The Formation Mechanism and Inheritance Pathways of Jiujiang's Integrity Culture from the Perspective of Industry-Education Integration

Hongyan Zhou[1], Weibing Luo[2*]

[1]School of Accounting,Jiangxi Vocational College of Finance & Economics, Jiujiang, 332000, China
[2]School of Urban and Rural Construction,Jiangxi Vocational College of Finance & Economics, Jiujiang, 332000, China
[*]Corresponding author email: jxlwb00@163.com

Abstract: *Integrity culture constitutes a vital resource for higher education institutions in fulfilling the fundamental mission of fostering virtue through education in the new era. As a nationally renowned historical and cultural city, Jiujiang has nurtured a distinctive local integrity culture tradition represented by a community of honest officials including Tao Kan, Di Renjie, and Huang Tingjian, which embodies rich ideological connotations and distinctive regional characteristics. However, current integrity culture development in Jiujiang's higher education institutions commonly faces challenges including insufficient exploration of historical resources, homogenised educational formats, and inadequate integration with professional education. From the perspective of industry-education integration, this paper systematically reviews the historical lineage and spiritual connotations of Jiujiang's integrity culture, deduces its formation mechanism characterised by the four-dimensional interaction of 'geographical environment–political ecology–cultural tradition–educational practice', analyses the impact mechanism of industry-education integration on integrity culture inheritance, and proposes a four-dimensional synergistic inheritance pathway encompassing 'curriculum infiltration–practical cultivation–environmental immersion–institutional safeguards'. The study contends that industry-education integration is not merely a transformation of talent cultivation models but also provides a practical field for the transformation of integrity culture from knowledge transmission to value identification, with the two capable of forming a mutually empowering and synergistically enhancing benign interactive relationship.*

Keywords: *industry-education integration; Jiujiang integrity culture; formation mechanism; cultural inheritance; local higher education institutions*

1. Introduction

A major national conference held in 2022 set out the strategic deployment to "strengthen the construction of a culture of integrity in the new era". Subsequent high-level meetings further emphasised the need to "improve the institutional mechanisms for advancing the integrated effort of not daring, not being able, and not wanting to engage in corruption", positioning integrity culture construction within the holistic anti-corruption governance framework. Industry-education integration, as the core lever for deepening the reform of the modern vocational education system, has been elevated to a national-level educational institutional arrangement. In 2024, the Notice on Strengthening the Construction of Municipal Industry-Education Joint Bodies issued by the Ministry of Education explicitly required, on the basis of industrial parks, the deepening of "four forms of cooperation" and the advancement of the "five platforms" construction, promoting vocational education to take root in regions and integrate with industries. This policy orientation provides an institutional framework for local higher education institutions to re-examine their interactive relationships with regional society, and also opens new practical spaces for the inheritance of integrity culture.

Jiujiang, a historic city with over 2,200 years of history, has produced many honest officials, forming an integrity culture heritage. Examples include Tao Kan of the Eastern Jin with his family traditions, Di Renjie of the Tang who reduced taxes for the people, Huang Tingjian of the Northern Song who transcribed admonitions on integrity, and Liu Fangpu of the Qing who declared his governance aspirations. This culture has developed a spiritual lineage centered on "purity, prudence,

and diligence," carried by "official admonition culture" and transmitted through "family traditions." These historical resources provide cultural nourishment for contemporary integrity culture development.

However, current integrity culture development in Jiujiang's higher education institutions faces a triple predicament. First, insufficient transformation of historical resources: the abundant local integrity culture materials have yet to be systematically transformed into educational resources, lacking curriculum systems and textbook support with distinctive local characteristics. Second, relatively homogenised educational formats: integrity education largely remains at the level of thematic lectures, warning film screenings, and other traditional models, exhibiting a tendency to 'emphasise knowledge transmission while neglecting value internalisation', and lacking close integration with students' professional learning and career development. Third, relatively lagging institutional development: the integration of integrity culture 'into teaching materials, into classrooms, and into students' minds' lacks systematic institutional design and long-term mechanisms. Concurrently, the deepening advancement of industry-education integration has transformed the operational forms and educational models of higher education institutions. School-enterprise cooperation and the integration of work and study have become the norm, with students spending substantial time in enterprise internships and practical training. The traditional campus-based integrity education model faces coverage gaps brought about by 'field migration'. How to achieve the transformation of integrity culture from 'knowledge transmission' to 'value identification' in the context of industry-education integration is an urgent practical issue that Jiujiang's higher education institutions must address in their integrity culture development.

2. The Core Connotations of Jiujiang's Integrity Culture

To grasp the essential characteristics and core essence of Jiujiang's integrity culture, systematic examination from the dimension of historical evolution is required. Jiujiang's integrity culture is not merely a scattered accumulation of honest official stories but has formed an organic whole with 'purity, prudence, and diligence' as its core value, official admonition culture as its institutional carrier, and family traditions and precepts as its transmission link. Its basic connotations can be understood from the following three levels.

2.1 Personal Cultivation of Integrity and Self-Discipline

The core spiritual trait of Jiujiang's upright-official heritage is the internalisation of integrity as a conscious pursuit in personal moral cultivation. Tao Kan of the Eastern Jin Dynasty stands as a typical example. His mother Lady Zhan instilled in him the principle of separating public and private interests via the “sealed-fish remonstrance”, remarking: “As an official, sending me public goods benefits me nothing, yet only adds to my worries”. Upon retirement, Tao Kan sealed government storehouses: he catalogued all military assets, locked and sealed them for hand-over. This act echoes his mother's remonstrance across time, showing integrity's transformation from external constraints to inner self-discipline. The ethos of “not deceiving oneself in private” forms the innermost personal-cultivation dimension of Jiujiang's integrity culture.

During the Southern Song Dynasty, Yue Fei stationed in Jiangzhou proposed that “civil officials should be incorruptible and military officials should be fearless to secure national peace”, elevating integrity from personal conduct to national governance. The strict discipline of his Yue Family Army — “no house invasion in freezing weather, no plunder in hunger” — extended integrity from individual cultivation to organizational norms. In the Northern Song Dynasty, Huang Tingjian transcribed the Integrity Admonition Tablet, which states that “official salaries derive from people's toil; the people may be oppressed, but heaven cannot be deceived”, further establishing integrity-based governance as a fundamental code of conduct for officials. These historical practices prove that Jiujiang's integrity culture has long embodied the dual connotations of self-cultivation and self-discipline, defining integrity as not only personal virtue but also reverence for official duties.

2.2 People-Centred Governance Orientation

Jiujiang's official integrity is a governance philosophy of "serving the people." Tang official Di Renjie petitioned for tax relief for disaster victims, securing an exemption for Pengze. His release of prisoners for the New Year, who returned willingly, prioritized people over harsh punishment. Qing official Liu Fangpu wrote a couplet upon taking office, stating that officials must rely on benefiting the

people, not geography. This integration of integrity with public service elevates the culture beyond personal virtue, giving it a people-centred character.

Yu Liang, as Governor of Jiangzhou, refused to leverage his status as an imperial relative, explaining that pursuing private gain harms the public good, linking integrity to public service. Huang Tingjian, as Magistrate of Taihe County, chose to store salt in granaries rather than force sales on the people, sacrificing his performance evaluation. These cases show Jiujiang's integrity culture combines integrity with 'responsibility': true integrity means 'acting appropriately,' not just avoiding corruption.

2.3 Cultural Transmission Through Poetry and Ritual Education

The persistence of Jiujiang's integrity culture is tied to the "poetry and ritual education" transmission mechanism. Tao Kan's mother, Lady Zhan, with stories like "cutting hair for guests" and "sealing fish to admonish," shows family education's foundational role in building integrity. The "scholarly and ritual family" tradition transformed integrity from public "official admonitions" into private "family precepts." Huang Tingjian's transcription of the Admonition Tablet on Integrity was both a public governance design and a reflection of the scholar-officials' cultural consciousness to take "purity, prudence, diligence" as their family's spiritual hallmark.

From the Song Dynasty, academy education thrived in Jiujiang. The White Deer Grotto Academy and Lianxi Academy were centers for Neo-Confucianism and institutional bases for passing down the culture of honest officials. Zhou Dunyi's ideal of purity and Zhu Xi's establishment of core ethical precepts at White Deer Grotto both formed a mutually constitutive relationship with integrity culture nurtured through learning. Thus, academy education provided Jiujiang's integrity culture with socialised transmission channels beyond family ties, granting it enduring cultural influence.

In summary, the essential characteristics of Jiujiang's integrity culture can be encapsulated as: 'self-disciplined integrity' as the personal foundation, 'people-centred governance' as the governance orientation, and 'poetry and ritual education' as the transmission link. These three elements constitute a complete closed loop of 'self-cultivation – governance – transmission'. This cultural system possesses both the universal logic of Confucian 'self-cultivation, family regulation, state governance, and world peace' and presents distinctive regional characteristics owing to Jiujiang's unique geographical location, historical circumstances, and cultural ecology.

3. The Formation Mechanism of Jiujiang's Integrity Culture

The formation of Jiujiang's integrity culture results from the interaction of geographical environment, political ecology, cultural tradition, and educational practice. Understanding this mechanism reveals the general laws of local integrity culture generation and provides historical reference for its contemporary inheritance within industry-education integration.

3.1 Geographical Space and Political Ecology: The 'Field Foundation' for the Generation of Integrity Culture

Jiujiang's location at the Yangtze-Poyang confluence, 'embracing the river and lake, connecting seven provinces', gave it special political status in ancient China. As a key transport and military hub, it faced strict central oversight. Conversely, its distance from the political center provided local officials independent administrative space, allowing honest officials to distinguish themselves. This 'periphery-centre' tension formed the unique political-geographical environment for Jiujiang's integrity culture.

From the perspective of political ecology, the honest officials in Jiujiang's history predominantly appeared in two scenarios: first, officials demoted here due to political struggles (such as Di Renjie), who, despite adversity, did not abandon their principles but instead focused more intently on people's welfare; second, native scholars who returned to their hometowns for official service or established academies after retirement (such as Tao Kan and Huang Tingjian), who combined their official experience with local cultural traditions, promoting the infiltration of integrity concepts from the 'officialdom' to the 'local community'. Both models demonstrate that the formation of Jiujiang's integrity culture was inseparable from the tension and interaction between 'officialdom' and 'local society'—it was precisely the existence of this spatial dynamic that enabled integrity concepts to transform from political regulations of the power centre into cultural identification of local society.

3.2 Neo-Confucian Tradition and Academy Education: The Institutional Carrier for the Transmission of Integrity Culture

From the Song Dynasty, Jiujiang became a key region for Neo-Confucianism. Zhou Dunyi, as Prefect of Nankang, founded the Lianxi Academy; Zhu Xi renovated the White Deer Grotto Academy and set its regulations. The Neo-Confucian theory of "preserving heavenly principles and eliminating human desires" provided the philosophical basis for integrity culture. Academy education served as both a site for knowledge transmission and moral cultivation. Through the path of "study – self-cultivation – imperial examination – official service", integrity concepts were embedded in the scholar's development trajectory, becoming an intrinsic professional principle rather than external rules.

Jiujiang's academy education transmitted integrity culture with a "localised" character—teaching materials included the Four Books and Five Classics, as well as records of local worthies, official admonitions, and biographies of honest officials from local gazetteers. This blend of "universal morality" with "local exemplars" gave the culture both Confucian universality and regional identification. Huang Tingjian's transcription of the 'Imperial Admonition Tablet on Integrity' being engraved at the county yamen, and Liu Fangpu's couplet recorded in gazetteers, show integrity culture here transformed from abstract moral exhortation into tangible local memory.

3.3 'Four-Dimensional Interaction': The Dynamic Mechanism of Integrity Culture Formation

In comprehensive view, the formation of Jiujiang's integrity culture can be summarised as a dynamic mechanism of four-dimensional interaction among 'geographical environment – political ecology – cultural tradition – educational practice':

Geographical environment provides the 'spatial field'—its 'embracing the river and lake, connecting seven provinces' pattern made Jiujiang a key node for official and cultural convergence, bearing central regulatory pressure while maintaining local autonomy. Political ecology forms the 'incentive mechanism'—the steadfastness of demoted officials and native scholars' sentiment reinforced each other, transforming integrity from 'institutional requirement' to 'voluntary identification'. Cultural tradition provides the 'value core'—Neo-Confucian cultivation and Confucian people-centred thought provided philosophical support beyond instrumental rationality. Educational practice undertakes the 'transmission function'—academy education embedded integrity concepts in scholar cultivation, achieving intergenerational transmission and social diffusion.

These four dimensions form a mutually reinforcing cycle, not a linear causality. For example, honest official deeds were transformed into cultural tradition through education; this tradition then shaped subsequent values, influencing the political ecology. This 'field – mechanism – value – carrier' closed-loop structure gave Jiujiang's integrity culture its institutional and sustained character.

The contemporary implication is that effective inheritance cannot rely on a single channel, but requires simultaneous efforts across the four dimensions: 'spatial field, incentive mechanism, value identification, and transmission carriers'. The advancement of industry-education integration provides an opportunity for reconstructing these dimensions.

4. Pathways for Inheriting Jiujiang's Integrity Culture in Higher Education Institutions from the Perspective of Industry-Education Integration

Industry-education integration's impact on integrity culture inheritance is a 'double-edged sword'. It expands the practical field for integrity education, allowing students in internships to transform integrity from knowledge into behavioral choice and internalize values. Conversely, it introduces challenges: students' extended off-campus time dilutes the coverage and influence of campus-based integrity education, while the tension between enterprise management and school educational cultures may undermine its effectiveness.

Based on the foregoing analysis of the connotations and formation mechanism of Jiujiang's integrity culture, this paper proposes a 'four-dimensional synergistic' pathway for inheriting Jiujiang's integrity culture in higher education institutions from the perspective of industry-education integration: curriculum infiltration as the foundation, practical cultivation as the key, environmental immersion as the guarantee, and institutional provision as the support.

4.1 Curriculum Infiltration: Transforming Jiujiang's Integrity Culture Resources into Curriculum Resources

Curriculum is the foundational carrier for the systematic inheritance of integrity culture. Currently, integrity education in Jiujiang's higher education institutions largely relies on 'embedded' delivery through ideological and political courses, lacking course content with school-based characteristics and regional distinctiveness. The key to breaking this predicament lies in systematically transforming Jiujiang's local integrity culture resources into curriculum resources.

First, develop school-based "Jiujiang Integrity Culture" courses. Compile original documents from honest officials like Tao Kan, Di Renjie, and Huang Tingjian into teaching materials. Course design should connect history with the present, linking historical cases to modern professional ethics, such as relating Tao Kan's stories to internal controls and family-professional integrity discussions.

Second, embed integrity education into the professional curriculum. Align with industry-education integration by developing discipline-specific modules: finance/economics programs cover historical finance and honest officials; law programs hold case seminars from Huang Tingjian's admonitions to contemporary ethics; teacher education discusses integrity inspired by Tao Kan's maternal education. This integrates integrity with professional learning and enhances student relevance.

4.2 Practical Cultivation: Achieving Value Internalisation in Industry-Education Integration Scenarios

From knowledge transmission to value identification, practice is key. Industry-education integration provides integrity education with authentic off-campus scenarios. During internships, training, or social services, students face real interest relationships and moral dilemmas, transforming integrity from a 'should be' concept into a 'how to choose' behavior.'.

First, integrate integrity education into practical teaching. Using the "collaborative education" framework of municipal industry-education bodies, include integrity competence in internship assessments. Add a "Professional Ethics and Integrity Norms" module to internship manuals, requiring students to record and analyse integrity-related situations in their logs. Encourage the school-enterprise "dual mentor" system to jointly guide students in handling internship-related interest conflicts, making integrity education a practical "learning by doing" process.

Second, create signature 'integrity culture and industry-education integration' projects. Establish a 'Jiujiang Honest Official Culture Study Camp' using local platforms. Organize student fieldwork at sites like Tao Kan's and Huang Tingjian's hometowns, Lianxi Academy, and White Deer Grotto Academy, integrating cultural study with professional practice. For example, tourism students design tour proposals, digital media students produce digital exhibition halls, and marketing students plan brand promotions. This project-based model deepens understanding of local integrity culture and aligns with 'authentic project-driven' teaching requirements.

Third, build a school-enterprise integrity education community. Extend integrity education to partner enterprises within industry-education integration. Encourage enterprises to include integrity practices in intern management systems, with mentors guiding skills and evaluating ethics. Explore a 'professional mentor + integrity mentor' model, where ideological/political teachers or disciplinary officials serve as integrity mentors, regularly visiting enterprises to monitor students' internship dynamics, extending integrity education to industry-education integration frontline scenarios.

4.3 Environmental Immersion: Creating a Cultural Ecology That 'Honours Integrity'

The vitality of integrity culture lies in the 'silent' environmental immersion. In the context of industry-education integration, students' activity spaces expand from 'campus' to 'campus + enterprise + society', and the cultivation of the integrity culture environment also needs to extend from campus to partner enterprises and community networks.

At the campus level, dig into Jiujiang's historical integrity elements to shape campus culture, such as establishing integrity figure corridors and media stories. Support student societies to organize related activities. Integrate integrity education into daily campus life.

At the enterprise level, encourage partner firms to build a culture of integrity practice. Consider their compliance status during selection. For deep-integration partners, explore co-building integrity

practice bases and include their compliance training in pre-internship programs.

At the societal level, utilize local integrity education bases like memorial parks and academies. Establish regular cooperation for on-site teaching and volunteer services. Empower students as docents or volunteers to transform them from learners into disseminators.

4.4 Institutional Provision: Establishing Long-Term Mechanisms for Integrity Education

Institutions are the fundamental guarantee for transforming integrity culture from 'campaign-style' promotion to 'normalised' operation. The primary shortcoming in the current integrity culture development of Jiujiang's higher education institutions lies not in conceptual consensus but in institutional design—the lack of systematic institutional arrangements from decision-making to implementation levels, from teaching to management, and from on-campus to off-campus spheres.

First, establish an administration-led, joint departmental management mechanism. Incorporate integrity culture into institutional governance, clarifying lead departments, responsibilities, and assessment standards. Learn from Jiujiang University's experience, advance integrity education and industry-education integration coordinately to avoid 'two skins'.

Second, incorporate integrity competence into the talent cultivation quality evaluation system. Within the 'collaborative education' framework of industry-education integration, integrity competence should become an important component of talent cultivation objectives. Specifically, an 'Integrity Culture Practice' credit component can be established within the 'second classroom transcript', requiring students to complete integrity education courses or integrity culture practice projects to obtain corresponding credits.

Third, establish an integrity education assessment and feedback mechanism. Regularly assess effectiveness to understand students' integrity awareness through surveys and interviews. Use results to optimize curricula and activities, forming an implementation-assessment-improvement loop. Drawing on school-enterprise collaborative evaluation, introduce enterprises and communities as independent evaluators to gauge the real-world impact of integrity education.

5. Conclusion

From the perspective of industry-education integration, this paper has systematically examined the historical lineage, spiritual connotations, and formation mechanism of Jiujiang's integrity culture, and discussed its contemporary inheritance pathways. The study draws the following main conclusions:

First, Jiujiang's integrity culture has formed a lineage of 'self-disciplined integrity' as its personal basis, 'people-centred governance' as its orientation, and 'poetry and ritual education' as its transmission link, a structure of 'self-cultivation – governance – transmission'. Second, its formation resulted from four-dimensional interaction among 'geographical environment – political ecology – cultural tradition – educational practice', with academy education as the key institutional carrier. Third, industry-education integration provides a field for transforming integrity culture from knowledge to value, while challenging traditional campus-based models. Fourth, the synergistic pathway of 'curriculum – practice – environment – institution' is a feasible approach for effective inheritance in this context.

First, municipal education authorities should include integrity culture in industry-education joint body assessments, defining school-enterprise responsibilities. Second, support higher education institutions in cooperating with local cultural research bodies to organize, study, and transform local integrity culture resources. Third, encourage institutions to incorporate integrity competence into talent programmes within the 'collaborative education' framework. Fourth, establish school-local government collaborative mechanisms, integrating existing education base resources to form a comprehensive network covering campuses, enterprises, and society.

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by the 2026 Jiujiang Social Science Foundation Project (Special Project for Integrity Culture Research) under Grant Nos. 26LJZX053 and 26LJZX054.

References

[1] Jiangxi Provincial Commission for Discipline Inspection and Supervision. (2025). Shangrao Normal University: Creating a new front for integrity education through 'Beloved China • Integrity Lecture Hall'. Jiangxi Provincial Commission for Discipline Inspection and Supervision Website.
[2] Li, M. (2025, December 24). Local undergraduate institutions must break the disconnection between learning and application in cultural education. China Education Daily, p. 6.
[3] Ministry of Education General Office. (2024). Notice on strengthening the construction of municipal industry-education joint bodies. Beijing: Ministry of Education.
[4] Recollections of ancient honest officials in Jiujiang. (2017). Taiwan Mainland Fellows Association Literature Database.
[5] Shangrao Normal University. (2025). Creating a new front for integrity education through 'Beloved China • Integrity Lecture Hall'. Jiangxi Provincial Commission for Discipline Inspection and Supervision Website.
[6] Xiao, C., & Li, X. (2025, June 8). Using the 'Six Integrity Cultivation Methods' to create a brand of 'cultivating people through culture'. China Education Daily, p. 4.