Article

Resource Dependence and Resource Regeneration: Exploring the Path from County Depression to County Revitalization

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Abstract: County-level senior high schools, hereinafter referred to as county high schools, serve as a crucial link between urban and rural education systems in China. They bear the significant mission of enabling county youth to achieve upward social mobility through education and constitute the core foundation for implementing the national strategy of building a strong educational nation. However, against the backdrop of accelerated urbanization and ongoing restructuring in educational resource allocation, county high schools across China generally face severe constraints in multiple critical resources, including student enrollment, teaching staff quality, and financial capacity. These institutions have fallen into a vicious cycle characterized by resource depletion leading to quality decline, which in turn triggers further resource erosion. Consequently, the issue of county high school collapse has become increasingly prominent, posing a substantial challenge to educational equity and rural development. Drawing on resource dependence theory, this study proposes that revitalizing county high schools fundamentally requires a paradigm shift toward resource regeneration. This regeneration should be achieved through three complementary approaches: reconstructing external resource networks to diversify institutional support, activating internal transformation potential to enhance organizational efficiency, and cultivating distinctive endogenous resources to build competitive advantages. By integrating these strategies, county high schools can transition from passive reliance on external resource allocation to a model of autonomous and sustainable development, ultimately contributing to the broader goal of county revitalization and the reduction of urban-rural educational disparities.

Keywords: county high schools; resource dependence; resource regeneration; educational equity; county revitalization

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1. Introduction

County-level senior high schools constitute a foundational pillar of China's basic education infrastructure, playing an indispensable role in ensuring equitable access to quality secondary education across diverse geographical and socioeconomic contexts [1, 2]. Their significance is especially pronounced in central and western regions, where they serve as the primary educational gateway for rural and township students, enrolling a disproportionately large share of the national senior high school population. These institutions function not only as critical feeders for higher education—nurturing academically capable and socially grounded graduates—but also as strategic nodes in broader human capital development initiatives aligned with national priorities such as rural revitalization, regional balanced development, and skilled workforce cultivation. Their curricular offerings, pedagogical practices, and institutional governance models reflect localized adaptations to demographic shifts, labor market demands, and evolving societal expectations. Moreover, county-level high schools often operate under unique resource constraints and administrative configurations, necessitating context-sensitive policy design and implementation. Their performance metrics—including graduation rates, college admission outcomes, teacher retention levels, and student well-being

indicators—serve as key barometers for assessing the effectiveness of educational equity policies at the sub-provincial level.

Sustained governmental attention has been directed toward strengthening county-level senior high schools through coordinated, multi-year strategic frameworks. Recent national planning documents underscore the imperative of revitalizing these institutions as part of a comprehensive effort to consolidate educational foundations in non-urban areas. A dedicated action plan outlines concrete measures spanning teacher recruitment and professional development, infrastructure modernization, curriculum standardization, digital resource integration, and inter-school collaborative mechanisms. These initiatives are implemented through layered administrative coordination involving provincial, municipal, and county education authorities, supported by targeted fiscal allocations and capacity-building programs. Nevertheless, persistent structural challenges impede full realization of policy objectives. Notably, student attrition—particularly among high-achieving cohorts migrating to urban or provincial key schools—remains widespread, reflecting disparities in perceived educational quality and opportunity. Concurrently, difficulties in attracting and retaining qualified teaching personnel, especially in STEM and foreign language disciplines, compound existing gaps in instructional capacity. Aging physical infrastructure, limited access to advanced laboratory equipment and digital learning platforms, and insufficient support for inclusive education further constrain pedagogical innovation and student engagement [3]. Addressing these interrelated issues requires integrated, evidence-informed interventions that balance systemic reform with localized adaptability and long-term sustainability.

2. Resource Constraints: Multidimensional Representations of the Challenges Faced by County High Schools

2.1. Challenges in Student Enrollment: Declining Scale and Structural Degradation

Student enrollment constitutes a foundational resource for the sustainable operation and long-term development of county-level high schools; however, these institutions are currently encountering multifaceted pressures affecting both the quantitative scale and qualitative composition of their student bodies. Accelerated urbanization has triggered sustained population mobility from rural and peri-urban areas toward central cities, resulting in a steady contraction of the local school-age demographic base. This demographic shift directly translates into diminishing enrollment figures across many county high schools, particularly those situated in geographically isolated or economically less developed regions, where annual enrollment declines have reached levels that challenge institutional viability. Compounding this trend is the uneven distribution of educational opportunities, as families increasingly prioritize access to perceived higher-quality learning environments, often located outside their home counties [4]. Consequently, enrollment patterns reflect not only numerical reduction but also growing heterogeneity in academic preparedness, socioeconomic background, and motivational orientation among enrolled students—factors that significantly influence pedagogical design, curriculum implementation, and teacher-student interaction dynamics.

A pronounced stratification in student quality has emerged, characterized by the disproportionate departure of academically high-achieving students from county high schools [5, 6]. This phenomenon contributes to a self-reinforcing cycle wherein selective outflow weakens institutional academic reputation, which in turn diminishes attractiveness to future high-potential cohorts. The mechanisms driving this attrition include inter-regional admission policies that facilitate cross-jurisdictional enrollment, expanded access to privately operated or municipally administered high schools with enhanced resources, and evolving parental expectations regarding college readiness and career pathways. Empirical observations from multiple provincial education surveys indicate that certain county-level schools report annual attrition exceeding one-third among their highest-performing students—figures that correlate strongly with measurable declines in average standardized test scores, reduced participation in

advanced academic competitions, and diminished rates of admission to nationally recognized universities. Such trends underscore systemic imbalances in educational resource allocation and highlight the need for targeted policy interventions aimed at strengthening local capacity, improving teaching quality, and enhancing institutional autonomy within the broader framework of balanced regional development.

2.2. Concerns Regarding Teaching Staff: Coexistence of "Blood Loss" and "Anemia"

Teachers constitute the foundational force driving educational quality and student development, yet educators in county-level high schools confront a complex interplay of structural constraints and systemic pressures. Economic limitations in many county-level regions translate directly into comparatively lower remuneration packages and constrained pathways for career advancement, resulting in sustained attrition of experienced and highly qualified teaching personnel. A significant proportion migrate toward better-resourced urban public schools or private educational institutions offering enhanced compensation, improved working conditions, and more robust professional support systems. Empirical observations across multiple provinces indicate that annual turnover among core instructional staff—particularly subject specialists and senior teachers—in county high schools located in less-developed inland areas typically falls within the range of 10% to 15%. In certain geographically remote counties, demographic imbalances have intensified, with over 60% of the teaching workforce exceeding the age of 45, while fewer than half of newly recruited young teachers remain in their assigned posts beyond three years, reflecting persistent difficulties in recruitment sustainability and retention effectiveness.

Beyond visible staffing fluctuations, deeper systemic challenges undermine teacher well-being and pedagogical efficacy. County-level high school educators routinely shoulder disproportionately heavy workloads, often exceeding standard weekly hour expectations due to responsibilities spanning classroom instruction, extracurricular supervision, administrative duties, and individualized student mentoring. Concurrently, access to high-quality, sustained professional development remains uneven—many lack regular participation in discipline-specific pedagogical training, curriculum innovation workshops, or collaborative action research initiatives. Institutional support structures such as subject-based teaching research groups, peer observation programs, and mentorship frameworks are frequently underdeveloped or inconsistently implemented. Survey data consistently reveal that more than 70% of these educators report insufficient avenues for meaningful professional growth, while approximately 65% articulate experiences consistent with occupational fatigue, emotional exhaustion, and diminished sense of professional accomplishment—factors that collectively erode instructional consistency and long-term institutional capacity [7, 8].

2.3. Financial Constraints: Insufficient Funding and Imbalanced Allocation

County-level secondary education in China relies predominantly on fiscal support from county-level governments, whose revenue-generating capacity is closely tied to local economic conditions. This structural dependency results in significant variation in financial input across regions. Empirical evidence shows that county-level budgets consistently provide more than eighty percent of the total funding for county high schools nationwide, whereas central and provincial government allocations collectively contribute less than twenty percent. In counties with relatively low levels of industrialization, limited tax bases, and constrained fiscal autonomy, per-student operational expenditures for high schools often fall to only half or slightly above half of those observed in urban high schools located in municipalities or provincial capitals [3, 9]. Such disparities reflect not merely differences in absolute resource availability but also variations in administrative priorities, institutional capacity for budget execution, and long-term strategic planning for educational development. Moreover, fluctuations in local fiscal revenue—driven by shifts in land finance, industrial restructuring, or changes in intergovernmental transfer mechanisms—can introduce volatility into school-level

financial stability, affecting staffing continuity, curriculum implementation, and timely maintenance of facilities.

Beyond aggregate funding levels, the composition and allocation logic of educational resources reveal persistent structural asymmetries [6, 10]. A notable pattern is the disproportionate prioritization of physical infrastructure investment—such as new classroom buildings, laboratories, and sports facilities—over sustained investment in human capital development, pedagogical innovation, teacher professional growth, and digital learning platforms. This imbalance undermines long-term institutional resilience and limits improvements in teaching quality and student learning outcomes. Regional inequities further compound these challenges: comparative analyses of provincial-level data demonstrate pronounced spatial gradients in per-student expenditure, with southern prefectures consistently allocating substantially higher resources than their central and northern counterparts within the same province. For instance, in one eastern coastal province, the disparity between southern and northern sub-regions has persisted over more than a decade, yielding a regional inequality index approaching levels associated with moderate income inequality. At the national scale, the gap widens considerably when comparing county-level high schools in central and western provinces with those in eastern coastal provinces, where per-student funding may exceed the former by two to three times. These layered disparities—operating simultaneously at inter-provincial, intra-provincial, and intra-county levels—not only hinder equitable access to quality secondary education but also impede the realization of balanced regional development goals aligned with national educational modernization strategies.

3. Resource Misallocation: A Theoretical Analysis of the Resource Dependence Theory as the Root Cause of the Dilemma

The Resource Dependence Theory constitutes a foundational framework in organizational sociology and strategic management, emphasizing that no organization operates in isolation but rather exists within a complex web of external resource flows. Its central proposition is that organizational survival and effectiveness hinge critically on the acquisition, control, and stewardship of essential resources—such as capital, labor, raw materials, regulatory approvals, technological inputs, and market access—which are typically distributed unevenly across institutional actors. Because organizations lack full autonomy over these inputs, they must engage in continuous environmental scanning, negotiation, alliance formation, and structural adaptation to mitigate vulnerability and enhance stability. The theory further posits that power asymmetries emerge not from internal hierarchy alone, but from differential access to scarce or irreplaceable resources; entities controlling such resources gain leverage over dependent counterparts, shaping governance arrangements, decision-making authority, and strategic priorities. This dynamic underpins patterns of interorganizational cooperation, vertical integration, board interlocks, and institutional embedding. Consequently, resource dependence functions not merely as a constraint but as an active driver of organizational design, policy formulation, and behavioral adaptation across sectors including public administration, healthcare systems, higher education institutions, and state-owned enterprises.

3.1. Transfer and Centralization of Control over External Resources

As the primary educational institution at the county level, its development is closely linked to external resource inputs, and shifts in the allocation and governance of these resources constitute a key factor influencing institutional capacity. With ongoing urbanization, there has been a noticeable reallocation of high-quality educational assets—including qualified teaching personnel, advanced instructional equipment, and specialized funding—toward urban centers. Prefecture-level cities, operating under administrative frameworks that integrate county-level jurisdictions, often exercise greater influence in coordinating and directing such resources, resulting in relatively uneven distribution patterns across administrative tiers. This dynamic has contributed to disparities in educational infrastructure and service quality between urban and rural areas.

The emergence and expansion of academically selective senior secondary schools have further shaped resource flows: through mechanisms such as inter-regional student enrollment policies and competitive compensation packages for experienced educators, certain institutions accumulate disproportionate shares of human and material capital. Such developments reflect broader systemic trends in resource mobilization and institutional differentiation within the national education system, prompting renewed attention to balanced regional development, equitable access, and sustainable capacity-building at the county level. Ongoing policy initiatives emphasize coordinated planning, standardized support mechanisms, and strengthened local governance to enhance resilience and long-term viability of county-level educational institutions.

3.2. The Rigidity and Dysfunction of Internal Resource Transformation Capabilities

In the domain of human resource development, county-level senior high schools encounter persistent constraints in cultivating teaching personnel capable of sustaining pedagogical advancement. Many educators operate with instructional mindsets shaped by traditional paradigms, exhibiting limited familiarity with evidence-informed teaching strategies, formative assessment methodologies, and differentiated instruction frameworks. Professional capacity gaps are further compounded by structural limitations—including insufficient access to sustained, school-based professional learning opportunities, fragmented mentoring systems, and weak linkages between teacher evaluation outcomes and targeted developmental support. Moreover, motivational challenges arise from imbalanced workloads, inadequate recognition mechanisms, and limited pathways for career progression tied to pedagogical excellence rather than administrative seniority. As a result, the existing pool of teaching talent—despite its foundational commitment—struggles to systematically convert available curricular materials, digital tools, and collaborative platforms into measurable enhancements in classroom practice and student learning outcomes.

Regarding financial resource allocation, inefficiencies persist in how county-level senior high schools deploy public education funding. A pronounced imbalance exists between investment in physical infrastructure—such as campus expansion, laboratory upgrades, and information technology hardware—and investment in intangible yet critical enablers of quality improvement. Excessive emphasis on visible, capital-intensive projects often occurs at the expense of recurrent expenditures essential for long-term capacity building: for instance, systematic teacher professional development cycles, curriculum enhancement initiatives grounded in local educational contexts, and sustained support for school-based educational research and innovation. Budgetary decisions frequently lack robust performance monitoring frameworks that connect resource inputs to demonstrable improvements in teaching effectiveness, student engagement, or learning achievement. Consequently, fiscal inputs fail to generate commensurate returns in instructional quality, reflecting a broader misalignment between financial planning processes and the dynamic, human-centered nature of educational improvement.

With respect to student resource utilization, the prevailing pedagogical approach across many county-level senior high schools remains largely uniform, offering limited responsiveness to the heterogeneous developmental trajectories, cognitive profiles, and aspirational orientations of learners. Students performing at intermediate academic levels frequently experience a pedagogical 'middle ground'—neither receiving intensive remediation nor advanced enrichment—resulting in stagnant growth and diminished self-efficacy. Meanwhile, learners demonstrating exceptional aptitude or distinctive talents in areas such as scientific inquiry, artistic expression, or technical application encounter significant barriers due to the absence of dedicated curricular pathways, specialized elective offerings, mentorship networks, and extracurricular incubation platforms. The lack of comprehensive student profiling systems, flexible grouping strategies, and adaptive learning supports further constrains the ability to calibrate instruction to individual readiness levels, interests, and learning preferences. This systemic rigidity impedes the realization of equitable, learner-centered education and

limits the extent to which schools can harness the full spectrum of student potential as a vital component of institutional capacity.

3.3. The Qualitative Change from Symmetry Dependence to Asymmetry Dependence

The dependency relationship between county high schools and the external environment has undergone a qualitative transformation, shifting from a relatively balanced pattern to one characterized by pronounced imbalance. This structural evolution constitutes a fundamental factor contributing to the systemic challenges faced by county-level secondary education institutions. In the initial phase of urbanization, county high schools functioned as integral nodes within localized educational ecosystems, maintaining reciprocal linkages with urban high schools and engaging in mutually reinforcing interactions with local social, economic, and administrative structures [11, 12]. Their operational autonomy, resource acquisition, and pedagogical development were sustained through stable, two-way exchanges—such as teacher exchange programs, shared curriculum development initiatives, and coordinated student placement mechanisms—that reflected functional interdependence rather than hierarchical subordination.

As urbanization progressed and educational governance frameworks evolved, this equilibrium gradually gave way to an increasingly lopsided configuration [13, 14]. County high schools now exhibit heightened reliance on external inputs—particularly student enrollment drawn exclusively from their jurisdictional boundaries and fiscal allocations determined by county-level budgetary processes—while simultaneously experiencing diminished capacity to influence or shape those very inputs. Persistent out-migration of academically competitive students to urban centers constrains enrollment stability and weakens demographic foundations for long-term institutional planning. Concurrently, constrained local fiscal resources limit infrastructure investment, teaching material procurement, and incentive-based compensation schemes. Furthermore, human capital asymmetry intensifies this imbalance: while county high schools depend critically on professionally qualified, pedagogically skilled educators to sustain instructional quality and student learning outcomes, labor market dynamics—including differential salary scales, professional development opportunities, housing support, and career advancement pathways—systematically favor urban school employment. This cumulative effect reinforces positional disadvantage not as an incidental outcome but as an embedded feature of contemporary educational stratification.

4. Resource Regeneration: Exploring Pathways for Revitalizing County High Schools

4.1. Reconstruct the External Dependency Network to Achieve Rebalancing of Dependency Relationships

In terms of ensuring student enrollment resources, the admission process is rigorously governed by standardized, transparent, and regionally anchored policies designed to uphold educational equity and territorial integrity in basic education provision. The principle of 'local-based admissions and equal admission for all citizens' has been comprehensively institutionalized across administrative jurisdictions, reinforcing the foundational role of county-level high schools as key nodes in the public education infrastructure. To prevent resource drain and structural imbalance, cross-regional recruitment practices—particularly those involving selective enrollment of academically high-achieving students by urban or elite high schools—are categorically prohibited. Regulatory enforcement mechanisms include clearly delineated admission 'red lines,' real-time monitoring of enrollment data through provincial education management platforms, mandatory public disclosure of admission plans and outcomes, and tiered accountability protocols for violations. Complementary measures such as quota-based admission systems have been systematically expanded, with increasing proportions of seats reserved for students from designated geographic catchment areas—including rural townships and economically disadvantaged communities—to ensure demographic representativeness and long-term enrollment stability [15, 16]. These

interventions collectively strengthen the institutional capacity of county-level high schools to serve as inclusive, locally rooted educational institutions rather than peripheral feeders to centralized academic elites.

Regarding the guarantee of teaching resources, a multi-tiered strategy has been implemented to address chronic shortages and quality disparities in faculty deployment. First, targeted human capital development initiatives prioritize the recruitment and professional formation of educators specifically committed to county-level service, including publicly funded teacher training programs with contractual service obligations, streamlined administrative pathways for qualified candidates entering teaching posts, and structured inter-school exchange frameworks that facilitate sustained pedagogical collaboration between urban and rural institutions. Second, systemic improvements to remuneration and career incentives aim to enhance occupational attractiveness and retention. This includes strengthening statutory salary guarantees aligned with regional economic benchmarks, refining performance evaluation frameworks so that classroom instructional effectiveness and student holistic development outcomes carry decisive weight in compensation decisions, instituting differentiated allowance schemes recognizing the unique challenges of teaching in geographically remote or socioeconomically constrained settings, and establishing merit-based recognition pathways—including specialized honorific titles, professional development stipends, and leadership opportunity pipelines—for exemplary practitioners at the county level. Such integrated policy levers not only elevate material conditions but also reinforce professional identity, institutional loyalty, and sustained pedagogical engagement among educators serving in these critical frontline educational environments.

4.2. Stimulate Internal Transformation Momentum and Enhance the Efficiency of Resource Value Conversion

In terms of transforming student resources, a multi-layered pedagogical strategy is adopted to support holistic development and diversified pathways to excellence. First, tiered instruction is systematically implemented: institutions design differentiated cultivation frameworks aligned with students' cognitive maturity, academic readiness, and individual aptitudes; this includes offering specialized curricular tracks—such as interdisciplinary STEM enrichment modules, performance-based arts electives, and structured physical education leadership programs—that cultivate domain-specific competencies and prepare learners for selective university admissions through non-traditional yet academically rigorous routes. Second, personalized developmental guidance is institutionalized through longitudinal student growth portfolios, which integrate quantitative learning analytics with qualitative reflections on interests, socio-emotional well-being, and emerging career aspirations; these portfolios inform timely, evidence-informed interventions in academic advising, psychological support services, and experiential learning opportunities [17]. Furthermore, peer-mediated learning is strategically integrated via small-group collaborative structures: high-performing students participate in guided mentoring roles that emphasize pedagogical responsibility and reflective practice, while targeted academic scaffolding, financial counseling, and social integration initiatives are extended to learners experiencing temporary or persistent challenges—thus cultivating an inclusive, supportive, and academically resilient learning community.

In terms of transforming teaching resources, three interdependent dimensions are advanced to strengthen instructional quality and professional vitality. First, pedagogical orientation is progressively refined: educators are supported in transitioning from narrow assessment-focused practices toward comprehensive approaches that prioritize the cultivation of disciplinary literacy, critical thinking, collaborative problem-solving, and self-regulated learning—this shift is reinforced through classroom observation cycles, lesson study protocols, and formative feedback mechanisms grounded in learning science principles. Second, the professional learning ecosystem is enhanced by embedding teaching, research, and continuous development into a unified framework: schools

establish collaborative inquiry communities where teachers co-design curriculum innovations, analyze student work using shared rubrics, and engage in action research projects that directly inform classroom practice and institutional policy. Third, motivational architecture is optimized through a balanced evaluation system that values teaching effectiveness—including classroom engagement, differentiation strategies, and student progress tracking—as well as scholarly contribution and stakeholder responsiveness; performance outcomes are meaningfully linked to differentiated professional recognition, including merit-based compensation adjustments, advancement in academic rank, and eligibility for distinguished teaching fellowships—thereby reinforcing sustained commitment to pedagogical excellence and adaptive expertise.

4.3. Cultivate Endogenous Distinctive Resources to Promote Autonomous Organizational Development

The key to developing distinctive endogenous resources lies in systematically reducing dependence on externally sourced inputs, cultivating institutionally embedded strengths that reflect the unique geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic context of county-level high schools, and fostering a sustainable capacity for self-sustaining resource generation. This entails strengthening internal capabilities—including pedagogical innovation, localized curriculum design, community-integrated teaching practices, and adaptive leadership—so that schools can respond dynamically to evolving educational demands without persistent external scaffolding. Such capacity-building represents a foundational, long-term strategy for institutional revitalization, grounded in evidence-based school improvement frameworks emphasizing contextual responsiveness, stakeholder co-construction, and iterative developmental evaluation.

In developing distinctive curriculum resources, two complementary approaches are implemented with rigorous academic grounding. First, local cultural assets are systematically integrated into the instructional framework: this includes offering instruction in regional languages or dialects where appropriate, supporting linguistic diversity while enhancing cognitive engagement and identity affirmation; concurrently, school-developed courses—such as aerospace-themed interdisciplinary modules grounded in STEM integration, or historically informed civic education units drawing upon locally significant heritage sites and narratives—are designed to deepen disciplinary understanding while reinforcing values of scientific literacy, historical consciousness, and social responsibility [12, 14]. Second, curricular alignment with regional economic ecosystems is advanced through structured vocational exposure pathways—such as industry-anchored project-based learning, workplace observation cycles, and applied skill development workshops tied to local priority sectors—including advanced manufacturing, modern agriculture, digital services, and green energy technologies—thereby strengthening students' occupational readiness and adaptability. Pilot initiatives exploring synergistic models between general academic and applied technical education pathways further support holistic student development. Regarding governance enhancement, institutional flexibility is strengthened through refined administrative processes that empower school leadership teams to exercise informed discretion in personnel deployment, fiscal planning, curriculum adaptation, and enrollment management—always within established professional standards and accountability frameworks—thus enabling responsive, context-sensitive decision-making aligned with each school's developmental stage and community needs.

5. Conclusion

County-level senior high schools constitute a foundational pillar of the national secondary education infrastructure, playing an indispensable role in sustaining equitable access to quality learning opportunities across geographically and socioeconomically diverse regions. Their continued viability directly influences intergenerational mobility, regional human capital formation, and long-term demographic stability. In recent decades, rapid urbanization has precipitated significant shifts in population distribution, leading

to pronounced student attrition from rural and peri-urban counties—often driven by household relocation, perceived prestige differentials among institutions, and limited local post-secondary pathways. Concurrently, chronic staffing shortages persist due to difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified educators, particularly in specialized disciplines such as physics, chemistry, and foreign languages; these challenges are compounded by comparatively lower professional development investment, heavier administrative burdens, and constrained career advancement structures. Financial sustainability remains precarious, with many institutions relying heavily on volatile local fiscal transfers and lacking diversified revenue mechanisms or endowment capacity. Internally, organizational inertia, fragmented leadership accountability, underdeveloped data-informed decision-making systems, and limited capacity for pedagogical innovation further impede adaptive responsiveness. Systemic revitalization therefore necessitates multi-scalar interventions: vertically integrated policy coherence across provincial and county education authorities; institutionally embedded capacity-building initiatives focused on leadership development, curriculum modernization, and digital infrastructure integration; and horizontally coordinated community engagement strategies—including partnerships with higher education institutions, vocational training providers, and local enterprises—to co-create contextually grounded educational value propositions. Sustained progress hinges not on isolated reforms but on reinforcing feedback loops among governance efficacy, institutional agency, and societal trust.

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