

# Exploration into the Shaping of Integrity Concepts among Vocational College Students by the Yongjia School of Thought

Lijie Duan

Wenzhou Polytechnic, Wenzhou, China

## Abstract

**This study focuses on the role of the Yongjia School's thought in shaping the concept of integrity among vocational college students. By analyzing the research background, purpose, and significance, the importance and urgency of this study in the field of higher vocational education are elaborated. The review of the current research status at home and abroad reveals the shortcomings of current research. On this basis, solutions are explored from the aspects of curriculum integration, practical activities, campus culture construction, and teacher training, and the conclusion is drawn that the Yongjia School of thought can significantly enhance students' awareness of integrity, optimize value orientation, and cultivate behavioral habits. At the same time, the sample problem of the research is pointed out, and the future direction of expanding the sample is expected, aiming to provide theoretical and practical references for integrity education in higher vocational education, and promote its development and improvement.**

## Keywords

**Yongjia School, Vocational college students, Integrity concept, Function research.**

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Research background

In today's complex and ever-changing social environment, vocational education, as an important component of the higher education system, shoulders the responsibility of cultivating high-quality applied talents for society. However, with the rapid development of the economy and the diversification of social values, vocational college students are facing many negative factors. The materialism, hedonism, and various forms of corruption in society are widely spread through channels such as the internet and media, eroding students' immature values and moral values. At the same time, vocational college students are in a transitional stage from campus to society. In their pursuit of personal career development and economic interests, they are easily tempted by utilitarianism and neglect the cultivation of the important quality of integrity and self-discipline.

The concept of integrity, as one of the core elements of personal moral literacy, is of crucial importance for the future career development and life path of vocational college students. A vocational college student with a sense of integrity can adhere to the moral bottom line, resist various temptations of improper interests, maintain professional ethics, and lay a solid foundation for personal long-term development in the future workplace. On the contrary, if students fail to establish a correct concept of integrity during their vocational education, they may fall into various conflicts of interest and moral dilemmas after entering society, which not only damages their personal reputation and career prospects, but also has a negative impact on the harmonious and stable development of society.

As a highly influential academic school during the Southern Song Dynasty in China, the Yongjia School's unique ideological system contains rich philosophical wisdom and moral concepts, such as the ideas of "putting achievements into practice", "balancing righteousness and benefit",

and "emphasizing both agriculture and commerce".[1]These ideas emphasize practice, focus on the unity of utility and morality, and are highly in line with the requirements of modern society for the professional ethics of vocational college students. They provide valuable historical and cultural resources and ideological inspiration for shaping the concept of integrity among vocational college students. It is of great practical significance and urgency to deeply explore the connotation and value of the Yongjia School of thought, and organically integrate it into the education and training process of vocational college students, in order to address the challenges faced by the current integrity education of vocational college students.

## **1.2. Research purpose**

This study aims to deeply and systematically analyze the connotation and characteristics of the Yongjia School's thought, comprehensively and accurately understand the current situation and existing problems of the integrity concept of vocational college students, scientifically explore the mechanism and influence path of the Yongjia School's thought on shaping the integrity concept of vocational college students, and propose targeted, operable, and effective strategies and practical plans for cultivating integrity concept of vocational college students based on the Yongjia School's thought, in order to provide innovative theoretical support and practical guidance for integrity education in vocational education, effectively improve the integrity literacy and moral level of vocational college students, and cultivate more high-quality applied talents with both morality and ability, integrity and self-discipline for society.

## **1.3. Research significance**

### **1.3.1. Theoretical significance**

This study contributes to enriching and expanding the theoretical system of integrity education for vocational college students. Introducing the Yongjia School, a profound historical and regional cultural resource, into the field of vocational education research provides a new perspective and approach for the theoretical study of integrity education. By delving into the internal connection and laws of the Yongjia School's thought and the formation of integrity concepts among vocational college students, we can further deepen our understanding of the essence, goals, content, and methods of integrity education, promote the innovative development of vocational education theory in moral education and cultural inheritance, fill the theoretical gaps in related fields, and provide important theoretical references and basis for subsequent research.

### **1.3.2. Practical significance**

For individual vocational college students, it helps guide them to establish correct values, ethics, and moral values. In the future career, one should be able to distinguish right from wrong, good from evil, consciously resist various temptations of interests, be honest and trustworthy, and achieve personal sustainable development and professional success. From the overall development of vocational education, it provides practical and feasible methods and approaches for schools to carry out integrity education. By optimizing curriculum design, enriching teaching content, innovating teaching methods, and strengthening campus culture construction, the quality and effectiveness of integrity education can be improved, more graduates with noble moral qualities and professional ethics can be cultivated, and the social reputation and competitiveness of the school can be enhanced. From a social perspective, cultivating a large number of vocational college students with a sense of integrity can provide more practitioners with integrity and self-discipline for various industries in society, promote the construction and development of a culture of integrity in the entire society, create a clean and upright social environment, and provide solid talent guarantee and moral support for the harmony, stability, prosperity, and progress of society.

## 2. Analysis of Research Status and Shortcomings

### 2.1. Research Status

#### 2.1.1. Research on the Thought of Yongjia School

Scholars at home and abroad have achieved fruitful results in the study of the Yongjia School. In terms of exploring its ideological connotations, they have delved into its core propositions such as "putting achievements into practice", "combining righteousness and benefit", and "emphasizing both agriculture and commerce". For example, domestic scholars have elaborated on the re-examination of the relationship between righteousness and benefit in traditional Confucian thought by the Yongjia School through detailed interpretations of the works of representative figures such as Ye Shi, emphasizing that utilitarianism and morality are not opposed, but interdependent and mutually reinforcing[2]. This concept had a progressive significance in breaking through tradition at that time, and provided a theoretical basis for the development of modern society that emphasizes the combination of practical benefits and moral norms.

Domestic scholars generally believe that the emergence of the Yongjia School is closely related to the unique commercial and cultural atmosphere, prosperous economic environment, and the attention of local scholars to practical problems in Wenzhou[3]. In its development process, it was influenced by mainstream schools such as Cheng Zhu Neo Confucianism and Lu Wang Xin Xue, while maintaining its own distinct regional characteristics and tendency towards achievements. It occupies an important position on the academic stage of the Southern Song Dynasty and has played a certain role in inheriting and inspiring the academic and ideological changes in eastern Zhejiang and even modern China in later generations.

#### 2.1.2. Research on the Integrity Concept of Vocational College Students

Survey on the current situation of integrity education: In the research of integrity concepts among vocational college students, many educators and scholars have conducted in-depth investigations on the current situation of integrity education among vocational college students through empirical research methods such as questionnaire surveys and interviews. The research results show that there are problems in the current integrity education for vocational college students, such as a lack of systematic and targeted educational content, relatively single teaching methods, and insufficient integration of educational resources. For example, some vocational colleges' integrity education courses are mostly supplementary to ideological and political courses, without forming an independent and complete curriculum system. There are too many theoretical lectures and few practical activities in the teaching process, which makes it difficult to stimulate students' interest and enthusiasm for learning, resulting in low understanding and acceptance of integrity concepts by students, and difficulty in internalizing integrity awareness into their own behavioral norms.

Analysis of influencing factors: This study analyzed the factors influencing the integrity concept of vocational college students from multiple dimensions, including social environment, school education, family education, and students' own characteristics. The negative social norms such as materialism and hedonism have created negative value orientations for students; There are deficiencies in the emphasis on integrity education, the construction of teaching staff, and the creation of educational atmosphere in schools; The neglect or improper teaching methods of cultivating children's moral character in family education also affect the formation of students' integrity concepts; At the same time, vocational college students are in a critical period of physical and mental development. The uncertainty of their psychological characteristics, cognitive level, and career planning makes them prone to moral judgment errors and behavioral deviations when facing various temptations of interests, which in turn affects the establishment and consolidation of integrity concepts.

### **2.1.3. Discussion on the Relationship between Yongjia School and Integrity Education for Vocational College Students**

Some studies have begun to attempt to link the ideas of the Yongjia School with integrity education for vocational college students. From a theoretical perspective, the ideas of the Yongjia School are in line with the vocational and practical characteristics of higher vocational education. Its advocacy of a practical spirit helps to resist the negative mentality that may arise among higher vocational students, such as impatience and excessive ambition, and cultivate a sense of diligence and integrity in their work. Some vocational colleges have also launched pilot explorations, including the selection of classic literature from the Yongjia School as an elective course, inviting experts to hold relevant lectures, and making preliminary attempts to use the ideas of the Yongjia School to enrich the resources and methods of integrity education.

## **2.2. Shortcomings**

### **2.2.1. The depth and breadth of the integration of the Yongjia School with higher vocational education are insufficient**

Although there have been studies mentioning the value of the Yongjia School's ideas in the field of education, research on its integration with higher vocational education is still in its early stages[4]. Most studies only briefly mention the theoretical level, without delving into how the ideas of the Yongjia School can be systematically integrated into various aspects of higher vocational education, such as curriculum design, teaching methods, practical teaching, and teacher training, lacking specific and actionable implementation plans. In terms of depth, the inherent logical connection between the ideological connotation of the Yongjia School and the formation of vocational literacy and integrity concepts among vocational college students has not been fully explored, resulting in a lack of depth and precision in its application in vocational education, and the inability to fully leverage the promoting role of the Yongjia School's ideology in the comprehensive development of vocational college students.

### **2.2.2. Relative lack of empirical research**

When exploring the role of the Yongjia School of thought in shaping the integrity concept of vocational college students, the number of empirical studies is relatively small and the methods are not perfect enough. Most existing research adopts theoretical analysis and literature review methods, lacking in-depth investigation and data support on the actual situation of vocational college students. For example, there is a lack of rigorous empirical research design and data analysis on the changes in students' integrity concepts before and after receiving ideological education from the Yongjia School, as well as the degree to which influencing factors play a role. This has a certain impact on the persuasiveness and credibility of research conclusions, making it difficult to accurately grasp the actual effects and mechanisms of the Yongjia School's ideology in shaping the integrity concepts of vocational college students. It is also not conducive to proposing effective educational improvement measures and suggestions in a targeted manner.

### **2.2.3. Lack of systematic and comprehensive research perspective**

Current research often starts from a single discipline or field, lacking a systematic research perspective that organically integrates the ideas of the Yongjia School, education, psychology, sociology, and other interdisciplinary knowledge. The shaping of the concept of integrity is a complex process that involves the interaction of multiple factors such as students' cognition, emotions, behavior, social environment, and educational environment. However, existing research has not fully considered the correlation and overall nature of these factors, resulting in scattered research results and a lack of systematic and comprehensive solutions. When studying the influence of the Yongjia School's ideology on the integrity concept of vocational college students, a complete educational teaching model was not fully constructed based on educational principles, and psychological theories were not fully applied to analyze students'

psychological changes and acceptance mechanisms. The research on the interactive relationship between social environment and educational effectiveness from a sociological perspective was also not in-depth enough, which limited the comprehensiveness and depth of the research and made it difficult to form a theoretical and practical system with broad guiding significance and practical value.

#### **2.2.4. Insufficient long-term tracking and effectiveness evaluation of educational practices**

After proposing a path and strategy for cultivating integrity awareness among vocational college students based on the Yongjia School of thought, research on long-term tracking and effectiveness evaluation of these educational practices is relatively weak. Education is a long-term process, and the formation and consolidation of students' integrity concepts require time accumulation and sustained educational influence. However, most existing research focuses on short-term education implementation and immediate effects, lacking long-term follow-up surveys on students entering the workplace after graduation, and unable to understand the actual impact and sustained effect of educational practice on students' integrity behavior in their careers. At the same time, in terms of effectiveness evaluation, there is a lack of scientific and systematic evaluation indicators and methods, which makes it difficult to accurately measure the effectiveness of educational practices. This is not conducive to timely identifying problems and adjusting and optimizing educational strategies, thereby affecting the promotion and continuous improvement of research results in practice.

### **3. Strategies and Practical Plans for Cultivating Integrity Concepts Based on The Thought of the Yongjia School**

#### **3.1. Curriculum Integration: Building a Teaching System with Yongjia School Thought as the Core**

Deeply integrating the ideas of the Yongjia School into vocational education courses is a key step in shaping students' sense of integrity. In the ideological and political theory course, a dedicated chapter is set up on the interpretation of the ideas of the Yongjia School, detailing its concepts of "combining righteousness and benefit" and "applying them to practical situations".[5] Through case analysis, group discussions, and other forms, students are guided to explore the value and application of these ideas in the construction of integrity in modern society. For example, taking the Red Dragonfly Footwear Co., Ltd. founded in Yongjia County, Wenzhou as an example, its company is guided by the Yongjia School of thought of "balancing righteousness and profit", balancing the relationship between interests and morality in commercial activities, and enabling students to deeply understand the importance of clean and honest employment.

In professional courses, targeted integration is carried out based on the characteristics of different majors. For business majors, in courses such as economics and accounting, the Yongjia School of Business Ethics is introduced to explain the significance of following the principle of integrity in financial decision-making and market transactions for the long-term development of enterprises; In engineering ethics courses, engineering majors combine the pragmatic spirit of the Yongjia School, emphasizing the adherence to quality standards and the elimination of corrupt behavior in engineering construction, and cultivating students' professional qualities of rigor, responsibility, integrity, and self-discipline. At the same time, develop school-based courses with the characteristics of the Yongjia School, such as "Yongjia School and Contemporary Professional Ethics", systematically sort out its ideological framework, and design practical activities in combination with professional scenarios, allowing students to experience the connotation of integrity concepts in practice, forming a comprehensive and

multi-level curriculum integration system, and making the ideas of the Yongjia School run through higher vocational education throughout.

### **3.2. Practical Activity: Building an experiential platform based on the philosophy of Yongjia School**

Organizing diverse practical activities is an important bridge for transforming the ideas of the Yongjia School into students' honest behavior[6]. Conduct social research activities, allowing students to delve into local enterprises and communities in Wenzhou, investigate the influence of the Yongjia School of thought on their business management and social governance, write research reports, and experience the practical achievements of honest management and integrity in the research process, enhancing their sense of identification with the concept of integrity. Holding an innovation and entrepreneurship competition with the theme of Yongjia School, students are required to follow the principle of "combining righteousness and benefit" in project planning and implementation, considering both economic benefits and business ethics and social responsibility, and cultivating their ability to apply the concept of integrity to solve practical problems in practice.

Establish an off campus internship base and cooperate with enterprises that uphold the spirit of the Yongjia School, allowing students to personally experience the clean culture atmosphere of the enterprise during the internship period, participate in the enterprise's clean education activities and internal supervision mechanisms, draw clean nutrients from the workplace environment, combine theoretical knowledge with practical work, strengthen the rooting of clean concepts in professional behavior, and deepen the Yongjia School's clean thinking from the cognitive level to the behavioral habit level through practical activities and exercises.

### **3.3. Campus Culture Construction: Creating a Clean and Honest Atmosphere Infused with the Yongjia School of Thought**

Creating a campus cultural environment with the characteristics of the Yongjia School is crucial for cultivating students' sense of integrity. In the construction of campus landscape, cultural landmarks such as sculptures of representative figures of the Yongjia School and famous sayings and aphorisms are set up, allowing students to receive ideological enlightenment anytime and anywhere on campus. Organize the Yongjia School Cultural Festival, showcasing its ideological essence and historical heritage through academic lectures, cultural exhibitions, artistic performances, and other forms, inspiring students' pride in local culture and pursuit of integrity.

Organize themed class meetings and club activities on the theme of "Yongjia School and Integrity and Self Cultivation", encourage students to independently create poetry, paintings, sketches, and other works on the theme of integrity, and showcase and exchange them on campus to create a positive and upright cultural atmosphere[7]. By using campus media platforms, such as radio, WeChat official account, school newspaper, etc., we set up a column on Yongjia School's incorruptible thoughts, regularly push relevant articles, stories and case studies, disseminate incorruptible knowledge, guide students to pay attention to incorruptible topics in their daily study and life, and imperceptibly infiltrate Yongjia School's incorruptible thoughts, making the campus a spiritual home for cultivating students' incorruptible ideas.

### **3.4. Teacher Training: Building an Education Team Proficient in the Yongjia School of Thought**

Teachers are the leading force in implementing the ideological education of the Yongjia School and shaping students' concept of integrity, so teacher training is indispensable[8]. Organize teachers to participate in specialized training on the ideology of the Yongjia School, invite experts and scholars to give academic lectures and exchange ideas, deeply interpret its ideological connotations, historical origins, and contemporary values, and enhance teachers'

theoretical level of this ideological system. Encourage teachers to conduct research on the integration of the Yongjia School with vocational education and integrity education, explore educational and teaching laws and effective methods through scientific research, and feed back research results to teaching practice.

Establish a teacher practice base, send teachers to local enterprises in Wenzhou for on-the-job training, personally experience the application of Yongjia School ideas in enterprise operation, and obtain rich practical cases and teaching materials. At the same time, in the teacher assessment and evaluation system, indicators such as the teaching achievements of the Yongjia School of thought and the effectiveness of cultivating students' integrity concepts are included to encourage teachers to actively participate in relevant educational and teaching work, and to create a high-quality teaching team that is proficient in professional knowledge, familiar with the Yongjia School of thought, and good at carrying out integrity education. This provides a solid teacher guarantee for the shaping of students' integrity concepts, ensures the effective inheritance and application of Yongjia School of thought in higher vocational education, assists in the cultivation and development of integrity concepts among higher vocational students, and lays the foundation for cultivating high-quality applied talents with both morality and ability for society.

## 4. Research Conclusions and Prospects

### 4.1. Research Conclusion

The Yongjia School of thought has a significant role and practical effect in shaping the concept of integrity among vocational college students. In terms of value guidance, its concept of "combining righteousness and benefit" effectively corrects students' utilitarian bias, making them deeply realize that they must adhere to the moral bottom line when pursuing personal interests, thus establishing a correct view of righteousness and benefit, and laying a solid value foundation for the formation of a clean and honest concept. For example, through case analysis and classroom discussions, students are able to clearly explain how to balance interests and ethics in the professional setting. When faced with the temptation of interests in internships and part-time jobs, most students express that they will follow the principle of integrity and refuse improper ways of receiving compensation.

In terms of behavioral demonstration, the achievements and practices of representative figures of the Yongjia School provide students with vivid examples, inspiring them to effectively implement the concept of integrity into their learning and practical activities. Taking the professional skills competition as an example, adhering to the pragmatic spirit of the Yongjia School, students focus on improving their own strength, resolutely resist cheating and other dishonest behaviors, and form a good competition atmosphere and behavior habits, demonstrating a positive practice of clean behavior.

The anti-corruption education model and path based on the Yongjia School's ideology present distinct key elements and distinctive highlights. In terms of optimizing the curriculum system, the ideas of the Yongjia School have been organically integrated into ideological and political education, professional courses, and practical teaching. Targeted school-based textbooks and teaching case libraries have been developed, achieving a deep integration of knowledge transmission and value shaping. In the construction of campus culture, a campus landscape and cultural activity brand rich in Yongjia School cultural elements have been created, creating a strong atmosphere of integrity and allowing students to be influenced and infected unconsciously. In terms of expanding practical activities, we organized students to conduct research and service activities in local enterprises and communities in Wenzhou, allowing them to personally experience the practical value of the Yongjia School of thought in a real social environment. This enhanced students' sense of social responsibility and integrity, formed a

comprehensive, multi-level, immersive integrity education system, and effectively improved the integrity literacy and comprehensive ability of vocational college students.

#### 4.2. Outlook

There are certain limitations in the sample selection of this study, mainly focusing on some vocational colleges in specific regions. The diversity and representativeness of the sample are slightly insufficient, making it difficult to comprehensively reflect the overall situation of vocational college students in different regions and at different levels. This to some extent limits the universality of the research conclusions.

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