

Enhancing the Competences of Female Village Officials in Zhanjiang from the Perspective of the Sociology of Knowledge

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Abstract: *This study investigates the socio-cultural and institutional challenges faced by female village officials in Zhanjiang, using the sociology of knowledge framework to explore how tailored training programs can enhance their competences. Qualitative data, collected from participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and training documents, were analyzed, revealing that context-specific and gender-sensitive approaches to knowledge selection, application, and transmission can empower the female officials to bridge the gap between theoretical concepts and everyday governance. Additionally, participatory methods like role-playing and case studies, adopted by the training can help the female officials apply new skills to real-world governance challenges. The findings also suggest training content needs to align with the socio-cultural realities of female village officials, particularly in aspects related to leadership, dispute mediation, and rural development. By focusing on the interplay between formal, codified knowledge and local, tacit knowledge, the study contributes to the literature on in-service training, rural governance, and gender studies.*

Keywords: Female village officials, Sociology of knowledge, Local knowledge, Competences.

1. Introduction

Over the last three decades, thousands of rural people were leaving their villages each year, seeking work in urban and industrial centers. The vast majority of these migrants are men and young, single women, who work away from home from periods ranging from a few months to several years. Consequently, middle-aged married women have been seen as the backbone of agriculture for some years [1]. The competence building of female village officials is an essential factor in improving local governance, particularly in rural areas like Zhanjiang. Female officials play a critical role in the decision-making processes that shape the lives of rural communities. However, their potential is often underutilized due to various socio-cultural, institutional, and knowledge-related barriers. This study aims to explore how to enhance the competences of female village officials in Zhanjiang, using the sociology of knowledge as a theoretical framework. By doing so, it addresses the broader issue of how knowledge production and application influence the effectiveness of female leaders in rural governance [2].

The enhancement of rural women's competences, particularly those in leadership roles, is fundamentally a process of knowledge production and application. It involves using specific methods to bring women's ideas, skills, and abilities to the level expected by the communities they serve. This process covers multiple dimensions, including knowledge production, selection, transmission, internalization, and application. Female village officials need not only acquire new skills but also navigate traditional gender expectations, social norms, and institutional challenges. These factors make the enhancement of their competences not merely a matter of individual capacity-building but a social and political issue that requires a deeper understanding of the knowledge systems at play [3] [4]. The issue is particularly important given the changing socio-economic landscape of rural China. As rural areas undergo rapid transformation due to urbanization, industrialization, and government-led rural

revitalization policies, local governance faces increasingly complex challenges. Female village officials, as key actors in implementing these policies, need to be equipped with the right tools, skills, and knowledge to meet the demands of their roles. Their enhanced competences could lead to better governance outcomes, as women are often more attuned to issues related to social welfare, healthcare, and community well-being—areas that are critical to rural development [5].

While numerous studies have examined rural governance in China, including the role of village officials, there is a noticeable gap in the literature when it comes to understanding the specific challenges faced by female village officials. Research has predominantly focused on male leadership, leaving a limited understanding of how gender impacts leadership effectiveness, especially in rural areas where traditional gender norms may still be pervasive. Studies on female leadership in urban settings are more common, yet the unique socio-cultural dynamics of rural governance remain underexplored.

In light of this focus, the primary objective of this study is to enhance the professional competencies of female village officials in Zhanjiang through the application of the sociology of knowledge framework. By understanding how knowledge is socially constructed, transmitted, and utilized within rural communities, this research seeks to provide insights into how female leaders can better navigate their roles in complex socio-cultural environments. Specifically, the study aims to address the following questions:

- 1) What are the key socio-cultural and institutional challenges that female village officials in Zhanjiang face in enhancing their competences?
- 2) What strategies and interventions can be employed to enhance the competences of female village officials, and how can these be informed by the sociology of knowledge perspective?

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Sociology of Knowledge and In-Service Training

Over the past five years, the sociology of knowledge has increasingly intersected with the field of in-service training, focusing on how knowledge is constructed, distributed, and institutionalized within professional learning environments. As workplaces continue to evolve due to technological advancements, globalization, and shifting labor dynamics, understanding how in-service training transmits and produces knowledge has become a critical area of study [6].

Ballantine et al. examine how in-service training functions as a site for the reproduction of institutional power dynamics and knowledge hierarchies. They argue that in-service training is not merely a technical process of skill acquisition but also involves the social construction of knowledge, where organizational norms and power relations shape what is considered “valid” knowledge. They contribute to the sociology of knowledge by highlighting the role of power in determining the types of knowledge that are prioritized in workplace learning. The authors employ a critical framework to analyze how in-service training often reinforces existing power structures, thus offering a nuanced perspective that goes beyond the traditional focus on skill development. Although these two scholars have offered valuable insights into how power and knowledge are intertwined, their analysis focuses heavily on formal, institutionalized organizations, limiting the paper’s applicability to more informal or decentralized workplaces. Additionally, the study lacks empirical evidence to substantiate its claims, relying instead on theoretical discourse [7].

Tamsah et al. investigate how in-service training fosters knowledge exchange and the formation of professional identity. Through a series of case studies across different industries, the researchers examine how workers’ professional identities are shaped by the knowledge they acquire during in-service training, as well as how they negotiate these identities within workplace knowledge hierarchies. This study offers insights by linking the sociology of knowledge with the sociology of identity, showing how knowledge acquired in in-service training is not just about technical competence but also about social identity formation. Its strength lies in its empirical approach, which uses real-world case studies to demonstrate the intersection of knowledge and identity. The focus on identity formation is insightful, but the paper could benefit from a deeper analysis of how organizational structures influence the knowledge exchange process. Furthermore, the case studies are drawn primarily from Western contexts, raising questions about the generalizability of the findings to non-Western settings where professional identities and knowledge systems may differ [8].

Some researchers argue that in-service training should be understood as a social practice embedded within specific organizational and social contexts. Their study examines how different forms of knowledge—tacit, explicit, formal, and informal—are produced and exchanged in workplace training programs. They emphasize the role of social interactions and cultural norms in shaping the knowledge that workers acquire during training. This study advances the sociology of

knowledge by highlighting the importance of social context in the construction and dissemination of workplace knowledge. The authors draw on socio-cultural theories to demonstrate how knowledge is not merely transmitted from trainer to trainee but is co-constructed through social interactions within the workplace [9] [10].

The sociology of knowledge in in-service training has seen considerable growth over the past five years, with researchers examining how knowledge is produced, exchanged, and contested in workplace learning environments. Studies have highlighted the roles of power, identity, and forms of knowledge in shaping in-service training programs, shedding some light into how knowledge is constructed within these contexts. However, more empirical research is needed, particularly in non-Western contexts and informal learning environments, to understand how in-service training operates across different cultural and organizational settings. Additionally, future studies could explore how workers resist or negotiate the knowledge imposed on them by institutionalized training programs, providing a more nuanced understanding of agency in workplace learning.

2.2 Training of Female Village Officials in China

In recent years, research on the training and development of female village officials in China has gained increased attention, reflecting the growing recognition of women’s roles in rural governance and the challenges they face. Studies conducted over the past five years have mainly focused on aspects of their training, including institutional support, socio-cultural barriers, gender disparities, and the effectiveness of different training models.

Some scholars explore the impact of leadership training programs designed specifically for female village officials in China. The study focuses on how these training programs empower women to take on leadership roles within rural governance. Through a mixed-methods approach, the authors evaluate several training initiatives in rural provinces, assessing their effectiveness in enhancing women’s administrative skills, decision-making capacity, and community leadership. This study provides empirical evidence on the positive effects of leadership training for female village officials, suggesting that targeted training programs can address the unique challenges faced by women in rural governance [11][12].

Similarly, more research delves into the institutional barriers that prevent female village officials from fully participating in rural governance, even after undergoing professional training. And some research points to systemic issues such as lack of institutional support, gender biases within local governments, and insufficient resources for continuous development. The authors suggest that while training programs are beneficial, without addressing these institutional challenges, their long-term effectiveness remains limited. As a result, more efforts should be taken in terms of patriarchal governance structures and resource inequalities to remove the embedded institutional obstacles that female village officials may face [13] [14]. Furthermore, research shifts the focus from administrative and leadership skills to the psychological resilience of female village officials. The study argues that in

addition to technical training, psychological support and peer networks play a crucial role in helping female officials manage the socio-cultural pressures they face, such as balancing family responsibilities with public duties and combating gender discrimination. The research is based on interviews and focus groups with female village officials from diverse regions [15][16].

The above studies have bettered the understanding of the challenges and opportunities involved in enhancing the competencies of female village officials. However, gaps remain, particularly in addressing the long-term sustainability of training programs, the integration of psychological support, and the need for deeper institutional reforms to support women's participation in rural governance. Future research could focus on comparative studies across regions and on identifying best practices for overcoming both structural and socio-cultural barriers.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Context

This research is conducted at Shangyi Social Work Agency, Zhanjiang, who worked with the local government to provide free training and workshops for the female village officials, especially those come from underdeveloped areas. The training aimed to enhance the officials' competences in village governance, entrepreneurship, and leadership, equipping them with the skills necessary to tackle socio-economic challenges and improve local development. This initiative was designed to empower women in rural areas, fostering sustainable growth and community leadership.

3.2 Data Collection

To collect comprehensive data, the study employed a multi-faceted approach that included participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and training document analysis. This research design allows for a comprehensive, context-sensitive examination of the experiences of female village officials, emphasizing the socio-cultural and institutional factors that shape their professional competences.

In this study, participatory observation was employed, particularly during official meetings or training sessions attended by female village officials. The researcher will observe interactions, decision-making processes, and any gendered dynamics that emerge in these settings. This method allows for understanding the institutional culture and socio-political structures that may influence these women's competence development. Observation captures real-time interactions and behaviors, providing insight into the implicit norms and practices that may not surface in interviews. It complements the interview data by offering a holistic view of the institutional environment.

Semi-structured interviews were another critical data collection method used in this study. This method allows for open-ended questions, enabling participants to express their experiences and thoughts freely, while also allowing the researcher to probe deeper into specific areas. The flexibility

of semi-structured interviews is ideal for exploring the socio-cultural and institutional challenges faced by female village officials, their strategies for overcoming these barriers, and their reflections on competence enhancement.

To support the primary data collected through interviews and FGDs, training document analysis was used as an additional data collection method. This involved reviewing various documents, such as online newspapers, government reports, and other relevant materials. The purpose of this analysis was to contextualize the primary data within a broader framework and to verify the information obtained from other sources. By examining official and unofficial documents, researchers could cross-check facts, understand historical and policy contexts, and gain insights into the external factors influencing the community.

3.3 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed by using thematic analysis, which involves coding the data and identifying recurring patterns or themes related to the challenges, strategies, and competence enhancement of female village officials. Thematic analysis is well-suited to qualitative research because it provides flexibility and allows the researcher to focus on both the explicit and implicit meanings in the data. Transcriptions of interviews and observation notes will be reviewed multiple times to gain a deep understanding of the content. Segments of data will be coded based on recurring ideas, phrases, and actions. Codes will include concepts like "knowledge selection," "knowledge application," "knowledge transmission," "support systems," and "institutional barriers." After coding, related codes will be grouped into themes. For instance, codes related to socio-cultural expectations and institutional limitations might combine into a theme of "gendered institutional challenges." Themes will be reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately represent the data and provide insights into the research question. Finally, the themes will be interpreted through the sociology of knowledge perspective, linking participants' experiences with how knowledge is socially constructed within their contexts.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Knowledge Selection

The trainers invited by Shangyi Social Work Agency were well aware of the fact that knowledge selection must align with the unique characteristics and needs of the female village officials. Consequently, knowledge should not be constrained by a narrow, orthodox definition but should remain flexible and adaptable. Knowledge is not an abstract, symbolic system removed from reality; it encompasses both theoretical and practical aspects. It includes explicit knowledge that can be codified, as well as tacit knowledge that is harder to articulate. Knowledge is both a structured system of symbols and lived experience, encompassing both principles and practical skills. To ensure knowledge is effectively communicated, it must be integrated with the learners' characteristics, considering the socio-cultural environment in the choice, processing, and teaching of knowledge. This positions knowledge as both objective and scientifically valid, while also subjective and socially relevant, making it simultaneously universal and

context-specific.

In the Female Village Officials' Competence Building Program, the process of selecting knowledge was grounded in extensive research and consultation. Early on, the project team collected detailed information and consulted with experts from organizations such as the Women's Federation, the Organization Department, and universities. Special efforts were made to investigate the female village officials in Zhanjiang, to gain an understanding of their job responsibilities, educational backgrounds, knowledge and skill gaps, and specific needs. The project team conducted a thorough analysis of this information, selecting knowledge that matched the overall context of these officials and the project's capacity to address their needs.

Furthermore, during consultations, the Women's Federation and the Organization Department emphasized the need to train female village officials in areas like current affairs, leadership, policy frameworks, and basic legal knowledge. Educators from Lingnan Normal University recommended practical skills training, including communication, mediation, and entrepreneurship. In a pre-training questionnaire, female officials ranked the importance of various courses, helping to shape the curriculum. Finally, three key principles in knowledge selection merged: 1) targeted and practical training content, including training sections like Leadership and Communication Methods for Cadres," "Dispute Mediation Skills," "Basic Agricultural Knowledge" and "Computer Skills Training"; 2) local and contextual approach to cover "Fruit and Vegetable Planting in Zhanjiang" and "Strategies for Developing the Local Agricultural Industry."; 3) Gender-specific training modules to address topics such as "Family Education", "Self-awareness and Mental Health" and "Mediation of Marital and Family Disputes," with a particular focus on protecting women's rights.

Many officials appreciated how the course content was directly relevant to their work, particularly in areas like rural land disputes, family conflicts, and neighborhood issues. They felt the training addressed real-life challenges they regularly face, making it easier for them to apply the new knowledge. This practical focus on village-specific issues helped bridge the gap between theory and daily practice. As Participant 33 expressed: "I have learned a lot of practical, hands-on skills during the training. Courses on mediation techniques and basic legal knowledge provided concrete strategies I could implement immediately. Instead of abstract concepts, the training focused on actionable skills that enhanced my ability to manage disputes and governance issues effectively, helping me solve problems in my communities with greater competence."

Notably, participants expressed high satisfaction with the interactive nature of the training, particularly role-playing and case studies. These methods not only kept them engaged but also allowed them to apply what they learned in a safe, simulated environment. By working through real-world scenarios and receiving peer and instructor feedback, they were better prepared to handle similar issues in their own villages. The female village officials also found the gender-sensitive approach to be a highlight of the training. Courses that considered their specific experiences, such as

family education and mental health, were highly relevant. They felt that the training acknowledged the unique challenges faced by women in rural governance roles, fostering a deeper connection to the material and reinforcing their self-confidence and leadership skills.

By carefully processing and structuring knowledge, it was made accessible, organized, and suited to the context of female village officials. Each training session was designed to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, ensuring the content was relevant and immediately useful in their roles. This approach reflects the program's overall goal: to empower female village officials by providing them with the knowledge and skills they need to navigate both the challenges of governance and the broader socio-economic landscape of rural Zhanjiang.

4.2 Knowledge Application

To effectively deliver useful knowledge to female village officials, it is crucial to structure and process the information, making it organized, logical, and accessible. This involves creating effective teaching plans or micro-courses with clear objectives, content, and assessments. This project-based approach breaks the larger program into smaller, goal-oriented training activities. The knowledge must be presented in a way that suits a rural audience and aligns with the officials' life and work contexts, taking into account their life experiences, psychological traits, and social backgrounds. The aim is tailor the course content to serve as a tool for female village officials to better understand and engage with their communities, fostering their personal and professional growth.

This workshop design demonstrates the integration of course content with the real-life and work contexts of female village officials. It uses everyday narratives to facilitate understanding and application of the knowledge. The participatory teaching method replicates real-life situations, enabling the officials to acquire not only theoretical knowledge but also practical, experiential skills. This approach promotes both knowledge acquisition and skill development.

In addition, the course design also incorporates gender considerations. A gender perspective acknowledges the distinct needs and interests of women compared to men, combining women's cognitive styles, life experiences, and values with the theoretical material. This approach integrates the female perspective, helping the officials to identify with the new knowledge and making it easier to absorb and apply.

The following is one of the voices from the trainee: "I really appreciated the clear structure of the workshop design. I was not familiar with the law things at all. But the training content was broken into smaller, digestible segments with specific objectives. That helped me understand the material better. I like the organized, step-by-step approach, easier to follow, as it allowed me to process complex legal regulations and dispute mediation techniques at my own pace, ensuring that no important detail was overlooked during the learning process. (Participant 6)"

Participant 55 also expressed her satisfaction by saying that: “I am so into the real-life examples and case studies in the workshop design! I found the use of everyday rural disputes very relatable, as it allowed me to reflect on similar situations in their villages. This connection between course content and my own experiences helped me take in the knowledge more effectively, as I could easily apply the lessons to the challenges I regularly face in their communities.”

What’s more, Participant 28 stressed the engaging teaching methods: “The combination of lectures, video presentations, and role-playing activities drummed up my interest greatly. More importantly, the training provided opportunities for me to actively participate and practice what I learned in simulated environments, reinforcing my understanding through experiential learning rather than passive instruction alone.”

From a constructivist perspective, knowledge only becomes meaningful when it is assimilated into the learners' existing knowledge structures. If learners cannot internalize the content, it holds little practical value. For the course content to resonate, it must reflect their real-life situations. Knowledge that is detached from their background and experiences will be hard to relate to. Therefore, the content must blend standardized, formal knowledge with the lived experiences of the learners, enabling them to grasp the social and practical significance of the materials.

4.3 Knowledge Transmission

The goal of knowledge transmission to Zhanjiang’s female village officials is to introduce new concepts, methods, and techniques, enhancing rural women’s confidence and effectiveness in political participation and governance. This involves both imparting fundamental ideas and offering practical skills training. The training includes large-scale knowledge dissemination sessions and smaller, targeted skill development workshops.

This type of training aims to influence the local knowledge and experience of female village officials with a universal knowledge system. It differs from conventional teaching, as it is non-systematic and short-term, focusing on specific themes and advocating particular concepts and skills. These female officials are unique in that they are adults with deeply ingrained “mental schemas” and “habitus”, having spent long periods in isolated rural communities. Changing their views and behaviors through knowledge transmission is challenging, requiring specialized strategies and techniques. Given the project-based nature of this training, it can be viewed as an experiment examined through the sociology of knowledge lens.

In this dynamic, the project team and trainers are the holders of universal knowledge, acting as instructors, while the female village officials possess local knowledge and are the learners. This creates a clash between two knowledge systems. The instructors' goal is to influence the learners, guiding them to adopt more legitimate standards in their views and behaviors, and helping them understand society and themselves from a more scientific and rational perspective. Universal knowledge serves to supplement local knowledge, particularly in addressing social management problems where

local experience may fall short. Both knowledge systems are essential for mediating social life and order. However, in village governance, modern standardized knowledge often resolves problems that traditional cultural knowledge cannot, reflecting the trend of social development and contributing to the modernization of governance. Thus, the universal knowledge delivered through the “Zhanjiang Female Village Officials Capacity Building Program” supplements or even replaces outdated and ineffective knowledge and methods.

A key challenge for instructors is their unfamiliarity with the participants' knowledge systems. Having operated within formal knowledge structures, they may not fully grasp the socio-cultural environment of the female village officials. Therefore, the trainers' primary task is to adopt strategies that effectively penetrate and influence the officials' existing knowledge. On the other hand, the female officials, who have limited formal knowledge and rely heavily on local experience and customs, often feeling helpless and overwhelmed when confronted with complex problems. They urgently need more authoritative, scientific, and universal knowledge to improve their working methods. The task for both parties is to bridge the knowledge gap and facilitate the integration of these two knowledge systems.

These efforts positioned the training in a positive outcome. As Participant 17 expressed her opinion in the interview: “I found the training was very theoretical at times, while it’s essential to understand the underlying concepts. It was helpful as we had more hands-on practice during the sessions. The skills transfer was effective because there were additional case studies or role-playing activities that mirrored the real challenges we face in our communities.”

Participant 22 also shared similar opinion by saying: “The training has improved my problem-solving skills, particularly when dealing with village disputes and governance issues. Before, I would rely on local customs and personal experience, but now I have a broader understanding of legal frameworks and structured approaches. The transfer of this more formalized knowledge has made me more capable of addressing problems systematically, which has led to better outcomes in my work.”

Table 1: Planning Skill Training

Sections	Planning Tasks
1. Naming plans	● Give simple, concise, and accurate name for the plans.
2. Significance	● List the significance and value of plans based on the village’s situation.
3. Needs	● Identify the needs and potential problems based on investigation.
4. Objectives	● Set achievable and specific objectives and break them into smaller goals.
5. Implementation	● Work out specific steps and list deadline to fulfill the action plan.
6. Budget	● Specify what materials are needed and forecast the possible expenses.

The most worth-noting is that the training of decision-making and planning skills. The female village officials are supposed to learn how to carry out work using scientific and standardized methods. Therefore, it is necessary to enhance their ability to design and write various types of work plans. A well-designed plan ensures the successful implementation of community activities, serving as a critical tool for presenting

facts, reporting achievements, analyzing problems, and securing funding or other resources from relevant departments or the public. During the training process, teachers guided female village officials on how to design and write plans through hands-on practice. The workshops conceived the following plan and design:

By following this framework, female village officials can incorporate their everyday actions and experiences into structured, standardized designs, aligning with the expectations of higher authorities and other modern organizations. This approach also brings village management closer to modern management practices, helping female village officials showcase their work achievements and gain the trust and support of higher authorities or other social forces. Additionally, the project team offered basic computer skills training to enable them to master important auxiliary technologies for modernizing village governance.

Since the main challenge for female village officials in organizing activities is often the lack of funds, leading them to believe that it's impossible to carry out activities. However, rural communities have a wealth of resources. While villagers may lack economic means, rural areas do not lack human resources. The training goal should be to cultivate female village officials' ability to tap into the advantages of village resources, teaching them the skills and methods necessary to develop community activities based on actual village conditions. Rather than directly providing funds, the officials should be trained to learn how to fish rather than simply give them fish. In this way, they can plan detailed activities, make use of resources available, and implement activities that are educational, engaging, and well-received by villagers, ultimately helping them blend into the local community seamlessly.

The workshops were also committed to equipping female village officials with essential and practical legal knowledge, especially regarding land disputes, neighborhood relations, and family and marriage issues by examples, scenarios and even experiences shared by the officials themselves.

Beyond legal dispute resolution, many officials noted that the workshop provided them with valuable insights into leadership and governance. The structured, project-based approach to training helped them think more strategically about how to manage community conflicts and lead with fairness and integrity. They felt that the skills and knowledge gained were not only useful in mediation but also in other areas of governance, contributing to their overall development as effective village officials.

5. Conclusion

This study presents significant contributions to the literature by offering a novel perspective on the training and development of female village officials, particularly in rural Zhanjiang, through a sociological lens. It fills an important gap in the existing research by focusing on the unique socio-cultural and institutional challenges these women face, and how tailored knowledge systems can enhance their competences. The findings suggest the critical importance of context-specific, gender-sensitive training approaches, which

have not been sufficiently explored in prior studies. The innovative framework proposed in this research not only deepens the understanding of the role of female village officials in governance but also provides practical solutions for improving their performance through carefully designed, culturally relevant, and gender-aware educational interventions.

One of the key contributions of this research is its focus on the intersection between gender, rural governance, and knowledge transmission. Although previous studies have examined governance in rural China, few have addressed the specific challenges female village officials face, particularly with regard to their unique roles and responsibilities within the local socio-cultural context. This study highlights the complexity of their work, emphasizing that training must be sensitive to their dual roles in governance and family management. By incorporating gender-specific modules such as "Family Education," "Self-awareness and Mental Health," and "Mediation of Marital and Family Disputes," the study offers an innovative approach to addressing the particular challenges faced by women in rural governance, a subject rarely discussed in the existing literature.

Moreover, the research bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application by demonstrating how knowledge selection, application, and transmission must be contextually adapted to the life experiences and socio-cultural realities of female village officials. This nuanced understanding of knowledge as both universal and context-specific adds a new dimension to the sociology of knowledge, making the findings relevant for scholars studying in-service training, rural governance, and gender studies.

One of the most critical insights from this research is the emphasis on the participatory and experiential learning approaches used in the training program. The role-playing exercises, case studies, and interactive teaching methods not only kept the participants engaged but also allowed them to immediately apply what they had learned in a safe, controlled environment. This practical focus on local, village-specific issues, such as rural land disputes and family conflicts, effectively bridged the gap between abstract governance theories and the real challenges faced by female village officials in their daily work. The result was a training program that not only equipped participants with theoretical knowledge but also provided them with hands-on skills that were immediately relevant to their roles.

The study's findings also have important implications for future training programs targeting female leaders in rural governance. The structured, project-based approach to training, particularly the focus on planning and decision-making skills, provided the officials with a clear framework for organizing and executing community activities. This approach aligns with modern management practices, enabling female village officials to showcase their work effectively and gain trust from higher authorities. Furthermore, the emphasis on integrating local knowledge with universal governance principles offers a practical model that can be applied in similar rural contexts, both in China and globally.

While this study provides a comprehensive understanding of how to enhance the competences of female village officials, it also opens up several avenues for future research. First, longitudinal studies could be conducted to assess the long-term impact of these training programs on the effectiveness of female village officials in their roles. This would provide deeper insights into how well the newly acquired skills and knowledge are retained and applied over time. Second, further research could explore the specific institutional and cultural barriers that female village officials face when trying to implement what they have learned. Understanding these barriers could help refine future training programs to better equip these women with the tools they need to overcome such challenges.

To conclude, the study has filled a significant gap by focusing on the unique challenges faced by female village officials in Zhanjiang and offering a more robust training framework that addresses both their practical and emotional needs. The findings demonstrate that knowledge transmission in such contexts must be flexible, adaptive, and rooted in the local socio-cultural environment to be effective. The study's emphasis on participatory learning and the integration of local knowledge with universal principles offers a valuable model for future training programs, not only in China but also in other rural governance contexts around the world.

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