

Integrating Virtue and Skill: Practical Innovation of Moral Education Conducted by Head Teachers in Secondary Vocational Medical Schools

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Abstract: Centered on moral education work undertaken by head teachers in secondary vocational medical schools, this paper conducts research against the contemporary backdrop where vocational education prioritizes fostering virtue alongside vocational proficiency and cultivating people with integrity. It analyzes practical dilemmas confronting head teachers' moral education in secondary vocational medical institutions, covering gaps in educational philosophies, monotonous working approaches, inadequate competency of educators, and fragmented collaborative education mechanisms. The study theoretically reconstructs head teachers' moral education framework guided by the philosophy of "integrating virtue and skill", elaborates on the connotation of this philosophy, redefines head teachers' educational roles, and clarifies the logical mechanism behind integrating moral education with specialized training. On this basis, it explores innovative practical approaches centered on developing featured moral education brands, specialized thematic class meetings, professional class culture construction, mental health education, and multi-stakeholder collaborative education. Furthermore, a supporting guarantee system is established, encompassing teachers' professional development, evaluation and incentive systems, and multi-dimensional platform support. Practical outcomes prove these measures have yielded tangible results, yet unresolved challenges remain. Further refinement of relevant practices will provide robust support for cultivating secondary vocational medical students with balanced virtue and professional competence.

Keywords: Integrating Virtue and Skill; Secondary Vocational Medical Schools; Moral Education by Head Teachers; Practical Innovation

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Significance

Academic research boundaries keep expanding amid fierce scholarly competition across disciplines. Within vocational education, integrating virtue and skill has become an inevitable demand of the times. For secondary vocational medical education, its unique mission lies in cultivating medical practitioners with solid professional expertise and noble moral standards. Medical services directly bear on public life and health, which dictates that secondary vocational medical students must master sophisticated practical skills while possessing sound professional ethics and humanistic literacy. Nevertheless, moral education delivered by head teachers in secondary vocational medical schools is currently plagued by numerous constraints that hinder students' holistic development. Accordingly, in-depth research on practical innovations for head teachers' moral education in such institutions carries profound practical value[1].

1.2 Research Objectives and Methodology

This research aims to explore innovative practical paths for head teachers' moral education under the guidance of "integrating virtue and skill", construct a scientific and effective moral education system, and enhance the comprehensive quality of secondary vocational medical students. Multiple research methods are adopted: the literature review method systematically sorts domestic and international relevant studies to identify the current status and existing deficiencies of moral education in secondary vocational medical education; the case analysis method dissects outstanding moral education practices from exemplary secondary vocational medical schools to summarize replicable experience;

questionnaires and semi-structured interviews collect opinions and suggestions from students, head teachers, and school administrators to furnish empirical evidence for the research[2].

1.3 Literature Review and Research Gaps

Extensive domestic studies have examined moral education in vocational education, yet systematic research focusing specifically on head teachers' moral education in secondary vocational medical schools remains scarce. Some existing literature merely discusses theoretical frameworks without actionable operational strategies; other studies touch on the integration of moral and professional education but fail to form a complete implementation system. Additionally, research on evaluation mechanisms and guarantee systems for head teachers' moral education in secondary vocational medical schools lacks depth. This paper fills these research gaps and delivers targeted, operable guidance for frontline head teachers in secondary vocational medical schools[3].

2. Problem Statement: The Contemporary Mandate of Integrating Virtue and Skill and the Unique Mission of Moral Education in Secondary Vocational Medical Schools

2.1 Contemporary Requirements for Integrating Virtue and Skill

Social progress has raised higher standards for professional practitioners, making the integration of virtue and skill a core direction for vocational education reform. This philosophy emphasizes simultaneous cultivation of students' professional proficiency, moral character, social responsibility, and humanistic literacy. Within the medical field, balancing virtue and skill carries exceptional weight: medical practitioners must possess refined clinical expertise as well as noble medical ethics, adhering to patient-centered care and wholeheartedly serving patients[4].

2.2 The Unique Mission of Moral Education in Secondary Vocational Medical Schools

Secondary vocational medical education targets the cultivation of applied medical talents capable of meeting the demands of healthcare development. Upon graduation, these students engage in direct patient care, and their moral standards and professional literacy directly determine the quality of medical services

delivered. Therefore, head teachers shoulder a distinctive moral education mission: guiding students to establish correct world outlooks, life philosophies, and values, nurturing their humanitarian spirit of healing the sick and rescuing the dying, alongside rigorous scientific thinking[5].

3. Practical Dilemmas: Restricting Factors of Head Teachers' Moral Education in Secondary Vocational Medical Schools

3.1 Defective Educational Philosophy: Separation of Moral Education and Professional Training

Some head teachers in secondary vocational medical schools hold biased educational philosophies that decouple moral education from specialized training. They overemphasize students' technical skill training while downplaying moral education, mistakenly regarding moral instruction as the sole responsibility of ideological and political teachers irrelevant to professional teaching. This disconnect deprives students of value-oriented guidance during specialized learning and impedes the formation of sound professional ethics[6].

3.2 Monotonous Implementation Approaches

Head teachers predominantly rely on traditional didactic lectures and generic thematic class meetings to conduct moral education, with limited innovative and engaging delivery formats. Such rigid teaching fails to accommodate students' personalized needs, cannot stimulate their enthusiasm, and ultimately diminishes the effectiveness of moral education[7].

3.3 Structural Deficiencies in Head Teachers' Comprehensive Competency

Many head teachers lack interdisciplinary knowledge and all-round literacy. Most excel only in specialized instruction but possess superficial understanding of moral education theories and methodologies. When confronted with students' complex psychological struggles and ethical confusion, they lack targeted intervention strategies to provide timely, precise guidance[8].

3.4 Weak Collaborative Education Mechanisms

Secondary vocational medical schools lack robust collaborative frameworks for moral education. Head teachers, specialized instructors, ideological and political teachers, and school administrators operate in silos with insufficient communication and coordination. Fragmented work undermines the systematicity and continuity of moral education, yielding suboptimal educational outcomes[9].

4. Philosophical Renewal: Theoretical Reconstruction of Head Teachers' Moral Education Under the Framework of Integrating Virtue and Skill

4.1 Connotation of Integrating Virtue and Skill

The philosophy of integrating virtue and skill advocates the organic unity of moral character and professional competence. In secondary vocational medical education, "virtue" encompasses professional medical ethics, social morality, family virtues, and personal integrity. "Skill" covers medical theoretical knowledge, clinical expertise, and hands-on operational proficiency. This philosophy requires students to master professional techniques while cultivating sound moral character and humanistic literacy to satisfy the ethical demands of medical careers[10].

4.2 Redefining Head Teachers' Educational Roles

Guided by the philosophy of integrating virtue and skill, head teachers in secondary vocational medical schools must redefine their roles. Beyond serving as class administrators, they act as mentors guiding students' holistic growth. They shall embed moral education into students' daily study and campus life, focus on students' all-round development, and steer them toward rational career aspirations and sound values.

4.3 Logical Mechanism of Integrating Moral Education and Specialized Teaching

Moral education and professional instruction reinforce one another. Moral education provides value orientation and spiritual motivation for specialized training, fostering students' dedication and sense of responsibility; professional teaching creates practical scenarios that contextualize abstract moral education content and render it vivid and tangible. The organic integration of the two realizes the

unified objectives of knowledge transmission, competency cultivation, and value guidance.

5. Practical Innovation: Exploring Pathways for Head Teachers' Moral Education in Secondary Vocational Medical Schools

5.1 Leading with Featured Moral Education Brands to Build a Distinctive Educational System

What distinguishes moral education in secondary vocational medical schools from that of general vocational institutions lies in its core focus on cultivating medical ethics, professional conduct, and humanistic spirit. School-level featured moral education brands serve as top-level frameworks supporting classroom-based moral education. Leveraging institutional brand systems, head teachers can develop unique class-level educational features, forming a tiered educational pattern where "schools boast core brands and classes develop distinctive highlights". Henan Cadre College of Health, a well-known secondary vocational medical institution in Henan Province, has developed the featured moral education brand "Journey of Medical Growth". It integrates medical ethics cultivation into the full training pipeline covering admission orientation, classroom learning, on-campus training, and clinical internships. Regular activities including medical ethics lectures, free community medical consultation, reflection-sharing sessions for clinical interns, and lectures by outstanding medical role models translate the new-era medical professional spirit of "revering life and practicing boundless benevolence" into perceptible, actionable daily conduct standards for students, forming a mature medical moral education model.

Under the guidance of institutional brand frameworks, head teachers can design exclusive class-level moral education brands tailored to distinct majors such as nursing, rehabilitation therapy, maternal and infant care, and infant childcare, fulfilling the goal of "one unique educational highlight per class". Taking the 2025 Nursing Class of Henan Cadre College of Health as a practical case: grounded in the nursing profession's core standards of gentleness, meticulousness, and accountability, the class developed the brand "Warm Nursing, Rooted in Virtue". It formulated class moral education codes aligned with registered nurse professional

criteria and launched monthly activities including medical ethics story sharing, field visits to outstanding nurses, and self-examination of ethical conduct during practical training. These initiatives transform abstract medical ethics requirements into concrete daily behavioral norms, effectively mitigating issues such as undisciplined practical training and weak professional identity among students. Meanwhile, the college has constructed the three-dimensional educational system "Apricot Fragrance Shaping Souls" characteristic of Henan's medical vocational education sector, adopting the integrated model of "Ideological Politics in Classrooms + Practical Ideological Education + Cultural Ideological Education". This framework synchronizes moral cultivation and skill enhancement, covering core dimensions including ideological guidance, medical ethics formation, competency improvement, and practical education. It furnishes a standardized template for head teachers in Henan's secondary vocational medical schools to conduct systematic, regular moral education, shifting fragmented discrete activities toward systematic holistic education.

5.2 Taking Thematic Class Meetings as Core Positions to Innovate Moral Education Carriers

Thematic class meetings constitute head teachers' primary platform for regular moral education, addressing students' ideological challenges and shaping their professional literacy. Generic, broad-ranging conventional class meetings lack targeted alignment with medical education demands. Head teachers in secondary vocational medical schools shall abandon homogenized meeting formats and design specialized, scenario-based, immersive thematic sessions centered on medical workplace scenarios, professional ethical codes, and industry standards to transform class meetings into core venues for medical ethics cultivation and professional shaping.

Beyond standard themed sessions such as "Benevolence of Medical Practitioners", "Nursing Etiquette and Humanistic Care", and "Ethical Reflections on Doctor-Patient Communication", frontline head teachers may design more practice-oriented sessions targeting common student challenges. A representative case is the special thematic class meeting *Empathy Empowers Benevolent Medical*

Practice: Cultivating Humanistic Literacy for New-Era Medical Workers delivered to the 2024 Traditional Chinese Medicine Rehabilitation Class of Henan Cadre College of Health. The session addresses prevalent student shortcomings including inadequate service awareness, non-standard communication etiquette, and insufficient empathy amid doctor-patient conflicts. Rejecting one-way didactic instruction, the session adopts a three-stage framework: scenario simulation, case analysis, and post-session reflection. Students are divided into groups to role-play rehabilitation therapists, patients, and family members in realistic scenarios including anxious patients, family members questioning treatment plans, and elderly patients with communication barriers, allowing immersive experience of doctor-patient communication hurdles. Combined with authentic local grassroots medical institution cases, the session guides students to analyze the dialectical relationship between technical proficiency and compassionate medical ethics, helping them fully recognize that medical practice entails not only technical operations but humanistic service delivery. At the session's conclusion, the head teacher leads all students to sign the *Professional Literacy Commitment for Medical Students*, incorporating etiquette standards, empathetic service, and accountability into daily behavioral assessment.

5.3 Promoting Class Culture Construction to Foster an Atmosphere of Balanced Virtue and Skill

Positive class culture delivers subtle, long-term educational influence, serving as a vital medium for achieving imperceptible moral education outcomes. Class culture construction in secondary vocational medical schools shall transcend the single focus on cultural and sports activities prevalent in ordinary classes, deeply integrating medical professional spirit, industry standards, and career aspirations to cultivate professionalized, distinctive, sustainable educational environments.

Head teachers may implement construction across three dimensions: cultural identity markers, regular growth activities, and standardized class management. First, design exclusive professional cultural identifiers aligned with medical majors, including class mottos, emblems, and slogans embedding core

medical ethics keywords such as rigor, dedication, benevolence, and integrity. For instance, nursing classes may adopt the motto "Build expertise for livelihood, practice benevolence for medical service", enabling students to benchmark professional standards at all times. Second, establish regular growth-sharing platforms, organizing recurring sessions for students to share personal career milestones. Students are guided to set phased objectives related to nurse licensing examinations, vocational skills competitions, and clinical internships, clarifying career development directions and eliminating academic confusion and idleness. Third, deepen humanistic cultivation through recurring activities including medical humanities reading salons, recitation of medical ethics role models, and lectures recounting distinguished medical practitioners' deeds, consolidating students' humanistic foundation.

5.4 Leveraging Mental Health Education to Safeguard Students' Holistic Growth

Secondary vocational medical students face unique stressors absent for peers in general vocational schools: they endure academic pressure stemming from obscure specialized curricula and complex practical training operations, alongside high professional expectations entailing rigorous standards, heavy accountability, and occupational risks inherent to healthcare. Compounded by adolescent emotional sensitivity, insufficient self-awareness, and employment anxiety, students are prone to psychological issues including inferiority, anxiety, and weariness of study, making mental health an indispensable component of moral education.

As primary custodians of students' mental wellbeing, head teachers shall establish a three-tier mental education mechanism featuring daily dynamic screening, stratified intervention, and targeted counseling. Henan College of Medical Technology attaches great importance to mental education for medical students and implements a dynamic mental management protocol of "daily observation, weekly risk assessment, monthly comprehensive review", tailored to the high-pressure, rigorous study and career characteristics of medical students, with strong replicability across institutions. Head teachers observe students' psychological status daily through classroom engagement, practical

training performance, daily conduct, and peer interactions; compile class-wide psychological challenges and classify risk levels weekly; and deliver specialized mental health thematic sessions and targeted counseling monthly to identify, intervene, and resolve psychological risks at an early stage.

A frontline intervention case from secondary vocational medical schools in Henan illustrates practical implementation: a nursing student at Henan Cadre College of Health developed persistent low mood marked by inferiority, academic weariness, and avoidance of practical training, triggered by difficulties mastering anatomy and nursing operations as well as excessive anxiety over nurse licensing examinations. The head teacher immediately activated the stratified psychological intervention mechanism, replacing punitive criticism with empathetic communication to alleviate academic pressure and listen to the student's worries. The head teacher coordinated with the school's professional psychology teacher for one-on-one counseling to restructure the student's cognitive framework and mitigate exam anxiety, paired the student with high-performing classmates for targeted practical skill tutoring, and communicated regularly with the student's family to implement home-school collaborative education, guiding parents to provide positive encouragement and rationalize academic expectations and reduce external pressure. After one month of sustained targeted intervention, the student fully recovered from psychological distress, regained academic motivation, and demonstrated marked improvements in practical proficiency and classroom engagement. Meanwhile, multiple secondary vocational medical institutions in Henan Province organize regular specialized training sessions on mental education for head teachers, adopting an integrated format combining theoretical lectures, scenario simulation, and hands-on drills. Trainings simulate scenarios including alleviating career pressure among medical students, intervening in academic weariness, and mediating adolescent emotional conflicts, breaking down actionable counseling techniques to comprehensively upgrade head teachers' capabilities in mental education and psychological crisis intervention, forming a robust safeguard for medical students' physical and mental wellbeing.

5.5 Advancing Multi-Stakeholder Collaborative Education to Unite Cross-Sector Educational Forces

Cultivating medical ethics, shaping moral character, and forming professional identity for secondary vocational medical students cannot rely solely on individual head teachers. A multi-dimensional collaborative education framework linking schools, families, medical enterprises, and society must be established to eliminate barriers separating classroom moral education, family education, and on-the-job vocational education, fully realizing the educational objective of balancing virtue and skill.

For intra-school collaboration, head teachers shall proactively coordinate with specialized instructors to drive deep integration of moral education and professional teaching, urging specialized teachers to embed medical ethical norms, workplace discipline, and professional integrity into practical training and skill lectures to rectify the biased tendency of prioritizing technical training over moral cultivation. For home-school collaboration, head teachers conduct regular parent meetings, one-on-one home visits, and constant online communication to transmit medical vocational education philosophies to parents, guiding families to attach importance to students' moral cultivation, stress resilience, and professional literacy and build consensus on joint education. For school-enterprise collaboration, institutional partnerships with hospitals, community health service centers, and rehabilitation facilities shall be fully utilized to integrate workplace norms, industry ethical codes, and clinical service standards into students' internships and placements, enabling immersive moral education within authentic professional environments.

6. Mechanism Safeguards: Support System for Innovative Moral Education by Head Teachers

6.1 Professional Development Mechanism: Transforming Head Teachers from Administrative Clerks to Professional Educators

Schools shall establish standardized professional development mechanisms for head teachers, encouraging participation in moral education training and academic exchanges to elevate their theoretical knowledge and practical capacity for

moral instruction. Regular head teacher workshops and case seminars shall be organized to facilitate cross-instructor experience sharing. Meanwhile, clear promotion and career progression pathways shall be created to incentivize head teachers to shift from transactional administrative staff to specialized moral education practitioners.

6.2 Evaluation and Incentive Mechanism: Stimulating Head Teachers' Innovative Initiative

A scientific, comprehensive evaluation and incentive system constitutes the core driver of head teachers' innovative work motivation. Evaluation indicators shall cover all dimensions of moral education including educational philosophies, working methodologies, and educational outcomes. Diversified evaluation methods integrating student feedback, parent assessment, peer review, and institutional appraisal shall be adopted. Outstanding head teachers delivering high-quality moral education shall receive formal recognition and material rewards to boost their work enthusiasm and innovative awareness.

6.3 Platform Support Mechanism: Leading Role of Renowned Head Teacher Studios

Renowned head teacher studios serve as pivotal platforms for cultivating outstanding moral education instructors. Schools may select experienced, professionally accomplished head teachers to establish specialized studios. Leveraging the exemplary leadership of studios, institutions may carry out research projects, case analysis, and experience dissemination, driving all head teachers to collectively upgrade their moral education proficiency.

7. Outcomes and Reflections

7.1 Practical Outcomes

Implementation of the aforementioned innovative practical pathways and supporting safeguard systems has yielded tangible results for head teachers' moral education in secondary vocational medical schools. Students' moral character and professional literacy have improved significantly, accompanied by stronger senses of social responsibility and dedication. Class culture construction has achieved remarkable progress, fostering positive class conduct and academic ethos. Furthermore, head

teachers have witnessed comprehensive advancement in their theoretical expertise and practical capacity for moral education, alongside enhanced enthusiasm and innovative consciousness.

7.2 Challenges and Critical Reflections

Despite positive outcomes, unresolved challenges persist in practice. Some head teachers possess superficial understanding of the "integrating virtue and skill" philosophy and struggle to organically integrate moral education with specialized teaching in daily work. Collaborative education mechanisms remain imperfect, with communication and coordination gaps persisting across institutional departments. To address these issues, targeted training for head teachers shall be intensified to deepen their comprehension and practical implementation of the philosophy; collaborative education frameworks shall be continuously refined to break inter-departmental silos and generate unified educational momentum.

7.3 Future Prospects

Moving forward, moral education delivered by head teachers in secondary vocational medical schools shall uphold the core philosophy of integrating virtue and skill and continuously explore innovative practical pathways and supporting mechanisms. Closer ties with the medical industry shall be forged to timely adjust moral education content and methodologies in response to evolving industry demands. Information technology shall be harnessed to expand channels and scope of moral education, elevating its efficiency and quality. Simultaneously, research and summary of moral education practices shall be strengthened to continuously advance its theoretical depth and practical effectiveness, contributing to the cultivation of qualified medical secondary vocational talents.

8. Conclusion

Centered on practical innovations of head teachers' moral education in secondary vocational medical schools against the backdrop of integrating virtue and skill, this study systematically analyzes prevailing practical dilemmas, reconstructs relevant theoretical frameworks, and proposes a full spectrum of innovative practical pathways and supporting safeguard systems. Research verifies that moral

education guided by the philosophy of balancing virtue and skill delivers profound theoretical and practical value for secondary vocational medical schools. In practice, initiatives including featured moral education brand development, innovative thematic class meetings, professional class culture construction, mental health education, and multi-stakeholder collaborative education effectively enhance students' moral character and professional literacy, facilitating their holistic development. Concurrently, supporting systems encompassing professional development, evaluation incentives, and platform studios provide robust institutional backing for innovative moral education by head teachers. Nevertheless, this research bears limitations such as restricted sampling scope and insufficient long-term tracking assessment of moral education effectiveness. Future studies shall expand research samples, strengthen long-term monitoring and evaluation of educational outcomes, and continuously refine the innovative moral education system for head teachers in secondary vocational medical schools, delivering more solid safeguards for cultivating medical vocational talents capable of meeting social development demands.

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