

Cultivating Wisdom with Culture: A Study on the Logic, Model, and Path of Integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into the Education of Higher Vocational College Counselors

Min Tang*, Shiyi Yang, Liang Guan, Lingmu Liu

Sichuan Vocational and Technical College, Suining, 629000, China

*Corresponding author: m18883790825@163.com

Abstract: The educational value of excellent traditional Chinese culture is becoming increasingly prominent in the context of modern higher vocational education. As key agents of cultural transmission and spiritual cultivation, higher vocational college counselors urgently require a theoretical reconstruction of their role positioning and competency structure. Centering on the core concept of "cultivating wisdom with culture," this study systematically constructs the logical framework and operational paths for integrating traditional culture into the education of higher vocational college counselors. First, at the ontological level, the study clarifies the cultural foundation and intellectual expectations of the counselor's role, defines the inherent connotations of traditional culture and its educational dimensions, and reveals the mechanism and functional positioning of "cultivating wisdom with culture." Second, the study constructs a structural model that encompasses the selection and transformation rules of cultural resources, the adaptive tension between counselors' cultural awareness and their educational competencies, and the psychological schemas and trigger conditions for higher vocational students' cultural acceptance. Finally, the study proposes operational paths, including strategies for cultural penetration in daily management fields, value transmission modalities in teacher-student interaction contexts, and mechanisms for realizing the nurturing function of the campus cultural ecology. This research provides a theoretical basis and operational guidance for the systematic integration of traditional culture into the work of higher vocational college counselors.

Keywords: Cultivating wisdom with culture; higher vocational college counselors; cultural integration; structural model; operational paths

Introduction

The role of higher vocational college counselors in the educational system is transitioning from routine management to cultural cultivation. However, current research mostly focuses on general conceptual advocacy or scattered experience summaries, lacking a systematic logical construction of the integration process of traditional culture. Excellent traditional Chinese culture contains abundant resources for interpersonal regulation, self-cultivation, and cognitive paradigms, which are highly compatible with the developmental needs of higher vocational students. Nevertheless, a clear theoretical framework is still absent regarding how to achieve effective transformation through the daily interactions of counselors. The significance of this study lies in the following aspects: first, it responds to the practical issue of the lack of "cultural competence" in the professional development of higher vocational college counselors, establishing "cultivating wisdom with culture" as an intermediary concept connecting tradition and modernity, culture and education; second, it breaks away from the linear thinking of simply "introducing" cultural resources in existing research, turning instead to the structural interconnections among dynamic processes such as selection, transformation, acceptance, and transmission; third, it forms a progressive theoretical system from ontological logic to structural model and operational paths, providing referential analytical dimensions for subsequent related explorations. Based on the above necessities, this study takes logical construction as the main thread and systematically elucidates the internal mechanism and realization conditions of integrating traditional culture into the education of higher vocational college counselors.

1. The Ontological Logic of Integrating Traditional Culture into the Education of Higher Vocational College Counselors

1.1 The Cultural Foundation and Intellectual Expectation of the Role of Higher Vocational College Counselors in Education

The role of higher vocational college counselors in the educational system is not merely that of administrative executors or task coordinators; instead, they serve as intellectual agents carrying cultural transmission and spiritual cultivation. The cultural foundation of this role can be traced back to the teacher-centered concept of "imparting truth, transmitting knowledge, and resolving doubts" in traditional educational philosophy, which emphasizes that counselors themselves must possess deep cultural accumulation and value identification skills. In the context of higher vocational education, the knowledge base and learning characteristics of the student population determine that counselors cannot rely solely on institutional regulations. Instead, they need to use cultural symbols, life wisdom, and ethical discourse to construct an intrinsically attractive guiding framework. This cultural foundation transforms the counselor's role from functional service provision to meaningful value co-construction^[1].

The intellectual expectation refers to the depth of thinking and cultural judgment that counselors should demonstrate in the educational process. Specifically, counselors need to extract content elements suitable for the cognitive development level of higher vocational students from the excellent traditional Chinese culture and transform these elements into intellectual resources for daily communication, contextual guidance, and growth counseling. This expectation does not require counselors to become researchers of traditional culture; instead, it requires them to act as "transformers" and "responders" of cultural meanings, namely, to invoke appropriate cultural concepts to interpret and respond to students' practical confusions. The intellectual expectation embodies the internal requirements for counselors' cultural competence and also provides the subject-level logical starting point for the subsequent design of the mechanism for "cultivating wisdom with culture".

1.2 The Inherent Connotations and Educational Dimensions of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture

Excellent traditional Chinese culture is not a static collection of knowledge; instead, it contains a value system centered on harmonious interpersonal relationships, individual self-cultivation, and compliance with the natural order. Its inherent connotations are mainly embodied in a meaning network composed of the concepts of "self-cultivation and introspection, benevolence and love for others, putting oneself in the place of others, harmonious coexistence, harmony without uniformity, kindness and good-neighborliness, integrity and justice, the unity of knowledge and action, applying knowledge to practical use, innovation and reform, and balancing righteousness and interests." These concepts are not abstract moral dogmas but operational life principles and thinking patterns. From an educational perspective, traditional culture provides a localized discourse system on "how to become a better person," emphasizing the progressive relationship of introspection, self-cultivation, pacifying others, and achieving things. This progressive relationship aligns well with the transition period of higher vocational students from skill learning to personality growth, thus possessing a natural foundation for integration.

The educational dimension is manifested in the regulatory functions of traditional culture on the three levels of individual cognition, emotion, and behavior. At the cognitive level, the concept of "investigating things to extend knowledge" in traditional culture can guide students to develop habits of rational observation and in-depth analysis. At the emotional level, the principle of "forgiveness" and empathy can help alleviate interpersonal conflicts and emotional distress. At the behavioral level, "vigilance in solitude" and "earnest practice" can strengthen students' self-discipline and behavioral consistency. These dimensions do not exist in isolation; instead, they penetrate the daily interactions between counselors and students through carriers such as classical texts, historical stories, and ritual norms. Thus, traditional culture is transformed from an abstract cultural heritage into an operable and perceptible educational tool^[2].

1.3 The Mechanism and Functional Positioning of the Concept of "Cultivating Wisdom with Culture"

The mechanism of the concept of "cultivating wisdom with culture" is built on two pathways: the

activation of meaning of cultural symbols and cognitive restructuring. The activation of meaning refers to the process in which counselors introduce specific cultural symbols, such as solar terms, allusions, maxims, and ritual actions, to trigger students' existing cultural memories or emotional identification, thereby leading to a reinterpretation of current problems. Cognitive restructuring, based on the activation of meaning, refers to the process in which counselors guide students to replace their original rigid or negative cognitive patterns with the thinking paradigms of traditional culture. The core of this mechanism lies in the character "hua" (transformation), which emphasizes the flexibility and permeability of culture rather than forced indoctrination or logical argumentation. Higher vocational students have limited receptivity to abstract theories but possess a relatively strong sensitivity to concrete cultural symbols, which provides a psychological foundation for the occurrence of "cultivating wisdom with culture."

At the level of functional positioning, the concept of "cultivating wisdom with culture" assumes three roles: a cognitive regulator, an emotional buffer, and a behavioral threshold enhancer. As a cognitive regulator, it helps students examine their own situations from multiple perspectives and reduces extreme black-and-white thinking. As an emotional buffer, it utilizes the concepts of peace, tolerance, and moderation in traditional culture to lower anxiety and confrontational emotions. As a behavioral threshold enhancer, it increases the degree of students' self-rejection of inappropriate behaviors through internalized cultural norms. This functional positioning avoids simplifying traditional culture into moral preaching; instead, it embeds the culture into specific scenarios of interaction between counselors and students, thereby forming a perceptible, repeatable, and modifiable operational framework for education.

2. The Structural Model of Integrating Traditional Culture into the Education of Higher Vocational College Counselors

2.1 The Composition of the Rules for Screening and Transforming Cultural Resources

The screening of cultural resources must be based on a set of prior criteria, which include the comprehensibility of the content, the acceptability of its values, and the repeatability of its operation. Comprehensibility requires that the selected cultural elements match the language habits, life experiences, and cognitive load of higher vocational students, thus avoiding overly abstract philosophical propositions or obscure classical expressions. Acceptability emphasizes that the value orientations embedded in the cultural resources should resonate with the fundamental needs of individual growth, such as concepts of diligence, integrity, and mutual assistance, which have a broad basis of recognition. Repeatability refers to the ability of cultural resources to be repeatedly invoked without dissipating their meaning, thereby facilitating counselors to reactivate them in different contexts. These three criteria together constitute the basic framework of the screening stage, ensuring that the cultural resources entering the educational field possess the prerequisite conditions for effectiveness^[3].

The transformation rules involve the path through which cultural resources are converted from a textual form to an interactive form. This transformation consists of two levels: semantic transformation and contextual transformation. Semantic transformation refers to the process of translating classical expressions into everyday language understandable to modern higher vocational students, retaining the core meaning while changing the linguistic form. Contextual transformation requires embedding cultural concepts into specific life problems or growth dilemmas, such as using "going too far is as bad as falling short" to explain the balance issue in time management. The core of the transformation rules lies in the balance between "deconstruction" and "reconstruction," which neither disrupts the original logic of the cultural resources nor fails to adapt them to the functional needs of the educational context. These rules constitute a methodological bridge connecting the cultural essence and the educational application.

2.2 The Adaptive Tension Between Counselors' Cultural Awareness and Their Educational Competence

Counselors' cultural awareness is manifested in the depth of their understanding of the inherent logic of excellent traditional Chinese culture and their sensitivity in invoking it. This awareness is not a mechanical memorization of cultural knowledge but an appreciation of the thinking patterns behind cultural concepts, including the grasp of traditional cognitive features such as "relationship

orientation," "holistic thinking," and "introspective tendency." Counselors with different degrees of cultural awareness exhibit differentiated behavioral characteristics in their educational practice: those with high awareness can flexibly select cultural resources to address students' problems, while those with low awareness tend to apply fixed expressions or avoid introducing cultural elements. The cultivation of cultural awareness requires long-term knowledge accumulation and reflective training, yet the heavy routine workload of higher vocational college counselors often limits the occurrence of this process.

Educational competence refers to the operational level at which counselors use cultural resources to achieve guiding effects in specific situations. A tension exists between this competence and cultural awareness: when counselors have sufficient awareness but insufficient competence, they struggle to transform their internalized cultural understanding into effective interactive behaviors, which manifests as "knowing what to say but being unable to express it." When counselors have strong competence but lack awareness, the misuse or superficial use of cultural resources may occur, reducing complex cultural concepts to slogan-like expressions. The path to resolving this adaptive tension lies in establishing a circular feedback mechanism between awareness and competence, whereby each use of cultural resources should, in turn, promote a deeper understanding of the culture itself, and each deepening of understanding should optimize the method of use. This tension is not a defect to be eliminated but a dynamic force driving the professional growth of counselors.

2.3 The Psychological Schema and Triggering Conditions of Higher Vocational Students' Cultural Acceptance

The psychological schema of higher vocational students' cultural acceptance consists of both a priori cognitive frameworks and emotional tendencies. The a priori cognitive framework comes from the family discourse, educational background, and media information that students have encountered during their growth, which already contain fragmented elements of traditional culture, such as the simple recognition of "respecting teachers," "being punctual," and "honoring promises." Emotional tendencies manifest as either a sense of affinity or alienation toward traditional cultural symbols. The former is often associated with positive life memories, while the latter may stem from negative experiences of forced indoctrination in the past. The psychological schema is not a fixed structure; instead, it adjusts dynamically with continuous information input and contextual stimuli. Understanding the schema characteristics of the student population is a cognitive prerequisite for designing cultural integration strategies^[4].

Triggering conditions refer to the key situational variables that can activate the psychological schema and facilitate the occurrence of cultural acceptance. Two types of conditions demonstrate relatively high effectiveness: the first is the relevance of the problematic situation, meaning that when students are facing difficulties related to interpersonal relationships, self-management, or professional ethics, the introduction of corresponding cultural concepts is more likely to be accepted; the second is the low defensiveness of the expression method, meaning that the use of indirect discourse such as stories, metaphors, and rhetorical questions, rather than direct preaching, can reduce students' psychological resistance. The operation of triggering conditions depends on the counselor's real-time judgment of the student's state; introducing cultural resources too early or too late will reduce the triggering effect. Systematizing these conditions helps form predictable pathways of acceptance, thereby transforming cultural integration from a random event into a structured guiding process.

3. The Operational Paths for Integrating Traditional Culture into the Education of Higher Vocational College Counselors

3.1 Cultural Penetration Strategies in the Field of Daily Management

The field of daily management covers routine matters such as attendance, dormitories, class meetings, and records of rewards and punishments. This field is characterized by high frequency and low visibility, which provides a covert and continuous channel for cultural penetration. The core of cultural penetration strategies lies in embedding traditional cultural elements into the symbolic system and operational procedures of management actions, rather than adding extra specialized cultural activities. For example, in attendance notifications, the expression "being punctual means keeping one's word" can replace a mere record of lateness; in dormitory hygiene inspections, the analogy framework of "cultivating the room is like cultivating oneself" can be introduced. This embedding method takes

advantage of the compulsory attention occupation inherent in management tasks, allowing students to passively receive cultural information while handling affairs, thereby reducing the resistance caused by deliberate indoctrination.

The operation of the strategy relies on two technical means: discourse replacement and ritual fine-tuning. Discourse replacement refers to the substitution of neutral or negative vocabulary in management directives with positive expressions carrying cultural connotations, such as transforming "no returning late at night" into "nurturing the morning energy." Ritual fine-tuning involves adding brief cultural symbolic operations to existing management procedures, such as conducting one minute of quiet contemplation or reciting maxims at the beginning of a class meeting. These means do not alter the essential functions of management affairs; they only attach cultural meanings to their surface layers. The effectiveness of the penetration strategy does not depend on the effect of a single operation but on the cumulative effect formed by high-frequency repetition, which gradually internalizes cultural symbols into the tacit knowledge within the students' cognitive frameworks.

3.2 Value Transmission Modalities in the Context of Teacher-Student Interaction

The context of teacher-student interaction is characterized by immediacy, bidirectionality, and situational dependence, making it a highly sensitive field for value transmission. In this field, the choice of transmission modality directly affects the reception effect of cultural concepts. Three modalities demonstrate high applicability: the metaphor modality, the questioning modality, and the demonstration modality. The metaphor modality conveys cultural meanings through stories, analogies, or fables, and it is suitable for situations where students express vague confusion. The questioning modality uses Socratic questioning to guide students to derive conclusions that align with traditional concepts on their own, and it is suitable for softening situations where students hold opposing views. The demonstration modality involves the counselor exhibiting behaviors that conform to cultural norms during the interaction, such as patient listening corresponding to the principle of "forgiveness" and punctual responses corresponding to "trustworthiness"^[5].

Value transmission is not a one-way delivery of information; instead, it completes the negotiation and confirmation of meaning through bidirectional interaction. Counselors need to dynamically switch transmission modalities according to students' real-time responses, avoiding the aesthetic fatigue or cognitive rigidity caused by a single modality. High-frequency daily conversations are suitable for the use of metaphor and demonstration modalities, while low-frequency important conversations can be supplemented with the questioning modality to deepen understanding. The basis for modality switching lies in the students' acceptance threshold: when the threshold is low, demonstration modality should be the main approach to reduce verbal output; when the threshold is high, the frequency of questioning can be increased to promote reflection. This modality combination strategy frees value transmission from simple preaching models and shifts it toward a more flexible and adaptive logic of interaction.

3.3 The Realization Mechanism of the Nurturing Function of the Campus Cultural Ecology

The campus cultural ecology consists of four levels: physical space, symbolic system, behavioral conventions, and interaction rules. The nurturing function refers to the implicit shaping effect of this ecological system on students' cultural literacy. The premise of the realization mechanism is to transform the core connotations of traditional culture into perceptible forms at the above four levels. At the physical level, static carriers such as cultural corners, maxim corridors, and solar term reminder signs can be set up. At the symbolic level, traditional patterns or elegant music elements can be embedded in campus broadcasts and visual identification systems. At the behavioral level, standardized interactions such as greeting etiquette between teachers and students and class beginning and ending rituals can be encouraged. At the interaction level, principles of "harmony without uniformity" can be embodied in forms such as class conventions and dormitory covenants. Mutual corroboration should be formed among the levels to avoid information conflicts or value disconnections^[6].

The realization of the nurturing function depends on long-term and stable ecological maintenance rather than one-time construction. The maintenance mechanism includes regularly assessing the cultural consistency of ecological elements, replacing symbols that have become ineffective or diluted in meaning, and adjusting the weight ratios among the different levels. Unlike traditional classroom education, ecological nurturing does not pursue immediate cognitive output; instead, it triggers students' unconscious learning through continuous environmental exposure. When cultural symbols reach a certain frequency of appearance and density of distribution in students' daily lives, they will

naturally form cognitive anchors. When students subsequently encounter relevant situations, they will automatically invoke the corresponding cultural frameworks for judgment. This mechanism transforms cultural integration from episodic intervention into routine environmental provision, which aligns well with the characteristics of higher vocational students, namely the fragmentation of their attention distribution and their limited time for systematic learning.

Conclusion

This study centers on the concept of "cultivating wisdom with culture" and completes the theoretical construction of integrating traditional culture into the education of higher vocational college counselors from three levels: ontological logic, structural model, and operational paths. At the level of ontological logic, this study clarifies the intellectual expectation of counselors as cultural transformers, reveals the regulatory functions of traditional culture in the three dimensions of cognition, emotion, and behavior, and defines the triple roles of "cultivating wisdom with culture" as a cognitive regulator, an emotional buffer, and a behavioral threshold enhancer. At the level of the structural model, this study constructs a complete chain from resource screening to acceptance triggering, points out that the dynamic tension between cultural awareness and educational competence is the internal driving force for the professional growth of counselors, and identifies the recognition of students' psychological schemas and the grasp of triggering conditions as the cognitive foundation for the effectiveness of cultural integration. At the level of operational paths, this study proposes differentiated operational modalities in three types of fields: daily management, teacher-student interaction, and campus ecology, emphasizing the covert nature of cultural penetration, the adaptability of value transmission, and the cumulative nature of ecological nurturing. Future directions can be pursued from the following aspects: first, to quantitatively test the structural model proposed in this study and develop corresponding measurement tools to verify the causal relationships among the variables; second, to explore the differential characteristics of cultural acceptance schemas among higher vocational students of different grades and professional backgrounds in order to refine classification-based guidance strategies; third, to study the transformation and transmission mechanisms of traditional cultural symbols in online interactive spaces in the context of digital media environments; and fourth, to track the longitudinal process of the development of counselors' cultural awareness and explore an effective training support system. The advancement of the above directions will help further consolidate the empirical foundation and application boundaries of the theory of "cultivating wisdom with culture."

Fund Projects

"Sichuan Vocational and Technical College 2025 School-level Ideological and Political Education Research Project (Counselor Special Project): A Study on the Construction and Digital Practice of the Lei Feng Spirit Education System in Higher Vocational Colleges from the Perspective of the 'Simultaneous Development of Five Kinds of Education' (2025YSZ02)"

"2026 Suining Municipal Philosophy and Social Sciences Planning Project: A Study on the Path of Embedding 'Community Principals' into Urban Social Governance: A Case Study of Xiniu Community in Suining (SN26YB014)"

References

- [1] Fang Chen. "Research on the Path of Higher Vocational College Counselors Improving the Educational Level of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture." *New Legend*, no.08 (2026): 97-99.
- [2] Li Fei. "Research on the Path of Integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into the Educational Work of College Counselors in the New Era." *Wisdom*, no.25 (2025): 177-180.
- [3] Wang Sining. "Strategies for Integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into the Ideological and Political Education Work of College Counselors." *Delta*, no.22 (2025): 160-162.
- [4] Feng Bing. "Exploration of the Path for College Counselors to Integrate Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into Ideological and Political Education." *Tiannan*, no.06 (2024): 114-116.
- [5] Zhang Jingying. "Research on the Path of Integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into the Daily Ideological and Political Education of Science and Engineering College Counselors." *Popular Literature and Art*, no.24 (2023): 137-139.
- [6] Du Wei. "Research on the Integration of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into the Ideological and Political Education of Counselors in Private Colleges and Universities: A Case Study of Tea

Culture." Fujian Tea, vol.44, no.02 (2022): 228-230.