

Cultivating Cosmetics Talents through the Holistic Education Approach: A Case Study of Guangdong Pharmaceutical University

Ping Zhao^{1,2*}, Yue Yu^{1,2}, Wenjie Liu^{1,2}, Haiying Zhan^{1,2}, Baofu Zhu^{1,2}, Hua Cao^{1,2}, Limin Zhao^{1,2*}

¹School of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, Guangdong Pharmaceutical University, Education Mega Centre, Guangzhou 510006, China

²College of Cosmetics Industry, Guangdong Pharmaceutical University, Zhongshan 528458, China

*Corresponding authors: Pingzhao (gdpu.edu.cn), Limin Zhao (zhaolimin@gdpu.edu)

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Abstract: With the rapid growth of the cosmetics industry, the demand for diversified and interdisciplinary talent is increasing. However, a structural mismatch persists between current educational approaches and industry needs, particularly in aligning with the holistic education model, which emphasizes moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor development. To bridge this gap, Guangdong Pharmaceutical University has implemented a comprehensive reform of its holistic education system, aiming to cultivate well-rounded cosmetics professionals. Key initiatives include integrating professional ethics into moral education, strengthening the integration of theory and practice in intellectual training, emphasizing skin health management in physical education, enhancing aesthetic appreciation and creative thinking, and promoting labor spirit and practical skills through hands-on experiences. These reform efforts have yielded significant results, contributing high-quality talent to the cosmetics industry and offering a valuable model for other institutions seeking to align education with industry demands.

Keywords: Cosmetics industry; Talent cultivation; Holistic education approach; Guangdong Pharmaceutical University

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1. Introduction

The rapid development of the cosmetics industry has created an urgent demand for diversified and composite talents. However, there is a structural mismatch between the current education system and industry demands, especially in terms of the holistic education approach. Traditional moral education is disconnected from industry-specific professional ethics norms, intellectual education emphasizes technology while neglecting ethics and sustainable development, and physical, aesthetic, and labor education are often marginalized, resulting in graduates struggling to meet the industry's demand for composite talents ^[1].

To address these issues, Guangdong Pharmaceutical University has implemented a comprehensive holistic education reform. In moral education, it promotes Chinese cosmetics culture through daily teaching and

internships, fostering students' patriotic sentiments ^[2]. In intellectual education, it strengthens the combination of theory and practice, enhancing students' innovative and practical skills through university-enterprise cooperation. Physical, aesthetic, and labor education integrate into professional courses and skills training, fostering students' overall quality. These reform measures have achieved significant results in talent cultivation, providing a reference for other educational institutions.

2. Current issues in cosmetic talent cultivation

With the booming global cosmetics industry, the demand for professionals is showing an unprecedented trend towards diversification and compositeness. This trend poses new challenges to cosmetics talent cultivation, particularly highlighted by the structural mismatch between the education system and industry demands.

At the moral education level, the traditional ideological and political education model struggles to meet the actual needs of the cosmetics industry. Course content lacks organic connection and integration with industry-specific professional ethics norms, such as ingredient safety ethics and advertising compliance. This disconnect makes it difficult for students to convert moral cognition into specific professional behavioral norms, affecting their future professional ethics practice in the industry.

In intellectual education, the existing model exhibits a clear structural imbalance. Education overly focuses on training in hard skills such as formulation technology, neglecting the cultivation of soft qualities like product ethics and sustainable development concepts ^[3]. This emphasis on technology over ethics aligns poorly with the cosmetics industry's requirements for high-quality development. The cosmetics industry not only needs technicians proficient in formulations and production processes but also requires them to have a deep understanding of product safety, environmental protection, and social responsibility.

The marginalization of physical, aesthetic, and labor education is equally severe, with most institutions showing inadequate course design and resource investment in these areas. Aesthetic education courses often remain at the level of traditional art appreciation, failing to effectively combine with the professional aesthetic abilities required in the cosmetics industry, such as color perception and packaging design. Labor education is often simplified to laboratory operations, lacking cognition training in product lifecycle management. Physical education courses are mostly limited to basic physical training, disconnected from the cosmetics industry's demands for image management and etiquette training. This segmented education model makes it difficult for graduates to adapt to the industry's demand for composite talents, particularly in emerging fields such as product innovation and green production, where graduates' ability shortcomings are particularly evident.

To address this issue, it is necessary to construct a new talent cultivation system that integrates the holistic education approach. This system integrates professional ethics education into professional courses, makes aesthetic literacy part of product development practice, and lets the spirit of labor permeate the entire skills training process. Through this integration, a new talent cultivation model integrating knowledge, abilities, and qualities can be formed, better meeting the cosmetics industry's demand for diversified and composite talents.

3. Guangdong Pharmaceutical University's holistic education measures

Guangdong Pharmaceutical University's holistic education reform aims to cultivate innovative, composite, and applied cosmetics talents, shaping them from the dimensions of emotional, knowledge, and ability goals. Relying on the guidance of party building and ideological and political education in the classroom, it achieves emotional goals by fostering national brand development, cultivating cosmetics talents with strong national

pride, high aesthetic taste, and vigorous creativity. It reaches knowledge goals through AI empowerment, university-enterprise-hospital joint teaching, and interdisciplinary integration, nurturing talents with extensive knowledge and comprehensive cosmetics-related skills ^[4]. It attains ability goals through project-oriented learning, combining theory with practice, and actively participating in frontline labor in enterprises, cultivating talents who can solve practical problems in the cosmetics industry, with a down-to-earth and hardworking attitude. Centered on this goal, Guangdong Pharmaceutical University has successfully constructed a comprehensive talent cultivation system for cosmetics talents that promotes the integrated development of moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor education as shown in **Figure 1** below.

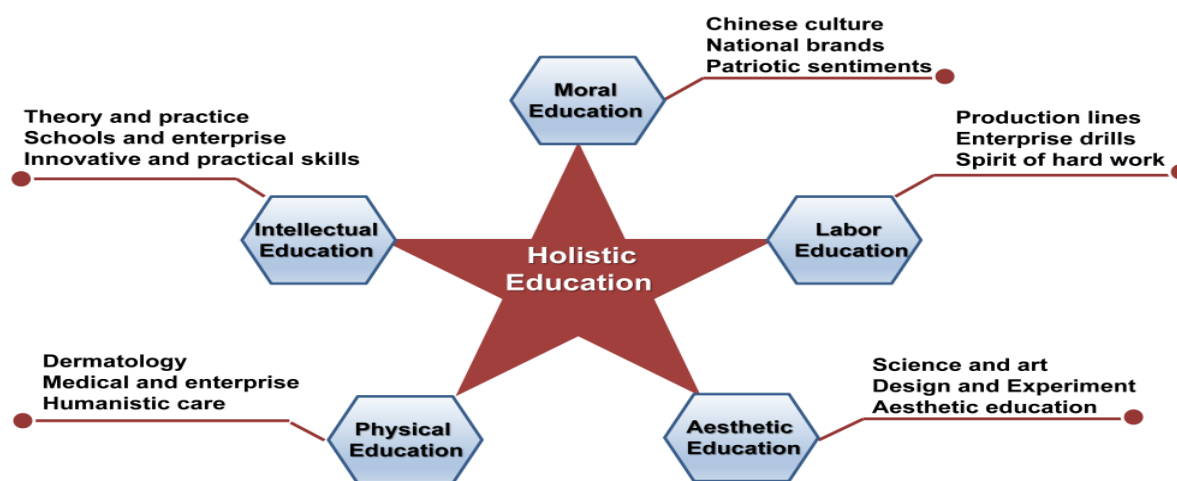


Figure 1. Guangdong Pharmaceutical University's holistic education measures.

3.1. Moral education

In our moral education implementation strategies, we focus on the promotion of Chinese cosmetics culture and Chinese cosmetics brands, aiming to enhance students' national pride and patriotic sentiments. By deeply understanding and inheriting the unique value of Chinese cosmetics culture, students not only strengthen their identification with national culture but also gain the ability to better showcase and promote Chinese cosmetics brands on the international stage ^[5].

Simultaneously, we have established professional ethics courses and incorporated the professional ethics norms and laws and regulations of the cosmetics industry into compulsory courses. These courses aim to equip students with knowledge of the professional ethics and legal requirements of the cosmetics industry, laying a solid moral and legal foundation for their future careers in the cosmetics industry. At the same time, we also focus on cultivating students' sense of social responsibility, enabling them to uphold professional ethics and maintain the good image of the industry in their future careers.

To strengthen the leading role of role models, we regularly invite moral exemplars and outstanding alumni from the cosmetics industry to give lectures and exchanges on campus. These lectures not only share the experiences and stories of successful individuals but also showcase the development achievements and brand building results of the Chinese cosmetics industry. Through these activities, we hope that students can draw strength from these positive examples, stimulate their enthusiasm for learning and aspirations for their future careers, and simultaneously enhance their national pride and patriotic sentiments.

In addition, we have enhanced the status of social practice and volunteer service in teaching. By organizing

students to participate in activities such as cosmetics safety promotion and environmental protection public welfare, we not only strengthen students' sense of social responsibility but also improve their practical abilities. These activities allow students to step out of the classroom and apply their learned knowledge to practical problems, deepening their understanding and application of industry ethics and laws and regulations through personal experience and practical operation. By participating in these activities, students learn how to transform theoretical knowledge into problem-solving abilities, which is crucial for their future development in the cosmetics industry.

Through these comprehensive moral education measures, we have cultivated a positive professional ethics concept among students, laying the foundation for their future success in the cosmetics industry. We believe that these students will become industry talents with both professional knowledge and good moral qualities, making positive contributions to the development of the cosmetics industry. At the same time, they will also become the disseminators of Chinese cosmetics culture and the promoters of Chinese cosmetics brands, showcasing the charm and strength of the Chinese cosmetics industry to the world.

3.2. Intellectual education

In intellectual education, the university has successfully implemented a series of innovative measures to strengthen students' knowledge reserves and professional skills. It has promoted deep cooperation among universities, enterprises, and hospitals, establishing close partnerships with multiple cosmetics enterprises and hospital dermatology and beauty departments. This cooperation not only provides students with extensive internship and training opportunities but also achieves effective integration of theoretical knowledge and practical skills, promoting the integrated development of industry, academia, and research.

The university has achieved remarkable results in optimizing its curriculum system. The course content has been updated in a timely manner according to the latest trends in the cosmetics industry to ensure that the knowledge students acquire keeps pace with the development of the industry. To further stimulate students' research interest and innovative potential, the university encourages students to actively participate in various research projects. By establishing innovation laboratories, it provides students with a platform to explore new knowledge and conduct scientific research practices. Simultaneously, it offers necessary financial support and mentor guidance, helping students achieve substantial progress in research projects, thereby cultivating their scientific research innovation abilities.

The university also focuses on encouraging students to apply their knowledge to solving practical problems through a project-driven approach. This project-oriented learning method not only enhances students' practical abilities but also improves their understanding and application of professional knowledge. By participating in real research projects, students experience the entire research process under the guidance of mentors, from project design, implementation, to results summary, greatly enhancing their scientific research literacy and innovation abilities at each step.

Furthermore, the university provides students with opportunities for interdisciplinary learning, encouraging them to participate in cross-disciplinary research. This interdisciplinary learning model helps students break traditional disciplinary boundaries, broaden their knowledge horizons, stimulate innovative inspiration, and lay a solid foundation for future research and work in the cosmetics field.

Overall, through measures such as promoting deep cooperation among universities, enterprises, and hospitals, optimizing the curriculum system, establishing innovation laboratories, and providing opportunities to participate in research projects, the university has created a challenging and opportunistic learning environment

for students, effectively cultivating their intellectual abilities and enabling them to better adapt to the future development of the cosmetics industry.

3.3. Physical education

In the field of physical education, we have reformed and innovated curricula specifically tailored for cosmetics majors, with a key focus on skin health management. Courses such as yoga and posture training were designed not only to enhance students' physical fitness but also to strengthen their awareness of skin health and image management. Yoga exercises, through a series of asanas and breathing techniques was proven to promote blood circulation, improve skin nutrition, and enhance skin health and radiance. Posture training helps students develop graceful body alignment and boost self-confidence through various movements and poses, which is particularly crucial for professionals in the cosmetics industry.

Simultaneously, we supported students in establishing sports clubs and regularly organized events like sports meets and fitness challenges to encourage active participation in physical exercise and cultivate healthy lifestyles. These activities not only improve physical fitness but also help students relieve stress and maintain positive mental well-being, that is critical for skin health, as stress and negative emotions often trigger skin issues like acne and eczema.

We also conducted nutrition and wellness lectures to guide students in developing healthy routines and dietary habits. Proper nutrition is vital for skin health, as the skin as the body's largest organ, requires essential nutrients like vitamins C and E and omega-3 fatty acids from food to maintain elasticity, prevent aging, and reduce inflammation. By educating students on nourishing skin through diet, we further promoted their holistic well-being.

Additionally, we introduced courses on skin health management, teaching students how to maintain skin health through appropriate exercise and lifestyle habits. These courses cover fundamental skincare knowledge (e.g., sun protection, moisturizing, and cleansing) and methods to promote skin detoxification and metabolism through physical activity. Students not only learn to care for their own skin but also gain expertise to educate consumers about proper skin health management in their future careers.

Through these measures, students have developed a comprehensive health mindset, elevating their physical and mental wellness, particularly in skin health management. Participation in sports activities has not only strengthened their physique but also taught them self-regulation and stress relief, positively impacting personal growth and professional development^[6]. We believe that sustained physical education and health initiatives will empower students to embrace future challenges with greater vitality and resilience.

3.4. Aesthetic education

Aesthetic education plays a pivotal role in cosmetics talent development^[7]. We seamlessly integrated aesthetic principles into core courses like cosmetic design and packaging, elevating the artistry of student work while deepening their understanding and application of cosmetic aesthetics. Through these courses, students learned to harmonize beauty with functionality, creating products that are both visually appealing and practical.

To further ignite creativity and artistic sensibility, we hosted specialized events such as cosmetic soap design competitions as shown in **Figure 2** below. These initiatives provided platforms for students to showcase innovative designs while applying theoretical knowledge to real-world product development. The soap design competition challenged participants to balance functionality, safety, and aesthetic appeal, fostering in-depth research and creative thinking. At makeup festivals, students demonstrated cosmetic application skills and market

trend insights. We also organized botanical cosmetics poster contests, merging artistic expression with scientific communication, enhancing students' ability to convey cosmetic knowledge accurately through visual media.



Figure 2. The designed soaps in the cosmetic soap design competitions.

This aesthetic training elevated students' artistic literacy while significantly boosting their innovation capabilities and market competitiveness in the cosmetics industry. In a field intrinsically tied to aesthetics, talent with strong artistic vision and creative thinking is invaluable. Through these initiatives, students mastered the fusion of art and science, creating cosmetics with both commercial viability and artistic merit-laying a robust foundation for their careers.

3.5. Labor education

Labor education can cultivate both a work ethic and practical skills. We partnered with multiple cosmetics enterprises to provide internships, enabling students to experience production lines and retail environments firsthand ^[8]. These opportunities offered comprehensive insight into the research, manufacturing, and sales processes of cosmetics.

On campus, we created dedicated labor positions such as cosmetic lab maintenance and campus beautification projects. These roles allowed students to acquire technical knowledge in cosmetic production

while fostering responsibility and work discipline. Through these activities, students mastered equipment maintenance and environmental enhancement skills, that is essential for their professional futures.

Additionally, we organized skill competitions in cosmetic formulation and packaging design to hone operational abilities and spark interest in product creation. These contests required students to apply knowledge to complete specific tasks, testing individual competence while strengthening team collaboration skills. Participants learned effective communication and teamwork, as an asset for future career advancement.

These labor initiatives significantly enhanced students' awareness of labor value and collaborative abilities. They recognized the importance of a diligent spirit in personal and professional growth and mastered the translation of theory into practice, an indispensable skill for future success in cosmetics or any field.

4. Conclusion

Guangdong Pharmaceutical University has established an innovative "Five-Education integration" cultivation system through these measures. This system integrates professional ethics education into specialized curricula, makes aesthetic literacy a core component of product development practices, and embeds the spirit of labor throughout skills training. This holistic educational model has forged a new talent cultivation paradigm centered on the trinity of knowledge, skills, and qualities, better addressing the cosmetics industry's demand for versatile, interdisciplinary talents.

Following implementation, students have not only mastered essential professional knowledge and technical skills but have also cultivated strong professional ethics, refined aesthetic sensibilities, and a diligent work ethic. These qualities significantly enhance their competitiveness in future careers and better equip them to navigate the industry's evolving trends toward diversification and interdisciplinarity.

Furthermore, this cultivation model has supplied the cosmetics industry with high-caliber talent, driving its sustainable and healthy development. Through university-enterprise collaborations, students gain exposure to cutting-edge industry insights and technologies, understand market dynamics, and sharpen their employability. Simultaneously, enterprises acquire a steady influx of fresh talent, providing vital human capital support for industry innovation.

Amid intensifying global competition, the cosmetics industry faces increasingly stringent talent requirements. Cultivating cosmetics professionals with international perspectives and innovative capabilities through the Five-Education integration system is therefore crucial for strengthening China's global competitiveness in the cosmetics sector.

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