

# Easy to Know but Difficult to Do -A Brief Analysis of the Importance of Practice in Social Work Education

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## ABSTRACT

With the progress of society and the introduction of national policies, the development of social work in China is getting faster and faster. However, the development of social work in China has some disadvantages. Through qualitative research, this paper finds that social work practice plays an important role in social professional education. Social work practice plays an important role in promoting students' integration of knowledge and practice, professional identity and localized development of social work. In this paper, the author puts forward suggestions on the development of social work practice from four different levels: government, university, teachers and students.

**Keywords:** *social work professional education, social work, social work practice*

## 1.INTRODUCTION

On June 8, 2021, the State Information Office of the People's Republic of China put forward suggestions on promoting the implementation of relevant laws and regulations of the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Minors. Social work was mentioned in five parts of the Law, including "strengthening the responsibility of family guardianship", "Strengthening school protection" and "strengthening social protection". The government and all sectors of society gradually realize that social work is professional and irreplaceable. With the continuous support of the state, the development of social work has been accelerated. However, the development of social work in China has some drawbacks inevitably, such as education first, social workers trained cannot adapt to social needs, and professionals have low recognition of social work. The author found that in order to solve these problems, we should first improve the professional education of social work in colleges and universities, especially strengthen the development of social work practice. We should not only improve the quality of education, but also let the students cultivated by colleges and universities master more practical skills and apply them to practical cases, and constantly enhance their professional identity of social work. improve the quality of education, but also let the students cultivated by colleges and universities master more practical skills and apply them to practical cases, and constantly enhance their professional identity

of social work. Social work practice plays an irreplaceable role in the professional development of social work.

## 2.QUESTION RAISING

Social work practice generally refers to social workers in various situations to help service objects and engage in management activities. Although different scholars have defined the concept of social work differently, they all emphasize the importance of practice. Social work should not only be guided by scientific knowledge, but also use this professional knowledge to help others. Scholars generally believe that social work education has both opportunities and challenges under the background of rapid overall development. Scholars mainly discuss the shortcomings of social work professional education from four aspects: localization, school, teachers and students.

First, in terms of the localization of professional education, the relationship between social localization and reference to foreign experience is not adjusted [5]. Serious lack of attention to local experience [7]; lack of correct understanding of Chinese social work practice in teaching; there are barriers to bridging the gap between professional and actual social workers in China's government-led context. Second, in terms of schools, social work education is seriously unbalanced between colleges and universities in terms of training direction [7].

The curriculum system set by the school needs to be improved [1]. The social work curriculum system is not contextualized enough; disadvantages of delayed construction of social work laboratories and practice bases [10-11]. Thirdly, under the condition that the school education system is not perfect, there are many deficiencies of teachers who assume the direct role of education. For example, the number of professional teachers is insufficient, and some teachers have not received systematic training. Also, lack of relevant practical experience, cannot be a good combination of scientific research and practice, so as to effectively supervise students. Finally, students majoring in social work lack practical experience and professional identity, and cannot effectively transform professional knowledge in concrete practice.

In order to cope with these challenges, scholars have put forward different requirements for social work education in colleges and universities. First of all, China's social work professional theory should be constructed, with reference to western theoretical achievements, the commonness and individuality should be clearly distinguished, China's own history and experience should be summarized and developed [7]. Secondly, colleges and universities should establish a social work curriculum system adapted to Chinese characteristics, integrating the education of professional theories, methods, skills and professional values. Strengthen cooperation with institutions [11]. Thirdly, teachers should devote themselves to practice and combine practice with scientific research. We should supervise students and point out their problems in practice. Finally, we should pay attention to the formation of students' good values. Students themselves should internalize their professional knowledge in practice, form professional values and promote their own professional identity.

To sum up, it is not difficult to find that the academic community generally believes that theoretical knowledge and practice are equally important for the study of social work through the challenges and corresponding suggestions of social work education in China pointed out by different scholars. Practice and social work practice is the foundation and core concept of system construction, and the key to understanding the discipline and theoretical system of social work [4]. Although scholars generally acknowledge the role of practice, the research on the importance of social practice in social work professional education and how to develop social work practice is relatively weak. Therefore, the author discusses the importance of social work practice to social work professional education through qualitative research, and puts forward his own opinions for the development of social work practice.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODS**

The author adopts qualitative research method and

semi-structured interview method when collecting data. The author selected five social work professional undergraduate and graduate students as the research object. The author made an interview outline before the interview, and conducted in-depth interviews with 5 students majoring in social work based on but not limited to the interview outline. At the end of the interview, the interview materials were sorted out to obtain information related to this study.

### **4. THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE IN SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION EDUCATION**

The quality of social work education in China lags behind the development of social work scale, which indicates that school education is more inclined to impart theory and neglects social work practice. Students blindly master theoretical knowledge, but fail to internalize knowledge and skills and apply them to practical service projects. It is easy to know but difficult to do. Attaching importance to the role of social work practice in social work professional education is of great importance for students to master theoretical knowledge, internalize professional value and promote the localization of social work major.

#### ***4.1. Unity Of Knowledge and Action: Master Professional Knowledge In Practice***

Social work is a professional, practical occupation, only know the knowledge of textbooks, without more practice, it is difficult to carry out effective services. In practice to carry out the process, not only is the process of social workers use professional theory and skills, and constantly internalize social work professional theory and practical skills in the process, the solid professional knowledge to help practice smoothly, whereas in practice constantly deepen the understanding of professional knowledge, to better grasp the professional knowledge.

#### ***4.2. Professional Identity: Internalize Professional Values In Practice***

Professional values of social work guide social workers to help others and help themselves. In the practical process, students can constantly promote their professional identity and better understand and love social work. In the process of carrying out actual service projects, social work students constantly use theories and skills to contact with service objects and help them change themselves to help others help themselves. Therefore, the practical process is not only a process to help service objects, but also a process for social workers to gain a sense of achievement and professional identity.

Most students majoring in social work choose this major to accept adjustment. Only through continuous practice can they feel the irreplaceability of social work major, thus increasing students' sense of identity to social

work major and also helping to keep social work professional talents.

#### ***4.3. Professional Development: Promote Professional Localization In Practice***

The localization of social work cannot be separated from the active exploration of practical workers. In China, professional social workers are different from actual social workers, so social work practice can provide opportunities for students majoring in social work to learn to apply some Western theories and values to China's reality. To feel the difference between western theoretical framework and China's actual experience and adapt to local social conditions, we should adapt measures to local conditions and learn from each other to promote the localized development of social work specialty in practical service.

### **5. SUGGESTION ON PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL PRACTICE**

In the above article, the author stated the importance of social work practice in social work professional education. Therefore, the government, universities, teachers and students must work together to promote the development of social work practice and improve the quality of social work professional education. To change the lack of professional characteristics of social work in China, education first. Train a group of professional social workers with rich theoretical knowledge and practical experience.

#### ***5.1. The Government - To Increase Support***

The development of social work professional education cannot be separated from the support of macro environment. The characteristics of social work development in China is government-led, the government should increase the publicity of social work and actively publicize the irreplaceable role of social work in social development, social welfare and community work.

Secondly, the government should increase financial and policy support for social work and expand employment opportunities. Improve the salary and welfare level of social workers, to avoid the loss of social work professionals because of salary and welfare problems. Let the large number of social work graduates trained by colleges and universities have a place to display their talents.

#### ***5.2. Institutions of higher learning -- Establishing A Reasonable and Distinctive Education System***

First, colleges and universities should actively adjust their distinctive curriculum education system according to the feedback of students' practice. For example, strengthen cooperation with social work institutions to

provide professional students with a variety of options, so that students can find their own field in the internship process, and help students to make choices in the future service direction. Colleges and universities should also adjust students' internship time according to the actual situation, so that students can have a complete time to contact with service objects and complete follow-up projects. According to the interview with the author, some undergraduate students' internship time is distributed in the second semester of sophomore year and the first semester of junior year, which is not conducive to students' comprehensive understanding of the project development process.

Second, colleges and universities can also hold relevant professional skills competitions, such as writing papers and service project books related to social work, so as to provide a platform for students to show their practical learning achievements and elevate the experience summarized in practice to the theoretical level. Stimulate students' ability to summarize, reflect and innovate. Some scene simulation contests can also be held to provide students with more opportunities to simulate real service scenes, which is conducive to helping students internalize theories and skills related to social work in fun learning.

#### ***5.3. Teachers - Improve Their Professional Degree***

To promote the development of social practice education, teachers need to master a lot of practical experience, improve themselves through active participation in projects and research, learn to combine practical experience with scientific research, and actively learn from other experienced teachers.

First, college teachers should actively participate in the service projects of social work agencies and carry out research activities, and accumulate practical experience in this process. At present, in the social professional education team of colleges and universities, some teachers who are not from social work lack theoretical knowledge, and some teachers only pay attention to scientific research and ignore the importance of practical experience. As a result, when teaching courses, teachers only teach theories in textbooks but not practical cases. Students master the theory, skills cannot be applied to the actual service activities. In practical teaching, teachers should combine theoretical skills with practical cases to make it more interesting and understandable.

Secondly, teachers who are newly engaged in teaching posts and those who lack practical experience should take the initiative to consult experienced teachers and experts. It will not work to lay stress on scientific research or practice. According to the author's investigation, some colleges and universities will hold teachers' seminars regularly. Teachers should seize the opportunity to share their problems and experiences in

teaching, scientific research and practice with each other. In the process of sharing with others, they should clear up their confusion and find the correct teaching methods and scientific research ideas.

#### **5.4. Students - Seize Opportunities To Improve Themselves**

Under the background of China's continuous encouragement of the construction of social work professional talent system and the continuous improvement of the quality of education in colleges and universities, students majoring in social work should also seize the opportunity to constantly improve their comprehensive quality and achieve better themselves.

First, students majoring in social work should carry out extensive practice. On the one hand, practice can apply theories in class to practical service and better master professional knowledge and skills. On the other hand, practice can also help students to understand the field they are interested in and find the method of service they are good at. When learning to provide internship opportunities to students, students should take the initiative to contact social work agencies, strive for valuable internship opportunities, and learn the operation process of social work agencies' service projects and solid practical experience.

Secondly, social work students should also pay attention to scientific research, especially at the postgraduate stage, should have the corresponding research ability, the skills learned in the process of practice to master the experience summed up, through their own continuous efforts to promote social work professional more professional, localized development.

## **6. THE CONCLUSION**

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020, social workers have played an important role in daily epidemic prevention work and psychological counseling with scientific working methods and professional values. The state has realized the importance of social work in the process of social development, and has constantly encouraged the construction of social work personnel, and the popularity of social work has also been rising. As the main source of exporting social workers, colleges and universities should improve the quality of training talents so that the talents trained by colleges and universities can meet the needs of society. Accelerate the development and adapt to the theory curriculum with Chinese characteristics, promote the localized development of social work. The development of social work is inseparable from the improvement of the quality of professional education in colleges and universities, and the improvement of the quality of education in colleges and universities is inseparable from the support of the government. The government should expand the popularity of social work through pleasing to the public,

so as to enhance the professional identity of students majoring in social work. Secondly, colleges and universities should strengthen cooperation with social work agencies. While promoting the development of social work theory, we should also pay attention to the practical ability of students and cultivate professional talents suitable for social development and national needs. Thirdly, colleges and universities should also strengthen the construction of teachers, and teachers should constantly improve their professional theoretical level and skills.

Social work practice is very important to social work professional education and development of social work. To a certain extent, it can promote students to combine understanding with practice, promote professional identity, and actively devote themselves to social work. In the process of future development, social workers should constantly adjust their theoretical framework and practical skills to promote the development of localization. In this process, as long as social work practitioners and researchers achieve the unity of knowledge and practice, social work can take root in China and become a truly Chinese profession and discipline.

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