

The Role of Psychology in Social Governance

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the role of psychology in social governance, elaborates on the importance of social governance and its close connection with psychology, and sorts out the relevant theoretical foundations, including the concept of social governance, psychological theories, and the basis for their integration. It analyzes in detail its specific manifestations in promoting individual mental health, optimizing group relations, facilitating policy formulation and implementation, and preventing and resolving social conflicts. Meanwhile, it points out the challenges such as shortage of professional talents, low public awareness, and insufficient scope and depth of application. It is proposed that in the future, interdisciplinary research, talent cultivation, and public psychological science popularization education should be strengthened to better exert its role in social governance and promote the modernization of national governance.

KEYWORDS: *Psychology; Social Governance; Theoretical Foundation; Role Manifestations; Challenges and Development*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of rapid social development and transformation, the importance of social governance has become increasingly prominent. From the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) taking "promoting the modernization of the national governance system and governance capacity" as the overall goal of comprehensively deepening reform, to the report of the 19th National Congress of the CPC proposing "strengthening the construction of social psychological service system", social governance has always been a key issue in the process of national development. Sound social governance can maintain social order, promote social fairness and justice, and ensure that the people live and work in peace and contentment, serving as the cornerstone for achieving long-term national stability and people's happiness and well-being.

As a science studying human psychology and behavior, psychology plays an indispensable role in social governance. Human psychology and behavior are the micro-foundations of social phenomena. Many issues in social governance, such as the emergence of social conflicts, the laws of group behavior, and the formation and transformation of public attitudes, are closely related to psychology [1]. In-depth exploration of the role of psychology in social governance not only helps us understand the inherent psychological mechanisms of social governance at the theoretical level but also provides scientific and effective methods and strategies for social governance practice, improving the level and effect of social governance[2].

2. PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH BASED ON SOCIAL NEEDS

In the development process of psychology, most researchers have emphasized natural sciences while neglecting humanities and social sciences research, simplifying human psychology and behavior into physiological reality, and ignoring the complexity of human nature and the characteristics of psychology being influenced by multiple social factors. However, human psychology is the unity of neural foundations and social-historical development [3]. Psychology has significant social value. Analyzing the process of human psychology and social development needs to be based on its social science attributes. Although psychology has not yet become a basic discipline of social sciences, it has received attention when studying social issues. Nevertheless, current psychological research mostly focuses on small social issues, and future research should pay attention to macro social issues[4]. This is not only an opportunity for the development of psychology but also because many major social issues are essentially psychological issues. Around the 1950s, Western scholars realized the social responsibility of psychological research and used psychological achievements to influence social policies. Nowadays, many psychological organizations participate in policy-making and have achieved results in multiple fields. To promote

social development and solve social conflicts, it is necessary to pay attention to social reality issues, because many social issues are related to individual or group psychology, highlighting the necessity of psychology's social responsibility [5].

3. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIAL GOVERNANCE

3.1 Concept and Connotation of Social Governance

Social governance refers to the governance activities of social public affairs under the leadership of the ruling party, led by government organizations, and involving multiple governance subjects such as social organizations[6]. Its goal is to realize and safeguard the rights of the masses, give play to the role of multiple governance subjects, improve social welfare, ensure and improve people's livelihood, resolve social conflicts, promote social equity, and promote the orderly and harmonious development of society in response to social issues in national governance [7]. Sound social governance can coordinate social relations, standardize social behaviors, solve social problems, resolve social conflicts, promote social fairness and justice, ensure the orderly operation of society, and create a good social environment for economic development and people's lives. For example, through a sound social governance mechanism, issues such as labor disputes and neighborhood conflicts can be resolved in a timely and effective manner, maintaining social harmony and stability.

3.2 Theoretical Basis for Their Integration

There are various psychological theories closely related to social governance. Social Learning Theory points out that individuals learn new behaviors through observing and imitating others, in which vicarious reinforcement and self-reinforcement play a key role [8]. In social governance, by using this theory to set positive role models and publicize the deeds of moral models, the public can be guided to learn positive behaviors, promoting the formation of good moral trends.

Cognitive Behavioral Theory emphasizes that cognition has a decisive impact on behavior and emotions, and changing irrational cognition can adjust behavioral and emotional states[9]. In social governance, the application of cognitive behavioral therapy can help individuals with psychological problems or behavioral deviations identify and correct irrational cognitions, reducing social problems.

Positive Psychology focuses on human positive qualities and strengths, committed to promoting individual happiness and development. Its core lies in cultivating positive emotions, shaping good character, and establishing positive interpersonal relationships[10]. The application of positive psychology in social governance, through holding mental health lectures and carrying out psychological outreach activities, can improve the public's psychological quality and sense of happiness, and enhance social cohesion.

Psychological theories are highly compatible with the needs of social governance. Individual psychological states and cognitive models directly affect social behaviors. Understanding the public's psychological needs and behavioral motivations in social governance helps formulate policies that are more in line with public interests and expectations[11]. For example, considering residents' psychological needs for living environment and public facilities in urban planning can improve policy feasibility and public satisfaction.

4. SPECIFIC MANIFESTATIONS OF THE ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGY IN SOCIAL GOVERNANCE

4.1 Promoting Individual Mental Health and Social Adaptation

Mental health services are crucial for promoting individual mental health, providing professional support for different groups of people. Young people face issues such as academic pressure and peer relationships. Psychotherapists use cognitive behavioral therapy to help them identify and change irrational cognitive patterns such as excessive worry about exam failure and underestimation of their own abilities, alleviating anxiety and improving stress resistance. Workplace personnel often encounter problems such as work pressure and career development confusion. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides psychological counseling, career planning guidance and other services to help employees adjust their mentality and improve job satisfaction and efficiency. For example, after a company introduced EAP, the employee turnover rate decreased, and work performance improved significantly. The elderly are prone to psychological problems due to physical function decline and social role transformation. Community mental health services pay attention to their mental health through lectures and activities, enrich their spiritual life, and strengthen social support networks[12].

4.2 Optimizing Group Relations and Social Harmony

Group cooperation is crucial for social governance. In community construction, by applying Group Dynamics Theory [13], through holding residents' meetings, clarifying rectification goals and respective responsibilities, residents' sense of ownership and willingness to cooperate are stimulated, and cooperation efficiency is improved, such as in community environmental improvement projects. In enterprise cooperation, using incentive theory to clarify cooperation goals and benefit distribution mechanisms stimulates enterprises' enthusiasm, establishes good communication and trust relationships[14], reduces conflicts, and achieves mutual benefit and win-win results, such as enterprise strategic alliances. In public affairs governance, with the help of Social Identity Theory, the government carries out publicity and education to improve the public's sense of identity with public affairs, guides all parties to participate, forms a cooperative governance model, and promotes the development of environmental protection and other work.

4.3 Assisting in Public Policy Formulation and Implementation

Psychological research provides a basis for policy formulation. In the formulation of social security policies, understanding people's needs through surveys, such as the diverse needs of the elderly for elderly care services, helps improve policies[15] and enhance the quality of life of the elderly. In the formulation of urban planning policies, considering residents' psychological needs such as sense of security and belonging to the living environment, rational layout of facilities enhances residents' recognition of the planning.

In policy implementation, correcting cognitive biases can improve effectiveness[16]. In the implementation of tax policies, strengthening publicity and education, explaining policy purposes, and optimizing collection and management processes improve taxpayers' cooperation. Policy publicity uses emotional resonance and information dissemination skills. For example, in public health policy publicity, telling anti-epidemic stories and using multi-channel dissemination improve policy awareness and influence.

4.4 Preventing and Resolving Social Conflicts

The psychological early warning mechanism can detect potential conflicts in advance by monitoring and analyzing social psychological states[17]. In the field of social security, with the help of public opinion monitoring tools, analyzing the public's emotions and views on hot events can timely discover unstable factors. In the field of labor relations, through investigating employees' job satisfaction, potential labor dispute risks can be detected in advance, and relevant departments can intervene in mediation in a timely manner.

Emotional counseling is crucial in conflict resolution. In demolition disputes, relocated households have negative emotions due to concerns about compensation and future life. Staff use methods such as listening and empathy to allow them to vent their emotions, and then conduct rational communication and negotiation to promote the resolution of disputes [18]. Cognitive restructuring can also help both parties in the conflict re-examine the problem and change irrational cognitions. For example, in doctor-patient disputes, using cognitive restructuring methods to explain the medical process and the complexity of diseases to patients and their families reduces misunderstandings and conflicts.

5. CHALLENGES AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTIONS OF PSYCHOLOGY IN SOCIAL GOVERNANCE

5.1 Faced Challenges

Although psychology plays a significant role in social governance, it faces numerous challenges in practical application. The shortage of professional talents is prominent. The demand in the mental health service field is constantly rising, but the quantity and quality of psychology professional talent training in China are difficult to meet the demand, resulting in a huge talent gap [19]. This limits the breadth and depth of the application of psychology in social governance, especially in remote areas and grassroots communities.

The public's cognition and acceptance of psychology also need to be improved. Influenced by traditional concepts, many people misunderstand psychology, equating psychological problems with mental illness, and resisting psychological counseling and treatment, leading to difficulties in promoting psychology. Many people have psychological problems but do not seek help, affecting social harmony. For example, residents' participation in community mental health services is low in some areas.

In addition, the scope and depth of the application of psychology in social governance need to be expanded. At present, applications are mostly concentrated in mental health services and conflict mediation, with low participation in fields such as urban planning and public policy formulation[20]. The combination of theory and practice is also not close enough, and research results are difficult to transform into governance strategies, affecting application effects.

5.2 Future Development Directions

To better exert the role of psychology in social governance, efforts need to be made in multiple aspects in the future. Strengthening interdisciplinary research is the key. Social governance is a complex systematic project involving multiple disciplines such as political science, sociology, law, and psychology [21]. Psychology should strengthen cooperation with other disciplines, integrate interdisciplinary theories and methods, and jointly solve complex problems in social governance. Cooperating with sociology to study the impact of social structure and social changes on individual psychology and behavior provides a more comprehensive basis for formulating social policies; cooperating with computer science to use big data, artificial intelligence and other technologies to realize real-time monitoring and accurate analysis of social psychological states, improving the intelligent level of social governance.

Talent cultivation is the foundation for ensuring that psychology continues to play a role in social governance[22]. Colleges and universities and relevant training institutions should optimize the curriculum setting of psychology majors, strengthen practical teaching links, and cultivate professional talents with solid theoretical foundations and practical abilities. Attention should be paid to cultivating students' interdisciplinary thinking and innovative abilities so that they can adapt to the diversified needs of social governance. Strengthen training and continuing education for in-service personnel, improve their psychological knowledge and skills, and encourage more social workers and community workers to master psychological methods and apply them to practical work.

Strengthening public psychological science popularization education is an important part of improving the effectiveness of social governance. In today's society, the public's awareness of mental health and psychological knowledge directly affects the overall effect of social governance [23]. On the one hand, various media platforms such as television, radio, and online new media should be fully utilized to produce and disseminate easy-to-understand and interesting psychological science popularization content. Through holding mental health lectures, psychological science popularization columns, and online psychological courses, popularize basic psychological knowledge to the public, such as the identification and response to common psychological problems, interpersonal relationship skills, and stress management methods, improving the public's mental health literacy, enhancing their psychological adjustment ability, and reducing social conflicts and disputes caused by psychological problems. On the other hand, in the school education system, psychology-related courses and activities should be gradually integrated from the basic education stage to cultivate students' good psychological quality and psychological adjustment ability, shape a citizen group with healthy psychology for future social development, and promote the benign development of social governance at the source.

6. CONCLUSION

As a science studying human psychology and behavior, psychology plays a significant role in social governance. Theories such as Social Learning Theory and Cognitive Behavioral Theory provide a theoretical basis for the integration of the two. In practical application, psychology promotes individual mental health and social adaptation, optimizes group relations, provides a scientific basis for public policies, and prevents and resolves social conflicts. However, its application faces problems such as shortage of professional talents and low public awareness. In the future, it is necessary to strengthen interdisciplinary research, promote technological innovation and application, and strengthen talent cultivation. At present, psychology has achieved certain results in social governance, and it will certainly play a more important role in improving the level of social governance and promoting social harmony and stability in the future, helping the modernization of national governance.

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