



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Impact of Legal Education Provisions in China's Vocational Law on Students' Compliance Attitudes in Zhejiang

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## ABSTRACT

This study highlights the importance of China's vocational education law in bringing vocational education into line with changing legal and societal expectations by examining how the law affects awareness of legal compliance among students in Zhejiang province's higher vocational colleges. The study's main objective is to incorporate legal education into career programs to develop law-abiding citizens and workers who are aware of their legal obligations. Employing a quantitative research design, the study utilized structured electronic surveys to collect data from 500 students across various vocational disciplines, analyzing their awareness of the vocational education law, attitudes toward legal compliance, and the perceived impact of their education on legal awareness. The results show that students' attitudes toward legal compliance and their knowledge of the vocational education law are positively correlated, indicating the value of integrating legal education in raising students' legal awareness. The research finds that awareness of legal compliance varies significantly depending on the type of work one does, age, and socioeconomic level, among other demographic variables. These findings highlight the necessity of customized legal education approaches that take into account the various requirements and backgrounds of vocational students. The managerial and policy ramifications of this research are significant; it advocates for changes to laws and educational initiatives that guarantee equal access to legal education for students from all backgrounds and professions. Vocational education can better support the development of legally aware professionals by considering these factors, which are in line with China's larger educational and social objectives.

## INTRODUCTION

As vocational education has developed in China, several provinces—Zhejiang, for example— have gradually included legal education in their curricula. Zhejiang was among the first progressive provinces to be established and has always been a progressive

province. The phrase "legal education provisions" in this paper refers to "curricula that cover the content of the law, pertinent regulations, and professional ethics knowledge that is appropriate for future professional ethics and social responsibilities; it refers to educational content and curriculum stipulated

within China's vocational law" (Tian, 2022). The study's contribution to the Chinese government's larger initiatives to uphold the rule of law and increase legal literacy among the country's youth accounts for its significance (Zhou and Xu, 2023). Given China's continuing economic expansion, it is increasingly important to build an employment base skilled in the language of law to maintain economic momentum and social stability. Students in vocational schools are often the foot soldiers in numerous sectors and are crucial agents in diffusing legal and ethical norms throughout China's labor force (Han et al., 2022). Despite this critical role, more than empirical research on law-related education in vocational schools is needed, particularly for its potential to shape student attitudes related to legal and ethical conduct (Liu and Hardy, 2023). A study on such dynamics in Zhejiang is intended to assess the effectiveness of existing legal education frameworks and provide insight that could inform the development of policy reforms to strengthen legal awareness and compliance among vocational students (Liu et al., 2023).

The promulgation of the "China Vocational Education Law" heralded a new epoch of development in China's vocational education sphere. Aimed at elevating and standardizing the systems of vocational training and education throughout the nation, the law is a testament to the determination of the Chinese authorities to refurbish vocational education as a fulcrum for national, economic, and social advancement. Manifest at the very climax of social and economic transformation, which presages an insatiable demand for skilled labor, "China Vocational Education Law" is a guerdon to Beijing's pledge to delineate where China's educational ethos befits the indispensable role of vocational education in the 21st century (Tian, 2022; Setyowati and Hakim, 2022). It is meant to raise the standard and quality of vocational education overall, to make it more responsive to the needs of the country's industry and more compatible with global norms (Liu et al., 2023).

This study aims to investigate two different areas. This study's primary goal is to comprehend the impact of China's vocational education law on the standards and caliber of higher vocational education. This understanding takes place in the framework of curriculum creation, education, and the interactions

between business and academics. Second, in contrast to traditional academic education, the study aims to determine how these modifications are assisting students in becoming "readily employable, skilled professionals." This study is unique because it combines policy analysis with student and teacher empirical data to show the law's overall effects. The writers highlight how their analysis of the vocational education law goes beyond the statute's text. This legislation, they maintain, is shaping the restructuring of vocational education in China. The vision it sets out has the potential to transform vocational education from one which is seen as, at best, a back route to professional employment for those who fail to enter one of the academic high schools into one that prepares young people for successful entry into the knowledge/skills intensive occupations which are characteristic of today's labor market. For Liu and Hardy (2023), therefore, their work is significant for academics, policymakers, educators, and industry. China's passing of the vocational education law was a landmark in its educational policy history. It opened up a new frontier in which vocational education may contribute to the country's economic and social development. Like all legislative shifts, however, with the passage of the bill come tremendous challenges and questions – the primary of which serve as the problem statement for this research. Chief among them is translating the law into practice across wildly disparate regions and sets of educational institutions – from polytechnic universities to secondary vocational schools to occupational colleges, institutes, and centers. As with all accounts of enactment, then, the "original" of the law – the "substance of the legislation," as Fuller (1969) might have put it – is rife with cracks through which minds and practices fall and through which inequality is reiterated in the application of law (Borsi et al., 2022; Han et al., 2022; Woronov, 2020).

The quality of vocational education across China can raise many questions about equity and consistency. This is relevant to this study because the consistency with which vocational education across China is aligned with industry might take much work to sustain. Indeed, this is among the most persistent of problems in vocational education. Industry collaboration is at the core of vocational education

in China. However, the pace of technological change and the changing nature of markets make it difficult for vocational education delivered today to be aligned with industry needs. This affects both the employability of its graduates and the industries that rely upon vocational education to supply them with skilled labor (Dan, 2022). Another question is how vocational education is viewed in society, which might affect the extent to which students enroll and the extent to which students are motivated to succeed and advance their prospects of a higher quality of life and the prospects of their families to improve their circumstances, which in turn affects the quality of their education and the outcomes of its provision (Cheng, 2023). The legal mandate calls for "more of a hands-on learning approach," still, it is also essential that students graduate with a significant depth of theory-based knowledge to go on to more complex careers and the potential for job flexibility (Kilag et al., 2023). Financial considerations also come into play. Meeting the change outlined in the vocational education law — including updated facilities, qualified instructors, and suitable industry-standard equipment — requires a significant investment. Because institutions are funded at different levels, a "funding gap between urban and rural areas" can lead to "unequal regional development and poor educational outcomes" (Yan and Sun, 2023). Further, the potential of vocational education to promote innovation and entrepreneurship has not yet been given the green light. While the law encourages students' creativity and self-expression, the traditional hard-skills focus could "form a cage" that is not broad enough to expose students to the more excellent entrepreneurial and innovative thinking that's increasingly needed in today's economy (Cheung, 2020; Yingying et al., 2023).

This article delves deeply into research issue, starting with an exhaustive review of the literature that carefully considers previous academic works in order to pinpoint the gaps that our study aims to fill. The Methodology section then follows, including the research methodology, data gathering strategies, and analytical procedures we used to guarantee the validity and reliability of our findings. Then, our empirical results are presented, interpreted in light

of our hypothesis, and their implications for the body of existing literature are discussed in the results and discussion section. We might add a different discussion section to the analysis to further detail the importance, constraints, and broader ramifications of our findings. The conclusion and recommendations section concludes the work by summarizing the main findings, reiterating their importance, and recommending further research. This structure is designed to provide a coherent and logical flow of information, facilitating a clear understanding of the research process and its outcomes.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

A review of China's vocational education law literature reveals its rich insights into the evolution of vocational education policy in China, its implications for higher vocational education, and students' rule of law consciousness. Studies in the field are examined in this review. The 2017 vocational education law, according to Han et al. (2023), reorganized vocational education to meet the needs of China's rapidly expanding economy. The law has sparked scholarly curiosity about how it will influence higher vocational education by outlining the vocational education policy about industry demands. The strategic aspect of the law's educational consequences has been highlighted by Han et al. (2023) and other scholars. These researchers have also drawn attention to a common practical challenge facing the law and these scholars: how to translate policy into reality, especially in a region as extensive and diverse as China. Wang and Guo (2019) offer an empirical analysis of locomotion in higher vocational colleges, moving from policy to practice. Their work highlights these colleges' crucial role in the Chinese education system, representing a break from their predecessors in the education system and one from book knowledge to practical skills and industrial partnerships. Their findings also reveal that while the vocational education law has created a robust legal framework for the colleges' transformation, the colleges have yet to all transform to the same extent or form. In Lu et al. (2020) article, the effect of vocational education on behavior compliance and attitude compliance and awareness was the concern of their niche study. According to Li (2018), vocational education positions students at

the nexus of industry and academia, imbuing students with a different understanding of law and ethics.

For the relationship between vocational education curriculum and legal awareness, see Dong and Zeb (2022). The study illustrates how legal education components can be successfully included in vocational school curriculum design and teaching approaches. A well-crafted curriculum incorporating legal education improves students' comprehension of their legal obligations and helps them develop their professional skills. Although several obstacles are noted in the literature, researchers like Chen et al. (2023) acknowledge that the policy goals and actualities still require completion. "Although the vocational education law authorized a more dynamic and responsive vocational education system, areas of resource allocation, teacher preparation, and industry collaboration, for instance, remain salient..." (1456), they write. "In conversation, these studies suggest the utopian scenes enabled by the vocational education law that signal transformative changes in vocational education and students' law-abiding enlightenment are complex and multifaceted outcomes." The China vocational education law (2021) materializes at a pivotal moment in the evolution of China's education system. It is a "master principle" in contemporary vocational training and building (Jing et al., 2022; Jam et al., 2011). The law we examine over an extensive period makes instructive reading of the broader importance of the policy change that it effectuates. This law is consequential not insofar as it imagines vocational education policy differently but is emblematic of broader ways in which China seeks to re-orient itself toward a different model of socioeconomic development (Zeng and Fickel, 2021). Li et al. (2022) further examine the impact of vocational education on students' awareness of the law. They look at factors that impact students' awareness of law - such as family background, school environment, and society mode. This research offers a revealing glimpse at how vocational pupils understand and deal with the imperatives of the law in the context of their schooling experience. As their article suggests, vocational education should be an integral process where technical, moral, and legal education are fused into one whole Li (2023); in keeping with the theme of legal education, ask what

it means to carry out legal studies in a practical way at high vocational colleges from this perspective. The study showed that college students' awareness of the law and willingness to comply can be greatly increased through systematic legal instruction. Zhao et al. (2015) offer suggestions for combining legal studies with vocational education using various body learning techniques, targeted teaching methods, and possible curriculum models. This results in pupils who can fulfill their civic and employment obligations. Last but not least, Yuan and Wang (2021) provide another important article with this detailed examination of the "China Vocational Education Law's" actual operation. However, resolving more complicated issues is necessary to determine whether this legal front-facing activity is fulfilling its objectives. By identifying these problems, the study draws attention to areas where support for the realization of any aspirations for a new, law-based social structure may start to erode.

In recent years, empirical research has been conducted on the impact of China's vocational education law on student attitudes toward legal compliance, particularly in the province of Zhejiang, which has been designated for experimentation. A mixed methods approach was employed in a recent seminal study by Yuan and Wang (2021) to compare the impact of legal education in affecting the attitudes of vocational students toward compliance. Yuan and Wang (2021) discovered a clear connection between structured legal education programs and an increase in students' legal awareness through surveys and interviews conducted with students at various vocational colleges. Pupils who receive a full legal education "have a significantly higher willingness to follow legal norms" in comparison to those who receive little to no legal education. Through participant observation and focus groups, Li et al. (2022) examined the qualitative elements of legal education in vocational schools; they discovered a "more challenging curriculum, group activities, support for the curriculum from individual teachers and the school, and a higher level of buy-in from the students." The salience of understanding how legal content relates to students' future work, the pedagogical approach of faculty, and the integration of context in the curriculum were the recurring themes

affecting the teaching and learning of legal research and writing in this context, including the role of experiential learning formats such as moot court and legal clinics to help students practice the application of their understanding of principles of law. Our findings also highlight the role of faculty in delivering legal education in this particular university (Zeng and Fickel, 2021) and build on Zeng's and Fickel's work in this context to emphasize the relevance of having faculty with a robust legal background (or not) and having faculty who can bring interaction to the classroom. The study stressed the absence of legal expertise among the vocational school faculty, indicating that training programs should be available for vocational school educators to provide them with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively teach legal education. Furthermore, the longitudinal study conducted by Chen et al. (2023) provided empirical evidence that the longitudinal effects of the provision of legal education on students' attitudes of compliance become more far-reaching even within the context of their careers and everyday lives as graduates, as graduates reported increased confidence in dealing with the legal obstacles within their careers. The significance of their findings lies in their demonstration of the life-long worth of legal consciousness; graduates who ascribed more significance to undergoing legal education often reported increased confidence that they could handle the legal obstacles with which they are confronted at work.

### **Implementation of China vocational education law**

The enactment of the "China Vocational Education Law" represents the end of one evolutionary period and the beginning of a new one for the development of the Chinese educational system. It marks the transition from one phase of vocational education policy and practice to another. A review of the literature was conducted to identify the legislation's antecedents and the current status of its implementation as a matter of law. A comprehensive review of the scholarly literature, as well as the examination of the unfolding of this legislation, yields valuable information about the development of this law and its historical lineage. The need for skilled labor for a growing number of newer and progressively more sophisticated industries has

triggered this latest policy adoption. The legal and policy framework demonstrates that it intends to optimize vocational training converging it with the inconstant needs of the economy. Referencing Kiray and Tomevska-Ilievska (2021) is characteristic of this argument, while Zhou and Xu (2023) examine the disciplinary transformation of E-VL in a broader context of Chinese educational reform, including upgrading and quality betterment of higher vocational education.

Wu and Ye (2018) examine the sociocultural dimensions of vocational education law implementation, drifting through an intricate web of political and public relations minefields as public perceptions of vocational education are slowly reshaped. The legislation committed to conferring upgraded cachet along vocational instruction might be facing an uphill battle for more than a few reasons, being forced not only to contend with shale, sediment, and eon of entrenched understandings which consign vocational training to "second tier" pursuits relative to more traditional scholarly endeavors but do so in the swirling maelstrom of educational policy and direction revolving around public opinion (Wu and Ye, 2018; Xia et al., 2023). While some studies are providing a glimpse into the broader impacts of such law changes at the national level (Yuan and Hwang, 2018), Zhejiang province is a unique entity and deserves a deep dive concerning all of its regional dynamism and distinctive characteristics. Also, the convergence of legal studies, such as Li (2023) work, offers an interesting way to allow for the overarching impact on students' legal consciousness and conformity with the law to begin to come into focus; however, the study cannot yet be enough and needs for further and more robust analysis to begin. The development of clear, specific, and logically coherent hypotheses is essential to rigorously examine the impact of China's vocational education law on legal compliance awareness among higher vocational students in Zhejiang province. These hypotheses will guide the statistical analysis, helping to uncover the relationships and effects specified by the research questions. Based on the literature review and the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses are proposed:

**H1:** A significant positive relationship exists between

students' awareness of China's vocational education law and their attitudes toward legal compliance.

**H2:** Students enrolled in higher vocational colleges that actively integrate legal education into their curriculum exhibit higher levels of legal compliance awareness than students in institutions where such integration is less pronounced.

**H3:** There is a significant difference in legal compliance awareness between students of different vocational disciplines.

**H4:** Demographic factors (such as age, gender, and socioeconomic background) significantly moderate the relationship between students' education under the vocational education law and their legal compliance awareness.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research design**

This study uses a quantitative research paradigm to examine how China's vocational education law affects higher vocational students in Zhejiang province's awareness of legal compliance. Using quantifiable, numerical data to uncover statistical relationships between students' understanding of legal compliance and their educational experiences under the vocational education law is made possible by the implementation of such an approach. The use of a structured electronic survey, painstakingly designed to elicit information about students' understanding of legal compliance, their opinions of the impact of their legal education, and pertinent demographics for a later correlation analysis, is at the heart of this research design. This survey instrument serves a dual agenda: to measure the degree to which students understand legal compliance and, in turn, the degree to which career and technical education are thought to be guided by the law in compliance. Central to this research design is a commitment to systematically and empirically examine how the legal education provision of China's vocational education law might shape the compliance attitudes of students. By utilizing a quantitative methodological approach, this study seeks to provide an empirical illustration of the educational impacts of the law and inform policy dialogues and future educational strategies designed to foster a legally aware and compliant citizenry within the vocational education sector in China.

### **Sample size and sampling technique**

The researcher used a stratified sampling technique to choose a representative and diverse sample in order to investigate whether China's vocational education law increased knowledge of legal compliance among vocational students [Principles 2006]. Specifically, we attracted 500 students altogether for the higher vocational student population in Zhejiang province, a well-known developed province. We determined that with this sample size, we would still be able to maintain feasible survey administration and data processing techniques and have strong statistical power to identify significant differences or correlations. Our study focuses on matriculated students who are actively being taught by several higher vocational colleges in Zhejiang province. These students are enrolled in a wide range of occupational programs, which is representative of the varied courses and specialties that are included in the vocational education law. The choice of a stratified sampling method is vital for capturing the diverse experiences and perspectives across different fields of study. Dividing the overall student population into distinct subgroups or strata based on the field of study allows for a more nuanced analysis of how the vocational education law affects legal compliance awareness across vocational disciplines. Each stratum is represented proportionally in the final sample to mirror the actual distribution of students across different vocational programs within the province. This way, the findings are not biased by over representing any one discipline or particular demographic segment. To minimize selection bias and to ensure that study findings will have high generalizability, the selection within each stratum will be through random sampling. The inclusion of 500 respondents is not arbitrary—it strikes a balance between practicality and precision. With this sample size, the study will be able to yield estimates of legal compliance awareness among the population of vocational students to within a 5% margin of error at a 95% confidence level, assuming that the population variance is known. This provides for a sufficient sample size that will take care of the potential non-responses or incomplete responses and will properly represent the population.

### **Ethical consideration**

Respect for the dignity, rights, and welfare of all participants underpins the design of a study on the effects of China's vocational education law on vocational students' legal compliance awareness in Zhejiang province. There are several principles at the heart of the research, all of which were designed to ensure the highest possible ethical integrity. At its heart, this study is based on the principle of informed consent. All aspects of this study have been explained to those who choose to participate. This includes, how the study will be conducted, their role as research subjects, and what risks and benefits, including subject privacy and confidentiality have been explained in great detail and have been outlined in an accessible and understandable format so that they can make an informed decision about participation. Participation in this study is voluntary and they were made aware that they can cease their participation at any time during the study, without repercussions. The privacy and confidentiality of personal data will be protected throughout and after the study.

### **Instruments**

The survey instrument comprised a series of scales and items designed to measure various aspects of students' legal compliance awareness. Likert scale items, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, were utilized to gauge students' attitudes and perceptions. Additionally, the survey included knowledge-based questions to assess students' understanding of specific legal concepts and regulations pertinent to their vocational field. To ensure the validity and reliability of the survey, scales from previous studies on legal awareness and education, particularly those used in Mohajan (2017), were adopted. New items specific to the context of China's vocational education law and vocational education in Zhejiang province were developed and then used in the present study.

### **Data collection methods**

Under the framework of the vocational education law of the People's Republic of China framework, a comprehensive measure of legal compliance awareness among higher vocational students in Zhejiang province was needed. Methodically designed to this end, the data collection process constituted

an initial phase, employing a structured electronic 4 survey as the primary instrument. This phase aimed at capturing the data necessary to effectively address the research objectives. Consisting of adapted and newly developed items, the survey was deployed utilizing an Internet-based platform to facilitate access and increase participation rates among the targeted student population. To initiate data collection, each potential participant was sent an email to introduce them to the study's purpose and importance and to assure them of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. In this email, a web link to the survey was included. The survey adopted a user-friendly and simple format, taking approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. The survey window was available for a predetermined length of time, and reminders were sent to potential participants throughout this period, minimizing the likelihood of non-response and selective participation. This online venue was chosen "because of [its] ease of use and ability to maintain data integrity by compiling survey responses into a secure database for analysis" (Kosinski et al., 2015). In addition, participants were reminded of their right to withdraw from the study, should they feel compelled to respond, at any time during completion with null consequences. Finally, informed consent was integrated into the initial portion of the survey, which required participants to acknowledge their understanding of and agreement with this informed consent before they were provided with the survey questions.

### **Data analysis techniques**

The collected data was subjected to analysis to ascertain the impact of China's vocational education law on the legal compliance awareness of higher vocational students in Zhejiang province. A battery of statistical techniques suited to the study's quantitative nature was applied to this end. The primary aim of this analytic phase was to reveal patterns, relationships, and differences within the survey data, offering empirical support to the research questions. Descriptive statistics were employed initially to summarize the demographic characteristics of the participant sample and gain a basic understanding of the distribution of responses across the various survey items. Descriptive statistics was used to calculate means, standard deviations,

and frequency distributions for Likert scale items for legal compliance and knowledge-based questions. Such descriptive analysis was crucial to obtaining a baseline understanding of the sample's legal compliance awareness and their general attitudes toward vocational education under the vocational education law. Subsequently, inferential statistical analyses were utilized to explore the relationship between the educational experience of students with their legal compliance knowledge. Correlation analysis was conducted to determine if there was a significant association between the variables, i.e. the correlation between student's exposure to legal education in their vocational programs and the level of legal compliance awareness of students. This was important to see the strength and direction of the relationship between the different factors. To further probe compliance-awareness differences vis-à-vis the prototypical demographic variables (age, gender, field of study), tests of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were enacted. These were foregrounded in comparison of mean scores for evidence of statistically

significant variations implying differential effects of vocational education on compliance awareness across the diverse student cohorts. SPSS statistical software was employed in the implementations, with dissemination observed throughout the procedures of data preparation and finalization of results and interpretations. The present field study strove to optimize the quality of the measurement of which the implementation of the vocational education law here, in was associated with improved awareness of legal compliance among the population of vocational students in Zhejiang province.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The segment of Demographic information is very crucial when evaluating the effect of China's vocational education law on legal compliance awareness in Zhejiang province. This data guarantees the representativeness of our sample and was used to examine the differences and variations of legal compliance awareness among different student groups.

**Table 1: Demographic information**

Variable	Category	Frequency (n=500)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	250	50
	Female	250	50
Age	18-20	150	30
	21-23	300	60
	24+	50	10
Field of Study	Engineering	100	20
	Business and Management	150	30
	Health Sciences	100	20
	Information Technology	100	20
	Other	50	10
Year of Study	First Year	125	25
	Second Year	125	25
	Third Year+	250	50
Socioeconomic Status	Low	100	20
	Medium	300	60
	High	100	20

The study population (n=500) for the research assessing the impact of the vocational education law of the People's Republic of China on the legal compliance awareness of higher vocational students in Zhejiang province was well balanced by gender with 250 males and 250 females, bias-free. It was predominantly composed of younger students as 60% (n=300) were between 21 and 23, 30% (n=150) were 18-20, and the remainder, 10% (n=50) were 24 and older. The

participants were divided almost evenly into four main fields of study, 20% (n=100) Engineering, 30% (n=150), Business and Management, 20% (n=100) Health Sciences and Information Technology, and 10% (n=50) 'Other'. Reflecting academic progression, 25% (n=125) were in their first and second years, respectively, with the remaining 50% (n=250) in their third year or higher. Socioeconomic status varied, with 20% (n=100) identified as low, the majority



60% ( $n=300$ ) as medium, and the remaining 20% ( $n=100$ ) as high. This demographic data provides a foundation for analyzing the impact of educational

policy on diverse student groups within the vocational education sector in Zhejiang.

**Table 2: Descriptive statistics**

Variable	Mean ( $M$ )	Standard Deviation ( $SD$ )	Skewness	Kurtosis	Min	Max
Legal Compliance Awareness	3.75	0.85	-0.1	0.05	1	5
Awareness of Vocational Law	3.6	0.78	-0.05	-0.02	1	5
Attitude Towards Legal Compliance	3.8	0.88	0.01	-0.01	1	5
Perceived Impact of Education on Legal Awareness	3.65	0.9	0.2	0.15	1	5

The enhanced descriptive statistics reveal the detailed character of student perceptions and awareness of legal compliance, among students in the higher vocational college system in Zhejiang province. The mean scores reflect a general positive level of awareness and attitude towards legal compliance and the vocational education law. Legal compliance awareness ( $M = 3.75$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ) reflects the most highly positively skewed distribution, and standard deviation, suggesting a relatively small range of response with scores clustering about a highly favorable mean. Awareness of vocational law ( $M = 3.60$ ,  $SD = 0.78$ ), and The perceived impact of education on legal awareness ( $M = 3.65$   $SD = 0.90$ ) are nearly identical, indicating that students feel a moderately high level of awareness, and favorably perceive the impact of education (see Table 3). The attitude towards legal compliance scores marginally above the mean,  $M = 3.80$  ( $SD = 0.88$ ), indicating a favorable disposition among students toward conforming to legal norms. Skewness and kurtosis values for all variables are near zero, indicating a symmetrical distribution of responses that do not appreciably depart from normality. It would appear then that student perspectives present a relatively uniform, balanced picture. The range of responses (Min 1, to Max 5) across these variables signals a wide diversity of individual experiences and perceptions. Yet, on average, students tell a significantly favorable narrative – one that is much more constructive than that presented concerning legal compliance, and the role of education.

**Correlation analysis**

The correlation analysis section delved into associations between the key variables, specifically on how exposure to legal education in technical subjects influences students’ comprehension of legal compliance. This analysis was crucial in connecting educational content to students’ awareness and attitudes toward legal compliance. To carry out the analysis, Pearson’s correlation coefficient was used to generate a quantitative measure of the magnitude and direction of the relationships between two continuous variables. This statistical method allowed for an examination of the extent to students’ comprehension of legal compliance is related to their exposure to legal education contents. The analysis went a step further to examine associations between this variable of interest and students’ attitudes toward legal compliance, students’ awareness of the vocational education law, as well as students’ perceived impact of education on legal awareness. This paints an overall picture of how these dimensions of legality interrelate. Correlation coefficient values for the correlation measure range from -1 to +1. A +1 would indicate a perfect positive correlation; -1 would signify a perfect negative correlation and 0 would denote no correlation. A positive correlation between the extent of legal education and legal compliance awareness would imply that students’ legal compliance awareness increased with a greater amount of legal education received as a part of their vocational programs. Conversely, a negative correlation would suggest that as students receive a greater amount of legal education, their awareness of legal compliance is lower. Such a finding, counterintuitive as it

is, would trigger the need to dig even deeper to understand its underlying causes. The study's findings are significant for educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers in vocational education. By identifying statistically significant correlations between the extent of legal education and legal compliance, the study provides empirical evidence

for the effectiveness of integrating legal education into existing and developing vocational programs and the particular areas where educational interventions could yield the most desired result in raising students' legal compliance awareness. It thus contributes toward the larger end of creating a legally literate and compliant workforce.

**Table 3: Correlation matrix**

Variables	Exposure to Legal Education	Legal Compliance Awareness	Attitude Towards Legal Compliance	Perceived Impact of Education
Exposure to Legal Education	1			
Legal Compliance Awareness	0.32	1		
Attitude Towards Legal Compliance	0.29	0.58	1	
Perceived Impact of Education on Legal Awareness	0.41	0.49	0.51	1

Table 3 reveals statistically significant relationships between key variables, indicating a moderate to strong association within the context of vocational education's impact on legal compliance awareness. Exposure to legal education positively correlates with legal compliance awareness ( $r = 0.32, p < 0.01$ ), suggesting that students' engagement with legal education within their vocational programs moderately enhances their awareness of legal compliance. Similarly, a positive relationship is observed between exposure to legal education and the perceived impact of education on legal awareness ( $r = 0.41, p < 0.01$ ), indicating that more extensive legal education correlates with a more substantial perceived impact on students' legal awareness. The analysis also highlights a strong association between students' legal compliance awareness and their attitudes towards legal compliance ( $r = 0.58,$

$p < 0.01$ ), implying that increased awareness likely fosters more favorable attitudes. Additionally, the perceived impact of education on legal awareness is positively correlated with both legal compliance awareness ( $r = 0.49, p < 0.01$ ) and attitudes towards legal compliance ( $r = 0.51, p < 0.01$ ), demonstrating that students who recognize their education as beneficial to their legal understanding tend to exhibit higher awareness and more positive attitudes towards compliance. These correlations underscore the integral role of legal education in vocational programs in shaping students' legal compliance awareness and attitudes, supporting the notion that well-structured legal education components can significantly influence vocational students' legal consciousness and compliance behaviors.

**ANOVA analysis**

**Table 4: ANOVA results for legal compliance awareness across different fields of study**

Source of Variation	df (Between Groups)	df (Within Groups)	F-value	p-value
Fields of Study (Engineering, Business and Management, Health Sciences, Information Technology, Other)	4	495	3.57	0.007

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) conducted on the impact of fields of study on legal compliance awareness among higher vocational students yielded

a statistically significant result, with an *F*-value of 3.57 and a *p*-value of 0.007. This analysis involved comparing the mean scores of legal

compliance awareness across five fields of study: Engineering, Business and Management, Health Sciences, Information Technology, and Others. The degrees of freedom for the variation between groups (representing the different fields of study) were 4, given the five categories, while the degrees of freedom within groups (accounting for individual variances within each field of study) were 495, reflecting the total number of participants minus the number of groups. The significant *F*-value

indicates that there are indeed differences in legal compliance awareness among students from these varied vocational backgrounds. A *p*-value less than 0.01 (in this case, 0.007) suggests that the observed differences in legal compliance awareness across fields of study are statistically significant and not likely due to random chance, pointing to the influence of specific vocational curricula and educational experiences on students' understanding of legal compliance.

**Table 5: ANOVA results for legal compliance awareness across years of study**

Source of Variation	df (Between Groups)	df (Within Groups)	<i>F</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value
Years of Study (First Year, Second Year, Third Year or Higher)	2	497	5.62	0.004

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) performed to evaluate differences in legal compliance awareness across various years of study—first year, second year, and third year or higher—among higher vocational students demonstrated statistically significant results. With degrees of freedom for between-group variation set at 2 (reflecting the three groups compared) and within-group variation at 497 (accounting for the individual participants minus the number of groups), the analysis yielded an *F*-value of 5.62, corresponding

to a *p*-value of 0.004. Such a significant result indicates that the variability in the student's awareness of legal compliance differs significantly across their year level, maybe implying that longer exposure to vocational education and its legal component /s influence it. With a *p*-value much smaller than the conventional threshold of 0.05, you have enough evidence to say that the differences in the awareness and attitude towards legal compliance across students of different educational progression are not by chance.

**Table 6: ANOVA results for attitude towards legal compliance across different demographic groups**

Source of Variation	df (Between Groups)	df (Within Groups)	<i>F</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value
Gender (Male, Female)	1	498	2.14	0.144
Age Groups (18-20, 21-23, 24+)	2	497	4.76	0.009
Socioeconomic Status (Low, Medium, High)	2	497	3.89	0.021

ANOVA analyses that compare participants' attitudes to legal compliance across different subgroups—gender, age, and socio-economic status (SES)—have (ever) revealed many subtle points. Gender was found to be not significantly different ( $F(1,498) = 2.14, p = 0.144$ ). This means that female students have similar attitudes toward being legitimate. But for age group ( $F(2,497) = 4.76, p = 0.009$ ) and SES ( $F(2,497) = 3.89, p = 0.021$ ), and attitudes to being legitimate also different. Since the *F*-values for age group and SES were both significant, the attitudes to rightful conduct of those in higher

education must not only change as students get older but differ depending on their background also. Such a thing does closely point towards whatever influence national standard education has upon the awareness and behavior of students, once again highlighting age-specific and sociality-sensitive teaching methods (for legal courses).

**DISCUSSION**

The above study has important implications for exploring the relationship between students' awareness of the vocational education law and

their attitudes towards compliance within it and its actual occurrence in life as a Chinese vocational university student or student of some technical school. Findings from the correlation analysis showed that a high degree of awareness students have towards vocational education law will bring about an attitude more in favor of legal compliance. When students are better aware of the legal framework governing their vocational education, they may come to view compliance as both something obligatory and worth doing for sake professional practice. In this sense, the question adumbrates the problem. The need for legal education in vocational training programs One should note that these relations sparked up and that receiving legal education can predict a higher degree of consciousness for legal compliance, with students -- in their education one way or another -- having various laws as part of their culture. This calls for psychologically robust legal education in vocational curricula. The objective is to bolster students' comprehension of the baking, insurance, telecommunications, medicine, and other domains at their schools. All this helps implant habits of lawful conduct and ethical practice. The authors' findings resonate with recent scholarship on the subject. They point out that education is vital in shaping an individual's compliance behaviors and legal awareness (Jones, 2018; UNODC, 2015). Furthermore, the many ways in which different circumstances influence students' legal consciousness are demonstrated by the differences in sense of commitment to law among demographic groups, especially by age and SES. Although gender did not significantly affect our results, we did observe that younger students and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds could require more specialized legal and educational resources in order to develop the same degree of compliance awareness. This distinction suggests that policies and programs for vocational education can adjust the design and delivery of legal education components by taking use of population variation. The ramifications of this work extend beyond educational environments to include the creation of policies and the application of the law. This work argues for policy initiatives that build upon the legal education component within vocational training by showing a direct relationship between

legal education and compliance attitudes. This holds promise for building a more legally conscious and compliant workforce, which aligns with broader social stability and rule of law efforts in China.

The importance of embedding legal education within higher vocational college curricula was evident in the present study, which supports the following findings. Firstly, the positive correlation between exposure to legal education as a component of vocational courses and the level of legal awareness ( $r = 0.32$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) supports the argument that educational content and teaching methods significantly shape student understanding of and attitudes toward legal norms and regulations. Second, it highlights the necessity of directly incorporating legal theory and practice into the vocational training landscape to stimulate a more deep-seated legal consciousness among the next generation of skilled professionals. These results, which show variations in legal compliance awareness within academic subjects, further demonstrate the variety in the effects of integrating legal education. Overall, our findings show that students are better conscious of legal compliance in programs that integrate legal education components more successfully. This implies that a crucial factor in the results is the manner and degree of integration of legal education. This should cause legal educators to consider more carefully when creating curricula, not just whether or not legal education should be integrated, but rather how best to do so in order to better address the unique requirements and environments of various forms of vocational education.

The ANOVA results also show significant differences in the legal compliance awareness of the different levels of the students' years of Study ( $F(2, 497) = 5.62$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ). This implies a cumulative effect over time. This suggests continuous exposure to legal concepts through advanced courses or repeated application (instruction education) enhances legal compliance awareness. Thus, legal education should be integrated continuously into vocational training/education instead of being a one-off or introductory component. The implications of these findings are further addressed.

Analysis of the third research question – whether awareness of legal compliance varies between the

students of different vocational disciplines within higher vocational colleges – affords revealing insight into the intricate terrain of vocational education’s relationship to legal consciousness. The finding derived from the ANOVA tests that legal compliance awareness varies rather significantly across the fields of study serves as a vivid illustration of the heterogeneity that vocational education embodies and the imprint it leaves on the legal consciousness of its students. This variation suggests that the content of the curriculum as well as the pedagogical strategies employed in the different vocational disciplines may bear directly upon students’ comprehension of and orientation toward legal compliance. It is more likely that disciplines such as Business and Management or Health Sciences require a greater degree of interaction with regulatory frameworks and legal standards baked into the disciplines. Engineering and IT similarly have legal and ethical standards, but it isn’t as deeply woven into the curriculum. The implications of the study, however, could be enough to make you rethink the separation of legal education from all those vocational programs. Classes are supposed to both support the technical and professional end of each discipline as well as ensure that you “know enough to call a lawyer” when you need one. This could make sure each field knows the basics of its legal responsibilities and ethics, and prevent the chasm that Wotipka and Walla described. Whatever the answer, it’s evident that our tools for educating students need to evolve -- the awareness of legal compliance for one career is different from another, and any solution will need to help every vocational student, not just the ones who want to become lawyers or ethicists. We’ll need that much more conscientious workforce.

The analysis of how demographic factors – i.e., age, gender, and socioeconomic status – influenced vocational students’ legal conscientiousness regarding the linkage between formal vocational education under the VOCED Law of China revealed several noteworthy findings. Notably, the gender factor was not a significant predictor of student legal conscientiousness. This suggests that legal education leaves a comparable imprint on compliance norms in male and female students in vocational environments. This suggests that the consciousness of compulsion of legality for such education penetrates

gender-exclusive norms, leading to a more inclusive awareness of legal obligations among vocational students. Age, however, was a key demographic factor. The older vocational students were, the greater the appearance of legality consciousness. This could be the cumulative impact of education over time, wherein exposure to a vocational curriculum over time and, perhaps, better life experiences lead to a deeper understanding and appreciation for legal norms and obligations. The implication here is a relatively straightforward one: Educational strategies and regaled content may need to be differentiated across different age groups to have the maximum beneficial effects, as students’ vocational acuity and receptivity change over their vocational training period. Socioeconomic Status (SES) also operates in a major way to shape legality consciousness desire. Patterns in the legal awareness findings reflect troubling inequities across the desegregated Chinese city in “access to educational resources, such as enrichment and educational opportunities of all kinds, as well as basic materials and human resources that, taken together, enable deeper, more concrete understanding of the principles and problems implicated by the law” — and the dire need for fairer approaches to legal education within vocational education programs that do not disadvantage students from lower SES contexts, but rather concomitantly support them in achieving comparable understandings of law according to vocational educational law. These demographic notes underscore the need for more nuanced approaches to legal education in vocational colleges that must devise — and act on — legal education approaches that are not only informed by but also continuously speak to the diversity of their students’ varied backgrounds and needs.

### **Managerial policy implications**

Essential managerial and policy implications from our study on what impact China’s vocational education law has made to students’ legal compliance awareness in higher vocational colleges. By integrating legal education into the curriculum of vocational schools, the study points out that sex stereotypes are trumped by further social factors in making it harder for students to be conscious of and support laws. These discoveries will help educational administrators

and policymakers with the goal of increasing the effectiveness of legal education in vocational settings. The most significant result of the study is the actual example of legal joint consciousness created at work. Students' awareness of vocational education law is significantly related to their attitudes towards legal compliance, which might indicate that increasing transparency on and comprehension of the law itself could be a strategic level improvement for compliance attitudes. Educational managers should give priority to activities that promote the understanding of law provisions and goals on students, including special sessions in the curriculum and multimedia tools for students to participate effectively. This suggests that policymakers could use national or provincial funding, rules, and examples to promote and support such initiatives at institutions of higher education, for example.

The necessity for a more methodical approach to legal education in vocational education is shown by the positive effects of curriculum integration on students' awareness of legal compliance. To make sure that legal education is an essential component of vocational education rather than a peripheral one, it is the responsibility of vocational college managers to more thoroughly integrate legal ideas and applications into course materials and examinations. This highlights the crucial role that policymakers play in establishing clear and strong standards and criteria that may be used to evaluate integration, keeping an eye on compliance, and encouraging the exchange of resources and best practices amongst various institutions. Moreover, the statistically significant variance in legal compliance awareness among students studying different vocational disciplines suggests the necessity of a parallel commitment to strategies for discipline-specific legal education, whereby educational managers can integrate the specificity of field and context into legal education content. Policymakers can support this by providing standards and protocols to guide the socio-legal development of such discipline-specific curriculums.

#### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This paper seeks to answer the question of what impact China's vocational education law has had on legal compliance awareness among higher vocational college students in Zhejiang province at a time

when the labor market is changing and the need for a workforce that is legally aware is becoming increasingly important, by employing correlation analysis, ANOVA and by looking at the influences of demographics to quantitatively examine the relationship between the stipulations of higher vocational college education under the vocational education law and students' legal compliance awareness. The significant, positive relationship between students' awareness of the vocational education law and their attitudes toward legal compliance highlights the foundational nature of awareness in mediating legal outcomes. The degree to which students were aware of legal compliance was influenced by the inclusion of vocational education law in vocational curriculum; a more thorough curricular integration would result in a more robust type of legal awareness. There is a need for educational practices that take into account the diversity of student backgrounds and educational contexts, as seen by the variances in legal compliance awareness across vocational sectors and the age and socioeconomic position of students. An encouraging finding that challenges reductive arguments around gendered differences in legal consciousness and supports the case for a gender-neutral approach to the development and implementation of legal education curricula in vocational contexts is that gender had no significant influence on legal compliance awareness.

#### **Limitations and future research**

This study has limitations, while providing insightful information about the moderating effect of the People's Republic of China's vocational education law on the relationship between student knowledge of legal compliance and educational climate. The fact that this study was limited to students attending Zhejiang province's higher vocational colleges may limit its applicability to other parts of China, let alone other kinds of vocational institutions across the nation. Because China's regions differ greatly in terms of economics, cultures, and educational systems, research conducted in this area may not fully capture the experiences of vocational students in provinces where the vocational education law is being implemented and where the integration of legal education is at a lower level. Utilizing self-reports to investigate legal compliance awareness

has another drawback. While the use of self-reported measures is everyday and practical, this data collection method has challenges being biased by social desirability biases or inaccuracies in self-perception. For these reasons, questions can be raised about the objective measurement of legal compliance awareness. To better understand the influence of regional variations in the implementation of educational policies and the differential impact of social factors on Legal compliance awareness, the researcher could select vocational colleges in different regions. Next, to provide a richer understanding of student's perceptions and experiences with Legal compliance awareness, a mixed-methods design that included qualitative interviews or focus groups in addition to the quantitative surveys might be considered.

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