



# Fostering professionalism in china's vocational students for a healthy china

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## Abstract

The healthcare landscape in China is undergoing significant transformation, propelled by the Healthy China initiative, which seeks to enhance the nation's health standards. Amidst this evolution, the demand for proficient professionals is escalating, underlining the pivotal role of vocational colleges in nurturing competent service providers. This article explores into the professional development of students within these institutions against the backdrop of the Healthy China paradigm, addressing a critical gap in existing research on vocational education and its alignment with contemporary demands. Through an analytical lens, the study examines the intricate relationship between educational strategies and the nurturing of professionalism, guided by theories of vocational training and skill acquisition. The contextual relevance of this research is underscored by the pressing need for well-rounded practitioners who can fulfill the economic, social, and public health objectives outlined in the Healthy China 2030 blueprint. The objectives of this study are twofold: to evaluate the effectiveness of current educational practices in fostering professionalism among vocational college students and to propose strategic enhancements for aligning these educational programs with the broader goals of sector development. By investigating the integration of moral literacy, theoretical knowledge, and practical competencies within the vocational curriculum, this study aims to provide insightful recommendations for refining vocational education, thereby equipping the future workforce with the requisite skills to meet the evolving needs of the Chinese population.

**Keywords:** Vocational education, Professionalism, Healthy China initiative, Workforce development

## Introduction

The rapid development of China's social economy, coupled with deepening social reforms, has escalated the demand for proficient skilled personnel. This study is set against the backdrop of the Healthy China initiative and focuses on the imperative of vocational colleges to adapt their training to meet evolving economic, social, and public health needs. This research identifies a critical gap in the current vocational education system – the need for a more holistic approach to cultivating the professional qualities of vocational students, rather than focusing solely on technical skills. At the heart of this research is the exploration of a novel educational model. This model emphasizes a balanced development of professional qualities in vocational students, extending beyond mere practical expertise to include ethical practices, humanistic care, and effective teamwork. Grounded in educational and vocational theories, the model seeks to align the curriculum of vocational colleges with the multifaceted demands of various sectors in a modern China. Contextually, this study gains significance against the evolving landscape of China's service models, which have

undergone substantial transformations under the Healthy China strategy and relevant system reforms.

These changes have elevated public and professional expectations for skilled personnel, underscoring the urgency to reevaluate and enhance the training of vocational students. National and social developments require a large number of skilled professionals with high skills and quality. Vocational students are the future skilled workers and the reserve strength of skilled service talents in our country. One of the crucial responsibilities of vocational colleges is to cultivate the comprehensive ability of vocational students. This will enable them to adapt to the rapidly changing social and economic environment and carry out professional practice (Guo Qingyan, 2022). With the rapid development of society and the continuous deepening of the reform of industries, students in vocational colleges need to have a higher comprehensive quality. This mean that they should not only have solid theoretical knowledge and excellent practical skills but also good professional quality. They should promote excellent professional ethics, set an example, serve the people, and truly interpret the sacred mission of skilled

workers (Ren Chunxiao, 2019). China's service model and health service model have undergone significant changes under the influence of the current Healthy China strategy and the reform of the social and economic system. As a result, society and people have higher expectations for the professional quality of skilled personnel.

The rapid development of China's modern economy, the optimization and adjustment of industrial structure, the continuous improvement of people's living standards and needs, and the urgent need for vocational students to grow up and become talents pose more challenges to the talent training of higher vocational colleges. This presents an opportunity to explore the path of professional quality training for vocational students and improve their professional ability and professionalism. Vocational students are the main group engaged in skilled work in the future, and professional literacy training is crucial for students in vocational colleges. The level of vocational students' professional literacy directly affects the quality of future services, which is related to the well-being of the people and the harmonious development of society (Ruihong, 2022; Fang, 2022; Moazzami, 2025). The natural duty of skilled personnel is to serve the people.

Therefore, vocational students should have a correct understanding of their professional connotation and development trend, enhance their ideological consciousness, prioritize beneficiaries, and respect life. Professional quality training of vocational students enables them to master solid theoretical knowledge and skilled practical skills. At the same time, they are equipped with internal ethics and behavioral requirements of professions, including humanistic care, professional ethics, communication skills, team spirit, dedication, and other qualities (Zhu Liqing). The deployment of the Healthy China strategy has brought new responsibilities and missions for vocational students. Talents engaged in services are required to have higher professional quality in the future. To successfully grow from vocational students to qualified skilled personnel, it is essential to have good professional quality. This will enable the students to adapt to the continuous development of various undertakings. The training of vocational college students' professional quality is conducive to the well-being of the people under the background of Healthy China. It helps to realize the

Chinese dream. Therefore, strengthening the training of professional quality of vocational students in higher vocational colleges is essential. It will improve the comprehensive ability of vocational students and the level of services. This has important practical significance for promoting the development of vocational education and the advancement of social and economic undertakings.

The primary aim of this study is to investigate effective strategies for professional quality training in vocational colleges, thereby elevating students' overall professional capabilities. This involves a comprehensive assessment of the current training models, pinpointing deficiencies in professional literacy, and proposing integrated educational strategies. Through this research, the goal is to substantially contribute to the academic discourse on vocational education and to practically influence the teaching methodologies in vocational colleges. Ultimately, the study seeks to improve the caliber of services in line with the Healthy China initiative, thereby playing a crucial role in realizing the national aspiration for a healthier society.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Strategic background of healthy china

Health is the most vital foundation for people's happiness, a basic need for human survival and development, and a prerequisite for society's all-round advancement. The vision of "Great Health" encompasses not just physical health, but also mental, moral, and social well-being (Shuzhou, 2022). Promoting a Healthy China is a national strategy. The 19th Party Congress report clearly positions improving public health policies and pursuing a Healthy China as strategic goals. The State Council's "Opinions on Implementing Healthy China Actions" likewise stresses that public health significantly impacts national prosperity. Both the 14th Five-Year Plan and 20th Party Congress report further prioritized Healthy China policies to protect public health through strategic investments and development. Health is the foundation for economic growth, a prerequisite for social advancement, and essential for human development.

As a key metric of socialist modernization, public health must be prioritized with people, life and health

put first by the Party and society. Our Party and government have consistently emphasized people's well-being, strategically positioning public health as a top priority and enacting policies to improve livelihoods. Adhering to people-centered development, the National Health Commission has spearheaded the Healthy China initiative to enhance public health services and outcomes. Safeguarding and promoting public health is thus an enduring priority aligned with serving the people.

## 2. 2 Relevant research status

After World War II, Western countries continuously updated science and technology, accelerating industrialisation to spur rapid economic growth. They reformed vocational education models to train more highly skilled workers to meet societal and production demands. Academics proposed that vocational students should possess strong foundations, learning abilities, technical skills, and professional qualities—perspectives gradually accepted by the public (Yang, 2022). Countries have developed distinctive vocational education programmes based on national conditions, providing useful references for modernising training and cultivating vocational literacy in China's colleges. Germany's renowned dual system integrates vocational colleges and businesses with enterprises leading in professional literacy education.

Teaching objectives and content align with occupational needs through a collaborative school-enterprise framework and an alternating work-study model. Students receive enterprise guidance, completing tasks while only briefly attending colleges for theoretical learning. This productive teaching immerses students in real working environments to hone comprehensive professional skills and match vocational outcomes with societal and business demands. The dual system model demonstrates the effectiveness of embedding vocational education in real-world professional settings to produce well-rounded graduates ready for practical work. China could leverage the beneficial elements of this approach to strengthen vocational literacy and enhance the integration of school-based learning with on-the-job training. The modern British apprenticeship system emphasises the development of transferable professional qualities in students.

The UK implements a vocational qualification certificate system, requiring certification before employment. Accordingly, colleges teach job skills and cultivate professional qualities based on qualification standards, industry developments, sector norms, and role needs. This modern apprenticeship uses a learner-centred, task-based approach, designing curricula and content around projects. Assigning tasks for students to demonstrate abilities builds professional qualities and evaluates competence. Similarly, Canada's "Youth Employment and Skills Strategy" states vocational education is a shared responsibility among schools, businesses, governments, communities, and families. Governments and enterprises jointly organise vocational promotion campaigns to reinforce professional development, connecting skills training with quality education. Attention centres on providing practical social experiences through vocational colleges to complement classroom learning. This strategy strengthens talent cultivation by linking professional education with career readiness, innovation, employment, entrepreneurship, and student professionalism.

Deepening school-business cooperation and education-industry integration is also key to high-quality professional education. The concept of professionalism originated from evolving understandings of expertise. The Hippocratic Oath established early ethical standards in Western professions, while medieval England proposed societal duties. By the 20th century, American scholars emphasised humanism, professionalism, service, and integrity as core competencies. The term "professionalism" was formally introduced in 1994 by the American Board of Internal Medicine. Subsequently, in 2002, the Charter on Professionalism, jointly published by American and European physician organisations, outlined professional conduct principles around patient welfare, autonomy, and social equity. In recent years, China has vigorously developed vocational education through supportive policies to drive reforms and high-quality growth.

This has promoted more academic research on professional literacy across fields (Lei, 2021; Dongmei, 2023). Key topics include cultivating professional dispositions and habits, situational management skills, and evaluating literacy training

within personnel development programmes. Research frames professional literacy in terms of public, industry-wide, and role-specific competencies. For vocational students, scholarly attention centres on building practical knowledge, technical abilities, humanistic qualities, and professional ethics. As China expands vocational education, vocational professional literacy should adopt similar multidimensional perspectives anchored in ethical professional care.

## Research Methodology

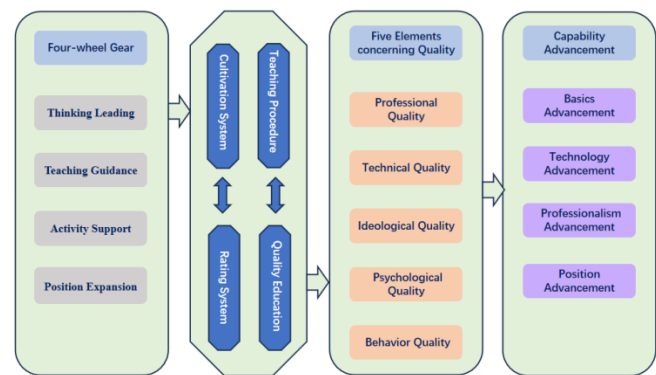
A thorough literature search was conducted using key terms including "Healthy China," "vocational education," "vocational colleges," and "professionalism in China." This search, encompassing Google and various academic databases, yielded 326 academic articles and 31 theses and reports. These sources were meticulously screened and selected based on their relevance to the study's objectives, centring around the cultivation of professionalism in vocational education within the Healthy China initiative. In each source, pivotal information about methodologies, findings, and strategies relevant to the research area was extracted and analyzed. This comprehensive literature synthesis provided a foundational understanding of the current state of vocational education in China. It informed the development of recommendations to enhance its quality and effectiveness, aligning with the Healthy China 2030 blueprint.

## Results

This research investigates the enhancement of professional skills in medical students at higher vocational colleges, guided by the Healthy China initiative. It introduces the "four-wheel drive" model

Core focus on enhancing professional quality. This involves setting clear objectives for professional literacy training and integrating professional ethics into daily teaching, thereby maximizing the educational impact of these course. Professional courses should improve the objectives of professional literacy training, clarify the content of professional literacy training, and infiltrate the cultivation of professional ethics into daily teaching work. This will effectively exert the educational function of courses (Zhu et al, 2021). A new curriculum system that

as a core method, integrating ideological guidance, teaching leadership, activity support, and continuous learning in real-world post-academic scenarios. This approach emphasizes the importance of incorporating professional literacy assessment into existing evaluation frameworks. These assessments are designed to be intricately linked with training programs and aim to develop a diverse set of literacies, including professional, skill-based, ideological, psychological, and behavioral. The overarching goal is to markedly improve students' foundational, technical, professional, and job-related competencies, ultimately raising the standard of medical and health services.



**Figure 1.** Training framework of professional quality of medical students in higher vocational colleges

## Discussion

### 6.1 Cultivate Professional Belief and Enhance Professional Ethics

Improving vocational education quality necessitates prioritizing professional quality education. Course construction should aim at talent training with a

merges professional knowledge with basic science, humanities, and social sciences should be developed, employing integrated teaching methods to expand students' perspectives and establish interdisciplinary connections (Sheiladevi, S., & Rahman, A., 2016). Interactive teaching methods like group discussions, role simulations, and case analyses should be employed to make learning engaging and improve students' communication skills, contributing to their professional literacy.

An evaluation system that assesses professional



knowledge, practical skills, and professional ethics is essential for fostering professional capabilities. Utilizing network resources and new media platforms like WeChat for educational content delivery, along with extracurricular activities, can enhance participatory learning. Activities should also focus on building integrity, patriotism, and professional ethics, aligning with the cultural and social ethos of China, thus deepening students' professional quality.

**5.2 Guiding Students Towards Fulfilling Career Paths Through Holistic Education**

Effective career planning involves helping students to understand their environment and themselves, setting clear career development goals, and taking proactive steps towards career realization. From the outset, vocational colleges should provide clear guidance on career direction and planning, fostering a positive career awareness and improving employability. Recognizing that professional ethics and a compassionate disposition are as crucial as practical skills, the curriculum should integrate these elements to cultivate future professionals who are both skilled and empathetic. As the social economy and technologies evolve, guiding students in establishing correct academic, professional, and employment perspectives becomes crucial. This includes enhancing legal awareness, promoting an artisan spirit, and fostering a sense of responsibility towards society, thereby improving personal morality and dedication to their profession.

### 5.3 Improve the skill level and build key career capabilities

Enhancing the professional quality of vocational students requires a comprehensive approach, focusing on responsibility, moral character, theoretical knowledge, and practical skills. Vocational colleges must aim to produce students who respect science, possess advanced practical skills, and demonstrate competencies in practical application, communication, and stress management. Practical education should be strengthened, providing ample opportunities for social and practical experiences, with rigorous pre-practical training to ensure students are well-prepared for the work environment. This approach should aim to continuously improve professional capabilities, aligning with the goals of the Healthy China initiative and enhancing the overall well-being of the population. By integrating theory with practical

application and fostering attributes like compassion, patience, and empathy, vocational students can develop a strong professional identity and ethical grounding, essential for their future roles in their respective sectors.

## Conclusion

The success of the Healthy China initiative critically hinges on the cultivation of superior talent, underpinned by a people-centric philosophy that champions "co-building and sharing for universal well-being." This ethos demands rigorous educational standards for skilled professionals, recognizing that the journey of skilled workers begins in their formative years as students. These individuals are poised to become pivotal agents in propelling societal advancements. The level of professionalism instilled in vocational students is a key determinant of their future efficacy in professional practice, with significant repercussions for the broader spectrum of societal well-being and harmony. In an era increasingly attentive to population well-being enhancement, amplifying the focus on vocational education is essential. This strategic emphasis is not merely beneficial for the evolution of vocational education but is also vital for cultivating a cadre of skilled professionals capable of addressing the nuanced demands of society. Moreover, it plays a pivotal role in driving the sustainable advancement of various sectors. Elevating the skills and ethical standards of China's forthcoming skilled professionals is paramount. Their ability to integrate professional competence with compassionate care will be instrumental in fostering stable, prosperous communities and society. This holistic approach to vocational education is indispensable for realizing the ambitious vision of the Healthy China initiative and ensuring a resilient ecosystem for future generations.

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