An Empirical Study on the Employment Quality of Graduates from Applied Undergraduate Institutions in a Three-Dimensional Capital Perspective

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Abstract. Three-dimensional capital refers to human capital, social capital, and psychological capital. To explore the impact of "three-dimensional capital" on the employment quality of graduates from applied undergraduate institutions, this study collected questionnaires from 300 graduates across four such institutions and constructed an analytical model based on the data. Findings indicate that the hypothesis of a positive influence of three-dimensional capital on graduate employment quality is supported.The implications are: To enhance the employment quality of graduates from applied undergraduate institutions, schools should heighten awareness of employment challenges, adapt to changes in the employment environment, strengthen employment capabilities, and fully leverage three-dimensional capital resources to improve graduate employment quality: First, diligently cultivate academic human capital while enriching extracurricular practical activities to enhance practical human capital; Second, schools should provide guidance to parents to improve students' ascribed social capital; Third, schools should improve employment mechanisms to enhance acquired social capital.

Keywords: three-dimensional capital; applied undergraduate institutions; employment quality

1 Introduction

With rising educational attainment, widespread access, and socioeconomic and cultural development, applied undergraduate institutions have become a vital component of higher education and a cradle for cultivating outstanding talent. Concurrently, the implementation of university enrollment expansion policies in recent years has led to rapid growth in the number and scale of these institutions, directly resulting in a year-on-year increase in graduate numbers and intensifying competition in the job market [1].

As new entrants to the labor market, the employment quality of university graduates not only impacts their personal career development and quality of life but also signif-

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icantly influences social stability and sustainable economic growth. Graduates with high-quality employment often exhibit greater work motivation, loyalty, and performance, making them more likely to achieve career success. Conversely, low employment quality may lead to increased employee turnover, reduced work efficiency, and even affect talent reserves and development across entire industries [2].Therefore, thoroughly investigating the factors affecting the employment quality of college graduates holds significant practical importance for universities to optimize talent cultivation models, enterprises to formulate reasonable human resource strategies, and graduates to enhance their own career adaptability.

This paper adopts a three-dimensional capital perspective and randomly selects graduates from several applied undergraduate institutions in Northeast China, Central China, and Southwest China as research samples to explore the relationship between three-dimensional capital and employment quality.

2 Literature Review

Human capital refers to one of the factors of production. Brian Ayn et al. (2009) propose that human capital denotes the knowledge, skills, and experience generated through investments in education and training [3]. Huang Jingbao (2012) further subdivided human capital into seven measurable indicators: university, academic discipline, political affiliation, academic ranking, honor certificates, student leadership roles, and internship experience [4]. Yang Huiqin and Liu Hui (2013) contend that human capital influences individual employment levels through education, training, and social practice [5]. Integrating the above literature analysis, this study adopts the human capital scale developed by scholars Shi Hongmei et al. (2017) [6].

Social capital essentially constitutes a reciprocal exchange relationship, and it is precisely this trust-based, mutually beneficial exchange that provides individuals with greater resources during their career development [7]. Lin Nan (2017) quantifies social capital into two fundamental indicators: one reflecting the structural relationships within an individual's social network, and the other measuring an individual's social relationships or mobilizable social capital [8].

This study hypothesizes that college students' social capital primarily relies on two main sources: family and school. Family resources—including parents' social connections, occupations, and social status—are inherently innate for students and significantly influence the expansion of their social networks[9].Second, the school provides resources acquired during the learning and development process, which, unlike family resources, are acquired later in life and also play a crucial role in career development [10].

This paper adopts the seven-item scale developed by scholar Zhao Jianguo (2017) to measure the social capital of Chinese college students [11].Lutens et al. (2005) define psychological capital as a measurable, developable, and motivatable positive psychological capacity that enhances work performance [12]. For university students, psychological capital influences employment quality by fostering a positive mindset dur-

ing job searches—including composure when addressing challenges, an optimistic outlook toward future uncertainties, and proactive action [13].

This study employs Loutans' (2005) psychological capital scale, selecting 10 items such as "I always complete tasks excellently" and "When situations are uncertain, I always expect good outcomes" to assess university students' psychological states regarding employment.For employment quality assessment, the study referenced Professor Wang Ting's (2015) employment satisfaction scale, incorporating evaluations such as "Your assessment of career prospects" and "Housing provident fund contribution levels" [14]. Ultimately, this paper proposes the hypothesis: Three-dimensional capital significantly influences the employment quality of college students.

3 Research Hypotheses and Model Construction

3.1 Research Hypotheses

Human capital theory posits that graduates can accumulate human capital investments through channels such as formal education and social practice, which plays a crucial role in determining an individual's employment quality and wage levels [15].In the labor market, some employers prefer to recruit students with outstanding academic performance, even treating major rankings as a key criterion for hiring. Therefore, this paper proposes Research Hypothesis 1.

Research Hypothesis 1: A positive relationship exists between the human capital of graduates from applied undergraduate institutions and their employment quality.

Regarding social capital, Coleman defines it as "a network of potential resources" [16].For graduates, social capital typically refers to employment assistance provided by families and schools. Family-based capital is often innate, while school-based capital can be acquired through personal effort [17].Therefore, both innate social capital and school-based capital significantly influence graduates' employment quality. Consequently, Research Hypothesis 2 and Research Hypothesis 3 are proposed.

Research Hypothesis 2: There exists a positive relationship between the social capital of graduates from applied undergraduate institutions and their employment quality.

Research Hypothesis 3: The positive relationship between human capital and employment quality among graduates of applied undergraduate institutions is stronger than the positive relationship between social capital and employment quality.

Research on psychological capital originated in organizational studies. The accumulation of psychological capital manifests primarily in positive mindset, self-confidence, and resilience. Bandura posits that individuals with high psychological capital possess greater positive energy to overcome challenges, stronger confidence in completing tasks, higher job satisfaction, and enhanced career well-being [18]. Consequently, Research Hypothesis 4 is proposed.

Research Hypothesis 4: There exists a positive relationship between the psychological capital of graduates from applied undergraduate institutions and their employment quality.

3.2 Research Model Construction

This study constructs a structural diagram illustrating the influence of three-dimensional capital on graduate employment quality, using randomly selected graduates from applied undergraduate institutions in Northeast, Central, and Southwest China as research subjects. The independent variable is three-dimensional capital, and the dependent variable is graduate employment quality, as shown in Fig 1.

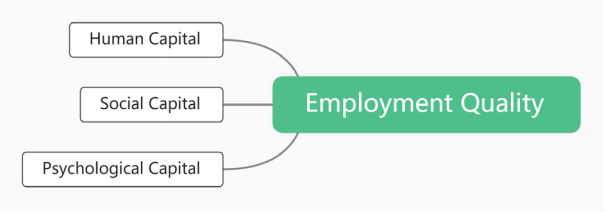

Fig. 1. Employment Quality Model

The model formula is: Employment Quality = 0.718 + 0.504*Human Capital Investment + 0.323*Social Capital Investment

3.3 Questionnaire Design

Through literature review and reference to previous studies on employment quality, designed a survey questionnaire based on graduates' human capital, social capital, and psychological capital. The questionnaire details are presented in Table 1. The design of the employment quality dimensions primarily integrates graduates' subjective perceptions of their job satisfaction, encompassing nine aspects: geographical environment of the workplace, evaluation of company size, salary, benefits, social insurance, housing provident fund, professional training opportunities, promotion prospects, and alignment between job role and personal interests.

Table 1. Survey Questionnaire Design Dimensions

Dimension	Definition	Item
Basic Information	Gender, Education Level, Major, Household Registration, Political Affiliation	1-5
Current Employment Quality	Evaluation of workplace location, company size, salary, benefits, social insurance, housing fund, training opportunities, promotion prospects, and job-interest alignment	6-15
Human Capital Investment Status	Academic performance during school, scholarship level, competition level, number of clubs participated in, part-time work experience	16-21
Social Capital Investment Status	Parents' occupation and education level, effective employment channels provided by friends and school	22-27
Psychological capital investment status	Self-confidence in facing work and challenges, problem-solving approaches and attitudes	28-35

4 Empirical Analysis of Factors Influencing Employment Quality Among Graduates of Applied Undergraduate Institutions

4.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Table 2. Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Variable Name	Sample Size	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation	Mean
Current Status of Pressing Quality	300	1	5	0.732	3.616
Human Capital Investment Status	300	1	5	0.882	3.445
Social Capital Investment Status	300	1.375	5	0.716	3.593
sychological Capital Investment Status	300	1	4.889	0.613	2.514

As shown in Table 2, the sample size for the variable "Current Employment Quality" is 300. The minimum value reflecting the current employment quality status is 1.0, the maximum value is 5.0, the mean is 3.616, and the standard deviation is 0.732. In the statistical analysis of the "Human Capital Investment Status," the minimum value is 1.0, the maximum value is 5.0, the mean is 3.445, and the standard deviation is 0.882.For the sample statistics of social capital investment status, the minimum value was 1.375, the maximum value was 5.0, the mean was 3.593, and the standard deviation was 0.716.In the sample statistics for psychological capital investment status, the minimum value is 1.0, the maximum value is 4.889, the mean is 2.514, and the standard deviation is 0.613. In summary, the standard deviation of each variable is less than 1, indicating relative stability of the sample. The means are all greater than 3, suggesting a favorable overall level of the sample.

4.2 Sample Characteristics Analysis

Table 3. Sample Characteristics Analysis

Frequency Analysis Variable	Option	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
1. Your Gender	1	78	26.000%	26.000%
	2	222	74.000%	100.000%
2. Your major belongs to	1	276	92.000%	92.000%
	2	24	8.000%	100.000%
3. The level of education you are pursuing is	1	285	95.000%	95.000%
	2	15	5.000%	100.000%
4. Your registered residence is located in	1	137	45.667%	45.667%
	2	163	54.333%	100.000%
5. Your political affiliation is	1	46	15.333%	15.333%
	2	222	74.000%	89.333%
	3	30	10.000%	99.333%
	4	2	0.667%	100.000%

Frequency analysis reveals(As shown in Table 3) that among genders, males account for 78 cases (26.00%), while females account for 222 cases (74.00%). Regarding academic disciplines, 276 cases (92.00%) belong to the humanities and social sciences, while 24 cases (8.00%) belong to the natural sciences.Regarding academic level, 285 respondents (95.00%) were pursuing undergraduate degrees, while 15 (5.00%) were pursuing master's degrees. In terms of household registration, 137 respondents (45.67%) held urban household registration, and 163 (54.33%) held rural household registration.Political affiliation: 46 respondents (15.33%) were Communist Party members; 222 respondents (74.00%) were Communist Youth League members; 30 respondents (10.00%) had no political affiliation. Cumulative total: 99.33%.5. Two respondents (0.67%) identified as "Other 4," bringing the cumulative total to 100.00%. Overall, the sample data distribution is reasonably balanced, facilitating further research on the issues.

4.3 Reliability and Validity Analysis

Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was employed for reliability analysis in this study. The final coefficient value exceeded 0.7, indicating that the reliability of the questionnaire meets requirements with high internal consistency, permitting further analysis.

Table 4. Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Analysis		
Number of Items	Sample Size	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
37	300	0.940

As shown in Table 4, the data comprises 34 items with a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.94, meeting the standard of exceeding 0.7. This indicates satisfactory results and stable test performance, thereby demonstrating the high reliability quality of the research data.

Table 5. Validity Analysis

	KMO Value	0.865
Bartlett's Sphericity Test	Approximate Chi-Square	5283.806
	df	406
	P	0.000

According to the validity analysis results shown in Table 5, validity verification was conducted using KMO and Bartlett's tests. As shown in the table: the KMO value for the survey data was 0.865, exceeding the 0.7 standard, indicating that the questionnaire is suitable for factor analysis and possesses a sound validity structure.

4.4 Factor Analysis of Three-Dimensional Capital and Employment Quality

Table 6. Variance Explained

Factor Number	Characteristic Root			Variance Explained After Rotation		
	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained %	Cumulative %	Eigenroot	Variance Explained %	Cumulative %
1	8.472	29.215	29.215	8.472	29.215	29.215
2	3.182	10.973	40.188	3.182	10.973	40.188
3	2.854	9.843	50.031	2.854	9.843	50.031
4	1.755	6.051	56.082	1.755	6.051	56.082
5	1.611	5.554	61.636	1.611	5.554	61.636
6	1.348	4.649	66.285	1.348	4.649	66.285
7	1.204	4.151	70.437	1.204	4.151	70.437
8	0.858	2.960	73.397	-	-	-
9	0.735	2.533	75.930	-	-	-
10	0.720	2.484	78.414	-	-	-
12	0.539	1.859	82.407	-	-	-
13	0.526	1.814	84.221	-	-	-
14	0.481	1.660	85.880	-	-	-
15	0.459	1.581	87.462	-	-	-
16	0.440	1.516	88.978	-	-	-
17	0.409	1.409	90.387	-	-	-
18	0.362	1.249	91.637	-	-	-
19	0.324	1.119	92.755	-	-	-
20	0.306	1.054	93.809	-	-	-
21	0.293	1.009	94.818	-	-	-
22	0.275	0.947	95.765	-	-	-
23	0.247	0.852	96.616	-	-	-
24	0.224	0.772	97.388	-	-	-
25	0.217	0.747	98.135	-	-	-
26	0.178	0.615	98.750	-	-	-
27	0.161	0.557	99.306	-	-	-
28	0.111	0.381	99.688	-	-	-
29	0.091	0.312	100.000	-	-	-

According to the results shown in Table 6, a total of 7 factors were extracted, all with eigenvalues greater than 1. After rotation, these seven factors explain the following percentages of variance: 29.215%, 10.973%, 9.843%, 6.051%, 5.554%, 4.649%, and 4.151%, respectively. The cumulative variance explained reaches 70.437%.

Table 7. Factor Loadings

Name	Factor Loadings						
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7
6. How would you rate your workplace's geographical environment? ( )	0.649	0.194	-0.024	-0.003	0.143	0.065	-0.005
7. Your assessment of your organization's size ( )	0.764	0.187	-0.047	-0.021	0.014	0.086	0.037
8. Your evaluation of your benefits ( )	0.823	0.139	0.037	0.023	0.028	0.093	0.076
9. High labor compensation ( )	0.786	0.043	-0.016	-0.009	0.139	0.094	0.018
10. High social insurance coverage rate ( )	0.852	0.115	0.074	0.018	-0.054	0.156	-0.029
11. Housing provident fund high ( )	0.83	0.096	0.088	0.043	0.018	0.144	-0.088
12. Plenty of vocational training opportunities ( )	0.815	0.209	0.069	0.075	-0.007	0.108	-0.09
13. Plenty of promotion opportunities ( )	0.838	0.112	0.034	0.024	0.062	0.119	-0.009
14. High interest-job fit ( )	0.72	0.185	0.096	0.024	0.036	0.234	0.065
15.Your academic ranking during your school years was ( ) in your class.	0.062	0.198	0.024	0.724	-0.028	0.067	-0.093
16. Highest scholarship level you received during your studies ( )	-0.032	0.034	0.023	0.846	0.003	0.104	0.144
17.Highest level of award you received for participating in activities during your time at school ( )	0.048	0.081	0.091	0.737	0.094	-0.14	0.142
18.Number of student clubs you joined during your time at school ( )	-0.032	0.166	0.144	0.146	0.059	0.023	0.758
19.Number of off-campus part-time jobs or internships you held during your studies ( )	0.005	0.061	-0.037	0.032	-0.069	0.033	0.825
20.Your father's level of education is ( )	0.012	0.036	0.809	0.049	0.065	0.091	0.063
21. Your mother's level of education is ( )	0.093	0.034	0.841	0.094	0.018	0.046	0.064
22. Your father's occupation is ( )	0.029	0.033	0.882	0.013	0.007	0.029	-0.01
23. Your mother's occupation is ( )	0.047	0.037	0.886	-0.007	-0.007	-0.029	-0.011
24.Your school and college provided professional and timely career guidance ( )	0.292	0.235	0.11	0.014	0.059	0.82	0.044
25.Your school has a large number of long-term partner organizations that come to campus for recruitment ( )	0.295	0.238	0.02	0.021	0.11	0.802	-0.001
26.Your instructor has provided you with an effective job recommendation ( )	0.296	0.214	0.039	0.01	0.052	0.806	0.038
27. Bad experiences can leave me feeling down for a long time ( )	0.11	0.07	0.095	0.062	0.848	0.091	-0.09
28. I rarely let life's unpleasantness bother me ( )	0.135	0.69	-0.012	0.046	-0.117	0.219	0.019
29.When things don't go my way, I tend to get down in the dumps ( )	0.104	-0.04	-0.013	0.003	0.854	0.06	0.064
30. I always complete tasks excellently ( )	0.242	0.746	0.029	0.2	-0.025	0.09	0.063
31. I enjoy taking on difficult and challenging tasks ( )	0.307	0.696	-0.029	-0.005	0.226	0.109	0.113
32.When facing adversity, I actively try different strategies ( )	0.176	0.827	0.116	0.087	0.033	0.094	0.055
33.I am working hard to achieve my goals ( )	0.109	0.847	0.061	0.068	0.016	0.115	0.032
34. I pursue my goals with confidence ( )	0.165	0.852	0.013	0.05	-0.005	0.104	0.066

Note: Blue indicates absolute load factor values greater than 0.5

The scale dimensions encompass institutional conditions, personal psychology, family background, academic performance, emotional traits, school support, and practical experience, forming a relatively comprehensive framework of factors influ-

encing university student employment. As shown in Table 7, high factor loadings (mostly >0.7) indicate good structural validity of the scale.

4.5 Correlation Analysis Between Three-Dimensional Capital and Employment Quality

Correlation analysis examines the dependency relationships between variables. This study employs Pearson's correlation coefficient method for analysis.

Table 8. Correlation Analysis

Pearson Correlation Analysis		Human Capital Investment Status	Social Capital Investment Status	Psychological Capital Investment Status
Current Status of Stress Quality	Correlation Coefficient	0.852***	0.786***	0.110
	p-value	0.000	0.000	0.056

*p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

Correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between current employment quality and human capital investment (r=0.852, p=0.000<0.05). Similarly, the correlation analysis between current employment quality and social capital investment also showed a significant positive relationship (r=0.786, p=0.000<0.05).

Comprehensive analysis indicates that the correlation between human capital investment and employment quality is significantly stronger than that between social capital investment and employment quality. However, the correlation analysis between current employment quality and psychological capital investment status is not significant (r=0.110, p=0.056>0.05).As shown in Table 8.

4.6 Regression Analysis of Human Capital, Social Capital, and Employment Quality

The findings above establish that human capital and social capital among the three-dimensional capital variables are correlated with employment quality, laying a solid foundation for regression analysis.

As shown in Table 9: The model's R-squared value is 0.0176, meaning human capital investment status explains 17.6% of the variation in current employment quality.The results yield an F-value of 3.334 and a P-value of 0.069. The model equation is: Current Employment Quality = 3.169 + 0.129*Human Capital Investment Status. Testing the independent variables reveals that all significantly positively influence the dependent variable (Current Employment Quality) (p>0.05).

Table 9. Regression Analysis

Linear Regression Analysis Results (n=300)				
	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	p
	B	Standard Error		
Constant	3.169	0.195	16.288	0.000***
Human Capital Investment Status	0.129	0.071	1.826	0.069
R^2	0.0176			
Adjusted R^2	0.008			
F	F=3.334,p=0.069			
D-W value	1.797			
Dependent variable: Current employment quality				
*p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001				

Table 10. Regression Analysis

	UnstandardizedCoefficients		t	p
	B	Standard Error		
Constant	2.072	0.185	11.190	0.000***
Social Capital Investment Status	0.480	0.060	7.996	0.000***
R^2	0.177			
Adjusted R^2	0.174			
F	F=63.942,p=0.000			
D-W value	1.780			

Dependent variable: Current employment quality

*p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

As shown in Table 10: The model's R-squared value is 0.111, meaning social capital investment status explains 11.11% of the variation in current employment quality. The F-test assesses the regression model's effectiveness—specifically, whether the linear relationship between the dependent variable and all independent variables is statistically significant—and also evaluates the model's statistical validity.Analysis yields an F-value of 63.942 and a P-value of 0.0. The model equation is: Current Employment Quality = 2.072 + 0.48 × Social Capital Investment Status. Social capital investment status exerts a significant positive influence on current employment quality, with a beta value of 0.48 and a P-value of 0.0 ($p < 0.05$).

Table 11. Regression Analysis

Linear Regression Analysis Results (n=300)				
	Unstandardized Coefficients			
	B	Standard Error	t	p
Constant	2.130	0.223	9.563	0.000***
Social Capital Investment Status	0.489	0.063	7.746	0.000***
Human Capital Investment Status	-0.032	0.068	-0.473	0.637
R^2	0.177			
Adjusted R^2	0.172			
F	F=31.999,p=0.000			
D-W value	1.781			

Dependent variable: Current employment quality

*p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

As shown in Table 11: The model's R-squared value is 0.1773, meaning that the status of social capital investment and human capital investment can explain 17.73% of the variation in current employment quality. The F-test is used to assess the regression model's effectiveness—specifically, to determine whether the linear relationship between the dependent variable and all independent variables is statistically significant. It also serves to evaluate the model's statistical validity.The results show an F-value of 31.999 and a P-value of 0.0. The model equation is: Current Employment Quality = 2.13 + 0.489*Social Capital Investment Status - 0.032*Human Capital Investment Status. Social capital investment status exerts a significant positive influence on current employment quality, with a beta value of 0.489 and a P-value of 0.0 ($p<0.05$).

4.7 Research Findings on Three-Dimensional Capital and Employment Quality

Research Findings on Three-Dimensional Capital and Employment Quality,As shown in Table 12:

Table 12. Summary of Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis	Hypothesis Content	Test Result
Research Hypothesis 1	There exists a positive relationship between the human capital of graduates from applied undergraduate institutions and their employment quality	Confirmed
Research Hypothesis 2	There is a positive relationship between the social capital of graduates from applied undergraduate institutions and their employment quality.	Valid
Research Hypothesis 3	The positive relationship between human capital and employment quality among graduates of applied undergraduate institutions is stronger than the positive relationship between social capital and employment quality.	Valid
Research Hypothesis 4	There exists a positive relationship between psychological capital and employment quality among graduates of applied undergraduate institutions.	Not established

5 Countermeasures and Conclusions

First, actively guide students to establish correct employment concepts. Universities should, on one hand, instruct students on how to leverage various employment platform resources based on their major characteristics, confront the current severe employment situation and trends, and select and position career goals and directions that align with their actual circumstances [19];On the other hand, they should strengthen guidance for students to participate in extracurricular practical activities, social volunteer experiences, and academic competitions during their studies. Such approaches enhance students' awareness of the objective realities of employment competition, effectively reducing unrealistic expectations, excessive self-regard, and utilitarian pursuits in their job-seeking mindset [20].

Second, establish student-centered employment platforms. Leverage "Internet Plus" initiatives to build collaborative industry-academia bases [21].For instance, attracting more enterprises with job openings—especially those targeting recent graduates—to join the platform enables students to promptly understand current employment supply conditions. It also provides comprehensive awareness of job qualifications and requirements, thereby compelling students to enhance their competencies and address weaknesses [20].Additionally, leveraging alumni associations or alumni relations offices to convey employers' feedback on the alma mater's talent cultivation mechanisms. This approach enhances alignment between the university's educational objectives and labor market demands while elevating the institution's social reputation [22].

Third, strengthen emphasis on internship programs for university students. Establish multi-position, multi-disciplinary university-enterprise cooperative internship bases and maintain regular, standardized cooperative relationships with enterprises.Guide students with less advantageous human capital to proactively address deficiencies in their knowledge structure, literacy, cultural awareness, and professional competence. Encourage them to secure internship opportunities at university-enterprise partners, where practical workplace experience can enhance their problem-solving abilities, innovative spirit, and employment readiness, laying a foundation of theoretical and practical knowledge for post-graduation employment [23].

Finally, guide students toward independent entrepreneurship and flexible employment. Establish and improve a collaborative mechanism among universities, communities, and governments, strengthening student entrepreneurship support tailored to provincial and municipal conditions. Develop comprehensive full-cycle service mechanisms covering entrepreneurship information dissemination, policy consultation, procedural processing, and incubation services, while enhancing the implementation of policy support for entrepreneurship services [24].

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