

A Research and Reflection on the Concept of Integrity between China and the Western World

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Abstract:

Being honest and creditable is uniquely human moral phenomenon, and both Chinese and Western societies attach importance to it as a fundamental norm in morality. The traditional Chinese concept of integrity is based on small-scale peasant economy and consanguinity, with obvious ethical overtones, pursuing the moral value of self-discipline and personal reflection; while the Western concept of it is based on commodity exchange and religious beliefs, with obvious rational overtones, emphasizing the regulation and supervision of the spirit of the rule of law. Chinese and Western people's conceptualization of integrity have their commonalities and differences. In this paper, we review the similarities and differences between Chinese and Western this mode of thinking, and further analyze and summarize the rationality and limitations of each one, demonstrating that although the Chinese and Western views have obvious heterogeneity, they are complementary to each other. For Chinese society which is still in transition, it is important to promote the construction of a modern civilization that stresses integrity by incorporating the traditional Chinese moral concept of self-discipline and integrity, while drawing on the rational factors embedded in the Western concept.

Keywords:

Concepts of Integrity between the East and West, Similarities and Differences, Progresiveness and Limitations, Integration and Development, Construction of a Society that Stresses Integrity

1. Introduction

The concept of integrity has played an important role in the development of the eastern and the western cultures, and is a topic that cannot be avoided in today's society, as it is the most fundamental quality of morality and ethics. The different socio-historical backgrounds, religious beliefs and cultural environments have incurred obvious differences between Chinese and Western ideas of integrity. By exploring the similarities and differences between Chinese and Western views on this concept and analyzing the limitations and rationality of each, we can have a clearer

understanding of the two views on integrity that arise from different cultural and social contexts. Promoting the construction of integrity is one of the important issues facing society today. By reviewing and reflecting on the Chinese and Western concepts, it is conducive to promote the integration of their essence, thereby promoting the construction of an honest-oriented society in the new era.

2. Similarities between the East and West on the Concept of Integrity

The traditional Chinese concept of integrity is based on the small-scale peasant economy of Chinese feudal society, while that of the Western society is closely related to the development of the commodity and the capitalist economy. Cultural concepts based on different economic foundations have their own cultural representations and specific connotations. The concept of integrity between Chinese and Western societies, as a kind of special culture, has developed some similarities despite the differences in their economic bases and cultural backgrounds.

2.1. Similarity in Connotation

In traditional Chinese thought of integrity, although the meanings of the words “honesty” and “credit” have different emphasis, they can be used in conjunction with each other. After a long period of development, the basic connotation remains relatively stable as honesty and abiding by credit. In China, the relationship between honesty and human beings is explained at the ontological level, that is, integrity is the way of heaven, to pursue integrity is the way of man. The ancient scholars in China regarded integrity as the foundation of the Five Constants and the source of the Hundred Lines.

In the *Annotations on The Doctrine of the Mean*, Zhu Xi has pointed out that “integrity means utter truthfulness without any pretensions or deceit. It is the natural state of the principles of the heaven”. To put it more plainly, honesty is the essence of the Tao of heaven and earth, and man, as the product of heaven and earth, must have the essence of the Tao of heaven, integrity not only points to nature, but most importantly points to man himself, which is the basic standard of dealing with human beings. In Western society, this concept connotes respect for the truth and keeping one’s word. The Latin word that interprets integrity is “bona fides”. The word “fides” comes from the verb “feri”, which means “to have made [3]”. Honesty, integrity and integrity are commonly used to express the connotations of “integrity” in western countries.

The concept of integrity in the West mainly comes from two aspects: the first one comes from people’s religious belief, which means the covenant between human beings and God and requirement that human beings should sincerely believe in God and keep their promises, and the second one can be traced back to the ancient Roman period. With the expansion of overseas trade, economic transactions were made in the form of contracts and laws were enacted to guarantee the fulfillment of honesty, where the word “honesty” usually refers to the spirit of contract. Meantime, contracts are often used to explain people’s relationship with government. In this way, the government’s behavior is restricted and people have the right to end this pact [8].

Western scholars also explain this relationship from the perspective of ontology and explained it as the non-loneliness of existence. Whether it is in religious culture or the principle in economic activities, its basic connotation is being honest and trustworthy.

2.2. Focusing on the Relationship between Interests and Integrity

The pursuit of material interests is an important prerequisite for human existence and development. Marx has pointed out that everything for which a man strives is related to his material interests. Western society has a long tradition of commerce, which has led them to pay close attention to the relationship between honesty and interests at an early stage, forming a “divergence between the teleological and deontological approaches to the pursuit of interests”. The former believes that interests has a governing role over morality, while the latter advocates that morality takes precedence over interests. The focus of the two schools of thought can be summarized as the priority between interests and integrity in interpersonal interactions. The pursuit of material interests and adherence to the code of integrity are mutually reinforcing.

The study of the relationship between them in Chinese society began with the debate on the Righteousness and Benefits during the Spring and Autumn period. In general, the mainstream concept of the relationship between interests and integrity in traditional Chinese ethics is that integrity has a governing role over interests, and interests are subordinate to integrity. In traditional culture, stressing credit is always associated with moral righteousness, while contempt for trust is associated with deviation from righteousness.

2.3. Similar Status in the Respective Society

Both Chinese and Western societies consider integrity to be of moral supremacy [8]. Firstly, in ancient China, the concept of integrity has been seen as a natural law followed by all things in the world, and the pursuit of the realm of supreme integrity was the ultimate realization of the supreme way, that is, unity with heaven and earth. Mencius first elevated integrity to its ontological meaning, namely: “integrity is the way of heaven; thinking about integrity is also the way of man”, believing that this concept is a fundamental attribute inherent in heaven and that striving for integrity and ultimately achieving the state of being in accordance with it is the way of man, as has been explained in *The Doctrine of the Mean* that “integrity is the start and the end of everything; Without integrity, there would be nothing”, which denotes the indispensability of integrity. It has been pointed out in *The Doctrine of the Mean* that “integrity” is the bridge to achieve the unity of heaven and man, and “It is only he, in the world, who possesses absolute truth, who can get to the bottom of the law of his being. He who is able to get to the bottom of the law of his being, will be able to get to the bottom of the law of being of other men. He who is able to get to the bottom of the law of being of men, will be able to get to the bottom of the laws of physical nature. He who is able to get to the bottom of the laws of physical nature, will be able to influence the forces of creation of the Universe. He who can influence the forces of creation of the Universe, is one with the Powers of the Universe.”

Secondly, integrity is a code of conduct that everyone should abide by, and it is a basic guideline for dealing with people in the world. Confucius proposed the “Four Teachings”, and pointed out that “People who do not keep his words is hardly acceptable to be seen as trustworthy and capable of doing anything else”. Confucius took integrity as an important criterion for measuring one’s morality, and in dealing with others in the world, one must be true to one’s own words and be true to his own deeds.

In addition, integrity is regarded as one of the basic guidelines for governing a country. Confucius pointed out that if the ruler of a state loves good faith, the people will not dare not to be sincere, which is to say, if the ruler of a country is honest and trustworthy, a culture of honesty can be developed in the whole society. Confucius pointed out that if the ruler of a country is honest and trustworthy, a culture of honesty can be developed in the whole society. According to Shang Yang, three things make a state governable: the first, law, the second, integrity, and the third, power, and “integrity” is the basic criterion for good governance. Integrity as a moral quality plays an important role in everything from personal cultivation to the governance of a nation in Chinese culture.

The modern Western concept of integrity emphasizes the meaning of “faith”, but, like “integrity” in traditional Chinese integrity thinking, it is the highest principle of ethical norms [8]. “Faith” comes first from the Western religious tradition, which emphasizes the belief and trust of human beings in God. Faith, hope and love are the three theological virtues in the Christian doctrine, and the most basic ethical and moral requirements of Christianity. Together with Plato’s “four virtues” of ancient Greece, which are “reason, justice, temperance and bravery”, they constitute the “Seven Virtues” of Christianity [2]. Integrity is an important principle of economic activity. The Western concept of integrity has always been linked to the trust of contract in economic activity. The idea of contract has profoundly influenced the economic and cultural traditions of the West, and with the development of the commodity economy, integrity has been written into the law and has become an important norm in Western society.

3. Differences between the East and West on the Concept of Integrity

The traditional Chinese idea of integrity is a kind of personal trust based on the society of acquaintances linked by blood and kinship. In contrast, the modern Western idea of integrity is based on the stranger society in the market economy, people practice integrity in the form of contract, so it is a contractual integrity. As a result, while the Chinese and Western integrity culture share some similarities, they also differ in the following aspects.

3.1. Differences in the Scope of Application

The main difference between Chinese and Western views on integrity lies in their respective core concept: one is based on the society of etiquette and favor and the other is the contractual integrity based on the contract society. In terms of the economic basis, the concept of integrity in China has its roots in the agrarian economy, a form of economy that relies on a relatively stable and closed environment in which people mostly know each other and trust each other. Politically, in ancient China, the strict feudal patriarchal system made the relationship between family members, bound by blood and kinship, and the relationship between rulers and ministers above the imperial court the main social relationships in traditional Chinese society. As a result, the scope of traditional Chinese concept of sincerity was limited to the relationship between acquaintances and rulers and subjects, and there were no specific requirements for upholding special integrity for people outside the scope of acquaintances. Thus, in the context of traditional Chinese society, the scope of integrity is relatively limited.

The Western concept of integrity is a kind of contractual integrity based on activities of the contractual market economy and trade, the basic feature of which is to treat things as they are [10]. The formation of contractual integrity in the West is inextricably linked to the development of productivity and cross-regional trade in goods. In this process, people broke away from the interpersonal bonds of geography and blood to enter the public sphere of society, changing from the interactions of acquaintance society to interactions between living beings linked and sustained by contracts. The concept of integrity in the West is based on religion, and through frequent exchanges, commerce and the formation of the capitalist system, the concept of contract took hold. The culture of honesty in Western society is therefore more focused on the common will of equal subjects in social and economic interactions. Therefore, in the context of Western society, integrity has a broader scope of application.

3.2. Differences in Value Orientation

The value of integrity over profit and the value of profit over integrity, as two value orientations, show the different views and measures of morality and profit between Eastern and Western civilizations.

In China, the natural economic model of self-sufficiency has occupied a dominant position for a long time, which has a profound impact on social values. The concept of family and state makes individuals lack the pursuit of individual rights, and the interests of family and state are regarded as overriding personal interests. If a person insists on pursuing self-interest, he will be denied by the mainstream concept of society. In addition, the nature of commerce is profit-oriented, the concept of emphasizing agriculture and suppressing business has occupied a dominant position for a long time, the development of China's commodity economy has been greatly restricted, businessmen have been marginalized for a long time, and their profit-seeking behavior has also been despised by the mainstream concept. Therefore, the Chinese traditional concept of integrity has a strong moral orientation.

The traditional Western concept of integrity emphasizes the mutual benefit. From the very beginning, the Western concept of integrity was based on commodity trading and rooted in the soil of economic life. The basis of mutual trust is the pursuit of common economic interests rather than for interpersonal relations and moral considerations, i.e. "credit in Western society is a contract propped by interests" [2]. In Western countries, people strive for their personal interests and well-being. People use contractual relationships as a means of realizing and maintaining their property rights. Essentially, the motive and purpose of people keeping their promises and complying with contracts is to obtain the personal benefit. The modern Western concept of integrity places more emphasis on 'profit' than the traditional Chinese concept.

3.3. Differences in Ways of Constraint

In traditional Chinese integrity culture, the focus is on the aspect of "honesty", which is considered to be a person's inner virtue and cultivation. The traditional Chinese concept of integrity restrains personal behavior through moral self-discipline, i.e. through the endogenous power of the moral subject's conscience and beliefs, and "the relationship of trust between people is based on belief in each other's character and virtue, and basically does not require the force of law" [2]. The traditional Chinese culture of integrity is inherently ethical, giving integrity itself a high moral

connotation and no real institutional validity. The traditional Chinese culture of integrity is inherently ethical, giving integrity itself a high moral connotation and no real institutional validity. The impact of integrity or lack of integrity is only connected with gain or loss of personal reputation or conscience, and does not serve as an absolute limit on people's behavior.

The Western concept of integrity is not restricted as much by internal moral constraints as by external institutions, which is a value judgment and value choice under the influence of the concept that human beings are inherently evil in nature. When dealing with the problem of integrity, western society often punishes people who break their promises through external mandatory norms, systems and laws. "In the West, honesty is a moral means of heteronomy and a moral concept based on contract. In order to protect the transfer and transaction of property between parties, people sign contracts on a voluntary basis [6]." Because of this contractual relationship and the legal relationship formed with the establishment of the contract, Westerners are more bound by the law than by the conscience of both parties in the process of practicing integrity.

4. A Dialectical Analysis of Chinese and Western Concepts on Integrity

The ideas of integrity in Chinese and Western societies are rooted in social environments with different economic bases and cultural traditions, and are value judgments and choices made based on different cultural contexts. The two types of integrity concepts have both rationality and shortcomings. A dialectical analysis of Chinese and Western integrity concepts is significant in promoting the construction of integrity culture in China.

4.1. The Progressiveness and Limitations of Traditional Chinese Integrity Concept

4.1.1. The Progressive Nature of Traditional Chinese Integrity Concept

Firstly, in traditional integrity thought, the proper functioning of the integrity mechanism depends on the trust in the virtues of others. This concept helps to promote the formation of a chain of mutual trust in communication and interpersonal exchanges, and it is a moral self-discipline that does not require external legal constraints. If a person violates the principle of integrity, his conscience will be condemned and will be despised by others in social relations. In the era of economic globalization, honesty needs both the rule of law and moral guidance, otherwise the society will fall into chaos because of the wanton behavior of legal speculators.

Secondly, different from the West, traditional Chinese integrity thinking is bridged by kinship and emotion, and in this cultural context, people attach more importance to collective interests. In order to obtain a stable social order, people will strive to maintain the collective interest and take the initiative to practice integrity, thus creating a harmonious social atmosphere, which can promote the overall development of society while facilitating the realization of individual interests.

Finally, traditional integrity concept has a distinctly moral character, insisting on the primacy of morality between 'righteousness' and 'profit'. In the context of market economy and economic globalization, the temptation of money has caused people to lose themselves, resulting in the unhealthy practice of money worship and being profit-oriented. If we can bring into play the connotation of righteousness in

traditional integrity thinking, we can effectively curb the prevalence of blind pursuit of profit.

4.1.2. The Limitations of Traditional Chinese Concept on Integrity

First of all, traditional integrity concept is largely determined by kinship and favor, and the circle of people interacting with each other is mostly restricted to acquaintances. This also leads to a limited scope of trust. Mistrust is shown towards others who are outside the scope of regular interaction. With the development of the market economy and the current trend of globalization, the scope of trust needs to be expanded, and the limitations of traditional acquaintance trust and emotional trust will become increasingly prominent, showing the characteristics of relative narrowness and closedness, which to a certain extent restricts the normal development of economic and social activities.

Secondly, traditional integrity thinking arose in a social context where the patriarchal system was dominant, making traditional integrity thinking distinctly hierarchical, emphasizing that ministers should be completely loyal and honest to their rulers, sons to their fathers, brothers to their brothers and wives to their husbands, and the traditional concept of integrity became a tool to maintain the patriarchal hierarchy. And the equality of honesty between people is missing.

Finally, traditional integrity emphasizes moral self-discipline and lacks external legal and institutional constraints, and lacks an effective prevention mechanism for the credit risk. In traditional society of China, the lack of comprehensive legal mechanism to punish breach of credit means that in the event of a breach of it, the person who has broken the credit is more likely to be condemned by his or her conscience, while the interests of the other party are difficult to protect.

4.2. The Progressiveness and Limitations of Integrity Concept in the Western World

4.2.1. The Progressive Nature of Integrity Concept in the Western World

Firstly, the modern Western concept of integrity is broader in its scope of application and meets the needs of the basic features of the international economic situation in the era of globalization. The Western concept of integrity is based on the idea of contract, which allows people to go beyond the network of social relations linked by blood ties into the public sphere, which makes it possible to establish universal rules of integrity between people and even between countries.

Secondly, people in Western societies attach great importance to the acquisition and use of personal and business credentials, and the modern Western concept of integrity places greater emphasis on the role of reason. Through rational analysis, people can find better partners, providing important guarantees for the orderly development of cooperation and the output of benefits. By understanding the integrity of the partner, it is possible to keep promises and act in accordance with contracts in the common interest of both parties. At the same time, the “rational” core of the Western concept of integrity can also avoid unnecessary entanglements due to favoritism. In China, human relations exist everywhere, and the intricate network of favor makes it more difficult to form a broad and powerful integrity mechanism, leading to corruption and malfeasance, etc. If we can learn from the Western tradition of attaching more importance to rationality, it will provide the necessary help to solve this problem.

In addition, the modern Western concept of integrity is based on the concept of equality for all, in contrast to the traditional Chinese concept of integrity with its obvious hierarchical connotations. With the development of the market economy, equal contractual relations allow individuals to obtain more economic benefits in the form of mutually beneficial cooperation, which increases the motivation of those who are active in the market economy to voluntarily enter into agreements and consciously abide by the contracts and fulfil their promises under the principle of equality and mutual benefit.

Finally, the modern Western concept of integrity depends on the law as its maintenance mechanism, which serves as a strong guarantee [12]. If people break a contract, they will be sanctioned by law, and people will regulate their own behavior because of the external legal restrictions, making up for the deficiencies in our traditional concept of honesty, which relies mainly on self-reflection to facilitate honest behavior. With the protection of the law, the risks and losses faced by either party to a transaction can be reduced, and people are more willing to engage in economic transactions with strangers.

4.2.2. The Limitations of Integrity Concept in the Western World

The economic crisis that swept the world in 2008 was closely linked to the ‘sub-prime’ mortgage crisis in the United States. Subprime mortgages are home loans made to borrowers with low credit scores and a high risk of default. The US government encouraged people to take out loans to stimulate overspending, the Federal Reserve lowered the benchmark interest rate several times, while housing prices kept going up and people wanted them to keep going up, and banks lent to low-credit borrowers for profit. Because of the vicious cycle, it led to a downturn in the economy, plummeting house prices, rising defaults among banks, a break in the capital chain and eventually a crisis [11]. The outbreak of the crisis was closely linked to the credit crisis. The financial crisis that originated in the United States and eventually swept the world exposed the flaws in the Western concept of integrity:

Firstly, unlike China’s traditional concept of integrity, the modern Western concept of integrity places insufficient emphasis on moral self-discipline. Western countries rely on the development of industry and commerce to grow gradually, coupled with the increasing trend of economic globalization, making it common in Western societies for people to choose to abide by a code of integrity in order to maximize their profit, i.e. integrity for profit. The lack of internal self-discipline in Western societies has led to an increase in speculative activities and a serious impact on the existing integrity system, making it difficult to break out of the law of historical cycles. The American scholar Fukuyama has also pointed out that although contracts are important, the most effective organizations are those that share common ethical values, and that such associations do not need rigorous contracts and legal texts to regulate relations between members, because an innate moral consensus already gives members of the association a basis for trusting each other [4]. Western contractual integrity not only lacks the intrinsic constraints of ‘goodness’ and ‘ethics’, but also ignores the moral and ethical significance of integrity itself.

Secondly, the modern Western concept of integrity is overly concerned with rationality [8]. Although the “rational” factor in the Western integrity culture overcomes the drawbacks brought by the “emotional” factor in our traditional integrity culture, however, with the rapid development of capitalism, people have

abandoned their emotions and resorted to any means to achieve their goals, eventually losing their true “rationality” due to the infinite expansion of desires. The only way to achieve an organic fusion of “reason” and “sensitivity” is to reconcile them with a certain amount of rational cognitive effort.

Finally, the excessive pursuit of profit inevitably leads to a widespread fraudulent and criminal mentality, giving rise to dishonesty such as falsification. Charles Taylor pointed out that “the dark side of individualism in Western social life is self-centredness, which makes our lives both banal and narrow, and makes our lives more lacking in meaning and less caring for others and society [2]”, and the alienation of contractual integrity causes the separation of the concept of integrity from social practice, and the moral personality connotation of integrity is dissolved.

5. Insights from Chinese and Western Cultures of Integrity

Through a comparison of the Chinese and Western cultures of integrity, the similarities and differences between the two are clarified, and a more comprehensive understanding of the rationality and limitations of the two cultures of integrity is gained. At present, to promote the construction and development of a new type of society in China, the culture of integrity is indispensable. In the process of promoting the construction of an integrity culture in the new era, while fully absorbing the essence of China’s traditional integrity thinking, we should also seriously draw on the essence of modern Western integrity concepts to establish a new era of integrity culture system.

5.1. Promoting the Integration and Innovation of Chinese and Western Concepts of Integrity

Firstly, traditional Chinese integrity thinking focuses more on the aspect of “honesty”, i.e. emphasizing the guidance of the subject’s honest practice through internal moral self-discipline and self-reflection, while modern Western concept focuses more on the meaning of “faith”, emphasizing the external system and legal provisions to regulate individual integrity behavior. The organic combination of the different concerns of Eastern and Western integrity thought will provide a more solid theoretical guidance for the construction of integrity culture in the new era in China.

The construction of a contemporary society that stresses integrity requires the formation of a solid internal virtue consciousness, and only by obtaining the support of individuals’ internal virtues can honest behavior be practiced [8]. Guiding people to practice honest behavior and oppose untrustworthy ones in terms of values and morals is conducive to creating a favorable atmosphere where integrity is a matter of pride and untrustworthiness is a matter of shame. In the market economy, individuals must be truly honest in order to maintain and promote their legitimate interests, i.e.: internal cultivation and external practice go hand in hand. Internal cultivation relies on establishing a holistic view on integrity and consciously cultivating the virtue of integrity; external practice means that when interacting with others, one consciously abides by the rules and regulations of integrity, develops one’s own integrity and virtue, and actively practices the concept of integrity. Through the guidance of society and individual efforts, integrity will become a popular trend in the whole society.

Secondly, there is a need to promote the establishment of a social integrity climate with contractual integrity as the core, and supplemented by human integrity. In the market economy, although integrity itself is not the material capital that directly

creates economic benefits, integrity has become an important factor that can actually influence and indirectly promote economic benefits [12]. The economic foundation determines the superstructure, and the concept of contractual integrity has gradually formed on the basis of China's socialist market economy. At the same time, different from the concepts and national conditions in the West, China is a country that stresses human relations, which requires a modernized reconciliation of traditional culture or concepts to find the best fit between contractual integrity and human integrity, providing a solid conceptual support for the modernization of China.

Finally, in the context of socialist market economy, we should strive to give equal importance to integrity and profit. Our traditional view of integrity over profit is not holistically applicable to Chinese society in the context of economic globalization, because pursuing integrity over seeking profit will gradually sap people's motivation to strive for it, which is not conducive to the development of our economy. The relative emphasis on profit over integrity in Western societies can inspire people to pursue material interests, but the relative lack of integrity has given rise to undesirable trends such as money-worship and hedonism, and the pursuit of profit among people has caused great damage to the entire social atmosphere and not conforms to our traditional moral values. In view of this, only by reasonably combining the two concepts of integrity and profit, not neglecting integrity while pursuing profit, and safeguarding the legitimate interests and legal rights of individuals while pursuing integrity, can we give full play to the enthusiasm of individuals and inject inexhaustible impetus into the development of social economy.

5.2. Strengthening the Mechanism regarding Integrity

The construction of the legal system provides strong external guarantee for the practice of integrity. As China's development enters a new era, it is necessary to improve the laws and regulations relating to integrity, and to severely punish the breach of integrity, making people realize the cost of breach is much greater than the cost of upholding it. At present, food safety is of great concern in China. The reason is that the illegal traders often exploit the loopholes of law, and the price of losing integrity is far lower than the illegal profits they get by breaking the principle of integrity. In the case that an individual's internal moral sense cannot restrain the illegal actors, if the external rules cannot play the role of mandatory constraints and norms timely and effectively, the illegal actors will not be aware of the seriousness of his practice, the illegal acts therefore cannot be curbed. To deal with the problem of food safety, we should perfect the existing laws and regulations, firmly establish the dignity of the law, and increase the risk and cost of those who break the principle of integrity so as to form a good integrity stipulation system in which there are laws to abide by and to be strictly enforced, and where the law-breakers must be prosecuted.

In addition to strengthening laws and providing strong external support for the practice of integrity, there is also a need to form an integrity monitoring system based on institutions and guaranteed by ethics. In traditional Chinese ethical culture, integrity is an ethic consisting of trust in personality and kinship (acquaintance), with emphasis on the conduct and self-discipline of the actor [9]. Traditional integrity culture itself has a strong ethical and moral orientation. The practice of integrity shows a clear moral overtone, and the way of restraint relies mainly on the subject's own morality and conscience, lacking strong external regulation and interest constraints, which leads to the principle of integrity not being implemented in a broader scope. For this reason, it is necessary to continuously improve the credit

supervision mechanism of enterprises and individuals, and strengthen the construction of credit enquiry system.

By fulfilling their obligations of integrity in economic exchanges, enterprises contribute to the improvement of the credit condition of society as a whole. Meanwhile, the personal credit system is the cell as well as the basis for the establishment of a sound social credit system. A personal credit system is a series of legally valid profiles and rules of conduct for proving and verifying an individual's creditworthiness. A well-developed personal credit system is able to record an individual's integrity performance in a timely manner and at the same time to disseminate the record that shows the lack of integrity to society within a certain scope and for a certain period of time. This approach uses the pressure of institutional penalties and the pressure of public opinion created by the public disclosure of the breach of trust to awaken the moral consciousness of the defaulters or potential defaulters and make them more conscious of their behaviors. A scientific and reasonable assessment of the integrity record of individuals and companies will help social policy makers and decision makers make the right choices. By drawing on the regulatory system for integrity in modern Western societies and form a system of integrity supervision based on institutions and laws, with moral reflection and self-restraint as guarantees, we can effectively overcome the insufficiency in the integrity guarantee mechanisms in China and the West, thus forming a sound integrity statute system, creating an atmosphere of integrity and trustworthiness in the whole society and promoting the orderly function of the economy and society.

In addition to the construction of a national legal system and integrity system at the macro level, schools, as the front-line of education and cultivation, also play the role of promoting and improving the integrity mechanism of society at the micro level. Schools should strive to form a comprehensive integrity education system comprising preparation for integrity, formulation and implementation of integrity rules, evaluation of integrity and punishment for breach of integrity, and gradually form a moral education model with four levels of formation, cognition, emotion and sentiment, so that students can consciously regulate their own behavior and cultivate their integrity awareness, and consciously practice integrity when they step into the society.

5.3. Innovations in the Practice of Integrity

In addition to conceptual and institutional adjustments, innovations are also needed in practice field. While theoretical innovations and institutional norms and constraints have an implicit nature and serves to regulate people's behavior, practice, with an external character, often manifests itself through external actions, and is a concrete representation of an individual's moral concept, the self-cultivation as well as external rules functioning together.

Firstly, it is necessary to facilitate the publicity of integrity, of which moral practice is the most effective means. In the theory of ideological and political education, environment and moral education are closely related, and morality is deeply influenced by the environment, of which the influence of campus environment is particularly emphasized [1]. Schools should attach importance to the cultivation of students' concept of integrity, which needs adjustments to the previous instillation mode and the application of moral and integrity education with different teaching contents according to the age of the educated. In addition, the cultivation of students' consciousness of integrity through practical activities is also needed, which is helpful

to guide students to realize the unity of knowledge and practice, and finally establish the concept of integrity and of honor and disgrace. On the other hand, the power of role models must be brought into full play. At home and school, parents and teachers should set an example of honesty and integrity, so that children can make an actual assessment of the words and manners they observe and thus practice the principle of integrity. Education should be conducted not only in schools for students, but also in all walks of life for each social member by electing role models and industry pioneers in every sector to gradually change the social atmosphere and shape the image of integrity, and the concept of integrity may therefore take root in the hearts of people.

Secondly, the penalties for breach of integrity should be tightened. Most defaulters take advantage of the lack of external forces, such as the restraint of law and social opinion, and choose to breach their trust. For this reason, the defaulters and their behavior of the breach of integrity need to be made public and recorded in their personal credit records, so that the losses caused by the breach of integrity are far greater than the benefits gained by the breach of it. The huge loss will affect the breaker's interests and can effectively put an end to the breach of integrity [8]. In the pursuit of profit, without the necessary internal moral self-reflection and strong external legal restraints, people often lose their way due to the blind pursuit of maximum profit and eventually fall into the abyss of lust, becoming enslaved by the profit and committing unethical and untrustworthy acts that touch the bottom line of the law. Social psychology believes that human psychological activities and daily behavior are the result of interrelated behavioral fields that occur in a certain living space [7], and that the interrelated behavioral fields constitute a field that exerts a general constraint on human consciousness and behavior through external forces such as social opinion [13]. Therefore, intensifying punishment and creating a social field that is in line with the construction of an honest society in the new era can form a powerful deterrent and discipline for defaulters and potential defaulters, effectively prevent members of society from nursing opportunistic ideas, avoid the "broken windows effect" in the field of integrity, and guarantee the gradual formation of a social culture of integrity and trustworthiness, which ensures the gradual formation of an honest and trustworthy society.

Finally, there is a need to establish models of integrity and to identify benchmarks for the professional development of people in all fields. Practical innovations need to include the promotion of ethical practices of integrity, the prevention and punishment of breach of trust, as well as the recognition and commendation of trustworthy people and their integrate behaviors. By setting a moral example for people, trustworthy people are able to show that keeping the words can promote one's own career and gain social recognition as well. Establishing a typical example of integrity is conducive to guiding people's daily behavior and encouraging them to strive to be integrate role models. As has been conveyed by the saying that if one sheep leaps over the ditch, all the rest will follow. A role model can not only regulate people's words and deeds, but can also foster faith in their hearts and minds, and eventually make the faith widespread in the whole society. When integrity becomes the faith that all social members pursue, the society can run more smoothly and the overall social atmosphere will change for the better.

6. Conclusions

Integrity can regulate interpersonal relationships and maintain social stability. In this paper, the similarities and differences between Chinese and Western integrity

concepts, as well as the cultural and social mechanisms lying behind the formation of the concept have been reviewed and discussed. In this paper, the ways to meet the requirements of building integrity in the new era have been reviewed from three perspectives, which are the integration and innovation of concepts, the strengthening of institutional construction and the promotion of practical innovation, so as to form a closed loop of integrity cultivation mechanism which is promoted by concept renewal, education and inculcation and institutional guarantee, by which we can expect to create an atmosphere of integrity to the maximum extent, and to promote the construction of an honest society in the new era by prompting all members of society to abide by the awareness of integrity and the practice of it. The objective of this paper is to provide macro suggestions of fostering an atmosphere in which the whole society can practice the concept of integrity from conceptual, institutional and practical perspectives. However, in view of the increasingly close communication between people in the information age and globalization, and the inevitable impact of interpersonal communication in the field of values, the cultivation and implementation of the concept of integrity should follow the characteristics of the times, and continue to deepen and subdivide the corresponding specific measures, so that the cultivation and guarantee mechanism of integrity can be made more effective. The development and implementation of the concept of integrity is advised to follow the characteristics of the times, and to subdivide the specific measures to make the formation and guarantee mechanism of integrity increasingly diverse. To this end, more in-depth research is needed to test the feasibility of integrity-building strategies and mechanisms from different perspectives and with practical examples.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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