocational contexts, normative critique of professional values and systemic constraints, and finally, collaborative redesign of practice-based solutions. These patterns were systematically absent in low-integration settings, where ideological and instrumental support remained institutionally siloed, temporally disjointed, or reduced to transactional service delivery. Their recurrence across diverse disciplines---health sciences, engineering technology, and early childhood education---suggests structural rather than idiosyncratic origins. The convergence of narrative validation, ethical scaffolding, and iterative curricular design appears essential for sustaining transformative learning among financially underprivileged vocational undergraduate students.

4.3. Structural Enablers and Barriers

Structural enablers facilitating the integration of aspiration support and wisdom support included dedicated time allocation for cross-disciplinary curriculum design teams, formal recognition pathways for faculty who embedded ideological dimensions into technical assessments, and institutional scaffolding for student co-facilitation of dual-support circles---hybrid spaces where academic tutoring intersected with peer-led values dialogues. Conversely, persistent barriers stemmed from misaligned incentive structures: promotion criteria prioritizing scholarly publication over pedagogical innovation; entrenched departmental silos impeding curricular revision; and financial aid systems evaluating performance solely on disbursement speed rather than longitudinal developmental outcomes. Notably, comparative analysis revealed that institutions operating under decentralized academic governance achieved significantly faster implementation of integrated practices than those governed by rigid top-down mandates. This divergence underscores the centrality of adaptive governance architecture in sustaining pedagogical coherence across ideological and technical domains. The findings suggest that structural agility---not merely policy articulation---constitutes a decisive determinant of programmatic fidelity and scalability. Institutional redesign must therefore recalibrate reward systems, flatten disciplinary boundaries, and reframe success metrics to encompass both cognitive advancement and character formation as co-constitutive educational aims.

5. Discussion

5.1. Reconceptualizing Ideological Education as Vocational Epistemology

The findings fundamentally reconceptualize ideological and political education not as an external overlay but as vocational epistemology---where professional knowledge itself constitutes a normative framework [1]. This perspective rejects the instrumental separation of technical skill from ethical formation, revealing instead how welding procedures embed occupational safety ethics, algorithmic design encodes distributive justice assumptions, and architectural planning enacts spatial equity commitments. Within this paradigm, ideological education ceases to be a discrete curricular module or supplementary activity; it becomes co-constitutive with vocational identity development. The pedagogical implication is decisive: rather than appending moral content to technical instruction, educators must foreground the ethical architecture already operative within disciplinary practices. For financially underprivileged students in vocational undergraduate contexts, this integration mitigates alienation by affirming that their

professional aspirations are inseparable from social responsibility. It transforms aspiration support from mere motivational scaffolding into epistemic validation, while wisdom support evolves from cognitive training into critical discernment of power-laden knowledge structures. Consequently, ideological formation emerges organically through disciplined engagement with practice, rendering values not abstract prescriptions but lived dimensions of vocational competence. This reframing aligns educational outcomes with both labor market demands and societal developmental imperatives.

5.2. Beyond Dualism: Aspiration and Wisdom as Co-Constitutive Processes

The empirical findings decisively reject a linear, stage-based interpretation of aspiration support and wisdom support [7]. Instead, they reveal a dynamic co-constitution wherein aspirational orientation acquires legitimacy only when substantiated through concrete skill development, while technical knowledge gains ethical resonance precisely when directed toward socially embedded objectives. This interdependence is exemplified by vocational learners engaged in CNC programming: their reported motivation intensified markedly when coursework required designing functional assistive technologies for community disability organizations. In such instances, algorithmic accuracy and empathic purpose evolved reciprocally---not as discrete outcomes but as mutually reinforcing dimensions of professional identity formation. Consequently, pedagogical architecture must foreground integrative thresholds---structured learning moments where cognitive mastery, affective commitment, and ethical reasoning converge within authentic occupational contexts. Such thresholds function not as additive components but as generative nodes where vocational competence and civic intentionality co-emerge. Curriculum design therefore shifts from sequencing support domains to orchestrating their simultaneous activation through contextually grounded, socially accountable tasks. This reconceptualization aligns ideological and political education with the epistemic logic of vocational practice itself, wherein knowing, doing, and being remain irreducibly entangled.

5.3. Institutional Translation and Scalability

Scalability of integrated ideological and political education hinges not on programmatic replication but on embedding institutional habits that sustain pedagogical synergy. As detailed in Table 4, three core principles anchor this translation: Pedagogical Symmetry mandates equal weight for value articulation and skill demonstration in lesson planning, with risk lying in rhetorical emphasis without substantive task redesign; Relational Continuity requires the same educator to provide academic guidance and identity-affirming dialogue, yet demands clear role boundaries and targeted training to avoid confusion; Assessment Convergence embeds dual criteria---technical accuracy and ethical reasoning---into grading rubrics, where superficial checklist compliance undermines meaningful evaluation. These principles operate through micro-practices: a lab instructor reframing safety violations as collective responsibility, or a math tutor linking statistical literacy to community health advocacy [9]. Institutionalization emerges from routine curriculum review panels with dual expertise, shared language such as ethical technical fluency, and resource allocation favoring integration over disciplinary purity [1, 4]. Such coherence transforms isolated interventions into a resilient educational ecology.

Table 4. Core Principles for Institutional Integration

Principle	Operational Manifestation	Risk of Misapplication
Pedagogical Symmetry	Equal weight given to value articulation and skill demonstration in lesson planning	Rhetorical emphasis without substantive task redesign
Relational Continuity	Same educator provides academic guidance and identity-affirming dialogue	Role confusion without clear boundaries and targeted training

Assessment Convergence	Grading criteria explicitly reward both technical accuracy and ethical reasoning	Superficial checklist compliance without meaningful evaluation rubrics
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6. Conclusion

6.1. Synthesis of Core Contributions

This study advances a practice-grounded theory of ideological and political education as vocational identity formation. It demonstrates that aspiration support and wisdom support are not parallel tracks but interwoven threads in the same pedagogical fabric---each gains coherence and durability only through the other. The research provides concrete evidence that integration improves not only retention and academic performance but, more significantly, the quality of students' vocational self-conception: their sense of agency, their capacity for ethical judgment in professional settings, and their commitment to socially generative work. Findings affirm that holistic development emerges not from additive interventions but from dialectical synergy between motivational scaffolding and epistemic empowerment. This reframing positions ideological and political education as constitutive of professional becoming rather than supplementary to it.

6.2. Implications for Policy and Practice

Policy frameworks must transcend fragmented funding silos that isolate student support, academic quality, and ideological education. Instead, they should incentivize integrated program design through outcome-based funding aligned with holistic development metrics---such as retention, skill mastery, ethical reasoning, and civic engagement. Practitioners must reconceptualize technical instruction as inherently normative terrain, drawing out the value-laden dimensions embedded in vocational knowledge rather than appending political content. Faculty development initiatives should prioritize translation competence---the capacity to operationalize ideological concepts within discipline-specific practices---over abstract ideological literacy alone. This demands sustained pedagogical scaffolding, cross-departmental curriculum co-design, and institutional reward structures that recognize integrative teaching as scholarly labor.

6.3. Limitations and Future Directions

This study acknowledges several methodological constraints. Data collection was concentrated within a limited regional cluster of vocational undergraduate institutions, potentially limiting the generalizability of findings across diverse socioeconomic and educational landscapes. Furthermore, primary outcome measures relied heavily on self-reported attitudinal assessments, which may be subject to social desirability bias and lack objective behavioral validation. Future research should broaden geographic representation to capture institutional heterogeneity and contextual variability. Longitudinal tracking of graduates---including structured employer evaluations of ethical professionalism and workplace integration---would strengthen causal inference regarding long-term developmental outcomes. Methodologically innovative approaches are also warranted, particularly digital scaffolds designed to embed real-time aspiration and wisdom cues during authentic workplace learning experiences. Most critically, future inquiry must investigate how dual-support practices transform when financially underprivileged students transition into educator roles, thereby shifting from recipients to co-designers and implementers of integrated pedagogical frameworks. Such generational transfer mechanisms represent a vital frontier for sustaining systemic equity in vocational higher education.

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