



Study on the Capacity Assessment and Optimization Path of Social Organizations in Assisting Rural Revitalization

Yupu Li¹, Yu Wang²

¹ Humanities and Social Sciences College, Inner Mongolia Agricultural University, Hohhot, China.

² Humanities and Social Sciences College, Inner Mongolia Agricultural University, Hohhot, China.

Email: liyupu0204@163.com, 634773973@qq.com

Abstract: Participation in rural revitalization is a crucial responsibility for social organizations. It not only demonstrates their commitment to serving the country, society, the public, and the industry but is also a vital avenue for achieving high-quality development. To assess the ability of social organizations to contribute to rural revitalization, we constructed an evaluation index system. We employed the TOPSIS evaluation and barrier degree model to evaluate the ability of Chinese social organizations, private non-enterprises, and foundations to participate in rural revitalization in our research area. Our results indicate that the overall ability of social organizations to participate in rural revitalization is at a medium-low level, and three major obstacles exist in the areas of organizational construction, basic guarantee, and project participation. Therefore, we should focus on improving the organizational construction capacity by strengthening the "internal strength of the organization" and cultivate the basic guarantee capacity by paying attention to "own finance." We should also enhance the participation capacity of rural revitalization projects by setting "participation targets" and relying on the "internal strength of the organization." We propose optimization paths from various perspectives, including practicing "internal strength of the organization" and actively improving the capacity of organization construction, paying attention to "own finance" and continuously cultivating the capacity of basic guarantee, focusing on "participation targets" and effectively strengthening the capacity of participation in rural revitalization projects, relying on "digital empowerment" and enhancing the professional service capacity of social organizations, integrating "rural demands" and improving the policy coordination capacity of social organizations.

Keywords: social organizations, rural revitalization, capacity assessment.

1. Introduction

General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out in the report of the 20th Party Congress that "the most arduous and heavy task of comprehensively building a socialist modern country lies in the rural areas", and to this end, "we should promote industrial, talent, cultural, ecological and organizational revitalization in a scientific and orderly manner".^[1]The Ministry of Civil Affairs and the National Rural Revitalization Bureau issued a notice on mobilizing and guiding social organizations to participate in rural revitalization work, which requires: guiding and mobilizing social organizations to actively participate in rural revitalization work.^[2]As independent actors with high social attributes, social organizations play the roles of resource allocation, value leading and capacity building in undertaking the functions of rural revitalization policies.^[3]To objectively and accurately assess the ability of social organizations to help rural revitalization, identify the key factors that restrict their ability to participate in rural revitalization, and propose systematic optimization paths for actively enhancing the ability of organization construction, continuously cultivating the ability of basic guarantee^[4], effectively strengthening the ability of rural revitalization project participation, enhancing the ability of professional services of social organizations, and optimizing the ability of policy coordination of social organizations, to help rural good governance.^[5]

2. Assessment of social organizations' ability to participate in rural revitalization

2.1 Literature Review

Social organization assessment is a topic that has received attention from academia and management departments at all

[Received 21 Mar 2023; Accepted 04 May 2023; Published (online) 30 June 2023]



Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)

levels. The Ministry of Civil Affairs has established a four-level assessment index system for national public welfare associations, joint associations, professional associations, and academic associations. The annual "standardized construction assessment" of social organizations conducted by the Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Associations contains 102 indicators, which cover all levels of organization operation, management and development. These assessment index systems cover a wide range of areas and have certain practical guidance, but most of them are aimed at the overall assessment of social organizations and do not take the capacity assessment as the fundamental purpose of the assessment;^[6]At the same time, since the assessment subject is the government, the index design reflects more of the government's normative requirements.^[7]Scholars have researched social organization assessment, and Professor Deng Guosheng (2004) of Tsinghua University proposed the "APC" assessment theory of social organizations, which builds an assessment framework from three dimensions: accountability, performance and capacity.^[8] The APC theory was initially used to guide the construction of the index system, and in the process of development, it gradually became the standard for measuring the evaluation of social organizations.^[9] Wu Di and Deng Guosheng (2017) constructed a model of capacity elements of social organizations of science and technology societies based on the APC theory, and assessed the capacity of social organizations of science and technology societies in three dimensions: basic guarantee capacity, organizational management capacity and core business capacity; Sabet and Khaksar constructed the capacity structure of social organizations of science and technology societies in three dimensions: function, boundary and time sequence,^[10] Cooke and Kothari built a "dynamic spiral" model for the capacity structure of science and technology society-based social organizations in three dimensions: function, boundary and time sequence.^[11] Some scholars have also introduced the CORPS model to evaluate social organizations in five dimensions: clientele, operations, resources, participants, and services created or provided.^[12]

Based on the above-mentioned studies,^[13] this study evaluates the ability of social organizations to participate in rural revitalization based on the APC theory and dynamic spiral model^[14] · ^[15]and constructs an evaluation index system consisting of three primary indicators, 10 secondary indicators and 48 tertiary indicators, including basic guarantee ability, organizational management ability and core participation ability. The core participation ability includes the ability to participate in rural revitalization projects, the ability to obtain resources, the ability to learn, and the ability to innovate services.

2.2 Analysis of assessment results

The combination of hierarchical analysis and entropy weight setting method is used to determine the weight of social organizations' participation in rural revitalization capacity assessment indexes, and TOPSIS evaluation method is used to comprehensively assess the level of social organizations' participation in rural revitalization capacity. ^[16]The data comes from the Questionnaire on the Ability of Social Organizations to Assist Rural Revitalization. Based on the above-mentioned index system for assessing the ability of social organizations to participate in rural revitalization, the questionnaire was further refined to obtain the Questionnaire on the Ability of Social Organizations to Participate in Rural Revitalization, which covered three types of social organizations, with a total of 1261 questionnaires collected and an effective rate of 84%, with social organizations and private non-enterprise units accounting for 49% and 42%, and foundations accounted for 9%, and the distribution was consistent with the general proportion of social organization types in the Statistical Bulletin of Civil Affairs Development in 2021.

Different types of social organizations differ greatly in terms of scale, function and management, resulting in a large difference in the ability of different types of social organizations to contribute to rural revitalization. ^[17]Therefore, this study conducts a comprehensive assessment of the ability of three types of social organizations, namely, social groups, private non-enterprise units and foundations, to contribute to rural revitalization respectively. Based on the results of the comprehensive assessment of 520 social organizations' ability to participate in rural revitalization, the ability of 520 social organizations to participate in rural revitalization was classified into three levels through K-means clustering,^[18] among which 138 (26.5%) were in the range of medium participation ability and the remaining 382 (73.5%) were in the

range of low participation ability. Similarly, it can be calculated that 147 (32.9%) of the 447 private non-enterprises are in the medium participation capacity range, and 300 (67.1%) are in the low participation capacity range. Of the 89 foundations studied, 32 (36.0%) were in the medium participation capacity range, and the remaining 57 (64.0%) were in the low participation capacity range. This indicates that the overall ability of social organizations, private non-enterprises and foundations to participate in rural revitalization in China is at a low to medium level, and effective measures need to be taken to continuously improve the ability of social organizations to participate in rural revitalization.

3. Analysis of obstructive factors for social organizations to participate in rural revitalization to influence capacity enhancement

Through a comprehensive TOPSIS assessment of the capacity of different types of social organizations in China to participate in rural revitalization, it is found that the capacity of various types of social organizations in China to participate in rural revitalization is still at a low to medium level on the whole. Therefore, a barrier degree model of social organizations' ability to participate in rural revitalization is constructed to identify the main barrier factors affecting the ability of social organizations in China to participate in rural revitalization,^[19] and then adopt targeted countermeasures to effectively improve the ability level of social organizations to participate in rural revitalization.^[20]

As we can see from the first-level indicators of obstacles to social organizations' participation in rural revitalization, "organizational management ability" and "basic guarantee ability" are in the top two positions respectively, which indicates that social organizations need to improve their own internal organizational management ability first, and at the same time This indicates that social organizations need to improve their internal organizational management ability, and at the same time, invest more in physical resources such as human, material and financial resources to continuously improve their basic security ability in order to most effectively improve their ability to participate in rural revitalization construction.^[21] From the obstacles of the secondary indicators, we can find that the three indicators of "organizational construction ability", "financial status" and "ability to participate in rural revitalization projects" rank in the top three respectively, which indicates that social organizations can effectively improve their ability to participate in rural revitalization. This indicates that social organizations need to focus their efforts on these three aspects to effectively improve their participation ability in rural revitalization. In terms of the barrier degree of the three-level indicators, "total asset size" has the highest barrier degree, while "activities carried out by party members", "party organization 'should be built as much as possible'", and "party organization 'should be built as much as possible'" rank highest. ' and "implementation of organizational life system" ranked 2nd to 4th respectively, indicating that for social organizations, the main obstacle factor for their ability to participate in rural revitalization is the low size and income level of the organization, and the failure to give full play to the political leadership role of social organizations. This indicates that the main obstacle for social organizations to improve their ability to participate in rural revitalization is their low scale and income level, and that they have failed to give full play to the political leading role of social organizations' party organizations, and have failed to fully realize the deep integration, mutual promotion and orderly participation of social organizations' party construction and rural revitalization.

Index	Barrier degree	Percent age
Total Assets	67.52	12.98%
Party members carrying out activities	62.88	12.09%
Party organization "should be built as much as possible" situation	52.40	10.08%
Implementation of organizational life system	50.60	9.73%
Revenue Scale	21.54	4.14%
Total number of beneficiaries participating in rural revitalization projects within one year	19.23	3.70%
Number of volunteers / Total number of organizations	15.95	3.07%

Whether the supervision system, supervisory system, renewal audit and exit audit are perfect	14.58	2.80%
The Ministry of Civil Affairs and provincial and municipal civil affairs bureaus standardized assessment results	13.52	2.60%
Number of social donations	12.35	2.38%
Number of inter-organizational learning exchanges	11.26	2.17%
Whether there is a fixed office space	10.65	2.05%
Amount of external donations	10.62	2.04%
Number of rationalized suggestions related to rural revitalization reflected to the government or society (e.g. media) each year	10.06	1.93%
Total annual revenue / Total annual expenses	8.96	1.72%
Number of party members	8.64	1.66%
Number of people served by the project/number of projects	8.20	1.58%
Number of government purchased services for rural revitalization	7.98	1.53%
Website, Weibo, WeChat, Jitterbug and other information platforms for information dissemination	7.74	1.49%
Percentage of employees with professional titles	7.64	1.47%

Table 1: Barriers to social organizations' participation in rural revitalization (The first 20 items of three-level indicators)

4. Policy Suggestions for Promoting Social Organizations' Participation in Rural Revitalization

Based on the empirical analysis of the assessment of social organizations' ability to participate in rural revitalization, it is recommended to make full use of the policy and environmental advantages of rural revitalization, combine the actual needs of rural revitalization, actively explore new paths in terms of actively enhancing the ability of organization construction, [22]continuously cultivating the ability of basic guarantee, effectively strengthening the ability of rural revitalization project participation, enhancing the ability of professional services of social organizations, and optimizing the ability of policy synergy of social organizations, to promote social organizations to effectively participate in the task of rural revitalization strategy.[23]

4.1 Practice "internal organizational skills" and actively improve organizational building capabilities

The ability of organization construction has become the primary factor that hinders the ability of China's social organizations to participate in rural revitalization. This shows once again that the ability of social organizations should be extended from the inside out, and social organizations, first of all,

need to realize effective management of the organization through organization construction, system construction, financial supervision and information construction, and practice "internal strength".[24]To achieve their vision and goals, and to undertake the policy function of rural revitalization effectively. Party organization construction can be an important "grasp" for social organizations in China to participate in rural revitalization, and realize the deep integration and mutual promotion between party construction and rural revitalization of social organizations. In addition, "integrity of management system" and "information construction" can also be important paths for social organizations in China to strengthen their organizational construction capacity.

4.2 Focus on "own finance" and continue to cultivate basic security capabilities

The financial status indicator is the second obstacle factor to the enhancement of the ability of various social organizations to participate in rural revitalization in China. The financial status directly reflects the resource allocation efficiency of social organizations, and a healthy financial status helps social organizations participate in rural revitalization more effectively. Social organizations are non-profit in nature, but their business development and the realization of their purposes and missions depend on good financial status, and only through diversification of funding sources can they achieve operational independence. Therefore, social organizations need to pay attention to their

financial status, develop the "quasi-public fund" system of private financing in China, [25] continuously improve the basic guarantee ability of social organizations, and promote the improvement of social organizations' ability to participate in rural revitalization.

4.3 Bite down on the "participation target" and effectively strengthen the participation capacity of rural revitalization projects

The ability to participate in rural revitalization projects is the third obstacle factor for social organizations in China to improve their ability to participate in rural revitalization, and the obstacle degree of three indicators, namely, "the number of people serving in projects", "participation in projects together with other social organizations" and "participation in rationalized suggestions for rural revitalization", is significantly higher than the average. This indicates that social organizations in China need to focus on these three aspects to effectively improve their ability to participate in rural revitalization, i.e., actively reflecting rational suggestions related to rural revitalization to the government or media, expanding the number of audiences of rural revitalization projects, and strengthening cooperation with other social organizations to participate in rural revitalization projects. We should also strengthen cooperation with other social organizations to participate in rural revitalization projects.

4.4 Rely on "digital empowerment" to enhance the professional service capacity of social organizations

Social organizations need digital technical support to participate in rural revitalization. The Opinions on Implementing "Science and Technology to Assist Rural Revitalization Action" issued by the National Rural Revitalization Bureau point out: insist on technology empowerment, deepen the support of both wisdom and will, and serve to consolidate and expand the results of poverty eradication and rural development, rural construction and rural governance. The Blue Book of Social Organizations: Report on Chinese Social Organizations (2022) requires that during the 14th Five-Year Plan period, social forces should be encouraged to innovate the mode of public service supply and enhance the effectiveness of public product supply through data empowerment. Using digital technologies such as big data, Internet, blockchain, artificial intelligence and cloud computing to promote the effectiveness of professional services of social organizations, exchange information on the needs and projects of rural revitalization, share professional service knowledge and skills, acquire new knowledge, new thinking and new channels on rural revitalization, and promote agricultural and rural modernization with information technology.

4.5 Integrate "Village Demand", to enhance the policy synergy of social organizations

The ability of social organizations to play a synergetic role in rural revitalization policies requires absorbing, integrating and regulating diversified interests in rural revitalization, including the ability of policy absorption and policy transmission. Social organizations actively exert their service effectiveness and form an interest integration mechanism. By combining the functions of providing policy consultation for the public sector from the bottom to the top and publicizing and popularizing from the top to the bottom, social organizations can, on the one hand, sharply capture the current social situation and pain points of the public, form an information absorption mechanism, and focus on reflecting the wishes of the public in the process of rural revitalization policy formulation, to meet the needs of people's livelihood; on the other hand On the other hand, it widely collects demands from various fields of rural revitalization, collates feedback information and evaluation suggestions from the public on the implementation of rural revitalization policies, and forms an institutionalized public opinion feedback channel.

Acknowledgments: Project: Inner Mongolia Natural Science Fund "Performance evaluation and application study of social organizations' participation in public service provision in Inner Mongolia, 2021MS07021".

About the Authors: Yupu Li, master student of Humanities and Social Sciences College at Inner Mongolia Agricultural University. Yu Wang (corresponding author), associate professor of Humanities and Social Sciences College at Inner Mongolia Agricultural University.

REFERENCES

- [1] Xi Jinping. Hold high the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics and unite the struggle for the comprehensive construction of a modern socialist country [N]. People's Daily, 2022-10-26(001).
- [2] Interpretation of the Notice of the Ministry of Civil Affairs National Rural Revitalization Bureau on Mobilizing and Guiding Social Organizations to Participate in Rural Revitalization Work [N]. China Social News, 2022-03-09(001).
- [3] J. J. D. Fox and Change, "Democratic rural development: leadership accountability in regional peasant organizations," vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 1-36, 1992.
- [4] D. C. J. P. a. r. Korten, "Community organization and rural development: A learning process approach," pp. 480-511, 1980.
- [5] A. J. C. d. j. Cornwall, "Unpacking 'Participation': models, meanings and practices," vol. 43, no. 3, pp. 269-283, 2008.
- [6] M. C. J. C. D. J. Torri, "Community gender entrepreneurship and self-help groups: a way forward to foster social capital and truly effective forms of participation among rural poor women?," vol. 47, no. 1, pp. 58-76, 2012.
- [7] J. J. C. d. j. Morrissey, "Indicators of citizen participation: lessons from learning teams in rural EZ/EC communities," vol. 35, no. 1, pp. 59-74, 2000.
- [8] G. J. A. S. R. Deng, "The influence of elite philanthropy on NGO development in China," vol. 39, no. 4, pp. 554-570, 2015.
- [9] P. J. S. r. Pugliese, "Organic farming and sustainable rural development: A multifaceted and promising convergence," vol. 41, no. 1, pp. 112-130, 2001.
- [10] N. S. Sabet and S. J. T. S. S. J. Khaksar, "The performance of local government, social capital and participation of villagers in sustainable rural development," pp. 1-29, 2020.
- [11] B. Cooke and U. Kothari, *Participation: The new tyranny?* Zed books, 2001.
- [12] J. Yang, L. Yang, and H. J. L. Ma, "Community participation strategy for sustainable urban regeneration in Xiamen, China," vol. 11, no. 5, p. 600, 2022.
- [13] C. J. T. m. Tosun, "Limits to community participation in the tourism development process in developing countries," vol. 21, no. 6, pp. 613-633, 2000.
- [14] K. Onitsuka and S. J. J. o. R. S. Hoshino, "Inter-community networks of rural leaders and key people: Case study on a rural revitalization program in Kyoto Prefecture, Japan," vol. 61, pp. 123-136, 2018.
- [15] J. L. Flora, G. P. Green, E. A. Gale, F. E. Schmidt, and C. B. J. P. S. J. Flora, "Self-Development: A Viable Rural Development Option?," vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 276-288, 1992.
- [16] J. Shen and R.-J. J. L. Chou, "Cultural landscape development integrated with rural revitalization: A case study of Songkou ancient town," vol. 10, no. 4, p. 406, 2021.
- [17] P. Sun *et al.*, "How does spatial governance drive rural development in China's farming areas?," vol. 109, p. 102320, 2021.
- [18] G. P. Green, *Handbook of rural development*. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013.
- [19] S. M. Aigner, C. B. Flora, S. N. Tirmizi, and C. J. C. D. J. Wilcox, "Dynamics to sustain community development in persistently poor rural areas," vol. 34, no. 1, pp. 13-27, 1999.
- [20] J. Gao and B. J. T. m. Wu, "Revitalizing traditional villages through rural tourism: A case study of Yuanjia Village, Shaanxi Province, China," vol. 63, pp. 223-233, 2017.
- [21] B. Wu and L. J. L. U. P. Liu, "Social capital for rural revitalization in China: A critical evaluation on the government's new countryside programme in Chengdu," vol. 91, p. 104268, 2020.
- [22] M. Rashid, I. Ngah, and S. Misnan, "Revitalizing rural areas in Malaysia: A framework for economic revitalization," in *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, 2019, vol. 385, no. 1, p. 012004: IOP Publishing.

[23] B. A. J. R. o. P. R. Cigler, "PRE-CONDITIONS FOR THE EMERGENCE OF MULTICOMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE ORGANIZATIONS 1," vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 86-102, 1999.

[24] T. J. T. C. Q. Saich, "Negotiating the state: The development of social organizations in China," vol. 161, pp. 124-141, 2000.

[25] J. J. H. o. Coleman, "Relational analysis: The study of social organizations with survey methods," vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 28-36, 1958.