

# Investigation, Analysis, and Countermeasure Research on the Current Situation of Humanistic Quality Education for Vocational Undergraduate Nursing Students

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**Abstract:** With the advancement of healthcare services, the humanistic quality education of nursing students has gained increasing importance. Vocational undergraduate nursing education serves as a vital pathway for cultivating high-quality nursing professionals who possess technical skills and demonstrate strong humanistic care abilities. This study employs surveys and interviews to examine the current state of humanistic quality education among students of the “Xiangya Nursing Class” at Guiyang Healthcare Vocational College. By identifying existing challenges, such as insufficient integration of humanistic education with professional training and a lack of immersive humanistic atmosphere, this paper proposes targeted strategies. These include enhancing humanistic awareness, optimizing curriculum design, and strengthening practical teaching. The objective is to elevate the humanistic quality education of vocational undergraduate nursing students and foster well-rounded nursing professionals.

**Keywords:** Vocational undergraduate; Nursing major; Humanistic quality; Survey

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## 1. Introduction

Humanistic quality education is integral to shaping well-rounded nursing professionals, as it directly influences their ethical standards, interpersonal communication, innovation, and ability to provide compassionate care. “The extent to which nurses possess good humanistic qualities depends on the humanistic education they receive both in school and during clinical practice” <sup>[1]</sup>. However, there are some challenges in the humanistic quality education for nursing students. These include insufficient understanding of humanistic education and a lack of humanistic care skills, which negatively impact the quality of nursing training. “In the face of issues

such as the formalization of medical humanities education in universities, the weak integration of professional and humanistic education, and the emphasis on knowledge transmission over humanistic practice, the tasks of medical humanities education in universities must first be clearly defined”<sup>[2]</sup>.

## **2. Research background and methodology**

### **2.1. Research background**

“The essential nature of medicine inherently includes humanistic qualities,” and the “Notice on Issuing the Action Plan to Further Improve Nursing Services (2023–2025)” released by the National Health Commission in 2023 emphasizes the importance of enhancing humanistic care<sup>[3]</sup>. Nurses should strengthen their awareness of proactive service and humanistic care, continuously deepen the “patient-centered” philosophy, and improve the quality of services. In terms of cultivating nursing professionals in vocational undergraduate programs, it is not enough for students to merely master nursing knowledge and proficient clinical skills. They should also possess strong humanistic qualities, a high sense of social responsibility, and professional ethics. Nurses must be able to apply specific communication skills to serve patients based on their individual needs, truly understand, care for, and meet the diverse and multi-layered needs of patients. To cultivate high-level, technically skilled nursing talent, Guiyang Healthcare Vocational College, in collaboration with Central South University, has established the “Xiangya Nursing Class” to nurture high-quality nursing professionals capable of meeting the demands of the new era.

### **2.2. Research methods**

To accurately reflect the current status of humanistic quality education for students and provide relevant recommendations for decision-makers, this study follows a problem-solving approach that identifies issues from students and seeks solutions. The research focuses on the students of the “Xiangya Nursing Class” as the study subjects. By reviewing relevant literature, the study examines the theoretical foundations of humanistic quality education and related research findings both domestically and internationally. A survey on the current status of humanistic quality education for nursing students in vocational undergraduate programs was designed. In addition, interviews were conducted with educators and students to understand their awareness and views on humanistic quality education. The survey was conducted using the Questionnaire Star platform, and an anonymous method was employed. It was distributed to 39 students from the 2023 cohort of the “Xiangya Nursing Class” at Guiyang Health and Care Vocational College. A total of 39 questionnaires were returned, consisting of 11 male students and 28 female students, resulting in a 100% response rate. The collected data was reviewed and cross-checked, and SPSS software was used for data analysis.

## **3. Data analysis of humanistic quality education for students of “Xiangya Nursing Class”**

### **3.1. Importance of humanistic education as perceived by students**

The data shows that when asked about the “necessity of humanistic quality education for nursing students,” 56.41% of students considered it “very necessary,” while 33.33% believed it “necessary.” This demonstrates the consensus among students regarding the necessity of humanistic quality education, reflecting their positive attitude and profound understanding of its importance. Nursing is not only a science but also an art. It requires

healthcare professionals to not only master technical skills but also understand and care for patients, providing human-centered care. “The humanistic spirit is the cell and flesh of medicine”<sup>[4]</sup>. Humanistic quality education is a key pathway to developing these nontechnical skills in nursing staff. It can help students better understand the emotional needs of patients, enhance communication skills, and foster a sense of professional responsibility and empathy — fundamental elements in providing high-quality nursing services. Moreover, with the shift in healthcare models and the increasing demands on nursing work, humanistic quality education in nursing is receiving more attention. The humanistic qualities of nursing students are not only crucial for their individual career development but also impact the overall image and quality of the nursing profession.

### **3.2. Insufficient integration of humanistic quality education with professional training**

Regarding the current integration of humanistic quality education with professional education, 43.59% of respondents indicated that it is occasionally integrated, while 2.56% said it is not integrated at all. However, 92.31% of respondents believe that humanistic quality education needs to be integrated with professional education. “Nursing students are in a highly malleable stage, making it a critical period for forming humanistic qualities. How to cultivate highly qualified nursing students is currently a key research task in nursing education” and “Combining humanistic spirit with medical knowledge and skills can help achieve the goal of enhancing medical students’ job competency”<sup>[5,6]</sup>. Based on this, the school should continue to strengthen the integration of humanistic quality education with professional education to enhance students’ overall qualities during the learning process. At the same time, the school should pay attention to the student groups that feel the integration is less frequent, understand their needs and expectations, and further optimize the allocation of educational resources to provide stronger support for the students’ overall development.

### **3.3. Weak atmosphere of humanistic quality education**

The statistical results regarding the “humanistic atmosphere in the school” show that 30.77% of respondents rated it as “average,” while 20.56% felt it was “not strong.” Regarding the ways to acquire humanistic knowledge and improve humanistic qualities, 87.18% of students chose campus activities. The reason campus activities are considered the primary way to enhance humanistic quality is that they are diverse in form and rich in content. Through participating in campus activities, students can not only broaden their horizons and increase their knowledge but also develop practical skills such as teamwork, organizational coordination, and social interaction. This suggests that schools should fully consider the characteristics of medical schools when designing extracurricular activities, taking into account the actual development needs of students. By offering a variety of quality development activities, schools can help enhance students’ humanistic qualities through practical experiences.

### **3.4. Need to enrich the humanities education curriculum**

Regarding the availability of humanistic education courses at the school, the data shows that more than 51.28% of students believe that humanistic courses are offered too infrequently. In particular, “humanistic core courses” that are tailored to nursing students’ actual needs and effectively stimulate their interest and engagement are still lacking. This indicates that there is significant room for improvement in the current offering of humanistic education courses. “Humanistic education courses have not been consistently integrated from the time students enter the school until they graduate. The scheduling of class hours often only scratches the surface, with some

universities merely offering humanistic courses as a formality rather than truly emphasizing them,” schools should focus on students’ actual needs, conduct thorough research, and enrich the offering of humanistic education courses to promote the students’ humanistic qualities <sup>[7]</sup>.

### **3.5. Path analysis of strengthening humanistic education in schools**

The data shows that among the key areas where schools need to strengthen humanistic education, the five options — creating a strong humanistic atmosphere, offering humanistic education courses and lectures, integrating humanistic education into professional courses, enriching humanistic education activities, and incorporating humanistic education into internships and practical training — each received support from over 80% of respondents. This highlights that these are the crucial measures for enhancing humanistic education in schools. Among these, creating a strong humanistic atmosphere received 97.44% support.

Campus culture construction is an important part of ideological and political education in higher medical institutions. Schools should fully leverage the uniqueness of medical campus culture to build a campus culture with distinctive medical humanism. Without a strong humanistic atmosphere, a lack of diverse humanistic courses, an academic environment that encourages humanistic inquiry, and a lack of varied cultural activities, students will find it difficult to receive comprehensive humanistic quality education.

## **4. The countermeasures and suggestions to strengthen the humanistic quality education of nursing students in vocational undergraduate programs**

### **4.1. Emphasize humanistic awareness and enhance student autonomy.**

Humanistic nursing is a practice aimed at alleviating patient suffering, promoting recovery, maintaining physical and mental health, preserving the value of life and personal dignity, and improving the quality of life through professional humanistic care activities <sup>[8]</sup>. Schools should guide students to focus on this aspect to ignite their intrinsic motivation to enhance their humanistic qualities. To achieve this goal, schools should employ various methods such as curriculum design and teacher guidance, using classroom teaching, case analysis, role-playing, and other teaching strategies to help students experience the pain of patients, understand their needs, and recognize the importance of humanistic care in nursing practice. “Role model education is one of the common and effective methods in college students’ ideological and political education” <sup>[9]</sup>. Schools should invite outstanding alumni to share work-related cases, helping students realize that excellent nurses do more than just perform technical procedures — they also address emotional, social, and cultural aspects of care. Furthermore, inviting experienced nursing professionals from the front lines of clinical practice to serve as part-time teachers and share real-world cases with students will help bridge the gap between theory and practice. This approach encourages students to integrate humanistic qualities into their practical experience. By raising students’ awareness of and value for humanistic qualities, schools can inspire students to take initiative in their learning, shaping them into well-rounded nursing professionals with comprehensive caregiving abilities.

### **4.2. Reasonably design courses and establish a humanistic education curriculum system**

“Medical education that lacks humanistic education is incomplete education” <sup>[10]</sup>. “The deeper aspects of any profession lie in its humanistic ‘reason’” <sup>[11]</sup>. Classroom teaching is the main battlefield of school education, and its role in promoting students’ humanistic awareness should be re-examined. “To accomplish the fundamental task of fostering virtue and cultivating individuals, integrating humanistic education with

professional education is the essential approach”<sup>[12]</sup>. Courses such as Nursing Humanistic Development, Health Assessment, SP Comprehensive Practice, and Nursing Ethics can be offered to help students systematically learn humanistic knowledge and enhance their humanistic qualities. For example, the Nursing Humanistic Development course should be based on the needs of the nursing profession, closely integrating humanistic spirit with humanistic knowledge and skills, creating a teaching framework to improve nurses’ humanistic qualities. The course content should include humanistic development, humanistic care, basic aesthetics, nursing etiquette, interpersonal relationships, communication skills, and scientific thinking. This course would reflect the humanistic demands of the nursing profession and the application of humanistic knowledge in the nursing field, helping to comprehensively improve students’ humanistic qualities. The SP Comprehensive Practice course uses standardized patients (SP) to play the roles of patients, assess the individuals being tested, and provide feedback. The teaching roles include SP trainers, SPs, and SP managers. The course employs clinical scenario-based experimental teaching, focused lectures, appropriate examples, group discussions, role-playing, and in-class exercises to enhance students’ communication with patients and their ability to provide humanistic care. Through feedback from SP patients, students can more realistically understand the issues that arise during nursing procedures, which helps prevent nurse-patient conflicts and enables students to recognize their shortcomings. This process significantly improves students’ comprehensive abilities and qualities.

“Incorporating classical Chinese works such as *The Great Learning*, *The Doctrine of the Mean*, *The Analects*, and *Mencius* into the curriculum, and organically integrating humanistic knowledge with scientific knowledge, will continuously enrich medical students’ spiritual world and strengthen their spiritual power”<sup>[13]</sup>.

### **4.3. Strengthen practical teaching and enhance students’ comprehensive qualities**

“The cultivation of humanistic care ability is a process of perception, experience, and practice”<sup>[14]</sup>. Practical teaching can help students combine theoretical knowledge with actual work, thus deepening their understanding of humanistic care and improving their ability to solve practical problems. Students can be arranged to participate in activities such as professional internships, community service, and clinical practice.

Nursing internships allow students to experience the fragility of life in a hospital setting, witness the challenges of nursing work, and learn to observe while empathizing with patients’ suffering. Community service offers nursing students a deeper understanding of the health needs of community residents, providing relevant nursing services and enhancing communication with community members, thereby improving students’ humanistic care abilities. Clinical internships enable students to directly engage with patients, experience the hardships and challenges of nursing work, and apply their nursing knowledge and skills in real-world settings, thus enhancing their practical skills. Through practical teaching, students can not only improve their humanistic qualities but also develop their professional skills. In practice teaching, students must adhere to professional standards, respect patients, care for them, and maintain effective communication and collaboration with healthcare professionals, patients, and their families to solve problems together. To ensure the effectiveness of practical teaching, schools should strengthen cooperation with hospitals, communities, and other institutions to establish stable practical teaching bases. Additionally, schools should develop comprehensive practical teaching plans and evaluation systems to ensure that students receive comprehensive training and improvement during their practice.

“Medicine is the study of humanity, and the way of medicine emphasizes human care”<sup>[15]</sup>. Vocational undergraduate nursing education should not only focus on students’ professional skills development but also

emphasize the enhancement of their humanistic qualities and autonomy, cultivating high-quality nursing professionals for the future.

## Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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