Multi-perspective Reflection and Integration Strategy of Social Psychological Service System

Liang Huang, Wei Qi, Shijin Sun*
Department of psychology, Fudan University, Shanghai 200433, China
* Corresponding Author: Shijin Sun, Fudan University, Shanghai; sunshijin@fudan.edu.cn

Abstract: Social psychological service system is complex, and the construction of social psychological service system is a complex systematic project. From the perspective of history, management, philosophy, society and psychology, social psychological service is not only the inevitable result of the further development of mental health education, but also the practical needs of social governance. In the final analysis, it is a practical activity based on people, for people and serving people. It should not only take into account the complex society and people’s social attributes, but also follow the general principles of psychology. Social psychological services are not equal to mental health services, social risk prevention and control or psychological counseling services. They are more than eliminating psychological problems, and the service cannot rely too much on psychological professionals. The scientific construction of social psychological service system needs an all-round integration from the aspects of concept, mechanism, resources, content and ways, so as to better serve people and society.

Keywords: Mental health; Social mentality; Social governance; Social psychological service; Social psychological service system

1. Introduction

The central government has repeatedly mentioned the concept of “social service system” for more than three months since the release of the 13th Five-Year Plan. Since November 2018, three special documents have been issued continuously to guide the construction of the system, which shows the importance that the country attaches to the system. Academic circles have carried out heated theoretical discussions on social psychological services from the aspects of naming[11], definition[2-4], qualitative and positioning[3,5,6] and construction strategies[2,5,7-9], The pilot areas have also extracted empirical achievements such as “Ganzhou model”[10] and “Xiping model”[11]. These theoretical research and practical exploration have good enlightenment and reference significance for building a scientific and perfect social psychological service system. Some scholars have proposed to carry out multi-disciplinary theoretical thinking to enhance the scientificity of practical work[6], but there is no special discussion based on this idea at present. This paper theoretically examines the social
psychological service from the perspectives of history, management, philosophy, society and psychology, and analyzes the misunderstandings and deviations in practice, then puts forward the integration strategy of constructing the social psychological service system.

2. Multi Perspective Examination of Social Psychological Service System

Social psychological service system is a complex system. It is not only necessary but also possible to examine it from multiple perspectives. Among them, the perspective of history and management is helpful to understand the connotation and extension of social psychological service; the perspective of philosophy is helpful to clarify the essence of social psychological service; the perspective of society and psychology can provide basic ideas and theoretical support for the construction of social psychological service system.

2.1. Historical perspective

From the perspective of historical materialism, everything has its past, present and future, and the past always exists in the reality and future in a potential form, constantly playing a positive or negative role. To accurately and completely understand the social psychological service, we should not only investigate its current situation, but also analyze it based on the historical facts of its occurrence and development. The first is to ask where the social psychological service, as a historical concept, comes from. Tracing back to history, we can find that the psychological work at the national policy level first began in schools. The *Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Further Strengthening and Improving School Moral Education* issued in August 1994 first proposed “mental health education”. After years of development, mental health education has become an independent discipline. In December 2016, the *Guidance on Strengthening Mental Health Services* jointly issued by 22 departments including the National Health and Family Planning Commission covered school mental health education and officially extended the object of mental health work to all social groups for the first time. In November 2018, the National Health Commission and other ten ministries and commissions jointly issued the *Pilot Work Plan for the Construction of the National Psychosocial Service System*, which clearly incorporated mental health services into psychosocial services. It can be seen that the psychological work at the national policy level has experienced the historical evolution from school mental health education to mental health service and then to social psychological service. Mental health education is the historical starting point of social psychological service (see Figure 1 for the relationship between mental health education, mental health service and social psychological service), and social psychological service is an inheritance of mental health education. This inheritance determines that social psychological services must carry some functions of mental health education and adhere to the modern concept of mental health education, such as prevention first, positive development, helping others and self-help.

2.2. Examination from the perspective of management

From the perspective of management, social governance has gone through the evolution process from “social management and control” to “social management” to “social governance”, and the corresponding concepts, subjects, means and systems have undergone profound changes. Yang and Guo summarized four characteristics of social governance different from social management: The participating subjects advocate the co-governance of multiple subjects, and the way of governance relies more on democratic consultation. The
goal of governance emphasizes the prevention and resolution of social contradictions, and the specific implementation pays attention to the refinement of governance. “From institutional and technical governance to social, cultural, emotional and psychological governance” is the primary trend of the future development of China’s social governance[14]. Psychosocial services are a positive response to this trend, reflecting the transformation of social governance from “hard governance” to “soft governance” and from “rigid governance” to “flexible governance”[15]. Obviously, it is not practical to require social psychological services to directly solve practical social problems, but it is logical to make suggestions for social governance from the psychological level. For example, by strengthening the benign interaction between subjects, we can lay a good psychological foundation for the co-governance of multiple subjects; through psychological counseling and psychological intervention, straighten out social emotions and peaceful social mentality, and create a good psychological environment for social governance; guide the direction of social governance by participating in the consultation, discussion and design of government decision-making, and provide think tank support for the formulation of public policies; by making the development of subjective evaluation indicators for the effectiveness of social governance to lay the foundation for the sustainable development of social governance, and so on. If social governance is intended to “draw the dragon”, social psychological services are actually the “punchline”. Social governance without social psychological services is twice as effective as the past, and social psychological services without social governance is tantamount to trying to stop the boiling by scooping water. In short, the social psychological service born under the background of “promoting the modernization of national governance system and governance capacity” is an important part of the modernization of national governance system. We must follow the general laws and basic principles of social governance, so as to give play to the function of social governance and reflect the idea of social governance.

2.3. Philosophical perspective

Philosophy is the foundation of all disciplines. Specific philosophical thinking determines specific social psychological services, which reflects the core cognition of social psychological services. This cannot be understood as a specific activity. we should explore its essence from the level of transcendence. Since social psychological service is not only the result of the development of mental health education, but also the way and means of social governance, the description of the essence of mental health education and social governance should enable people to better understand the essence of social psychological service. Mental health education is

![Figure 1. Relationship among mental health education, mental health services and social psychological services.](image-url)
“a practical activity for human beings to consciously and purposefully promote their own psychological development”[16], and “an education based on and publicize human nature”[17]; social governance is an activity closely centered around “people”, which is essentially a multi-agent group decision-making process. The core is the problem of “people”[18,19]. It can be seen that the essence of mental health education and social governance lies in people. They are all activities carried out around people. The concern for people will inevitably become an unavoidable theme of social psychological services. It can be said that social psychological services carry the specific demands of “people-oriented”. The core value is to develop and enhance human nature, shape and improve human nature, and finally “promote people’s free and all-round development”. Perhaps people have different understanding and interpretation of “human nature”, but this does not prevent social psychological services from realizing and improving the ultimate concern for human reality, i.e. everything starts from people, serves people, focuses on people’s all-round development, pays attention to people’s life and livelihood, cares about people’s value and mission, and cares about people’s spirit and belief.

2.4. Social perspective

From the perspective of society, human development is a process of socialization, i.e. the process of internalizing social norms and social culture to be competent for the role expected by the society. The development of society leads to the change of social rules, and the meaning of social role is also changing accordingly. It requires continuous resocialization of people after completing the basic socialization, which is an adaptive process. Once maladjustment, it may cause problems in thinking mode, values, behavior habits and other aspects, impacting on mental health and personality development, and leading to mental illness or psychological crisis. In the critical period of social governance transformation, promoting people’s socialization and resocialization is an unavoidable responsibility of social psychological service. Besides, “complexity constitutes an inherent attribute of Chinese society”[20]. Behind the complex society are complex social problems, such as environmental pollution, network risk, food safety, interpersonal trust, doctor-patient relationship, petition appeal, demolition and land acquisition, which reflect the complex social psychology and social mentality. This means that social psychological services must have complex thinking and comprehensive thinking. At the same time, it also means that social psychological services cannot be the only way to deal with social problems, let alone a panacea for “all diseases”. In the absence of social justice, social equity and social security, it is obviously impossible to require people to replace “impulse and violence” with “rationality and peace”, to dispel “anxiety and doubts” with “self-esteem and self-confidence”, and to dispel “depression and decadence” with “positivity and progress”. Social psychological services should be combined with the work of “social existence” related to people’s livelihood in order to maximize the effect.

2.5. Psychological perspective

From the psychological perspective, social psychological services should “strengthen the import” from the existing psychological research results. The work should be conducted relying on the basic theory of psychology and following the general law of the occurrence and development of human psychology. For example, psychoanalysis emphasizes the influence of childhood psychological development on one’s life, which suggests that we should pay attention to children’s mental health; behaviorism emphasizes the plasticity of human behavior, so we should actively guide people’s appropriate behavior and transform people’s improper behavior; humanism pays attention to people’s potential, value, experience, creativity and so on, which provides a theoretical basis for “people-oriented”; positive psychology focuses on health and happiness, so we should focus on the cultivation of positive personality traits of social subjects, and so on. In addition, psychosocial
services also need to “expand exports” and take the initiative to take care of the “endogenous psychological problems” in the process of social governance, i.e. the governance ability of various subjects, the real social psychological problems as the governance object, the psychology of group decision-making, and the strategy and practical scheme of psychological construction\[^{19}\]. Among them, social mentality is important, because it is not only the reflection of social reality and the embodiment of the effect of social governance, but also an important psychological basis for promoting the development and progress of individuals, society and the country. Social psychological service is to conduct in-depth research and correct guidance on the bad social mentality in the process of China’s social transformation.

Generally speaking, social psychological service is an inheritance and transcendence of mental health education. At the same time, it conforms to the practical needs of social governance. In the final analysis, it is a human-centered social activity. It should not only follow the general principles of psychology, but also take into account the social complexity and people’s social attributes. Although the analysis based on the above five perspectives is not enough to show the whole picture of social psychological services, it provides many possibilities for the understanding of social psychological services. The examination from multiple perspectives more reflects a way of thinking and ideal pursuit. Only when all perspectives complement and promote each other in continuous communication can they really contribute to the generation and development of social psychological services. So far, social psychological service is temporarily defined as a kind of social psychological construction activity in which multiple subjects participate together; it is consistent with the law of the occurrence and development of individual and group psychology; it is carried through the integrated application of multidisciplinary theories, methods and technologies such as psychology, management and sociology in social governance; the basic goal of it is maintaining individual mental health and the core goal is cultivating good social mentality.

3. Practical Deviation in the Construction of Social Psychological Service System

Due to the insufficient understanding of social psychological services, there are some misunderstandings in the practice of various places, mainly in the following aspects.

3.1. The first misunderstanding: Psychosocial services are mainly aimed at people with problems

Some areas conduct the work of social psychological services focusing on “released prisoners and targets of community corrections, drug users, AIDS infectors and patients, easily hit and run troublemakers with mental disorders, troubled teenagers, extreme people, key personnel of letters and visits, and other key groups with hidden dangers for public security”. However, social psychological services are not equal to “treating the sick and saving the people”\[^{3}\]. The objects of social psychological services are narrowly focused on a small number of “people with problems”. Even if they can prevent and correct their extreme mental problems and behavior, they cannot prevent the ordinary people from degenerating into special people because they ignore the improvement of the psychological literacy of most ordinary people. To carry out social psychological services, we need to have the awareness of “problems”, but we can’t just talk about “problems”. If we can’t meet the basic psychological needs of most ordinary people for survival and development, this practice of “treating the symptoms” may lead to an endless stream of new problems, which can’t be prevented in the end.
3.2. The second misunderstanding: Psychosocial services can only rely on psychological professionals

Social psychological service is a highly professional work. Many places emphasize the importance of psychological professionals in the process of the practice of the work. Professional things should be done by professional people, but if we think that social psychological service is only the professional work of psychological professionals, it not only lags behind in many occasions, but also has limited coverage, which is unfavorable to the cultivation of individual healthy psychology at the micro level and good social mentality at the macro level. Social psychological services need the joint participation and cooperation of multiple subjects, but the reality makes us have to ask whether each policy issued by the government fully takes into account the wishes and conditions of the people, whether social organizations such as various psychological professional associations have given full play to their professional role, whether enterprises pay attention to the psychological construction of employees, and whether ordinary people really have the awareness and ability of self-psychological health care, etc. Obviously, in terms of the awareness and action of the joint participation of multiple subjects in social psychological services, what has been done is far from enough.

3.3. The third misunderstanding: Social psychological service is social risk prevention and control

In order to “prevent and reduce crimes committed by special groups, prevent and reduce social risks, and prevent extreme cases (events)”, some regions carry out psychosocial services by establishing the so-called “triple cascade row” working mechanism of “investigation—screening—intervention”. However, psychosocial service itself is not equal to the social risk prevention and control system[21]. It is not the “fire extinguisher” of social problems, nor does it represent social governance itself. Its fundamental value lies in people. Its core purpose is to devote to macro psychosocial construction, including cultivating social mentality, dredging social psychology, guiding social expectations and using psychological strategies to carry out social governance[3]. In some areas, the instrumental attribute of social psychological services is emphasized too much that its value attribute is ignored. Although it helps to improve people’s sense of security, it does not pay enough attention to and has few methods to improve people’s sense of gain and happiness.

3.4. The fourth misunderstanding: Social psychological service is psychological counseling service

Many places pay special attention to psychological counseling when carrying out social psychological services. In some areas, psychological counselors are employed through the purchase of services by the government; some organized civil servants and teachers to conduct psychological counselor training, and “the goal is still to cultivate psychological counseling professionals”[22]. Although the development of social psychological services is inseparable from psychological counseling, its role in social psychological services is limited. For example, one of the basic ethics of psychological counseling is “whoever comes will not be refused, and whoever goes will not be pursued”, and social psychological services often need to take the initiative; psychological counseling can only be carried out one-on-one, the number of people who benefit at one time is limited, and the service efficiency is not high; what’s more, ordinary people have prejudices and misunderstandings about mental diseases. For example, a survey data shows that 55.9% of individuals with mental health problems do not actively seek professional services[23]. In fact, social psychological services
cannot be equated with psychological counseling services. Overemphasizing psychological counseling actually exaggerates the role of psychological counseling in social psychological services, which is also a manifestation of simplifying social psychological services.

3.5. The fifth misunderstanding: Social psychological service is mental health service

In some pilot areas, there is a misunderstanding that social psychological services are equal to mental health services, which is manifested in paying more attention to the mental health of individuals and groups and paying less attention to the macro social mentality. For example, the construction goal of a pilot area is to “establish a mental health service chain including psychological knowledge publicity and popularization, psychological problem monitoring and early warning and precise intervention for high-risk groups, and establish a social support system covering prevention mechanism, early warning mechanism and intervention mechanism, and gradually build a social psychological service system”. Obviously, this is more in line with the goal of the construction of mental health service system (and at a lower level) than the social psychological service system. In terms of social mentality construction committed to “improving unbalanced social values, reducing lost social emotions, improving the level of social trust, and enhancing the sense of gain and happiness”[3], macro policy-making, psychological risk assessment of policies, evaluation of policy satisfaction, etc. that should have been involved in psychosocial services is far not enough.

The above problems not only show the deviation and deficiency, but also provide opportunities for scientific development. The key is whether we can see the hope and direction behind the problems, so as to correct the concept and optimize the practice.

4. Integration and Construction Strategy of Social Psychological Service System

Social psychological service is not only a complex system, but also an organic whole. The construction of social psychological service system is to scientifically layout all aspects and levels of the system with the idea of integration and the method of system theory, so as to organically connect and coordinate the operation of various components and elements, and finally form a scientific and reasonable structural system, so as to give full play to the maximum effect of the whole.

4.1. Integration of ideas

Basic ideas and concepts determine the direction of action and are decisive of the success or failure of action. The integration of ideas is to focus all the work of social psychological services on people themselves. Specifically, First, we should establish the value of “people-oriented”, focus on people’s high-quality survival and development, and “realize people’s yearning for a better life”. Second, we should establish the goal view of “positive development”. While committed to reversing the “deterioration” of key psychological indicators such as various mental health and social mentality, improve people’s basic psychological quality, especially their self-psychological adjustment ability, cultivating a good social mentality, and promoting the improvement of people’s sense of gain, happiness and security. Third, we should establish a “comprehensive and complete” object view. Pay attention to both individual mental health and macro social mentality, grasping the monitoring and early warning of key groups and psychological counseling of special groups, and serving the psychological
construction of the general public. Forth, we should establish the evaluation concept of “scientific system”. Build a comprehensive and systematic evaluation index from the aspects of organizational structure, working mode, platform construction, service object and content, team construction and effect evaluation\cite{20}, and timely introduce the third-party evaluation\cite{5}.

4.2. Integration of mechanism

The construction of social psychological service system involves many departments of the government and covers all aspects of society. We must make overall consideration and comprehensive planning, grasp the linkage relationship between work, establish and improve the mutually supporting and interconnected system, and form a long-term mechanism. First, we should strengthen organizational leadership, give full play to the core role of the Party committee and the leading role of the government, establish a work leading group headed by at least the “number one” of local administration, and further clarify the responsibility subject of social psychological services. The second is to clarify the division of labor and specific work responsibilities of each department, improve the cross departmental work coordination mechanism, psychological service information sharing mechanism, and the investment mechanism for the overall planning of human, material and financial resources, and establish a joint meeting system to avoid the possible “shirking of responsibility” between departments, the division and fragmentation of work caused by their own battle, as well as the phenomena of “competing for resources” and “competing for political achievements”. Third, we should further unblock the operation mechanism, open up the channels between the government and non-governmental organizations, the market and public welfare, encourage college students to start businesses in social psychological services, support the development and growth of social psychological service institutions, strengthen the incubation and cultivation of public welfare organizations, and achieve the coordinated promotion of government, society, market and public welfare.

4.3. Resource integration

To build a social psychological service system, we should make full use of the Internet to build a unified service platform, integrate existing and decentralized social organizations, human resources and material resources, so as to achieve the effect that the whole is greater than the sum of parts, and finally realize “making the best of people, making the best of things and providing accurate services”. Some studies believe that the lack of professional talent team is a major dilemma facing the current work\cite{9}, while the reality is that the existing professional talent resources have not been fully utilized. For example, in terms of psychological talents, “of the 1.2 million certified psychological counselors, only 30,000 or 40,000 are engaged in full-time or part-time psychological counseling” in China\cite{24}, which is undoubtedly a huge waste of human resources. All regions can bring the “awakening” of non on-the-job personnel with certificates into the professional talent information database, activate them through professional associations, and guide them to participate in various works of social psychological services in the form of full-time, part-time or voluntary services according to their professional expertise, professional level and service willingness. In terms of psychological facilities construction, resources such as psychological counseling room and psychological evaluation software are mainly concentrated in schools, hospitals and social counseling institutions, but not all resources have been fully utilized. All regions can bring these resources into the unified management of the Internet for cross regional and cross unit integration and sharing. In terms of the information of service objects, all institutions can strengthen the exchange of information, realize the common attention of multiple institutions and levels to key groups, special groups and even ordinary people, and achieve unified guidance, common early warning and coordinated...
intervention.

### 4.4. Content integration

At the micro level, individual values will affect people’s mental health; to improve the social mentality at the macro level, we should pay more attention to the establishment of social values, especially systematic and stable social core values\(^{25}\). Integrating the content of social psychological services is aim at the cultivation of socialist core values, especially the “freedom, equality, justice and rule by law” at the social level is the guarantee and cornerstone of a good social mentality. For example, some studies have shown that the sense of social justice will directly affect individuals’ trust in institutions, and then affect the attitude and intention of public cooperation\(^{26}\). This requires that social psychological services should pay attention to the role of values, infiltrate the cultivation of socialist core values in the publicity of mental health knowledge and psychological crisis intervention, lead people to form correct social cognition and cultivate positive social emotions. We should actively participate in social governance work such as interest coordination, appeal expression, contradiction mediation and rights and interest protection, pay attention to dredge the sense of unfairness, and prevent and resolve social contradictions from the root. On the basis of full psychological research, we should accurately grasp the psychological needs and interest demands of the masses, standardize the evaluation of the impact of government decisions on social mentality, actively participate in the formulation of public policies, and help develop a good social mentality.

### 4.5 Integration of approaches

For a long time, the theoretical research and practical operation of psychology in China have been learning and introducing Western research methods and research results. However, the so-called “standardized” psychological research based on the background of Western culture is being questioned by more and more people\(^{27}\). Social psychological service is a new thing based on the realistic condition of Chinese society. There is no Western experience and model that can be copied. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to localization and build a social psychological service system with Chinese characteristics. Reality has proved that the suicide prevention and intervention mechanism of Chinese college students established based on China’s social characteristics organically integrates student management, ideological and political education, psychological education, counselor system and class psychological committee system, which makes the suicide rate of Chinese college students much lower than that of Western countries\(^{28}\). Inspired by this, the construction of social psychological service system should also be combined with the characteristics of Chinese society; pay attention to the combination with party affairs and community work; deeply excavate and integrate local cultural resources from traditional culture, local culture and community culture; adopt the methods loved by the masses; integrate social psychological services into the people’s daily life, thus make psychological construction a way of life and life concept of people. Only in this way can we really improve the effectiveness of social psychological services.

### 5. Conclusion

Based on the perspectives of history, management, philosophy, society and psychology, this paper makes a theoretical reflection on the social psychological service system, points out the deviations in practice, and puts forward the strategies of integration and construction. As an open system, the connotation and extension of the social psychological service system are still being generated and developed. However, as long as we regard
“people” as the focus of all work and maintain the interaction, communication and cooperation between various work, the social psychological service will be closer and closer to its “true nature” and finally better serve people and society.

Conflict of interest

The authors believe that there is no economic interest or other relationship with individuals and organizations.

References

3. Xin Z. Shehui Xinli Fuwu bu Dengtong “Zhibing Jiuren” (Psychosocial Services are not Equal to “Treating Patients and Saving People”). Beijing Observation 2018; (9): 16-17.