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The Research on the Talent Cultivation Model for Master's Degree in Applied Psychology from the Perspective of Industry-Education Integration

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Abstract: This paper analyzes the current status of talent cultivation for master's degree in applied psychology in China. It discusses the demand for high-level applied talents in the context of rapid social and economic development and industrial structure adjustment. The role of the industry-education integration model in enhancing students' practical and innovative abilities is explored. Based on relevant research, strategies for constructing an efficient talent cultivation system for master's degree in applied psychology from the perspective of industry-education integration are discussed. It is suggested to optimize the talent cultivation model to train psychology professionals that better meet social needs.

1. Introduction

In the context of rapid societal development, the demand for applied talents in the field of psychology is increasingly growing, particularly in areas such as mental health services, corporate management, and educational consulting. The cultivation of master's degree professionals in applied psychology must closely align with industry needs to adapt to the swift changes in society and the market. However, current challenges include the inadequacy of collaboration mechanisms between higher education institutions and enterprises, as well as a disconnect between training objectives and actual demands.

This research focuses on constructing an effective industry-education integration model to enhance the quality of talent cultivation and meet the societal demand for professional psychological practitioners. Through an analysis of the current situation, a literature review, and the exploration of new models, this study aims to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for the reform of applied psychology education, thereby promoting innovation and development in psychology education.

2. Research on Industry-Education Integration and the Talent Cultivation Model for Applied Professionals

Industry-education integration can facilitate the alignment of educational outcomes with industry demands, enhancing practical and innovative capabilities, which is crucial for cultivating applied

talents. Currently, while certain achievements have been made in practice within higher education institutions, challenges such as unclear positioning and unstable funding for school-enterprise cooperation persist. Higher education institutions need to strengthen faculty development and enhance collaboration with enterprises to construct a diversified and collaborative talent cultivation system.

2.1 Current Status of Industry-Education Integration

Industry-education integration is a key pathway for cultivating high-level applied talents. It helps to bridge educational resources with industry needs, thereby enhancing students' practical and innovative abilities[1] .However, the lack of clarity in positioning and talent cultivation objectives within higher education institutions affects the effectiveness of industry-education integration. In practice, various models have been explored by universities[2], such as the "321" model, which emphasizes the integration of theory and practice, as well as school-enterprise cooperation, where enterprises participate in curriculum design and provide internship opportunities to cultivate students' practical work skills. For instance, Peking University's master's program in applied psychology emphasizes the integration of teaching and practice, collaborating with enterprises and public management departments, and inviting experts to participate in teaching.

Although the talent cultivation model of industry-education integration has made certain progress, it also faces challenges. Some higher education institutions lack clear objectives and effective mechanisms, resulting in suboptimal training outcomes. Unstable funding and low enterprise participation in school-enterprise cooperation are also bottlenecks that limit the in-depth development of industry-education integration [3].

2.2 The Role of Industry-Education Integration in Talent Cultivation

Geng Liming, Wang Simeng, and Pan Chang (2024), through literature analysis and case studies, pointed out that industry-education integration is essential for cultivating applied talents needed by society[4]. With the adjustment and optimization of the industrial structure, the requirements for talents are increasing, and the education field faces severe challenges. Therefore, in the new era, the cultivation of applied talents should follow the background and connotation of industry-education integration development. They analyzed the importance of the cultivation model in detail and proposed innovative ideas to promote the cultivation of applied talents from the perspective of industry-education integration. Yang Bo and Jiang Darui (2024) analyzed the problems existing in the talent cultivation model of universities, such as the disconnection between talent cultivation and social needs, the lack of students' practical abilities, and the low participation of enterprises, pointing out that these problems are closely related to the traditionality of the talent cultivation model [5]. Through policy analysis and empirical research, they proposed that industry-education integration can effectively solve these problems, emphasizing that universities should strengthen faculty development and university-enterprise cooperation to give full play to the important role of industry-education integration in talent cultivation.

Lu Ming, Sang Yupeng, Hu Zhedong, et al. (2024) studied the role of industrial colleges in talent cultivation, exploring a multi-faceted collaborative characteristic talent cultivation system and building a high-level faculty and university-enterprise linkage mechanism through the construction of industrial colleges[6]. Their case analysis demonstrated the effectiveness of the industry-education integration alliance in co-constructing majors and teaching resources, providing new paths for regional economic development.

Wei Jing, Wang Keda, and Li He (2024) discussed the applied talent cultivation model under industry-education integration, emphasizing the comprehensive consideration of goal positioning

and social needs, constructing a talent cultivation model, and strengthening the connection with local industries[7]. Zhu Weiguo, Gao Rong, Xu Zhao, et al. (2024), based on the "321" cultivation model, constructed a new professional degree graduate cultivation model through comparative analysis and practice, and achieved success in Huaiyin Institute of Technology[8].

3. Exploration of Graduate Student Training Mechanisms and Practices

A disparity exists between the reform ideals and practical outcomes in China's postgraduate education, particularly within the Master of Applied Psychology (MAP) domain. The practical competence and comprehensive qualities of graduates have not fully met expectations, indicating a need for further enhancement of training quality and practical skills. Consequently, there is a continued imperative to refine existing training systems and construct talent cultivation models that align with the demands of the contemporary era.

3.1 Discrepancies Between Reform Ideals and Practical Outcomes

Since the reforms initiated in 2013, while advancements have been observed in China's postgraduate education, challenges persist regarding training models and overall quality[9]. Although certain policy implementations have contributed to improved teaching standards, the corresponding elevation in training quality remains insufficient. The reform's guiding principles explicitly emphasize "innovation as the soul, research-led approach as the core, and the supervisor responsibility system as the foundation." However, the practical realization of these principles has been limited in areas such as funding, enrollment, and research support. Research conducted across 23 pilot universities reveals inconsistencies between certain guiding reform ideals and their practical implementation, with incomplete interaction among practical objectives. Scholars have suggested reinforcing the integration of research and teaching mechanisms through a "teaching-research" integrated model, facilitating the transfer of research resources to teaching and thereby enhancing training quality[10].

Further exploration is warranted in China's postgraduate education reform, specifically concerning training quality, pedagogical models, curriculum design, and management mechanisms. The MAP program also requires optimization of the student-faculty ratio, specialization delineation, curriculum structure, and program duration to meet contemporary demands. Furthermore, the establishment of a long-term mechanism for practice-based education is crucial to promote the integration of teaching and research, ultimately elevating the overall quality of education.

For instance, Shenzhen University has implemented a mentor group system in its MAP program, combining collective training with individual responsibility. The mentor group is led by qualified faculty members and incorporates the participation of corporate executives and industry experts. The curriculum adopts a combination of foundational and elective courses, incorporating a designated internship period and requiring the completion of a thesis. Assessment of foundational courses includes both examinations and evaluations, with examinations accounting for no less than 50% of the overall grade. These measures provide robust support for the cultivation of high-caliber, application-oriented professionals.

3.2 Problems and Countermeasures in Current Postgraduate Training

Wang (2024) employed a literature analysis approach to investigate challenges associated with industry-education integration in professional degree postgraduate training, including incomplete systems, low levels of enterprise participation, and limited adoption of diverse graduation design assessment methods[11]. He proposed mechanisms and pathways such as multi-stakeholder

collaboration, interdisciplinary integration, scientific transformation of training, and digital resource sharing to enhance the training level of professional degrees and promote the interconnection of industrial innovation resources and talent cultivation.

Ge (2023) systematically reviewed the development trajectory of China's postgraduate education policies from 1977 to 2022, categorizing it into three phases: recovery and development, adjustment and reform, and optimization and improvement, while also analyzing the influencing factors of policy changes[12]. He identified issues arising during the policy evolution process, such as inadequate talent cultivation mechanisms and a lack of policy evaluation and feedback, and proposed corresponding solutions and improvement suggestions.

Wen, Zhao, and Cheng (2022), from the perspective of constructing postgraduate training mechanisms in the new era, combined the practice of postgraduate training mechanism construction and reform at Southwest Petroleum University to propose a series of measures for postgraduate training mechanism construction[13]. This provides a reference for the construction and reform of postgraduate training mechanisms in similar universities, establishing a postgraduate training system that meets the requirements of the times. Wang, Sun, and Liu (2022) analyzed the problems existing in the current training model by taking the "1+3+2" training model of the Psychology Department of Beijing Normal University as an example, and proposed the construction of a professional degree postgraduate training model guided by professional competence, a "three-in-one" training path, and a "fourth classroom" and "cooperative co-construction" mechanism guarantee. This model has replicable and promotion value[14].

4. Research on Talent Cultivation Models in Applied Psychology

Current postgraduate training models in Applied Psychology are undergoing continuous adjustments and optimizations, generally emphasizing the training of fundamental theories and professional skills. However, universities face shortcomings in curriculum design and the cultivation of practical skills, particularly in industry-education integration, where there is significant room for improvement.

4.1 Characteristics and Limitations of Current Psychology Talent Cultivation

Most universities commonly adopt a combination of theory and practice to cultivate Applied Psychology postgraduates. For example, Tianjin Normal University requires Applied Psychology master's students to participate in professional practice internships, with the content of the professional practice internship consistent with the major studied, and the internship duration not less than 3 months. Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine adopts a training method combining compulsory and elective courses, arranges a certain amount of internship time, and requires the completion of a thesis. Zhejiang University requires students to complete 4 credits of professional practice during their studies, no less than 3 months of professional internship practice, and complete a high-quality internship report of more than 10,000 words. Universities improve students' professional theoretical knowledge and practical operation ability through a training model combining course learning and practical activities[15].

In terms of curriculum design, universities generally focus on the transmission of basic theories and the training of professional skills. The curriculum covers various aspects, including basic psychological theories, psychological counseling and treatment techniques, and psychological measurement and assessment. Through the study of these courses, postgraduates can master solid psychological basic knowledge and possess certain psychological counseling and treatment abilities. Some universities also offer interdisciplinary courses, such as social psychology and organizational behavior, to broaden students' knowledge horizons and enhance their comprehensive problem-

solving abilities.

For example, the curriculum for the Master of Applied Psychology at Sun Yat-sen University covers various aspects, including basic psychological theories, psychological counseling and treatment techniques, and psychological measurement and assessment. "Theory and Practice of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics" and "English" serve as public theory courses, providing students with the necessary political and language foundation. Professional foundation courses such as "Advanced Psychological Research Methods" and "Advanced Psychological Statistics" cultivate students' research abilities and data processing abilities. At the same time, some interdisciplinary courses are also offered, such as "Special Topics in Developmental Psychology," "Special Topics in Social Psychology," and "Special Topics in Applied Psychology." These courses not only broaden students' knowledge horizons but also enhance their comprehensive problem-solving abilities. In order to enhance students' practical skills, Sun Yat-sen University also provides professional technical and practical courses such as "Professional Internship." Other courses, such as "Special Topics in Consumer Psychology" and "Special Topics in Management Psychology," provide students with more choices to meet the learning needs of different directions. Through the study of these courses, postgraduates can master solid psychological basic knowledge and possess certain psychological counseling and treatment abilities.

Although the current training model meets the learning needs of Applied Psychology postgraduates to a certain extent, there are still some shortcomings. For example, some universities overemphasize theory in curriculum design, and the cultivation of practical skills is insufficient. Although, in the practical link, many universities provide students with internship opportunities through cooperation with enterprises, hospitals, community and other institutions, the quantity and quality of practice need to be improved in order to better cultivate students' practical skills[16].

4.2 Exploration of Psychology Talent Cultivation Practices from Multiple Perspectives

In the field of research on postgraduate training mechanisms and practices, Zhu (2023) studied the construction of an integrated collaborative talent training model for Applied Psychology majors in the context of new liberal arts, taking the sports psychology major of Xi'an Institute of Physical Education as a case, starting from the report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, and constructed a set of talent training system[17]. By analyzing the opportunities and challenges of the construction of new liberal arts, it proposed a construction plan for the curriculum system, the collaborative education system for practical teaching, and the integrated evaluation and assessment system, aiming to cultivate high-quality, compound, and application-oriented talents that meet the needs of social development.

Yang, Yin, and Huang (2023) analyzed the motivation for postgraduate studies of 24 "post-90s" students in a university in Yunnan. It was found that the motivation for postgraduate studies can be divided into types such as escaping reality, career advancement, external expectations, interest in knowledge, and secondary compensation[18]. The study analyzed the commonalities and individual differences of "post-90s" postgraduate studies, and pointed out the shortcomings of "post-90s" college students in career planning awareness and self-cognition, providing important reference for universities in these two aspects of training.

Wu (2022) discussed the talent training model of Applied Psychology under the background of transformation and development, analyzed the supply-demand mismatch problem existing in the talent training of Applied Psychology majors, and proposed the necessity of professional transformation and development, in order to promote the diversified growth of talents[19].

5. New Exploration of Applied Psychology Master's Talent Cultivation Model under the Perspective of Industry-Education Integration

In the current environment, the Applied Psychology Master's talent cultivation model under industry-education integration should construct a "Six-in-One" talent cultivation framework (Figure 1). This includes personal competencies, career development, and local service. The curriculum system is modularized, covering basic literacy, core competencies, and directional electives. Teaching methods are informatized, such as MOOCs and flipped classrooms. The faculty team is diversified, integrating resources both inside and outside the university. The practical teaching platform is diversified, collaborating with enterprises and medical institutions. The assessment and evaluation system is three-dimensional, combining process-oriented and summative evaluations to ensure training quality.

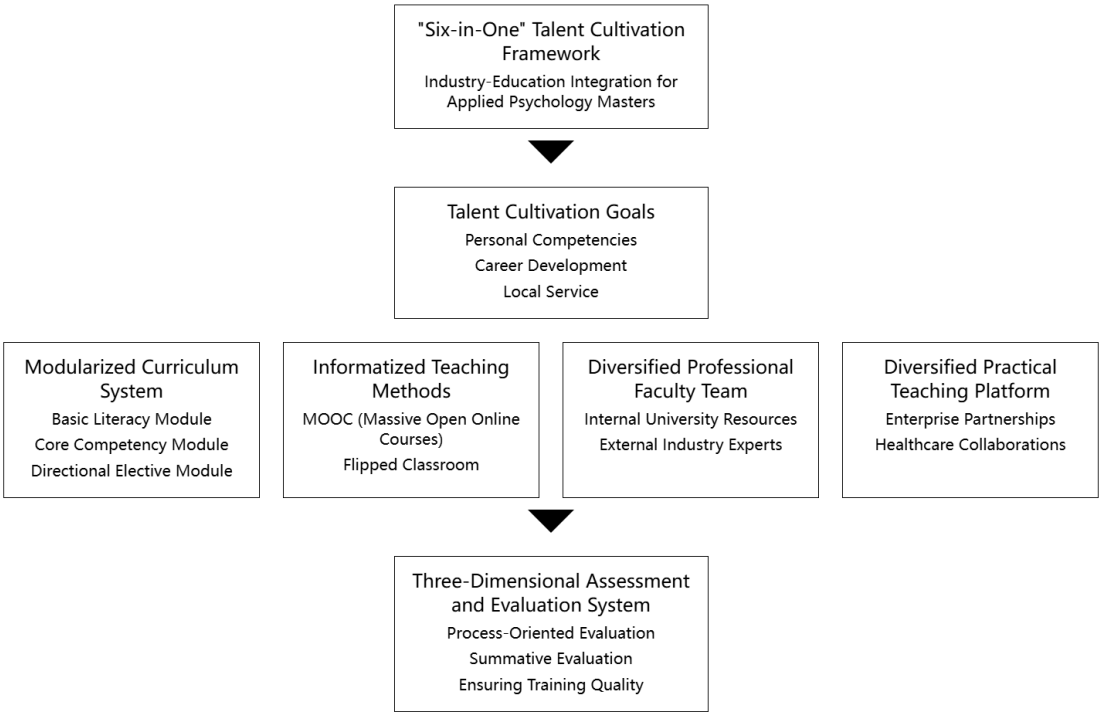

Figure 1: The “Six-in-One Integrated” Talent Cultivation Model

5.1 Diversification of Talent Cultivation Goals

Based on the characteristics of the Applied Psychology major, breaking away from the previous single-goal orientation that emphasized knowledge mastery, adhering to the "qualified + specialized" talent cultivation standard, and guided by personal competency growth, career development, and service to local economic and social development, we deeply explore multi-dimensional talent cultivation goals.

The personal competency cultivation goal requires that the Applied Psychology professional talent cultivation model must be closely integrated with the current social needs for psychology professionals. The cultivation model should not only strengthen the mastery of professional theoretical knowledge and the practical ability to solve practical problems, but also possess good communication skills, critical thinking, innovation ability, and lifelong learning ability. These abilities are key to adapting to future social and professional development.

Career development requires graduates to have interdisciplinary perspectives and comprehensive abilities. The industry-education integration model should cultivate compound talents with broad vision and innovative abilities. The curriculum system should cover multiple related fields to broaden students' knowledge structure and flexibly respond to professional needs.

The talent cultivation goal should serve local economic and social development. Psychology professionals should actively participate in and serve local economic and social development. Through cooperation with local governments, enterprises, and social psychological service organizations, students can better understand local psychological service needs, apply what they have learned to solve practical problems, and promote psychological health construction.

In summary, the Applied Psychology Master's talent cultivation should build an open, flexible, and forward-looking system to meet industry needs and lay a solid foundation for future careers. Through multi-level and broad-field cultivation goals, it ensures that the cultivated talents can meet market demands and possess sustainable development potential.

5.2 Modularization of the Teaching Curriculum System

According to the development trend of this major and the development needs of professional master's degrees, revise the talent cultivation plan according to the school's positioning of talent cultivation specifications, and make corresponding adjustments and improvements to the professional curriculum system, focusing on creating three major curriculum modules: basic literacy, core competencies, and directional electives, optimizing allocation, complementing functions, and cultivating application-oriented and compound talents through multiple channels and methods.

The basic literacy module should integrate basic psychology courses with interdisciplinary education, encouraging students to cross-integrate psychology with disciplines such as sociology, economics, and management to broaden their horizons and cultivate students' ability to cope with complex social environments, enabling them to possess the literacy to comprehensively analyze and solve problems. At the same time, educational institutions should strengthen psychological ethics education to ensure that students abide by ethical norms in practice.

The core competency module focuses on the cultivation of professional skills and practical abilities. According to the characteristics of the Applied Psychology major, core courses such as psychological counseling and treatment, psychological measurement and assessment, and psychological intervention and planning are set up. Through the transmission of theoretical knowledge combined with practical analysis, students' practical operation ability and problem-solving ability are cultivated. At the same time, new technologies such as big data and artificial intelligence are integrated into the curriculum system to enhance students' data analysis and psychological research capabilities to meet the social demand for psychology professionals.

The directional elective module provides cross-disciplinary elective courses, such as consumer psychology and organizational behavior, to support students in choosing areas for in-depth study based on their interests and career plans. Combined with the "industry-university-research" model, students' innovation ability and practical skills are enhanced through participation in scientific research projects, stimulating learning interest and promoting the combination of theory and practice to cope with future career challenges.

5.3 Informatization of Classroom Teaching Methods

By integrating discipline-specific teaching features and adopting student-centered approaches, educators should innovate beyond traditional lecture-based methods. This involves exploring the effectiveness of MOOCs, flipped classrooms, and scenario-based experiential learning, while actively utilizing internet technologies to enhance instructional guidance. Such pedagogical

innovations aim to stimulate student engagement and foster dynamic teacher-student interactions.

The introduction of MOOC resources, using high-quality courses on online platforms as a supplement, enables students to learn independently at any time and cultivate self-management and lifelong learning abilities. Teachers combine MOOC content to design offline discussions and practical operations to achieve the integration of online and offline teaching and improve teaching effectiveness.

The flipped classroom is a teaching model that reverses the lecture and after-class practice links in the traditional classroom. It transforms the traditional "lecture-listening" model into a "guidance-exploration" model, enabling students to participate more actively in the learning process in the classroom, which can improve students' critical thinking and problem-solving abilities.

Scenario-based experiential teaching allows students to learn psychological counseling and treatment techniques in a simulated or created virtual scenario, such as role-playing and case analysis, enhancing the intuitiveness and participation of learning.

In the cultivation of Applied Psychology Master's students, an informatized classroom can also be established, such as carrying out the online transformation of psychological experiment teaching. Through a remote psychological experiment platform, students can participate in experiments anytime and anywhere, obtain experimental data, and independently complete data analysis and report writing. This method can improve hands-on and data processing abilities and break through the geographical and time limitations of traditional experiments.

5.4 Diversification of Professional Faculty Team

According to the talent cultivation goals of this major's master's students, universities should fully integrate domestic and overseas social resources, hiring well-known domestic teachers, overseas experts, and social enterprise elites to provide guidance for students' development and growth. They should actively explore the cooperation mechanism between internal and external supervisors, establishing a faculty team that is "mainly specialized, combining specialized and part-time" to enhance the participation of external supervisors in postgraduate training and guide students to solve practical problems in industry practice.

Strengthening the construction of the faculty team is the key to improving the quality of talent cultivation through industry-education integration. The construction of a "dual-teacher" faculty team is particularly important, including scholars and enterprise experts who have both a solid academic theoretical foundation and rich industry practical experience. Universities can improve the quality and teaching ability of the faculty team by introducing experts and strengthening the practical training and academic exchanges of in-service teachers. For example, graduate programs can learn from the practice of the Department of Psychology at Renmin University of China and adopt a dual-supervisor system combining internal faculty and external industry professionals. Internal university supervisors are responsible for theoretical teaching, and external university supervisors impart practical experience, jointly promoting student development.

Having an international perspective is also important for the diversified construction of the faculty team. The faculty of Applied Psychology should include experts and scholars from overseas, or internal university teachers with overseas study and research experience, which helps to combine international advanced psychological theories with local practices and cultivate high-level application-oriented talents with a global vision and local experience. Schools can regularly hire external supervisors from diverse fields to bring cutting-edge knowledge and industry practice guidance, providing support for students' career choices and practical training.

Through dual-teacher training programs and dual-supervisor systems inside and outside the university, resources can be integrated, teachers' practical and academic abilities can be improved,

international perspectives can be broadened, and the quality of talent cultivation for Applied Psychology Master's students can be enhanced. This diversified faculty provides students with a wide range of learning resources and is an important support for career planning, practical operation, and coping with future career challenges.

5.5 Diversification of Practical Teaching Platform

According to the professional master's postgraduate training program of this major, combined with the actual situation of the school, universities should build a scientific and reasonable practical teaching system that meets the requirements of the Applied Psychology Master's training goals. They should make full use of resources such as university psychological centers, hospital psychological psychiatry departments, and social psychological service organizations to build a diversified practical teaching platform to meet the needs of students' professional development and growth.

The construction of "industry-university-research" joint training bases is an effective way to achieve the talent cultivation goals of Applied Psychology Master's students. Graduate programs should cooperate with enterprises, medical institutions, and social organizations by introducing enterprise case projects to enhance students' practical and problem-solving skills. This collaboration will provide graduate students with enriched practical opportunities, thereby better preparing them for future professional environments.

At the same time, the University strengthens in-depth cooperation with enterprises and establishes stable internship bases and training platforms to provide students with opportunities to contact the forefront of the industry and promote the connection between education and market demand. For example, Tianjin Normal University, Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine, and Zhejiang University all require professional practice internships to ensure that students obtain sufficient practical experience and enhance their professional competitiveness.

In addition, it is necessary to innovate the talent cultivation model, explore diversified cultivation methods such as short-term training, enterprise internships, and joint research and development, and then improve professional skills and stimulate innovation abilities. Universities can hold workshops and seminars, inviting industry experts to provide guidance; organize students to participate in interdisciplinary research projects to explore new solutions across different fields.

5.6 Three-Dimensional Assessment and Evaluation System

Higher education accreditation bodies should explore scientific, fair, reasonable, and comprehensive evaluation standards, focusing on the combination of process-oriented evaluation and summative evaluation, qualitative evaluation and quantitative evaluation, and theoretical knowledge assessment and practical skill assessment, especially highlighting the ‘applicability' of professional master's degree theses, to construct professional degree thesis quality evaluation standards.

Process-oriented evaluation should run through the entire cultivation process, tracking and providing feedback on students' learning progress in real time, including classroom participation, assignments, case analysis, project research, and practical performance, and providing real-time feedback on students' comprehensive learning progress. Summative evaluation is conducted at the end of a course or project, focusing on assessing students' knowledge mastery and practical application abilities. For example, in the thesis writing and defense stages, the school establishes a clear set of thesis quality evaluation standards for comprehensive evaluation. Finally, the two are combined to comprehensively reflect students' learning status and effectiveness, ensuring the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the evaluation.

Graduate education institutions should fully combine qualitative and quantitative evaluation in terms of specific assessment methods to build a multidimensional evaluation system. Qualitative evaluation focuses on students' practical abilities and problem-solving abilities in psychological counseling, psychological measurement, and research methods. Quantitative evaluation uses quantified indicators, such as the accuracy rate of psychological tests, project completion status, and course exam scores, to ensure the objectivity and accuracy of the assessment. At the same time, universities should introduce methods such as peer evaluation and supervisor evaluation to increase the evaluation dimension and ensure the comprehensiveness and fairness of the assessment.

Theoretical knowledge assessment and practical skill assessment require schools to focus on the assessment of theoretical and practical skills, which is mainly reflected in the experiment and internship assessment of on-campus courses. Professional degree programs should assess students' performance in actual work scenarios through cooperation with off-campus enterprises, establishing a dual evaluation mechanism that integrates academic and industrial perspectives. The evaluation provided by enterprise supervisors on work performance, professional skill application, and teamwork provides a more comprehensive basis for the school's assessment. This assessment method not only helps to improve students' comprehensive quality but also better meets the social demand for high-level application-oriented talents.

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