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Difficulties and Breakthroughs of Home Visits for Financially Disadvantaged College Students from the Perspective of Developmental Funding Education—A Case Study of the School of Mechanical Engineering, Yangzhou Polytechnic University

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Abstract: Home visits serve as a core mechanism for the accurate identification of financially disadvantaged college students and the effective delivery of funding-based education within higher education institutions. Nevertheless, their practical implementation is frequently plagued by limited geographical coverage, persistent barriers to information verification, inadequate longitudinal follow-up support, and a range of other real-world challenges that undermine the precision and equity of student financial aid programs. Taking the School of Mechanical Engineering at Yangzhou Polytechnic University as a representative case, this paper systematically examines the institution's practical efforts in conducting home visits within the broader framework of developmental funding education. It analyzes multiple dimensions of difficulty, including technical constraints in data collection, spatial barriers arising from dispersed student residences, and resource limitations in staffing and funding. In response, the study summarizes several breakthrough approaches, such as integrated online-offline visit models, three-stage supportive home visits spanning students' entire academic development trajectory, and collaborative linkage mechanisms among schools, families, and communities. Furthermore, the study proposes integrating home visits into a comprehensive funding education system characterized by work-study integration and school-enterprise closed-loop collaboration. It advocates that home visits should extend throughout students' complete journey from admission to employment, forming a closed loop encompassing vocational competency training, on-the-job practice, and alumni feedback. This paradigm shift transforms funding work from mere financial assistance to holistic growth empowerment, thereby fulfilling the fundamental educational mission of fostering virtue through comprehensive student development.

Keywords: developmental funding education; financially disadvantaged students; home visits; targeted financial aid; school-enterprise collaboration

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1. The Contemporary Value of Home Visits from the Perspective of Developmental Funding Education

Education empowers young people to pursue personal advancement, lifts impoverished families out of hardship, and bears critical implications for the future of the nation. Guaranteeing equal access to higher education for financially disadvantaged students is an inherent requirement for advancing social equity and justice and building a harmonious society. National policy guidance emphasizes the need to improve the student financial aid system across all stages of education. Institutional frameworks for higher education further mandate the establishment of a comprehensive funding education system. Universities are required to provide not only material assistance but

also sustained spiritual support for disadvantaged students, guiding them to develop sound moral values, cultivate gratitude, and foster a sense of social responsibility. This supports the formation of a constructive developmental cycle—where hardship alleviation enables talent nurturing, which in turn facilitates academic and professional success, ultimately encouraging graduates to contribute meaningfully to their communities and institutions. The evolution from security-oriented financial aid toward developmental funding reflects a broader pedagogical shift: one that prioritizes holistic growth, long-term capacity building, and individual agency over short-term relief alone. This paradigm recognizes that financial support must be embedded within a coherent educational strategy that addresses academic, psychological, and socio-emotional dimensions of student development.

Against this backdrop, home visits have grown increasingly vital as a relational and diagnostic practice in university student support systems. Home visits refer to structured faculty engagements conducted at students' residences, where educators communicate directly with family members, observe living conditions, build empathetic rapport, and collaboratively explore educational pathways. For financially disadvantaged students, such visits carry multi-layered significance beyond administrative verification—they serve as bridges between institutional support structures and familial contexts, enabling deeper contextual understanding and more responsive intervention design.

First, they constitute a pivotal step in the accurate identification of students experiencing economic hardship [1]. Proper identification lays the foundational groundwork for all subsequent student funding work. Field-based visits enable educators to gain firsthand insights into students' housing conditions, household income sources, family composition, caregiving responsibilities, regional infrastructure limitations, and other context-specific challenges. Such direct observation allows for meaningful verification of application materials, reducing reliance on self-reported data alone and supporting more precise classification of hardship levels and corresponding aid packages—including combinations of grants, work-study opportunities, skill development subsidies, and psychosocial mentoring.

Second, home visits enable targeted, personalized support tailored to each student's unique circumstances—not only in terms of financial need but also academic readiness, language proficiency, digital access, health considerations, and familial expectations. Educators can co-develop individualized learning plans with students and their families, align institutional resources with home-based strengths, and identify potential barriers to persistence that may not surface in campus-based assessments alone [1].

Third, they constitute a key channel for refined university student administration, enhancing data integrity, improving interdepartmental coordination, and strengthening feedback loops between frontline staff and institutional leadership [2]. When systematically documented and analyzed, home visit findings inform policy refinement, resource allocation decisions, and continuous improvement of support protocols—transforming anecdotal insight into evidence-informed practice.

Fourth, they serve as an essential platform to elevate the quality of funding-based education by integrating care, communication, and curriculum-aligned development [3]. Through intentional dialogue with families, educators reinforce shared educational values, demystify institutional processes, and position financial aid not as charity but as an investment in human capital and social mobility—thereby deepening students' sense of belonging, motivation, and long-term engagement with learning.

However, home visits in universities generally face pervasive hurdles including insufficient coverage due to logistical constraints, inadequate pre-visit preparation such as lack of standardized assessment tools or cultural competency training, and absence of sustained follow-up mechanisms to track longitudinal outcomes. It is urgent to explore ways to overcome these obstacles and upgrade home visits from a supplementary tool for passive relief to a foundational, scalable, and evaluative component of developmental funding education. This paper takes the School of Mechanical Engineering, Yangzhou Polytechnic University as a case to examine its practices and theoretical insights on home

visits for disadvantaged students within the developmental funding framework—focusing on implementation fidelity, stakeholder perceptions, adaptive strategies, and measurable impacts on retention, academic performance, and post-graduation trajectories.

2. Current Home Visit Practices at the School of Mechanical Engineering, Yangzhou Polytechnic University

2.1. Overview of Home Visit Operations

The School of Mechanical Engineering has implemented structured home visit initiatives for students experiencing financial hardship since 2024, marking the completion of its second full academic cycle of operation. As an institution with a strong emphasis on applied engineering education, the school enrolls a comparatively high proportion of students from economically constrained backgrounds [4]. Comprehensive internal assessments have been conducted annually to identify and categorize students according to standardized criteria aligned with national student assistance guidelines, yielding consistent demographic and socioeconomic profiles across reporting periods.

Total 236 students identified (92 classified as severely disadvantaged, 67 as moderately disadvantaged, and 76 as mildly disadvantaged)

Total 211 students identified (73 classified as severely disadvantaged, 52 as moderately disadvantaged, and 86 as mildly disadvantaged)

Adjusted enrollment figures resulted in a total of 287 students meeting eligibility criteria (77 classified as severely disadvantaged, 113 as moderately disadvantaged, and 97 as mildly disadvantaged)

Home visits are prioritized for students assessed as severely disadvantaged, reflecting institutional commitment to targeted support where need is most acute; this prioritization ensures efficient allocation of limited personnel and travel resources while maintaining meaningful engagement with families facing significant socioeconomic barriers [5].

Visiting teams are composed of senior administrative and Party leadership—including Party branch secretaries and deans—as well as student affairs professionals, academic department heads, frontline counselors, class advisors, and faculty members holding Party membership, thereby integrating ideological guidance, academic oversight, and pastoral care into a coordinated, hierarchical implementation framework [6].

Geographically, the majority of financially disadvantaged students originate from rural and township communities in northern Jiangsu Province; a notable minority reside in less-developed regions including Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, and Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, necessitating careful logistical planning, interprovincial coordination, and flexible scheduling to ensure equitable outreach despite considerable transportation distances and regional infrastructure disparities [7].

2.2. Prevailing Difficulties in Home Visit Implementation

The challenges encountered by the institution in implementing home visits align closely with broader operational patterns observed across higher education institutions throughout the country, reflecting systemic considerations in student support service delivery [8].

Technical limitations present a significant factor: many families from economically disadvantaged backgrounds reside in geographically isolated rural communities where digital mapping infrastructure remains underdeveloped, resulting in inconsistent GPS signal reception and unreliable location-sharing functionality [9]. These technical shortcomings directly contribute to extended travel durations, reduced scheduling predictability, and diminished overall efficiency during field engagement.

Geographic dispersion constitutes another key consideration: student households are widely distributed across multiple administrative counties within a single prefecture-level city, necessitating extensive inter-county travel [5]. This spatial distribution restricts the number of households that can be meaningfully engaged during a single working day,

while simultaneously increasing both time investment and transportation expenditures per student reached.

Resource availability presents practical boundaries: allocated financial support covers only essential travel logistics and modest symbolic gestures of goodwill, precluding comprehensive outreach to every identified student requiring targeted assistance [10]. In 2025, students classified as economically disadvantaged represented 18% of the total enrolled population; furthermore, the institution's nationwide recruitment strategy expands the geographic footprint of potential visit locations, whereas staffing capacity, material provisions, and budgetary allocations collectively constrain the feasible scope of in-person engagement activities.

Workload distribution among academic staff introduces additional complexity: faculty members maintain multifaceted responsibilities encompassing classroom instruction, scholarly research, institutional administration, and direct student mentoring, leaving limited discretionary time for voluntary participation in home visit initiatives. When such activities are assigned as supplementary duties, some educators perceive them as extending beyond core professional expectations, which may affect motivation and sustained involvement [4].

Safety considerations require careful attention: field visits conducted in remote rural settings often involve substandard road networks, unpredictable weather conditions, and limited access to emergency services. Navigating unfamiliar terrain adds logistical uncertainty, particularly for educators without prior regional experience. Female educators traveling independently face elevated personal safety concerns; although team-based visits enhance security, they entail more intricate coordination of personnel availability, transportation logistics, and itinerary sequencing—further complicating program execution [11].

Psychological factors also influence program effectiveness: a subset of students from disadvantaged backgrounds expresses hesitation or declines participation in home visits, often without articulating specific reasons. Similarly, alumni engagement in post-graduation follow-up visits tends to be inconsistent. Some parents interpret these interactions primarily through the lens of financial verification rather than holistic student welfare support, leading to guarded communication styles or minimal verbal participation during meetings. Such interpersonal dynamics can limit the depth of information exchange and reduce the pedagogical and relational impact of the initiative [7].

2.3. Existing Mitigation Strategies

The school has systematically developed and refined targeted countermeasures through sustained, practice-driven iteration, grounded in longitudinal observation of implementation efficacy, stakeholder feedback, and adaptive adjustments to evolving socioeconomic conditions affecting student families [5].

Pre-visit Preparation involves a rigorous, multi-step verification protocol: funding counselors and class teachers jointly confirm precise residential addresses using official household registration records and digital mapping tools; proactively schedule visits during time windows aligned with family members' work and caregiving routines to ensure consistent household availability; and document culturally salient local landmarks—such as distinctive architectural features, community service facilities, or neighborhood signage—to enhance navigation accuracy and minimize logistical delays in geographically complex or newly urbanized areas [12].

Team Organization adopts a spatially rationalized deployment model wherein teaching staff are assigned to geographic clusters based on administrative jurisdiction and transportation accessibility; party-affiliated faculty members are invited to participate voluntarily during winter break, leveraging pre-planned personal travel to nearby hometowns, thereby optimizing resource efficiency without compromising ethical boundaries; the institution centrally administers standardized condolence materials or modest stipends and processes transparent, receipt-based reimbursement for verifiable

travel expenditures—including public transit fares, fuel costs, and accommodation—ensuring equitable operational support while maintaining strict fiscal accountability and compliance with institutional financial regulations [13].

A Hybrid Online-Offline Model ensures comprehensive outreach continuity: synchronous online interactions—conducted by class teachers via telephone, WeChat voice/video calls, and secure institutional platforms—achieve 100% contact coverage across all identified disadvantaged households, accommodating mobility constraints, caregiving responsibilities, or geographic remoteness; during freshman enrollment orientation, structured face-to-face dialogues between parents and faculty serve as an initial triage mechanism for identifying socioeconomic risk indicators; and during third-year internship periods, faculty conduct supervised workplace visits to assess students' occupational integration, living standards, and psychosocial adaptation—functioning as a complementary, contextually grounded extension of traditional home-based assessment [5].

Support for Reluctant Students prioritizes relational trust and methodological flexibility: those expressing resistance to home visits receive sustained, individualized attention through asynchronous messaging, scheduled check-in calls, and periodic self-report instruments administered via encrypted channels to monitor household financial stability and emotional wellbeing over time; one case demonstrated successful resolution following multiple empathetic counseling sessions that clarified procedural transparency and confidentiality safeguards; for graduates who remain unresponsive or inaccessible, the school coordinates discreetly with registered local neighborhood committees—acting strictly within statutory community governance frameworks—to obtain anonymized, aggregate-level updates on residence status and basic welfare indicators, thereby preserving data integrity without violating privacy norms or regulatory requirements.

3. Systematic Restructuring of Home Visit Mechanisms: From Audit-Based Inspections to Holistic Growth Empowerment

Guided by the principle of developmental funding education, the school has comprehensively reformed its home visit framework to align with contemporary student support paradigms. The core transformation involves repositioning home visits not merely as a point-in-time verification mechanism for financial eligibility but as an integrated, longitudinal platform that supports holistic student development across academic, psychosocial, and familial dimensions. This reconceptualization expands the functional scope of home visits beyond initial hardship identification to include early detection of learning barriers, socioemotional challenges, family engagement patterns, and environmental constraints affecting educational outcomes. The restructuring is implemented through four interdependent dimensions: refined identification protocols grounded in multidimensional vulnerability indicators; a tiered, full-cycle visiting framework calibrated to students' developmental stages and changing needs; embedded institutional and community-based support systems coordinated across academic advising, counseling, and social services; and robust, data-informed feedback loops enabling continuous program refinement. As a result, home visits have evolved from episodic, audit-oriented field checks into sustained, relationship-centered interventions that foster resilience, agency, and long-term academic success.

3.1. Multi-Dimensional Identification Mechanism: Shifting from Empirical Judgment to Data-Driven Assessment

Accurate identification of aid recipients forms the foundational prerequisite for equitable and effective targeted financial support. Building upon time-tested practices such as structured home visits, the institution implements a rigorously designed dual-track identification system that integrates systematic multi-source data collection with in-depth field verification. This approach deliberately shifts away from reliance on subjective empirical judgment—often vulnerable to perceptual bias or incomplete information—

toward a more robust, transparent, and replicable framework grounded in triangulated evidence and objective indicators.

Data Collection Phase: Two complementary streams of information are systematically gathered and cross-referenced to enable rigorous preliminary screening and risk stratification:

Key high-risk groups identified through the national student funding management platform, integrated with formal student aid applications, signed personal declarations of economic hardship, and corroborative input from democratically convened peer evaluation panels composed of faculty advisors, class representatives, and student union members.

Contextual behavioral indicators derived from routine academic counseling interactions, longitudinal observations by residential life staff, and anonymized peer reports regarding campus-based living conditions, meal plan usage patterns, clothing and device ownership, and discretionary spending behaviors—all treated as supplementary, non-definitive signals requiring further validation.

Cross-verification across multiple independent information sources significantly mitigates the risk of misclassification arising from single-point reporting, self-reporting inaccuracies, or situational anomalies, thereby enhancing both the reliability and fairness of the identification process [3].

Field Verification Phase: Structured home visits serve as the critical validation step for preliminary identification outcomes [3]. For cases involving incomplete documentation, atypical household structures, or exceptional socioeconomic circumstances, the institution coordinates closely with local village committees, neighborhood offices, and grassroots civil affairs personnel to obtain authoritative, community-verified household economic profiles. A standardized multi-layered workflow—encompassing counselor training modules, visit protocol checklists, digital evidence logging, and post-visit review panels—has been institutionalized to ensure consistency, accountability, and cultural sensitivity, thereby establishing a sound evidentiary basis for subsequent personalized support planning.

3.2. Full-Cycle Home Visit Framework: Expanding Single Inspections to Three-Stage Integrated Support

Traditional home visits are typically confined to pre-enrollment hardship screening and thus suffer from significant limitations in temporal scope, functional depth, and relational continuity. These one-off assessments often fail to capture evolving socioeconomic conditions, shifting family dynamics, or emerging psychosocial needs as students progress through their academic journey [14]. The school has therefore developed and implemented an innovative 'Three-Stage Support Visit' framework designed to transform home visits from isolated administrative procedures into a pedagogically grounded, longitudinal support mechanism that actively accompanies students across critical developmental transitions.

Admission Visits serve as the foundational phase of this integrated model, emphasizing both diagnostic precision and relational intentionality. Conducted during freshman intake, these visits involve structured yet empathetic engagement with households to evaluate financial capacity, living conditions, caregiver involvement, and student-centered educational aspirations [1]. Faculty members employ standardized assessment protocols while simultaneously cultivating trust through culturally responsive communication, transparent explanation of national student aid policies—including tuition waivers, living allowances, and skill-based subsidies—and proactive mitigation of enrollment-related anxieties concerning affordability, belonging, and academic readiness.

Internship Visits constitute the second strategic intervention, bridging classroom learning with workplace application and reinforcing support within professional contexts. During third-year centralized internships, faculty travel to internship sites to observe performance, identify contextual barriers—such as transportation access, housing

stability, or mentorship gaps—and extend institutional support services directly into vocational environments. In summer 2025, 54 students participated in centralized internships, with full inclusion of all current aid recipients. A dual-mentor system was operationalized, pairing industry professionals with academic advisors to co-supervise experiential learning; this integration enabled concurrent delivery of on-site guidance, live employer engagement sessions, and aligned graduation project supervision—thereby embedding home visit principles of care and continuity into career preparation.

Graduation & Employment Visits represent the culminating and generative stage, focusing on longitudinal outcomes and community reciprocity. Following degree completion, faculty conduct follow-up workplace visits to assess job quality indicators—including salary adequacy, role relevance, advancement opportunities, and workplace inclusion—while also gathering qualitative insights on post-graduation challenges and successes. Notably, high-achieving alumni who previously received financial assistance are formally invited to return as peer mentors and program ambassadors, delivering testimonials, co-facilitating information sessions, and advising prospective applicants. This cultivates a self-sustaining ecosystem wherein support receipt is meaningfully linked to future contribution, reinforcing values of responsibility, resilience, and collective uplift. All 2025 aid recipients secured formal employment (100% placement rate), and over 90% of the 2026 cohort had already obtained job offers by mid-2025, underscoring the model's capacity to deliver measurable, sustained impact.

Collectively, the Three-Stage Support Visit model redefines home visits not as episodic compliance checks but as a dynamic, educationally embedded practice that spans admission, internship, and post-graduation phases [11]. By anchoring outreach in developmental theory, institutional accountability, and relational pedagogy, it transforms physical visits into sustained touchpoints for holistic student development—integrating welfare support, academic scaffolding, career navigation, and civic identity formation within a unified, stage-sensitive framework.

3.3. Three-Dimensional Support System: Institutionalizing Ad Hoc Visits into Sustained Long-Term Operations

Sustained home visit delivery relies on comprehensive, integrated support mechanisms that ensure continuity, equity, and pedagogical coherence. The school constructs a three-pillar framework—comprising institutional, organizational, and financial dimensions—to systematically transform historically episodic, volunteer-driven outreach into standardized, accountable, and long-term operational practice. This structural shift prioritizes procedural rigor, cross-departmental alignment, and resource predictability, thereby reinforcing educational equity and strengthening the home-school partnership as a core component of holistic student development.

Institutional Support ensures home visits are formally embedded within the school's governance architecture and administrative workflow, rather than treated as supplementary or discretionary activities. Standardized protocols govern every phase—from evidence-informed candidate selection criteria and mandatory pre-visit training modules to structured in-home communication frameworks, uniformly formatted digital data recording systems, and time-bound post-visit reflection and intervention planning. These protocols undergo annual review and iterative refinement based on implementation feedback and longitudinal outcome tracking, thereby minimizing variability arising from individual interpretation, scheduling convenience, or subjective judgment.

Organizational Support establishes a dedicated leadership team composed of senior school administrators, which coordinates across student affairs, academic affairs, and general administration units to ensure vertical integration and horizontal coherence. This team develops multi-year strategic visit plans aligned with academic calendars and student developmental milestones, allocates personnel equitably across grade levels and geographic zones, and implements real-time progress monitoring through shared digital dashboards. The participation model features a tiered structure: leadership oversight by

Party and administrative heads ensures policy fidelity; student affairs staff serve as operational anchors for logistics and documentation; and full-time faculty contribute subject-specific insights during visits [6]. Furthermore, a zone-based, phased, multi-round visiting schedule is calibrated to align with teachers' personal travel patterns and regional holidays, optimizing human resource utilization without compromising coverage breadth or visit quality.

Financial Support is secured through diversified, sustainable funding streams that insulate home visit operations from budgetary volatility. Core institutional allocations provide baseline staffing and administrative infrastructure, while targeted social donations enable program expansion and innovation. A formal cooperation agreement with the Jiru Foundation secures an annual RMB 40,000 scholarship fund, directly supporting over 30 students across three consecutive cohorts from enrollment through graduation, thereby linking home engagement to sustained academic retention and completion. Additional corporate partnerships further stabilize resources: the Xiushan Scholarship Program with Jiangsu No.1 CNC Machine Tool Co., Ltd. contributes RMB 50,000 annually, while Lens Precision (Taizhou) Co., Ltd. provides RMB 24,000 in unrestricted grants—collectively ensuring consistent, multi-year financial backing not only for home visits themselves but also for follow-up counseling, learning material provision, and family capacity-building initiatives [15].

3.4. Closed-Loop Follow-Up Feedback: Extending One-Time Visits to Continuous Long-Term Oversight

A persistent limitation inherent in traditional home visit practices lies in the lack of systematic post-visit engagement, resulting in fragmented and temporally isolated interventions. To address this gap, the institution has institutionalized a rigorously structured three-phase closed-loop management framework—comprising file creation, information feedback, and recurring visits—which fundamentally reorients episodic field engagements into an integrated, longitudinal oversight process grounded in continuous pedagogical responsiveness and data-informed decision-making.

Individual Growth Dossiers with Dynamic Updates: Following each home visit, teaching staff systematically compile and maintain comprehensive, student-specific dossiers that capture multidimensional developmental indicators—including socioeconomic context, academic trajectory, technical competency acquisition, internship experiences, psychosocial well-being assessments, and evolving career orientation. These dossiers are not static records but living documents subject to scheduled quarterly reviews and real-time updates triggered by academic milestones, counseling sessions, or family communications. To date, such personalized dossiers have been established for two consecutive cohorts comprising thirty students receiving targeted support, thereby enabling granular, evidence-based monitoring and adaptive intervention planning across the full educational continuum.

Targeted Information Feedback for Customized Support: Structured visit summaries are formally submitted to the university's centralized student support coordination unit, while anonymized yet actionable household contextual data and student-specific developmental insights are selectively disseminated to class advisors and relevant academic departments through secure internal platforms. This cross-functional information flow ensures that frontline observational intelligence directly informs the calibration of financial aid allocation, academic advising strategies, mental health referrals, and extracurricular development pathways, thereby strengthening institutional coherence and reducing service fragmentation.

Regular Recurring Visits to Consolidate Educational Outcomes: Educators sustain ongoing relational continuity with families through dedicated digital communication channels—including moderated QQ and WeChat groups—while scheduling biannual in-person or video-based follow-up visits for students identified as requiring sustained support. This iterative outreach model enables longitudinal tracking of both macro-level household stability indicators—such as employment status, housing security, and

caregiver health—and micro-level student outcomes—including semester GPA trends, skill certification attainment, participation in mentorship programs, and self-reported emotional resilience metrics—thus expanding the functional scope of home visits beyond transactional verification toward proactive, holistic student development stewardship.

In summary, guided by principles of developmental funding education, the school's four-dimensional restructuring—encompassing multi-dimensional identification protocols, full-cycle three-stage visit sequencing, tripartite support systems integrating academic, psychological, and vocational dimensions, and the closed-loop follow-up feedback mechanism—collectively transforms home visits from discrete administrative audits into a dynamic, pedagogically embedded practice of sustained growth empowerment. No longer confined to verifying eligibility criteria or collecting financial documentation, these visits now function as a fully integrated educational platform that synergistically delivers material assistance and formative developmental guidance, thereby advancing both equitable access and comprehensive student flourishing within the broader framework of inclusive higher education.

4. Deep Integration of Home Visits and Developmental Funding Education

4.1. Conceptual Shift: From Pure Financial Aid to Holistic Growth Empowerment

Developmental funding education represents a strategic integration of material support with comprehensive human development, aligning poverty alleviation objectives with sustained intellectual advancement and ethical formation. The school systematically ensures that financial assistance is consistently accompanied by structured opportunities for personal growth, skill acquisition, and long-term self-reliance. Within this framework, home visits serve not merely as administrative procedures but as essential relational touchpoints that inform holistic student support. Rather than focusing exclusively on socioeconomic documentation, these visits actively explore students' vocational interests, learning motivations, emotional well-being, and family-based educational resources. Insights gathered—such as career inclinations, academic confidence levels, or contextual barriers to engagement—are systematically channeled into the Spark Program's curriculum design, mentoring protocols, and individualized career guidance pathways. This transforms home visits from routine data collection activities into dynamic, evidence-informed developmental interventions grounded in pedagogical intentionality and student-centered responsiveness.

4.2. Three-Stage Support Visits: Full-Cycle Assistance Linking Families, Enterprises and Workplaces

The school has implemented an innovative Three-Stage Support Visit model designed to provide sustained, development-oriented assistance throughout students' academic and professional journeys—from initial enrollment through internship experiences to post-graduation employment—thereby transforming episodic field engagements into a structured, longitudinal support system grounded in holistic student development and social integration.

Admission visits serve as the foundational phase, enabling early identification of socioeconomic challenges, educational barriers, and individualized needs, thereby facilitating the co-creation of tailored aid frameworks that integrate financial assistance, psychosocial support, academic mentoring, and family engagement strategies [6].

Internship workplace visits constitute the second critical stage, focusing on real-time assessment of students' workplace adaptation, technical competency development, interpersonal integration, and alignment between institutional support services—including stipend disbursement, vocational training modules, and career counseling—with evolving industry requirements and occupational competencies.

Post-graduation employment visits represent the culminating stage, systematically tracking graduates' career progression over time—including job retention rates, promotion pathways, skill upgrading opportunities, and long-term labor market participation—to evaluate program efficacy, inform continuous improvement of support

mechanisms, and ensure closure of the developmental support cycle with measurable outcomes.

In summer 2025, all 54 interns receiving financial or academic support participated in comprehensive workplace outreach initiatives, which encompassed supervised on-site factory visits, interactive live recruitment broadcasts hosted jointly by industry partners and faculty, discipline-specific graduation project mentoring delivered in authentic work environments, and corporate-led recruitment seminars—all strategically coordinated to extend institutional support beyond campus infrastructure and deepen experiential learning linkages with regional economic ecosystems.

4.3. School-Enterprise Closed-Loop Collaboration: Targeted Employment Support Driven by Home Visit Data

Leveraging the local national-level CNC forming machine tool industrial base and the '341' modern industry integration consortium, the institution has developed a work-study integrated school-enterprise closed-loop education model that aligns financial support with long-term career development [16]. Home visit data—systematically collected to assess household economic conditions, educational background, and student-identified vocational interests—are rigorously analyzed and matched against real-time talent demand profiles from strategic industry partners. Formalized cooperation agreements with Jiangsu No.1 CNC Machine Tool Co., Ltd. and Lens Precision (Taizhou) Co., Ltd. have established dedicated scholarship mechanisms, wherein enterprises commit not only financial sponsorship but also structured internship pathways and preferential recruitment consideration for scholarship recipients upon graduation. This integrated approach fosters a self-sustaining developmental cycle: corporate investment in scholarships enables precise identification of students requiring targeted support; successful internships cultivate professional competencies and workplace readiness; priority employment opportunities ensure smooth transition into industry roles; and alumni who advance within partner enterprises often contribute back through mentorship, skill-sharing initiatives, or renewed funding commitments. Empirical outcomes demonstrate strong efficacy: the 2025 cohort of scholarship recipients achieved full employment placement, while the 2026 cohort attained a placement rate exceeding 90%, reflecting both institutional effectiveness and industry responsiveness.

Through work-study integration and school-enterprise closed-loop collaboration, the institution systematically connects home visit insights to broader industry-education integration strategies, thereby extending the scope of funding-based educational support beyond traditional campus boundaries and temporal limits [10]. This framework deliberately bridges academic instruction with authentic workplace contexts, transforms undergraduate learning experiences into continuous professional development trajectories, and sustains engagement with graduates throughout early-career stages. As a result, funding education evolves from a discrete financial intervention into a longitudinal, ecosystem-wide developmental chain—encompassing needs assessment, capacity building, experiential learning, labor market entry, and post-graduation professional growth—thereby reinforcing institutional mission, enhancing social mobility outcomes, and strengthening regional industrial human capital pipelines.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study centers on home visit practices for financially disadvantaged students within the developmental funding education framework, using the School of Mechanical Engineering at Yangzhou Polytechnic University as an illustrative case. The analysis reveals that home visits serve not merely as a verification mechanism for financial eligibility but as a multifaceted intervention strategy. They foster relational trust between institutions and families, provide empathetic emotional support to students and caregivers, enable nuanced identification of individualized developmental needs—including academic, psychosocial, and vocational dimensions—and facilitate coordinated resource mobilization across institutional, familial, and community domains. The six

recurring challenges observed—related to technological infrastructure limitations, geographic dispersion of student households, finite material and budgetary resources, availability and capacity of trained personnel, physical safety considerations during travel and in-home engagement, and psychological readiness among both staff and families—reflect systemic operational complexities common across higher education institutions implementing similar outreach initiatives. In response, the school has developed several replicable innovations: a multi-dimensional identification protocol that triangulates administrative data, peer nominations, and faculty observations; a full-cycle Three-Stage Support Visit model encompassing pre-visit preparation, structured in-home dialogue with documented reflection, and post-visit integration into longitudinal student development plans; and a work-study integrated school-enterprise closed-loop education system that embeds home visit insights directly into experiential learning pathways, scholarship allocation, and career placement mechanisms.

Based on empirical findings and iterative program evaluation, four evidence-informed recommendations are advanced to strengthen the design, implementation, and impact of home visit initiatives:

Institutionalize standardized workflows spanning the entire home visit lifecycle: from initial candidate screening and consent procedures, through pre-visit briefing and logistical coordination, to in-home engagement protocols, secure digital dossier creation with structured field notes, and systematic post-visit tracking—including academic progress monitoring, counseling referrals, and periodic feedback loops to families. Embedding these steps explicitly within university funding policy documents ensures consistency, accountability, auditability, and long-term sustainability across academic cycles and staffing transitions.

Strategically align home visit outcomes with broader institutional partnerships and student development services. Specifically, integrate household socioeconomic context, student self-reported aspirations, and observed environmental assets or constraints—gathered during visits—with corporate-sponsored scholarship criteria, internship matching algorithms, and graduate recruitment pipelines. This alignment transforms home visits from isolated welfare checks into dynamic connectors that enhance institutional responsiveness, deepen employer engagement, and expand students' access to meaningful professional opportunities grounded in authentic understanding of their lived circumstances.

Strengthen human capital investment by establishing comprehensive professional development pathways for faculty and staff conducting home visits. Training curricula should emphasize active listening, culturally responsive communication, ethical data handling, trauma-informed practice, and familiarity with institutional aid policies and external support systems. Complementing this with formal recognition frameworks—including workload adjustments, performance appraisal weighting, and peer-nominated excellence awards—encourages sustained participation and cultivates a cohort of skilled, reflective practitioners committed to equitable student support.

Systematically activate home visit intelligence to drive continuous improvement across student support ecosystems. Field-collected qualitative and contextual data must be translated into actionable inputs for academic advising, mental health service planning, financial aid recalibration, and curriculum-responsive mentoring. Establishing cross-departmental data review forums—where student affairs, academic departments, career services, and counseling units jointly interpret visit insights—ensures that frontline observations inform strategic decision-making, thereby closing the loop between direct engagement and institutional responsiveness.

Home visits have increasingly become recognized as a high-impact relational practice within university student support systems—not only for verifying need but for cultivating mutual understanding, reinforcing institutional care commitments, and enriching pedagogical responsiveness. As work-study integrated school-enterprise models mature, the function of home visits is evolving from reactive hardship assessment toward proactive, holistic growth facilitation. This shift supports a sustainable

developmental arc wherein targeted support catalyzes academic resilience, builds career agency, strengthens family-school collaboration, and ultimately contributes to long-term student well-being and societal contribution. Such evolution reflects a maturing commitment to student-centered, contextually grounded, and continuously adaptive educational support structures.

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