

Original Paper

Mechanisms, Pathways, and Evaluation of Party-Building
Empowerment in Finance Talent Cultivation at Private
Application-Oriented Undergraduate Institutions: Based on the
Practice of the Internet Finance Program at Guangdong
Technology College

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Abstract

Finance talent cultivation at private application-oriented undergraduate institutions faces a twofold predicament: Party building and professional education operate as disconnected “two skins,” and the effects of Party building resist evaluation. Using the Internet Finance program at Guangdong Technology College as a case, and drawing on literature review, institutional text analysis, questionnaires, interviews, and recruitment big data, this paper examines the mechanisms, pathways, and evaluation of Party-building empowerment. Three findings emerge. First, empowerment works through a triple transformation—organizing political potential energy, converting organizational kinetic energy into educational practice, and consolidating educational efficacy into student competencies—which in private institutions presupposes governance embeddedness. Second, in the

support matrix of the 2026 cultivation plan, all seven core specialized courses leave the “moral cultivation” indicator points unmarked, supplying verifiable evidence of the disjunction. Third, resource constraints make a lightweight, embedded, and assessable pathway a better fit, and existing data suffice to construct a low-cost Party-Building Empowerment Index. The graduate destination realization rate exceeds 95%, whereas the employment–major match rate is only 58.60%, 77.08%, and 76.70%; the resulting index score is 82.11.

Keywords

Party-building empowerment, private application-oriented undergraduate institutions, finance talent cultivation, red-finance literacy, Party-Building Empowerment Index

1. Introduction

China’s *Master Plan on Building a Strong Education Nation (2024-2035)* requires that ideological and political education run through the entire process of talent cultivation (Communist Party of China Central Committee & State Council, 2024). That requirement bears with particular force on finance, conventionally described as the lifeblood of the national economy. Graduates of application-oriented undergraduate finance programs take up posts mainly at commercial bank branches, securities business outlets, local rural commercial banks, and corporate investment and financing units, where they deal daily with fund security, compliance and risk control, and client rights and interests. A graduate who is technically strong yet weak in compliance awareness may well carry more risk than he or she creates value. Digitalization has raised the stakes further, giving data literacy and compliance judgment a prominence they did not previously have (People’s Bank of China, 2022).

In this paper, Party-building empowerment refers to the process through which a Party organization’s political resources—its mandates, its organizational network, and its Party-member faculty—are converted into educational resources and, eventually, into student competencies. The term is used as a process claim about institutional arrangements, not as an established causal effect; “two skins” denotes the observed disjunction between Party-building activities and professional education in their objectives, resources, and measurement conventions.

The gap between requirement and practice, however, is no less conspicuous. In many institutions, Party building (the organizational and educational work of Communist Party of China branches on campus) remains confined to recruiting Party members, theoretical study, and regular organizational activities, whereas program development turns on course evaluation, discipline competitions, and employment rates; the two domains rarely meet in their objectives, resources, or measurement conventions (Gao & Zong, 2017). Private institutions are a special case. Their Party organizations must have their relationship with the board of directors and the university administration specified through the charter and institutional rules (General Office of the CPC Central Committee, 2025), and transplanting the high-input model of public institutions is unlikely to be feasible.

This paper therefore asks three questions. What is the internal mechanism through which Party building empowers finance talent cultivation in application-oriented undergraduate education? How should feasible pathways be designed? And how should their effects be evaluated?

This paper addresses the three questions through a single-case design centered on the Internet Finance program at Guangdong Technology College, combining literature review, institutional text analysis, questionnaire surveys, interviews, and recruitment data. Three contributions are offered. Theoretically, Party-building empowerment is reframed as a conditional rather than automatic process: in private application-oriented institutions it is argued to be preconditioned on governance embeddedness, understood as the charter-specified standing of the Party organization and its right of prior deliberation on major academic matters. Methodologically, the widely invoked “two skins” disjunction is operationalized as a countable property of an institutional document—the per-course support markings recorded in the cultivation plan’s requirement matrix—and a traceable composite index is assembled from records the institution already maintains. Practically, a pathway is specified that reuses existing curricular instruments rather than adding parallel structures. These claims are advanced as contextually grounded propositions from one program: the design is descriptive and supports no causal inference.

The remainder of the paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 reviews three lines of research and locates the gaps this study addresses; Section 3 sets out the design and data sources; Section 4 diagnoses the case; Sections 5, 6, and 7 take up mechanism, pathway, and evaluation; and Section 8 concludes with the main conclusions, implications, recommendations, and limitations.

2. Literature Review and Research Gaps

Existing research has developed along three lines. On value guidance, Gao and Zong (2017) proposed the move “from ideological and political theory courses to curriculum-based ideological and political education”, addressing directly the separation between ideological and political education and specialized education and establishing the educational principle of combining explicit and implicit approaches; the *Guideline for Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Education in Higher Education Institutions* subsequently turned that principle into an institutional arrangement (Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China, 2020). A second line locates the question historically. Zhong (2020) traced the quality logic through which Chinese higher education moved from scale expansion to connotative improvement; Fan (2020) set out the case for bringing finance as a discipline together with digital technology; and Pan and He (2019) clarified how application-oriented institutions should be positioned. A third line consists of practice-oriented studies that have appeared in recent years, most of them identifying ideological and political elements within finance courses or summarizing experience with “Party building plus industry–education integration”.

Read together, these lines disclose a nested rather than parallel set of gaps. At the base lies an unresolved mechanism: most studies argue for the value of Party building rather than trace the process, leaving what mediates its translation into student quality largely unspecified. Existing research has

clustered in research universities and vocational colleges (Pan & He, 2019); private application-oriented institutions—where Party leadership is not an institutional default but a standing secured through governance arrangements—are almost absent, so that the failing case goes unexamined. The strongly regulated, ethics-intensive character of financial work rarely enters the analysis, and consequently evaluation lacks instruments that are discipline-specific, auditable, and cheap enough for routine use under resource constraints. Human capital theory supplies the vocabulary for input–capability transformation (Schultz, 1961) and the resource-based view for converting heterogeneous resources into advantage (Barney, 1991); what remains missing is how that conversion is organized and when it proceeds. This paper takes up that question.

Framed in this vocabulary, Party building can be read as a resource stock held by the institution and talent cultivation as the process that converts it into graduate capability; what this paper asks, and answers in Section 5, is what governs the efficiency of that conversion.

3. Research Design and Data Sources

This study adopts a single-case design. Because the question concerns how a mechanism operates rather than how widely it is distributed, a single case permits process-level observation that surveys cannot provide; the corresponding cost in external validity is acknowledged in Section 8. The program was selected for three reasons. It was approved to enroll students in 2019 and, by the time of the survey, had produced four graduating cohorts, giving it a complete development history. It is located in the Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macao Greater Bay Area and maintains stable cooperation with financial institutions in Zhaoqing and surrounding areas. And its host school has a fintech teaching and research team and specialized laboratories, so that organizational and resource conditions are directly observable.

Five sources of evidence were combined. A literature review established the analytical framework (Fan, 2020; Zhong, 2020). Institutional text analysis examined item by item the 2026 version of the cultivation plan and its “support-relationship matrix linking the curriculum system to graduation requirements”. A questionnaire survey reached 40 participating enterprises and 198 graduating students, supplemented by questionnaires to graduates and employer feedback forms (Guangdong Technology College, School of Economics and Management, 2025b). Interviews and field observation covered visits to financial institutions including Zhaoqing Rural Commercial Bank, Industrial Bank, and the Xiqiao Sub-branch of Nanhai Rural Commercial Bank. Recruitment big-data analysis captured one year of position data from Zhaopin and BOSS Zhipin.

One caveat should be stated at the outset. The quantitative analysis in this paper is limited to descriptive statistics, group comparisons, and index computation, and it is intended to display trends and differences rather than to support strict causal inference. No significance tests are reported, and year-to-year differences are therefore read descriptively. Among these sources, text parsing is the only

one that yields documentary evidence a reader can check cell by cell; the questionnaire, interview, and recruitment sources triangulate it.

4. Case Diagnosis: Three Tensions and One Piece of Hard Evidence

The subsections that follow diagnose the case along four lines. Subsections 4.1 through 4.3 describe three tensions: an adequate supply of Party-member faculty alongside weak mechanisms for putting it to work; high employment alongside low major match; and demand-side signals for the very capacities that value shaping targets. Subsection 4.4 is not a fourth tension but the hard evidence on which the diagnosis rests—a cell-by-cell reading of the support matrix in the cultivation plan, which turns the three tensions from plausible readings of questionnaire data into facts a reader can check independently, and which Section 5 takes up as the observable trace on which its mechanism argument rests.

4.1 Adequate Personnel but Insufficient Mechanisms

The first tension is one of supply without mechanism. According to the school's program application materials (Guangdong Technology College, School of Economics and Management, 2025a), the School of Economics and Management had 7 undergraduate programs, 3,839 undergraduate students on campus, and 201 full-time teachers at the time of the study, a student–teacher ratio of 19.10:1. Among those teachers, 99.0% held a master's degree or above; 86 were members of the Communist Party of China, or 42.79%; dual-qualified teachers (teachers with both theoretical and practical qualifications) made up 31.8%; and teachers under 35 made up 70.65%. Within this school, the Internet Finance program enrolled 571 students and had 31 full-time teachers, a student–teacher ratio of 18.42.

A Party-member share above 40% provides the human resource base for “Party building plus professional work.” The faculty, however, was young as a whole, with relatively short Party membership and limited teaching experience, and converting political enthusiasm into stable educational capacity is precisely the task that mechanism design has to take up. The personnel were in place; what was missing was the arrangement that would direct them toward teaching. As Section 8 argues, adding activities would generate outputs the existing design cannot route into teaching.

4.2 The Structural Tension of “High Employment, Low Major Match”

The second tension concerns the shape of graduate outcomes rather than their volume. The program passed the review of its qualification to confer bachelor's degrees in 2023. Over the following three years, its graduate destination realization rates were 91.79%, 97.22%, and 95.15%, in each year above the school average for that year. Over the same period, its employment–major match rate was only 58.60%, 77.08%, and 76.70% (Figure 1). The 2024 and 2025 figures represent a marked improvement on 2023, but both remain below the school-wide average of 81.81%, and the 2025 figure fell back slightly.

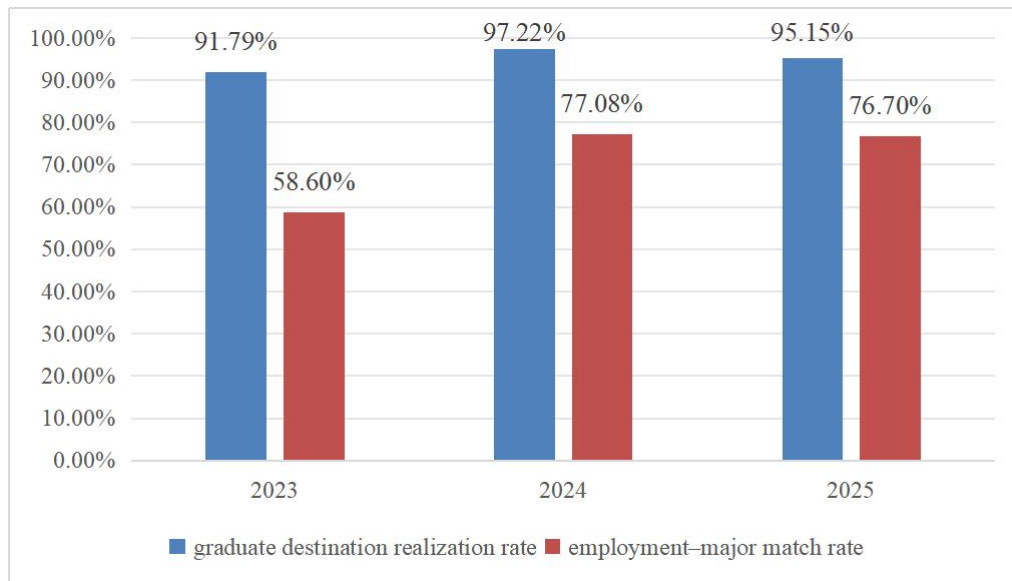


Figure 1. Graduate Destination Realization Rate and Employment-major Match Rate of the Internet Finance Program, 2023-2025

Read together, the two series say that students can find employment but not necessarily employment in finance-related positions. The problem is no longer one of quantity but of fit between the industrial orientation of that employment and the education the program provides. The next subsection turns to the demand side.

4.3 Soft-Skill Signals on the Demand Side

The third tension appears when supply is set against demand. The enterprise questionnaire shows that demand for fintech positions among employers of alumni was spread across position types: research and development 23%, product 20%, operations 17%, sales 14%, and corporate investment and financing together with regulatory and compliance 16%. On capability ratings (Figure 2), employers ranked the items as follows: professional and technical skill 4.8, problem solving 4.6, communication and coordination 4.5, teamwork 4.3, learning 4.2, innovation 4.0, and stress resilience 3.8. Learning ability (291 enterprises), communication ability (224 enterprises), and innovation ability (186 enterprises) were the attributes named most often.

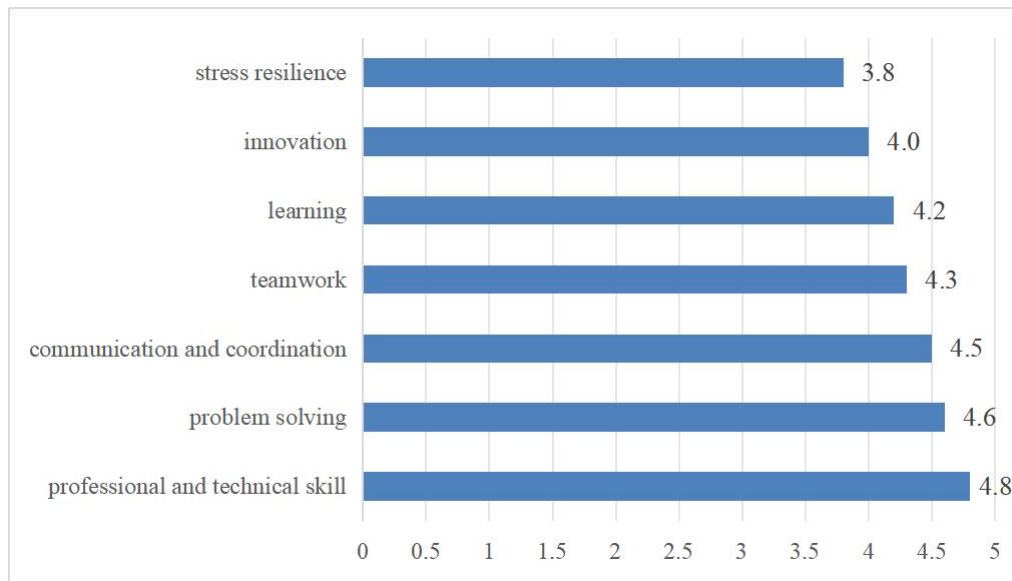


Figure 2. Importance Ratings of Competency Items for Fintech Talent Positions (5-point scale)

Two points follow. Technical skill ranked first, but not alone: the attributes named most often—learning, communication, and innovation—are precisely those that value shaping is positioned to influence. The demand side was asking for something the program was not systematically supplying. One limit on these ratings should be noted: they record what employers say they value, not what the program fails to teach. They identify a target rather than measure a shortfall.

Alumni feedback points to the other side of the same gap. Overall satisfaction stood at 4.2 on a 5-point scale, but practical opportunities received only 3.7, and 68% of respondents suggested adding case analyses and lectures by enterprise experts (Guangdong Technology College, School of Economics and Management, 2025b). Knowledge transmission had a foundation; what was weaker was the capacity to orient that knowledge toward real positions.

4.4 The Absence of Moral Education in the Support Matrix: Verifiable Evidence

Judgments resting on questionnaires alone can be set aside as subjective impressions. The 2026 version of the cultivation plan provides a check against that objection. The plan contains a “support-relationship matrix linking the curriculum system to graduation requirements,” in which H, M, and L mark the strength of each course’s support for the nine graduation requirements and their 20 indicator points (Guangdong Technology College, School of Economics and Management, 2026). The matrix can therefore be read cell by cell, and Table 1 and Figure 3 report what that reading found.

Table 1. Support Markings of each Course for the “Moral Cultivation” Indicator Points

Course category	Course name	1.1 Ideological	1.2 Humanistic	1.3 Professional	Other indicator
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			and character	moral literacy	ethics awareness	points with marked support
Core course	Internet Finance		Not marked	Not marked	Not marked	2.2(H), 6.2(H), 8.1(H), 9.2(M)
Core course	Corporate Finance		Not marked	Not marked	Not marked	2.1(H), 4.2(M), 6.2(M)
Core course	Quantitative Finance		Not marked	Not marked	Not marked	2.3(H), 4.1(M), 6.1(M)
Core course	Financial Data Mining		Not marked	Not marked	Not marked	2.3(H), 4.1(M), 6.1(H), 7.1(L), 8.2(M)
Core course	Financial Risk Management		Not marked	Not marked	Not marked	2.2(H), 5.2(M), 6.2(M), 8.2(M)
Core course	Big-Data Risk Control		Not marked	Not marked	Not marked	2.2(H), 4.1(M), 7.2(H)
Core course	Blockchain and Fintech		Not marked	Not marked	Not marked	2.2(H), 3.2(M), 7.3(H), 9.2(M)
Ideological and political theory course	Ideology, Morality and the Rule of Law	H		—	—	3.1(H), 4.1(M), 6.2(M), etc.
Ideological and political theory course	Situation and Policy	H		M	M	3.2(M), 5.2(H), 8.1(M)

General education course	Corporate Social Responsibility	—	—	H	2.3(L), 5.2(M)
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Note. H, M, and L denote high, medium, and low strength of support, respectively, as marked in the support matrix of the cultivation plan. “Not marked” and the em dash (—) both indicate that no H/M/L marking appears in the corresponding cell of the source matrix; the two notations are reproduced as they appear in the source document. Indicator points 1.1–1.3 belong to the graduation requirement “moral cultivation”; the full matrix comprises nine graduation requirements and 20 indicator points. Cells under “Other indicator points with marked support” are reproduced verbatim from the source matrix.

Source: Authors’ parsing of the “support-relationship matrix linking the curriculum system to graduation requirements” in the 2026 version of the cultivation plan (Guangdong Technology College, School of Economics and Management, 2026). The version analyzed is the May 2026 text.

		Core courses(7 subjects): Not marked		
Internet Finance	—	—	—	—
Corporate Finance	—	—	—	—
Quantitative Finance	—	—	—	—
Financial Data Mining	—	—	—	—
Financial Risk Management	—	—	—	—
Big-Data Risk Control	—	—	—	—
Blockchain and Fintech	—	—	—	—
		1.1 Ideological and moral character	1.2 Humanistic literacy	1.3 Professional ethics awareness
		General education and ideological and political theory courses: all carry H/M markings.		
Ideology, Morality and the Rule of Law	H	—	—	—
Situation and Policy	H	M	M	M
Practical Teaching of Ideological and Political Theory Courses	H	—	—	—
Corporate Social Responsibility	—	—	H	H
Introduction to Xi Jinping’s Economic Thought	M	—	—	—
		1.1 Ideological and moral character	1.2 Humanistic literacy	1.3 Professional ethics awareness

Figure 3. Comparison of “Moral Cultivation” Support Markings between Core Courses and Ideological and Political Theory Courses

The contrast is stark. Courses carrying support for “moral cultivation” were concentrated entirely in ideological and political theory courses and a small number of general education courses, whereas the seven core courses responsible for professional competence left indicator points 1.1–1.3 entirely unmarked. In the institutional design of the cultivation plan, the core specialized courses were responsible only for *cai* (professional talent), while *de* (virtue) was handed over wholesale to the ideological and political courses.

Three things follow. First, the “two skins” disjunction, until now an experiential description, becomes a verifiable textual fact. Second, the finding offers an institutional account for why a Party-member share as high as 42.79% leaves no observable trace at the course level: moral-education responsibility has not

been allocated institutionally there. Third, it identifies where pathways and evaluation should be directed. One boundary on this evidence should be explicit: the matrix records the institutional allocation of responsibility, so its blank cells are evidence about the allocation system rather than about what happens in classrooms. One qualification on scope: the text analyzed here is the May 2026 version, and should the plan be revised subsequently, the most recent official text supersedes it.

5. Mechanisms: The Triple Transformation and the Prerequisite of Governance Embeddedness

Section 4 established what is not working. This section takes up the first of the three questions posed in Section 1: how Party building could in principle change it. The documentary finding of Section 4.4—the absent support markings—is taken up below as the observable trace on which the argument rests. Bringing the theoretical vocabulary of Section 2 together with the case evidence, this paper argues, as a proposition to be tested rather than a finding demonstrated here, that Party-building empowerment is realized through a triple transformation, and that in private application-oriented undergraduate institutions this chain is preceded by an additional prerequisite step.

First, the organization of political potential energy. Party directives and the requirements of financial security do not enter the cultivation process on their own; they have to be translated by an organizational carrier. In the case, when the program development and teaching guidance committee reviewed the 2026 version of the plan, it wrote into the cultivation objectives the items “serving the building of a strong financial nation” and “implementing the concept of financial development with Chinese characteristics”, and named four target industries: the digital economy, financial services, financial regulation, and artificial intelligence (Guangdong Technology College, School of Economics and Management, 2026).

Second, the conversion of organizational kinetic energy into educational practice. Organizational resources do not become educational resources automatically. The “dual-leader” arrangement, a Party branch secretary who is also an academic leader) generates effects only when it is embedded in course development, internship supervision, and competition coaching. The fintech teaching and research team built around core Party-member faculty has, over the past three years, undertaken 3 provincial-level research projects and 4 municipal-level research projects, published 7 papers in core journals, journals included in Chinese core-journal catalogs), and taken on nearly 9 teaching reform projects under the “Quality Engineering” initiative (Guangdong Technology College, School of Economics and Management, 2025a). These outputs, however, are recorded in the support matrix under the indicator points for “disciplinary knowledge” and “application ability”; they have not been linked institutionally to “moral cultivation.” Organizational kinetic energy has indeed been generated, but the channel leading it into education has not been opened. The counts above are organizational outputs, not observations of teaching behavior.

Third, the consolidation of educational efficacy into student competencies. The endpoint should be an identifiable capacity in graduates, here termed “red-finance literacy”. It has four components: a

financial security outlook and an awareness of the larger picture of serving the real economy; professional ethics centered on integrity and compliance; technological adaptability oriented toward digital finance; and a commitment to service rooted in local industry. The plan's description of indicator point 1.3 is already specific enough to work with—familiarity with financial regulatory policies and industry compliance requirements, and possession of compliance thinking and awareness of rights-and-interests protection (Guangdong Technology College, School of Economics and Management, 2026)—which supplies the policy language needed for operationalization. As a programmatic definition, it specifies what the program is to produce and how it might later be measured; no student-level measure of it is available in this study.

Prerequisite step: governance embeddedness. In public institutions, Party leadership is an institutional default, so the task is mainly one of implementation. Private institutions differ. The relationship between the Party organization and the board of directors and the university administration must be specified through the charter, and whether the Party organization holds the right of prior deliberation directly determines whether it can mobilize educational resources such as academic affairs, faculty, and funding (General Office of the CPC Central Committee, 2025). This yields the basic judgment of this paper: in private application-oriented undergraduate institutions, Party-building empowerment must first cross the threshold of governance embeddedness.

The wholesale absence of moral-education support in the specialized courses shown in Table 1 can be read as evidence of insufficient governance embeddedness once it reaches the course system. This reading is not the only one available. The blank cells may instead follow a template convention in which moral-education indicator points are routinely assigned to ideological and political theory courses; they may reflect the documentary labor of completing the matrix and uneven training in how to complete it; or they may record a division of documentary responsibility within a review process in which Party-organization members already took part. Separating these accounts would require matrices from institutions whose governance arrangements differ, which the present design does not supply.

The claim advanced here is also narrower than the general proposition that Party organizations should participate in governance: it concerns participation in the review and revision of the cultivation plan specifically, and its consequence for the granularity with which responsibility is allocated course by course. Within that narrower claim, responsibility appears unlikely to be reallocated at the course level without substantive Party-organization participation in reviewing and revising the cultivation plan. Section 8 returns to this reading and draws out what it implies. Read as a sequence, the three transformations move from the institution to the course and then to the graduate: the 2026 plan carries the objectives at the institutional level, the fintech team generates organizational outputs, and neither is recorded against indicator points 1.1–1.3 at the course level.

6. Pathways: Lightweight, Embedded, and Assessable

Mechanisms explain why Party building can empower cultivation; pathways specify how to do it. The resource constraints of private application-oriented undergraduate institutions make the public-institution approach—large inputs, full coverage, project-based initiatives—a poor fit. The three attributes below are pitched at the three tensions identified in Section 4: lightweight responds to the missing support markings of Section 4.4, embedded to the industry-orientation gap of Section 4.2 and the practical-opportunity complaints of Section 4.3, and assessable to the absence of mechanism-carrying records noted in Section 4.1.

First, lightweight. Reuse the support matrix, an instrument the cultivation plan already institutionalizes: for each of the seven core specialized courses—Internet Finance, Quantitative Finance, Financial Data Mining, Financial Risk Management, Big-Data Risk Control, Corporate Finance, and Blockchain and Fintech (Guangdong Technology College, School of Economics and Management, 2026)—identify the value points it can carry, and rewrite its support markings for indicator points 1.1–1.3 from blank to the corresponding H, M, or L. When teaching Financial Risk Management and Big-Data Risk Control, embed compliance baselines and risk vigilance; when teaching Blockchain and Fintech, embed the orientation toward serving the real economy and toward preventing and defusing financial risks; when teaching Corporate Finance, introduce integrity and responsibility awareness through local enterprise financing cases. Because no new documentation system has to be built, the marginal cost is low.

Second, embedded. Embed Party building within industry–education integration rather than running the two in parallel. The case program draws on the Digital Economy Industry College co-built with Hithink RoyalFlush, on practice bases co-built with Guosen Securities, Dexun Securities, Jingzhuan Duoying, and other enterprises, and maintains close ties with Zhaoqing Rural Commercial Bank and Nanhai Rural Commercial Bank (Guangdong Technology College, School of Economics and Management, 2025b). If joint Party-organization building between the university and enterprises is pursued—bringing enterprise Party members who are business backbones into the practice-mentor team, and converting enterprises’ compliance and Party-building cases into teaching materials—value shaping can then be accomplished in real business settings. Interviews indicate that both Zhaoqing Rural Commercial Bank and Industrial Bank expressed willingness to co-build internship bases and to jointly develop customized courses (Guangdong Technology College, School of Economics and Management, 2025b).

Third, assessable. The “dual liaison” system, under which Party-member teachers liaise with student dormitories and with enterprise Party branches, does more than strengthen teacher–student contact: it generates recordable process data as a by-product. The program’s already-established Fintech Multifunction Training Room, Digital Finance and Quantitative Investment Laboratory, and Intelligent Risk Control Laboratory (Guangdong Technology College, School of Economics and Management,

2026) provide the conditions for linking data across “digital Party building plus financial simulation training,” so that effect evaluation rests on data rather than on materials compiled after the fact.

The three attributes reinforce one another: lightweight keeps the marginal cost low enough to survive ordinary budget cycles, embedded places value shaping where students already meet practice, and assessable generates the data that make the first two visible.

A pathway of this kind is credible only to the extent that its effects can be assessed, and assessed cheaply. That is the subject of Section 7.

7. Evaluation: Construction and Computation of the Party-Building Empowerment Index

7.1 Indicator System and Weighting

Section 6 argued that private institutions are better served by a lightweight, embedded, and assessable pathway. Such a pathway is actionable only if it is matched by an evaluation instrument of comparable weight. The direction of education evaluation reform is to improve result evaluation, strengthen process evaluation, and refine comprehensive evaluation (Communist Party of China Central Committee & State Council, 2020); under the practical conditions of private institutions, however, the instrument must also satisfy three constraints: data availability, stability of measurement conventions, and operational sustainability. Accordingly, three design principles are established. *Reuse first*: draw indicators wherever possible from channels the institution already operates. *Combining soft and hard data*: use objective output data and subjective perception data together. *Traceability*: for each indicator one should be able to answer who collected it, when, and under what measurement convention, so that a score can be traced back to a specific organizational behavior. Constrained by data availability, the index currently incorporates four indicators with stable sources that can be collected directly, covering the process, result, and perception levels (Table 2).

Table 2. Composition and data sources of the Party-Building Empowerment Index indicators

Level	Indicator	Calculation convention	Data source	2025 value
Process	C11 Coverage rate of ideological and political elements in core courses	Number of core courses with the marked support for the “moral cultivation” indicator points $\div$ 7	Support matrix of the cultivation plan (text parsing)	0.00%
Result	C21 Employment–major match rate	Number employed in finance and related positions $\div$ number of employed graduates	Annual report on employment quality	76.70%
Result	C22 Graduate destination realization rate	Number with realized destinations $\div$ total number of graduates	Annual report on employment quality	95.15%
Perception	C31 Alumni overall satisfaction	Mean satisfaction score in the questionnaire to former graduates (5-point scale)	Questionnaire to former graduates (Guangdong Technology College, School of Economics and Management, 2025c)	4.20

Note. C11–C31 are indicator codes; “Process,” “Result,” and “Perception” denote the three levels of the index. The 2025 value column reports the value used in the computation presented in Table 3. C11 is expressed as a percentage of the seven core specialized courses; C31 is a mean score on a 5-point scale. The em dash (—) in the “Total” row of Table 3 and in this table’s cells indicates a value that is not applicable.

Source: C11 — support matrix of the cultivation plan, obtained by text parsing (Guangdong Technology College, School of Economics and Management, 2026); C21 and C22 — annual report on

employment quality of the program; C31 — questionnaire to former graduates (Guangdong Technology College, School of Economics and Management, 2025c).

Three considerations require explanation. The process level takes the coverage rate of ideological and political elements because it can be verified directly in the institutional text and because it carries the pathway proposition of filling in the blank cells of the matrix advanced in Section 6. The result level takes the employment–major match rate rather than the destination realization rate as its core, because the case’s contradiction lies precisely in “high employment, low major match,” and the match rate carries both quantity and industrial orientation. The perception level takes alumni satisfaction because its measurement convention is stable, it can be collected year by year, and it permits cross-validation against enterprise-side evaluation. Two qualifications attach to this choice. The employment–major match rate indexes the alignment between graduate destinations and the program’s stated industry orientation; it is treated here as a necessary but not sufficient condition in the industry dimension of outcomes, not as a direct measure of value shaping, and differences in regional labor demand, student intake, and program popularity are not ruled out as contributors to its level.

Weights were determined using the analytic hierarchy process (AHP). The judgment matrix was constructed on the basis of the mechanism described above and the explanatory power of each piece of evidence, using Saaty’s 1–9 scale and solved by the eigenvector method (1980): $C21-C11 = 3$, $C22-C11 = 2$, $C31-C11 = 2$, $C21-C22 = 3$, $C21-C31 = 2$, $C31-C22 = 1$, yielding $C11 = 0.1194$, $C21 = 0.4598$, $C22 = 0.2009$, and $C31 = 0.2198$, with a maximum eigenvalue $\lambda_{\max} = 4.0458$, $CI = 0.0153$, and $CR = 0.0170$, far below the critical value of 0.10, so the consistency test is passed.

Dimensionless normalization uses the efficacy coefficient method, $d = 60 + 40 \times (x - L)/(U - L)$, with values truncated to $[0, 100]$ (Du, Pang, & Wu, 2008). The threshold values are as follows: for C11, $L = 0$ and $U = 100$; for C21, $L = 55\%$ (referring to the program’s 2023 low of 58.60%) and $U = 90\%$; for C22, $L = 85\%$ and $U = 100\%$; for C31, $L = 3.0$ and $U = 5.0$, where 3.0 corresponds to “generally satisfied.” The efficacy coefficient method was chosen over range standardization because the latter relies on in-sample extreme values, so that a change in extreme values across years would render historical scores incomparable, whereas the endpoints of the former carry clear policy meaning. Because the formula assigns a floor of 60, an indicator at its lower threshold records 60 rather than 0, so a null process indicator lowers the index without erasing it. Two further qualifications follow. The consistency ratio reported above indicates internal consistency of the pairwise judgments, not validity; the weight vector should be read as an explicit, contestable statement of priorities derived from the mechanism argument rather than as an empirically estimated parameter, and alternative weightings have not been examined. The threshold values are provisionally anchored to this program’s own observed range and to institutional benchmarks, which suits the diagnostic purpose stated here but means the resulting score is not directly comparable across institutions.

7.2 Computation Results and Diagnosis

Computed according to the conventions above, the results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Computation results of the Party-Building Empowerment Index

Indicator	Actual value	Efficacy coefficient d	Weight w	Contribution w·d
C11 Coverage rate of ideological and political elements in core courses	0.00%	60.00	0.1194	7.16
C21 Employment–major match rate	76.70%	84.80	0.4598	38.99
C22 Graduate destination realization rate	95.15%	87.07	0.2009	17.49
C31 Alumni overall satisfaction	4.20	84.00	0.2198	18.47
Total	—	—	1.0000	82.11

Note. d denotes the efficacy coefficient, computed as $d = 60 + 40 \times (x - L)/(U - L)$ and truncated to [0, 100]; w denotes the analytic hierarchy process weight. Contribution = w·d, reported to two decimal places; the total is the sum of the four indicator contributions. Weights are C11 = 0.1194, C21 = 0.4598, C22 = 0.2009, C31 = 0.2198, with $\lambda_{\max} = 4.0458$, CI = 0.0153, and CR = 0.0170. Threshold values used are: C11, L = 0 and U = 100; C21, L = 55% and U = 90%; C22, L = 85% and U = 100%; C31, L = 3.0 and U = 5.0.

Source: Authors' calculation.

The Party-Building Empowerment Index of this program is 82.11, which places it in the “good” (良好) range. The labels “good” and “exemplary” are used here as provisional interpretive descriptions rather than validated cut-offs. That figure needs to be read carefully; taken at face value, it invites the misreading that Party building at the program is performing well. Three qualifications follow.

First, the zero score at the process level pulls down the overall level and also marks the most urgent direction for improvement. C11 takes the value of 0 and contributes only 7.16 points, which means that no institutionalized trace can currently be found of whether Party building has been embedded in specialized teaching. This is not to say that Party-building work has not been carried out; it is to say that its traces have not been brought into an observable measurement convention. If all seven core

courses completed their support markings along the pathway described above, with the other indicators unchanged, the index would rise to 86.89 and enter the “exemplary” (示范) range; among the four indicators, this is the item with the largest room for improvement and the lowest cost. That figure is an arithmetic scenario under the stated scoring convention, not an estimated effect.

Second, the employment–major match rate, which carries the highest weight, is precisely the principal weakness. C21 carries a weight of nearly one half and contributes 38.99 points, yet its efficacy coefficient is only 84.80. If the match rate rose from 76.70% to the school’s average level of 81.81%, the efficacy coefficient for this item would rise to 90.64 and the index would increase by 2.69 points, to 84.81; conversely, if the match rate remains near 76%, this indicator will continue to hold the index down. Both figures are arithmetic scenarios under the stated scoring convention rather than estimates of an effect. This is consistent with the diagnosis of “high employment, low major match” in Section 4: orienting employment toward clearly defined industries is both a pathway issue and an evaluation focus.

Third, the value of the index lies in diagnosis rather than in ranking. It converts Party-building effectiveness, long confined to qualitative description, into a continuous series that can be tracked year by year, used to locate weaknesses, and used to check whether improvements have worked. For the case institution, updating the support matrix at the next plan revision and fixing the measurement convention for the match rate in the annual employment quality report would yield a series spanning several consecutive years.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

Taking the Internet Finance program at Guangdong Technology College as an example, this paper has examined the mechanisms, pathways, and evaluation of Party-building empowerment in finance talent cultivation at private application-oriented undergraduate institutions. The main conclusions are as follows; they correspond, in order, to the three questions posed in Section 1.

First, on the question of mechanism, Party-building empowerment is a conditional transformation process. The chain of “organizing political potential energy—converting organizational kinetic energy into educational practice—consolidating educational efficacy into student competencies” reveals how the effect operates, while for private application-oriented undergraduate institutions, governance embeddedness is an indispensable prerequisite. In the case program, the share of Party-member teachers reaches 42.79%, yet all seven core courses leave the support markings for the “moral cultivation” indicator points absent. This pattern is consistent with the argument that the political advantage has not been converted into educational effectiveness because the institutional design keeps responsibility for it outside the specialized courses. The first task is therefore not necessarily to increase the number of activities, but to improve the arrangements through which the Party organization takes part in decisions on major matters.

Second, on the question of pathway, the choice of pathway should match the resource endowment. Private application-oriented undergraduate institutions are better served by a lightweight, embedded, and assessable pathway: reuse the existing support matrix in the cultivation plan to carry the requirements of curriculum-based ideological and political education, embed Party building in industry–education integration, and use joint Party-organization building with enterprises to compensate for insufficient on-campus resources.

Third, on the question of evaluation, the evaluation instrument must be discipline-specific, operational, and affordable. The Party-Building Empowerment Index, constructed from four indicators that can be collected stably, yields a score of 82.11 in the case computation. Within this, the zero score at the process level and the low employment–major match rate constitute the two most prominent weaknesses, while completing the support markings for the core courses would bring an improvement of 4.78 points—an arithmetic scenario under the stated scoring convention rather than an estimated effect—making it the most cost-effective item for improvement.

On this basis, two recommendations are offered. For private application-oriented undergraduate institutions: give priority to closing the institutional gap in governance embeddedness; advance in parallel the completion of support markings for core courses and joint Party-organization building between universities and enterprises; and use the index for annual tracking. For education authorities: add an observation dimension of “effectiveness of transformation into education” to Party-building assessment, and permit evaluation through lightweight instruments that reuse existing data.

What travels beyond this case is a conditional proposition rather than a universal claim. Read against human capital theory (Schultz, 1961), the findings qualify the input-to-capability conversion: a Party-member teacher share of 42.79% coexists with a complete absence of course-level responsibility for moral cultivation, so capability formation cannot be inferred from input stocks. Read against the resource-based view (Barney, 1991), Party-building resources behave less like productive assets than like resources whose value realization depends on complementary organization—available yet undeployed where the Party organization cannot participate in decisions on major academic matters. Governance embeddedness thus functions less as background than as a switching condition, and the evidence locates the break at the second link: organizational kinetic energy has been generated, but its channel into education has not been opened. Two corollaries follow. The proposition should be tested where governance arrangements vary and student-level outcome data can be collected; and the instruments used here—support markings and a four-indicator proxy index—are devices for detection rather than validated measures of value shaping.

For institutions, three moves follow from the diagnosis, and none requires a new funding line. The first is to treat the support matrix already embedded in the cultivation plan as the unit of intervention: because responsibility is allocated course by course, correcting it is a deliberative and documentary act rather than a new program. The second is to attach Party-building activity to structures already reaching students and employers—industry–education integration platforms, joint Party-organization building

with enterprises, and the dual-liaison (双联) system—so that process data accumulate rather than being compiled retrospectively. The third is to fix measurement conventions before attempting improvement, since dependability over time depends on holding the definitions of the match rate and the destination realization rate constant. For authorities, the implication is narrower and contingent on replication: permitting evaluation built on reused administrative data with traceable provenance may suffice to make the transformation into education observable.

Four limitations bound the conclusions. First, evidence comes from one program at one private institution: the case probes a mechanism under specified conditions rather than estimating a population parameter, and external validity remains untested. Second, the quantitative component is confined to descriptive statistics, group comparisons, and index computation; nothing reported here supports a causal reading, and regional labor demand, student intake, and program selectivity are not ruled out as explanations for employment outcomes. Third, weights were assigned by the authors from the mechanism argument rather than elicited from stakeholders, and no sensitivity analysis was conducted; a consistency ratio below the conventional threshold signals internal consistency, not validity. Fourth, only four indicators are incorporated—none measuring value shaping directly—and all derive from documents and surveys produced by the case institution, so self-report and common-source bias cannot be excluded.

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