

A Study on the Construction Paths for a Positive Academic Ethos in Universities under the “Five-Education Paralleled” Policy

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Abstract: Academic ethos is the very foundation of a university and a key metric of its educational quality. Under the guidance of the “Five-Education Integration” policy, although the construction of academic ethos in universities has been incorporated into core work, prominent issues persist, such as the fragmentation of the five educational elements, an excessive emphasis on intellectual education, and scattered construction measures. Supported by the Marxist theory of comprehensive human development, collaborative governance theory, and educational evaluation theory, this study deeply analyzes the internal correlation between the “Five Educations” and the construction of academic ethos, sorts out the practical dilemmas in their current integration process, and explores specific construction paths.

Keywords: Five-education paralleled; University academic ethos construction; Fostering virtue through education; Collaborative education

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1. Introduction

In the new journey of building a modern socialist country in all respects, education, as a fundamental plan for the nation and the Party, always has the fundamental task of fostering virtue and nurturing talent. “Five-Education Integration”, as a core concept for deepening education and teaching reform, is not only a breakthrough in traditional education models but also sets new contemporary requirements for the construction of academic ethos in universities.

Academic ethos is the foundation of a university’s operation and the soul of its development, centrally embodying the university’s spirit and core values. It is not only a scholarly and learning atmosphere jointly shaped by faculty and students but also a key benchmark for measuring the effectiveness of education and the quality of talent cultivation. Its construction effectiveness directly relates to whether the goal of the “Three-All Approach” (all personnel, all processes, all dimensions) can be realized^[1]. A positive academic ethos can stimulate students’ intrinsic motivation for learning, improve the quality of talent cultivation, and also cultivate campus civilization and promote the connotative development of universities. Deeply integrating the “Five-Education Integration” concept into the construction of academic ethos, leading value orientation through moral education, consolidating the academic foundation through intellectual education, strengthening

physical and mental support through physical education, cultivating humanistic character through aesthetic education, and tempering practical ability through labor education, to build a multi-dimensional, synergistic academic ethos ecosystem has become both the inherent logic and the imperative of higher-education reform in the new era.

Currently, although universities in China generally regard the construction of academic ethos as key to their operation, they still encounter many structural difficulties in the practice of deep integration of the “Five Educations”. Some universities continue the traditional inertia of “emphasizing intellectual education while neglecting physical, aesthetic, and labor education”, with academic ethos construction mostly revolving around academic performance, leading to the inability of the five educations to form a joint educational force; other universities lack long-term planning for academic ethos construction, often resorting to short-term, campaign-style measures. When faced with the impact of campus subcultures like “lying flat” and “involution”, they often fall into passivity due to inadequate response mechanisms^[2].

Against this backdrop, exploring the construction of a positive academic ethos in universities from the perspective of “Five-Education Integration” holds significant theoretical and practical importance. Although existing research has separately discussed the connotations of the “Five Educations” and the paths for academic ethos construction, systematic research in the intersectional field of the two is still in an exploratory stage, suffering from shortcomings in theoretical construction^[3-5]. Simultaneously, by focusing on the current deficiencies in synergy and integrity in academic ethos construction, it explores operable path solutions to provide specific guidance for universities in optimizing the top-level design of academic ethos construction, helping to solve practical problems such as the disconnection between teaching and educating, and students’ insufficient intrinsic motivation for learning^[6,7].

2. Core concept definitions and theoretical foundations

“Five-Education Integration” is the core of the educational policy with Chinese characteristics in the new era. It is not a simple superposition of moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor education, but an organic whole aimed at the fundamental goal of “promoting the comprehensive development of people”, emphasizing that each education dimension mutually permeates the others to form a synergistic whole. A positive academic ethos in universities is a core component of campus culture, a concentrated expression of the common learning attitudes, behavioral habits, and value pursuits formed by all faculty and students in long-term educational, teaching, and academic activities.

From a theoretical perspective, the construction of a positive academic ethos in universities under the “Five-Education Integration” framework needs to be supported by three core theories.

The Marxist “theory of comprehensive human development” is the fundamental guide. This theory holds that human development is the unified development of physical and mental faculties, morality and aesthetics, labor ability, and comprehensive qualities, opposing the fragmentation and one-sidedness of human development. “Five-Education Integration” is the concrete embodiment of this theory in the educational practice of the new era.

Collaborative governance theory is an important methodology. This theory emphasizes the formation of governance synergy to solve complex problems by integrating diverse actors, coordinating multi-party resources, and improving collaborative mechanisms. It requires leveraging collaborative governance theory to build cross-departmental and cross-field collaboration mechanisms, break down resource barriers and departmental divisions, and ensure that the “Five Education” elements can be systematically integrated into all links of academic ethos construction^[8].

Educational evaluation theory is the key guidance. This theory requires universities, in their evaluation of academic ethos, to include the value expression of moral education, the effectiveness of physical training, the level of aesthetic literacy, the practical results of labor education, and the academic performance of intellectual education into the evaluation scope. Through scientific evaluation, it guides faculty and students to attach importance to the synergy of the “Five Educations”, thereby promoting the formation and consolidation of a positive academic ethos^[9].

3. The internal correlation between “five-education integration” and university academic ethos construction

“Five-Education Integration”, as the core concept of educational reform in the new era, has a profound internal correlation with the construction of academic ethos in universities, the two are highly isomorphic in their educational goals, both pointing to the realization of the fundamental task of “fostering virtue and nurturing talent”.

From the value dimension, moral education, as the foremost of the “Five Educations”, provides direction and guidance for the construction of academic ethos. The education on ideals and beliefs and academic moral norms it contains can guide students to establish a value orientation of “learning for national development and social progress”, fundamentally reversing the utilitarian tendency of learning motivation and solidifying the spiritual foundation of academic ethos construction; intellectual education, as the core carrier of academic ethos construction, directly shapes students’ learning behavior of “diligent learning, good thinking, truth-seeking, and earnest practice” through professional knowledge transmission and academic ability cultivation^[10].

From the dimension of functional complementarity, physical education provides physical and mental guarantees for academic ethos construction. It extends the academic ethos from a “mere pursuit of knowledge” to a “comprehensive development with humanistic warmth”, preventing the academic ethos from falling into a rigid and mechanized trap; labor education, as the link between theory and practice, allows students to deepen their understanding of knowledge and enhance their ability to solve practical problems through forms of labor such as professional practice and social service^[11]. At the same time, it cultivates a learning attitude of “respecting labor and being down-to-earth”, addressing the dilemma of “emphasizing theory over practice” in traditional academic ethos^[12].

From the perspective of synergistic coexistence, the driving force of “Five-Education Integration” on academic ethos construction is not a linear superposition of elements, but a networked ecological effect of mutual penetration and mutual empowerment (as shown in **Figure 1**). This ultimately achieves dual empowerment and synergistic efficiency between “Five-Education Integration” and academic ethos construction, building a university educational ecosystem where “comprehensive education” and “positive academic ethos” resonate in unison^[13].



Figure 1. Synergistic ecosystem for talent cultivation through “five-education integration”.

4. Current status and problems in university academic ethos construction

With the continuous advancement of the “Five-Education Integration” educational policy, the construction of academic ethos in universities has gradually broken through the limitations of the traditional singular intellectual education orientation and is exploring a multi-dimensional, synergistic educational direction. Most universities have recognized the core value of “Five-Education” integration for shaping academic ethos: At the moral education level, they attempt to strengthen value guidance through carriers such as “Curriculum Ideology and Politics” (Kecheng Sise) and thematic

education, aiming to solidify the spiritual foundation of academic ethos construction; in the field of intellectual education, they promote the connection between knowledge transmission and innovation ability cultivation through platforms like scientific research training and disciplinary competitions, which has, to a certain extent, activated students' enthusiasm for academic exploration; the educational functions of physical, aesthetic, and labor education have also received preliminary attention^[14]. This aligns with the academic judgment that “under the background of ‘Five-Education Integration,’ the four-dimensional dynamic structure of academic ethos construction is gradually forming”^[15].

However, when examined against the requirements of deep integration of the “Five Educations”, current university academic ethos construction still faces many structural and deep-seated problems, which have been widely revealed in academic research^[6,7].

Lack of holistic synergy in the “Five Educations”. Most universities have not yet broken free from the inertia of “intellectual education dominance”. Teaching activities are concentrated on knowledge transmission and fail to effectively excavate the values of physical health, aesthetic elements, and labor practice within professional courses. This results in the nurturing and supporting roles of physical, aesthetic, and labor education on the academic ethos being unable to be fully exerted, forming a governance dilemma of “single-point breakthroughs but overall imbalance”. As shown in **Figure 2**, the singular nature of the evaluation system is the key root cause of this pattern evaluation standards centered on intellectual education indicators such as GPA and university admission rates have relegated physical, aesthetic, and labor education to “marginal links” in academic ethos construction.

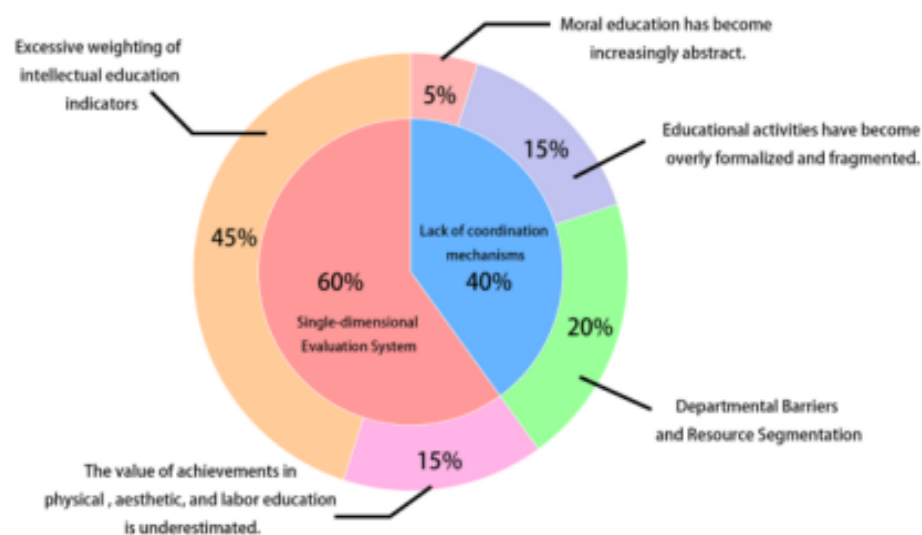


Figure 2. Challenges faced by the integration of “five educations” in current university academic ethos construction.

The guiding role of moral education has become abstract. Some universities fail to organically integrate moral education with academic cultivation. They either conduct moral education only through specialized ideological and political courses or completely ignore value guidance in professional teaching, leading to the weakening of moral education's spiritual support for the academic ethos.

Insufficient depth in the integration of physical, aesthetic, and labor education. Practices related to physical, aesthetic, and labor education mostly exist as scattered activities. Their educational effectiveness is often weakened due to uneven resource allocation and the form a listic nature of activities, failing to be truly internalized into students' learning habits and scholarly attitudes.

Absence of synergistic mechanism guarantees. The mechanisms required for “Five-Education” integration, such as cross-departmental collaboration, resource sharing, and evaluation incentives are not yet sound.

5. Path construction for a positive academic ethos in universities under “five-education integration”

The cultivation of a positive academic ethos requires the deep integration of the core values and practical requirements of moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor education to form a unified, organic educational force, pushing the construction of academic ethos from external regulation to internal consciousness. As shown in **Figure 3**, this path system is a “Five-in-One” synergistic model.

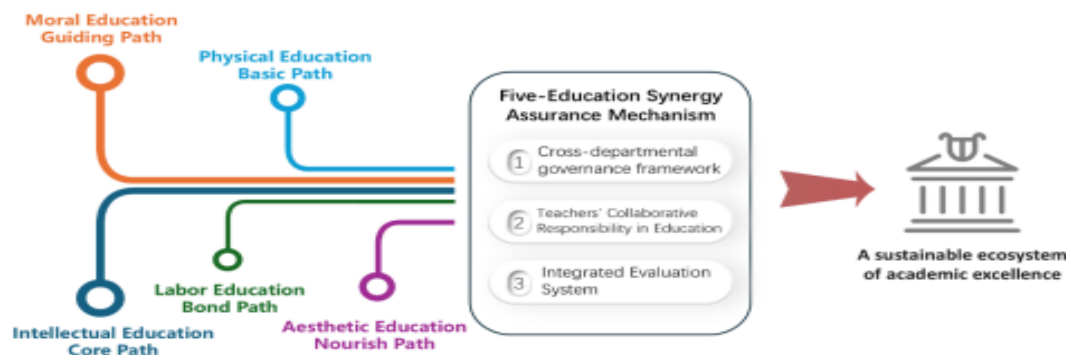


Figure 3. The “five-in-one” synergistic path model for building a positive academic ethos under “five-education integration”.

5.1. Leading with moral education to solidify the value foundation of academic ethos construction

As the soul of “Five-Education Integration”, the core value of moral education lies in providing directional guidance and spiritual motivation for academic ethos construction, using value guidance to solve problems such as students’ utilitarian learning motives and weakened ideals and beliefs. This can be advanced in two aspects: First, deepen value guidance and education on ideals and beliefs. Universities need to use “Curriculum Ideology and Politics” as a starting point to promote the deep integration of ideological and political education with the characteristics of professional disciplines. Relying on “one-stop” student community education platforms, they should carry out thematic open classes on faith, such as “Inheriting the Revolutionary Spirit and Bravely Undertaking the Youth Mission”, and organize advocacy activities like “Great Country Craftsmen Enter Campus”. Through the stories of model workers and craftsmen achieving success and serving the country with their skills, students are guided to closely link their personal studies with national needs and industry development. Simultaneously, build a three-tiered ideological guidance system featuring “college coordination—teacher leadership—role-model students”. Second, strengthen the academic integrity and behavioral norms system.

5.2. Centering on intellectual education to enhance the professional quality of academic ethos construction

As the core carrier of academic ethos construction, universities need to transition from “knowledge transmission” to “ability cultivation” through teaching reform, research integration, and precise support, building an academic ecosystem of “loving learning, being good at thinking, seeking truth, and innovating”. Specific paths include: First, deepen innovation in teaching content and methods. Second, construct an integrated system of “teaching—research—competition”. Increase the openness of key laboratories and research platforms to undergraduates, implement the “Undergraduate Research Training Program”, support students in participating in faculty research projects, and encourage the formation of interdisciplinary science and innovation teams; simultaneously, rely on disciplinary competitions to build an “promoting learning through competition” platform, combining competition requirements with course objectives, and guiding students to enhance their innovation and teamwork abilities during competition preparation. Third, improve precise academic support services. Build a full-chain support system of “learning situation diagnosis—early warning intervention—tracking feedback” based

on data analysis.

5.3. Grounding in physical education to enhance the physical and mental support for academic ethos construction

Physical education provides physiological and psychological guarantees for sustained and efficient learning by tempering willpower and cultivating team spirit. Its core lies in internalizing physical exercise into students' conscious habits and lifestyles. This can be approached from two aspects: On one hand, build a diversified system of physical education courses and activities. In addition, normalize activities like "morning run check-ins", "fun sports meets", and "campus hiking check-ins". Combine physical exercise with community cultural construction, for example, by forming "sports groups" based on dormitories to create an atmosphere of mutual assistance in exercise. On the other hand, establish a process-oriented physical education evaluation and incentive mechanism. Change the tendency in traditional PE evaluation to "emphasize final tests over daily process". Incorporate indicators such as morning exercise participation rates, sports club activity duration, and physical health standard compliance progress into the student comprehensive quality evaluation, assigning a certain credit weight.

5.4. Nurturing with aesthetic education to enhance the humanistic literacy of academic ethos construction

Aesthetic education enriches the spiritual connotation of the academic ethos through aesthetic experience and cultural immersion, cultivating students' innovative thinking and humanistic sentiment, and achieving the educational effect of "supplementing virtue with aesthetics, transforming people with aesthetics". This can be promoted through two main paths: First, promote the deep integration of aesthetic education and professional courses. At the same time, invite experts from the art field to give special lectures such as "Intangible Cultural Heritage and Aesthetic Innovation". Second, create an immersive campus aesthetic education atmosphere. By transforming aesthetic skills into social services, deepen the understanding of "beauty and responsibility" and thereby cultivate a learning attitude of "seeking truth, admiring beauty, and striving for excellence".

5.5. Bonding with labor education to strengthen the practical orientation of academic ethos construction

As the bridge connecting theory and practice, the core value of labor education lies in cultivating students' pragmatic work style and sense of responsibility through labor practice, addressing the academic ethos deviation of "emphasizing theory over practice, knowledge over skills". This can be advanced in two aspects: On one hand, build a "professional + labor education" characteristic practice system. Design differentiated labor practice content according to the professional characteristics of different disciplines, allowing labor education and professional learning to be linked. On the other hand, improve the labor education evaluation and incentive mechanism. Formulate "Detailed Rules for Evaluating Student Labor Literacy", converting indicators like labor practice duration, quality of results, and reflection reports into quantifiable "labor credits" and incorporating them into the comprehensive quality evaluation system; promote selection activities like "Labor Star" and "Practice Expert", strengthening positive incentives through forms like "labor achievement exhibitions" and "practice experience sharing sessions"; at the same time, establish labor literacy files as an important reference for awards, evaluations, and internship recommendations, guiding students to form a learning style of "respecting labor and being diligent in practice".

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