Analysis of Social work Project Management Process from the Perspective of Empowerment Theory—Taking the "Not Come Singly but in Pairs" Social Work Project for Families Who Lost Their Only Child as an Example

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Abstract: *Project-based management of social work has become an important trend in the development of social work, and has gained greater development space for the development of social work. This paper takes the empowerment theory as the theoretical support, takes the "Not Come Singly but in Pairs" social work project for families who have lost their only child as an example, analyzes the project with the four main stages of project management, namely, the initiation, planning, implementation, and closing, and summarizes the experience of social work project management from the perspective of empowerment theory.*

Keywords: Empowerment, Families who lost their only child, Social work project management.

1. Background

With the continuous strengthening of social service requirements and the continuous development of social organizations, social work has extended from the original emphasis on specialization and professionalization to social work projectization. The projectization of social work has become an important development trend to promote the continuous development of social organizations and improve the level of social services. For social work, combining management and professional social work to implement project management can not only fully integrate social resources and achieve effective management of social organizations, but also promote the development of social work. Empowerment is an important theory in social work. The core of empowerment theory is to develop the ability to obtain power. Analyzing the social work project management process under the guidance of empowerment theory is not only conducive to social organizations paying more attention to the improvement of their own capabilities of the vulnerable groups they serve, tapping the potential of service objects, and enhancing the power of service objects. It is also conducive to social workers to reflect on themselves during the implementation of the project, promote the improvement of social workers' own capabilities and promote the improvement of service quality. The "Not Come Singly but in Pairs" social work comprehensive service project for families who have lost their only child is led by the Population and Family Planning Commission and the Family Planning Association of Y District, C City, with a professional social work team composed of teachers and students of social work majors in colleges and universities as the funding applicant and project executor. Through the model of applying for the project to the foundation and obtaining funding, a "three-in-one" project cooperation mode of government, foundation and social workers has been formed. The project mainly provides psychological counseling, emotional support, social integration, reconstruction of social support system, life care, elderly care and other services for the elderly who have lost their only child through professional social work services to meet the various needs of the elderly who have lost their only child. To this end, this article takes the "Not Come Singly but in Pairs" social work project for families who have lost their only child as an example, and explores and analyzes the process of social work project management based on empowerment theory, so as to understand how to manage the project to promote the healthy development of social organizations and the healthy operation of social work projects.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Concepts

2.1.1 Empowerment

Empowerment is a very important concept in social work. This concept originated in the West and has been widely used in social work practice and theoretical research. In 1976, American scholar Solomons used the concept of empowerment in Black Empowerment: Social Work in Oppressed Communities, arguing that the American black community has long been negatively evaluated by the surrounding environment, causing individuals or groups to feel powerless, lacking skills, knowledge, material resources and even emotional management capabilities, so that they cannot play social roles well [1]. Although empowerment theory has been widely used in various fields, there is no unified definition of the concept of empowerment. From the perspective of foreign scholars, the empowerment perspective links social and economic justice with personal pain, and uses empowerment theory as an integrated framework. It presents an integrated and comprehensive perspective that responds to the needs of oppressed groups [2]. Domestic scholars tend to define empowerment as tapping or stimulating the potential of clients, thereby increasing their adaptability and talents,

enabling them to control the environment and gain a sense of power [3].

2.1.2 Families who lost their only child

Single-child-lost families: "Single-child-lost families refer to families whose only child has died due to illness, traffic accident, crime, work, suicide, disaster, etc., and thus the parents have lost their only child forever. Most of them are over 50 years old, and generally, due to age or other reasons, they are unable or unwilling to have or adopt another child." This article takes all aspects into consideration and believes that "single-child-lost families" specifically refer to families where the couple has only given birth to or adopted one child, and the child unfortunately died due to illness or accidental disaster, and the couple is unable or unwilling to have or adopt another child [4].

2.1.3 Social Work Project Management

Social work project management refers to the process in which social work organizations, based on the overall development strategy and direction of the organization, use the thinking and skills of project management to manage social work service concepts and activities in a project-based manner in order to achieve specific purposes and service goals. That is, social work is regarded as an organic whole, and from the organizational management level, the organizational structure is managed in a project-based manner to achieve specific goals; from the service provision level, the concept, technology and methods of project management are applied to some social work service activities to realize the value of the organization [5].

2.2 A Study on Families Who Lost Their Only Child from the Perspective of Empowerment Theory

Domestic scholars believe that the sense of powerlessness and inability of families who have lost their only child is caused by their negative experiences and is the result of their interaction with the environment. Low self-efficacy leads to the disconnection of families who have lost their only child from society, and their opportunities to obtain social resources are reduced; while institutional and policy barriers in the external environment, such as imperfect pension and social assistance systems, in turn hinder the realization of their personal potential and effective interaction with the environment [6]. Therefore, only by empowering families who have lost their only child, improving their ability and enhancing their quality of life can we improve their ability. Social work can empower families who have lost their only child from both micro and macro levels. At the individual and interpersonal levels, we can use micro social work methods to intervene in families who have lost their only child, and use case, group and community work methods to help them get rid of their mental difficulties and enhance their self-efficacy; at the environmental level, that is, starting from the macro level, we can learn from foreign experience and promote the society to pay attention to and attach importance to the pension issues of families who have lost their only child, and improve the social security level of families who have lost their only child by improving social welfare policies and increasing social administrative efforts.

2.3 Research on Social Work Project Management

Wang Ruihong summarized four strategies of project management from his many years of practical work in front-line social work supervision, namely, the "four transformations" of concept activity, activity project, project branding and brand socialization, thereby helping to empower institutions and projects [7]. Luo Feng took the "Heart Bridge Project" social work service project as an example, and discussed the management strategies of social work projects from four aspects: the establishment and start-up stage of social work projects, the planning stage of projects, the implementation stage of projects and the closing stage of projects, and constructed a project management model for social work service projects [8]. Liu Qingyuan conducted an in-depth study of project management through project cases of social work institutions, and proposed that social work institutions should focus on project planning, transparent use of funds, and fully mobilize the initiative and enthusiasm of all parties in project management; classify projects, strengthen cooperation with the government, foundations, etc., explore the goal of the whole society's participation, and form a project operation support system [9].

3. Process Analysis of Social Work Project Management from the Perspective of Empowerment Theory

This paper takes the "Not Come Singly but in Pairs" social work project for families who have lost their only child as an example, and based on the empowerment theory, conducts a process analysis of the four stages of social work project management: initiation, planning, implementation, and closing, and summarizes the experience of social work project management for families who have lost their only child from the perspective of empowerment theory.

3.1 Empowerment During the Project Start-up Phase

The start-up phase of a project is composed of a group of activities that help start a new project. Each start-up activity is generally completed by an organization, plan or comprehensive action process beyond the control of the project. For institutions, the management work of the project start-up phase is mainly focused on the control of the project scope. In the start-up phase, the main task of the project management team is to conduct a feasibility study of the project and make a basic description of the project scope, deliverables and project time, clarify the project boundaries and textualize them, and scientific textualization requires a survey of the needs of the service recipients. When conducting a needs survey on the elderly who have lost their only child, the "Not Come Singly but in Pairs" social work project for families who have lost their only child focuses on exploring the unequal environment and oppression faced by the service recipients, discovering some direct or indirect rights obstacles faced by the service recipients, and also seeing the resources of the service recipients' environment and their own potential, and the possibility of improving self-efficacy and changing themselves and the environment. When conducting a feasibility analysis of the project, the SWOT framework is fully utilized. It is necessary not only to see the strengths and weaknesses of people, but also to see the

opportunities and challenges of the environment.

3.2 Empowerment During the Planning Phase of a Project

For social work projects, the series of activities in the project planning stage will be affected by the unique value factors of social work. When formulating project plans, we can start from the perspective of empowerment, adhere to the principles of situational context, empowerment, and collectivism, that is, focus on the understanding of the social environment in which the elderly who have lost their only child live. Through the support of social workers, the service recipients can identify different possibilities that may meet their requirements, reduce the loneliness of the elderly who have lost their only child, and promote mutual connections between the elderly who have lost their only child, and help the service recipients make decisions that can affect their life affairs. Therefore, the project planning stage should be empowered from the two dimensions of the subject and content of goal setting. In the goal setting stage, the setting of goals cannot be limited to one person. All project stakeholders should be empowered and various intentional suggestions should be fully adopted, including the expectations of the service recipients, the thinking of social workers, the goal control of institutional managers, and the service results expected by the investors. In addition, the following social work ethical codes and values should be followed when formulating project goals from an empowerment perspective, including that clients and social workers must effectively participate in jointly creating and establishing an environment consistent with human needs; promoting social justice; allocating resources fairly and respecting clients' right to self-determination and self-realization; eliminating all forms of discrimination; and guiding clients to take maximum control of their lives and providing them with opportunities to fully develop themselves.

3.3 Empowerment During the Implementation Phase of the Project

During the implementation phase of the project, the empowerment of social work projects is mainly reflected in three aspects: social organizations, social workers, and service recipients. The first is social organizations from the perspective of empowerment. During the implementation of the project, the management team of the "Not Come Singly but in Pairs" social work project for the elderly who have lost their only child has always adhered to the following empowerment concepts: first, creating a formal mechanism for the elderly who have lost their only child to participate in the decision-making of project activities; second, forming a partnership with the elderly who have lost their only child and designing and evaluating project activities. Third, promoting cooperation and communication between teachers and students within the team to form a decision-making practice model without power differences. Fourth, empowering students majoring in social work with ability and psychology, improving their social work service capabilities, helping them improve their sense of self-efficacy, and thus improving their satisfaction with project activities.

The second is social workers from the perspective of empowerment. Social workers from the perspective of empowerment should maintain a partnership with clients and be committed to social changes. When empowering service recipients, they should also remain conscious and empower themselves. The ability and resources of social workers themselves are also important contents of self-empowerment. In the process of providing social work services to elderly people who have lost their only child, social workers often feel low self-efficacy, sense of existence, and sense of value. They believe that they lack the ability to prompt service recipients to change, or that the services they provide cannot bring real help to the elderly who have lost their only child, which in turn affects the empowerment of service recipients. Lack of resources is also one of the problems faced by social workers. On the one hand, social work students in school lack practical supervision in the process of service delivery. Although teachers in school can provide theoretical supervision, it is difficult to provide students with favorable support due to lack of practical experience. On the other hand, social workers are limited in the venues for group activities and community activities. Service activities are generally held in community or street activity centers. However, due to limited resources and administrative factors of social work, it is difficult to apply for activity venues or they cannot meet the needs of activities. Therefore, social workers should focus on empowering themselves in the process of providing services. Only when social workers have rights or powers can they truly empower service recipients and assist them in changing.

Finally, there are the service objects under the empowerment perspective. Service objects under the empowerment perspective generally have no ability and confidence to change their difficult situations due to the lack of control over their own lives and available social resources. It is difficult for them to strive for and create employment opportunities and other competitive opportunities through interpersonal networks, and it is difficult for them to participate in the process of formulating various policies for economic and social development. Therefore, in the process of providing services to the elderly who have lost their only child, we should focus on intervening in their plight from multiple aspects. In the "No One" social work project for families with lost only children, the case work method was used to provide psychological counseling for families with lost only children, helping the elderly who have lost only children to get rid of their mental difficulties, relieve their pain, and get rid of the pain of losing their children as soon as possible. In the process of service, we focus on tapping the potential of the elderly who have lost only children, allowing them to see their own abilities and advantages and believe that they have the ability to get rid of their difficulties. Then help them restore their social functions, enhance their sense of self-efficacy, and improve their quality of life. The group of people who have lost only one child is a group with strong homogeneity. They have common experiences and similar emotional experiences, which makes it easy for them to have emotional resonance and form group cohesion. Therefore, we used group work methods to influence the attitudes and behaviors of the elderly who lost their only child through group processes and group dynamics, improve their interpersonal relationships, and build an empowering social support network. We also used community social work methods to tap community resources, cultivate community leaders, and let the elderly who lost their only child become the planners and implementers of activities,

strengthen the connection between the groups that lost their only child, and enhance their sense of self-efficacy.

3.4 The Final Stage of the Project

At the end of the project, the application of empowerment theory mainly reflects the evaluation management of the project. For social work projects, project evaluation is to systematically investigate the performance of social intervention projects aimed at improving social environment and conditions by using social research procedures under a certain political and organizational environment. Project evaluation needs to use scientific concepts and techniques in order to achieve improvement of the project and reduce social problems through understanding of social behavior. Therefore, the project evaluation of the "Not Come Singly but in Pairs" social work project for lost single families should focus on the following factors: First, focus on the improvement of the social environment, evaluate whether social resources are equal, whether the oppressive environment has changed, and the degree of social awareness of this group. Second, focus on the improvement of the self-efficacy of the service recipients, whether the service recipients' abilities have been improved, whether the potential for self-change has been tapped, and whether social resources can be used. Third, focus on internal evaluation, including self-evaluation by social workers or service agencies, fully empower social workers and agencies, and participate in the evaluation of social work projects.

4. Conclusion

Analyzing the process of social work project management based on empowerment theory is conducive to enriching the relevant content of project management and accumulating experience for practical development. However, this article lacks a specific and clear analysis of the project implementation process and provides insufficient case materials, which is an area that needs to be further improved in future research.

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