

# A Study on the Impact of Charitable Organization Capacity on Community Governance Performance: Based on the Perspective of Social Capital

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**Abstracts:** In the context of deepening the grassroots governance system in the new era, charitable organizations, as an important complementary force of the social governance system, have gradually become the focus of research on their functions and paths in community governance. Based on the social capital theory, this paper explores the influence mechanism of charitable organizations' resource integration, social mobilization, and information transfer capacity on community governance performance. The study finds that: (1) the capacity of charitable organizations significantly improves the performance of community governance; (2) social capital has a partially intermediary role; and (3) there is an operable interactive mechanism between the three.

**Keywords:** Charitable organizational capacity; Social capital; Community governance performance; Structural equation modeling

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## 1. Background and significance of the study

As China's social transformation and modernization of national governance advance, community governance is becoming increasingly important. Since the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), policies have continued to emphasize the construction of a pattern of "common governance and sharing", promoting the downward shift of the center of gravity of governance, and explicitly requesting that the role of charitable organizations in grass-roots governance be brought into play. Documents such as the Charity Law provide institutional guarantees for their participation. In this context, how charitable organizations can effectively integrate into the community to improve governance performance has become a key issue. Although existing studies have explored the relationship between charitable organizations and community governance, there is a lack

of systematic research on their mechanism of action, especially through the intermediary path of social capital to influence governance performance.

Based on this, this paper intends to address the following research questions: Does the capacity of charitable organizations significantly affect community governance performance? Does social capital play a mediating role in it? Is the mechanism of the relationship between the three operational?

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1. Study on the capacity of charitable organizations and their role in community governance**

The capacity of a charity organization refers to its systematic effectiveness in achieving its public welfare mission, covering the dimensions of resource integration, strategic management, social mobilization, and information dissemination. Early research was represented by Glickman's five-dimensional model (resources, governance, networks, coordination, projects) <sup>[1]</sup>. Domestic studies mainly focus on three aspects: resource integration capacity emphasizes strategic management and resource mobilization, which is regarded as the key to coping with the dependence on government resources <sup>[2]</sup>. Social mobilization capacity activates community participation through volunteer services and public incentives, reflecting organizational mobility <sup>[2]</sup>. Information dissemination capacity, especially in the digital era, affects the credibility of the public in emergencies and the efficiency of participation in governance <sup>[4]</sup>. In community governance, charitable organizations become key subjects by virtue of their flexibility and professionalism. Western studies have emphasized the synergistic governance through service provision and policy advocacy; domestic studies have paid more attention to the specific paths of their embedding in grassroots governance, such as playing the dual functions of "service supplementation" and "participation activation", enhancing the performance of weak governance structures through cultural embedding, and reflecting the organization-government-residents' participation in community governance. and the "welfare governance triangle model", which embodies the interaction between the organization, the government, and the residents <sup>[5]</sup>.

### **2.2. Research on the role of social capital in the relationship between charitable organizations and community governance**

Social capital theory, proposed by scholars such as Bourdieu, Coleman, and Putnam, emphasizes trust, networks, and norms as important mechanisms of social resources. Coleman argues that social capital facilitates collective action through structural embeddedness and normative constraints <sup>[6]</sup>. Putnam, from the perspective of civic culture, points out that trust and social participation have a governance performance significant enhancing effect <sup>[7]</sup>. Lin Nan, on the other hand, distinguishes between structural and cognitive social capital and argues that social capital is a resource embedded in social relationships <sup>[8]</sup>. Zhang Qilin et al. empirically demonstrated that social capital is a mediating variable embedded in the governance network of charitable organizations, which enhances governance performance through a triple path: trust capital reduces transaction costs; relational networks enhance information symmetry; and institutional norms establish legitimacy of action <sup>[9]</sup>.

To sum up, the current research lacks the systematic modeling of "competence→social capital→governance performance" and needs to verify the specific paths of multidimensional competence. Therefore, this paper will try to construct an analytical framework of "charitable organization capacity — social capital — community governance performance", and systematically explore the role of the three paths and the mechanism of evolution.

### 3. Research design and hypotheses

#### 3.1. The capacity of charitable organizations and community governance performance

By virtue of their resource integration, social mobilization, and information transmission capabilities, charitable organizations have become a key force in enhancing the performance of community governance. The ability of resource integration systematically integrates fragmented resources of multiple actors (government, enterprises, media, individuals) to build a collaborative network, and its professionalism and transparency enhance credibility and facilitate the flow of knowledge, technology and other non-material resources, thus improving the accuracy of services and helping to break the dilemma of “fragmentation”<sup>[10]</sup>. The social mobilization capacity makes use of organizational flexibility to efficiently activate the community participation network, mobilize professional volunteers, and link external resources, and build a multi-dimensional co-management pattern under the leadership of the government<sup>[11]</sup>. Information transfer capacity is particularly important in the digital context, through specialized communication to transform complex governance information into easy-to-understand content, reduce information asymmetry, realize “governance visualization”, promote transparency in community decision-making, and enhance the legitimacy of governance<sup>[12]</sup>. Based on this, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis H1: The resource integration capacity of charitable organizations positively affects community governance performance.

Hypothesis H2: The social mobilization capacity of charitable organizations positively affects community governance performance.

Hypothesis H3: The information transfer capacity of charitable organizations positively affects community governance performance.

#### 3.2. The mediating role of social capital

The resource integration, social mobilization, and information transfer capabilities of charitable organizations indirectly contribute to community governance performance by enhancing community social capital (networks, norms, and trust).

In terms of resource integration capacity, charitable organizations increase the density of community social networks by constructing multifaceted collaborative networks, thus enhancing the efficiency of public services<sup>[13]</sup>. In terms of social mobilization capacity, they use moral advocacy and institutionalized reciprocity mechanisms to activate residents’ participation in collective action, strengthen community reciprocity norms, and reduce governance friction<sup>[11, 14]</sup>. In terms of information transfer capacity, it utilizes digital channels to enhance transparency, correct principal-agent failures, and increase resident trust, which in turn improves governance responsiveness and satisfaction<sup>[15–16]</sup>.

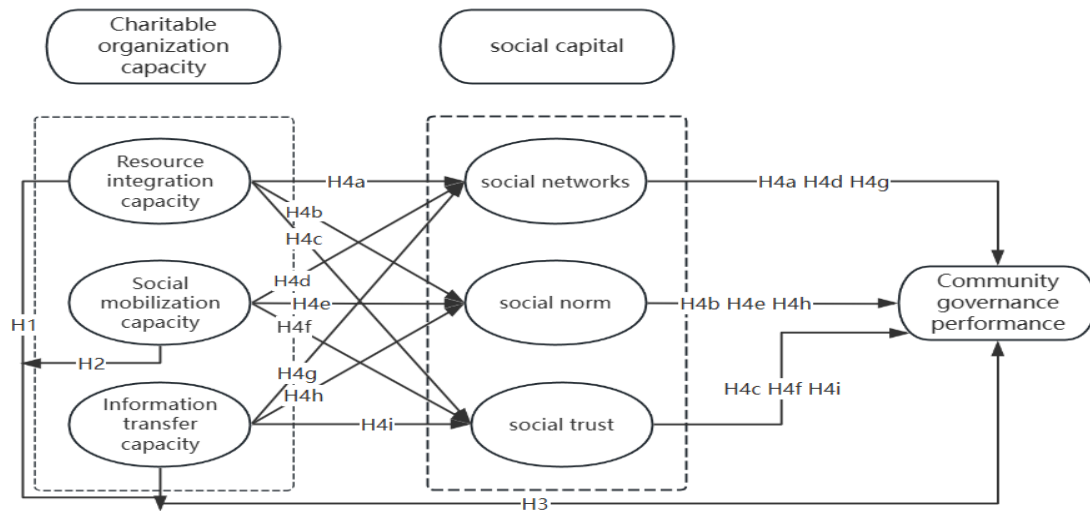
In summary, social capital plays a key mediating role in the process of charitable organizations’ three types of capabilities affecting community governance performance. Based on this, it is proposed:

Hypothesis H4: Social capital plays a mediating role in the influence of charitable organization capacity on community governance performance.

Based on this, its sub-hypothesis is proposed accordingly:

H4a: The resource integration capacity of charitable organizations can enhance community governance performance by expanding the density of social networks. H4b: The resource integration capacity of charitable organizations can enhance community governance performance by strengthening the norms of community reciprocity. H4c: The resource integration capacity of charitable organizations can enhance community governance

performance by strengthening the trust of residents. Subsequent H4d–H4i as above (**Figure 1**).



**Figure 1.** Diagram of the relationship between the research hypotheses

## 4. Results of empirical analysis

### 4.1. Data sources and sample description

This study collects research data through a household questionnaire survey and a centralized questionnaire survey. Eventually, the first pre-survey questionnaire got 30 valid questionnaires, the second pre-survey got 30 valid questionnaires, and the official questionnaire distributed after analyzing the reliability and validity got 418 valid samples.

### 4.2. Structural equation modeling path coefficient analysis

According to the path analysis of the structural model, the results are shown in **Table 1**. From the path relationship between the variables, it is known that according to the significance level  $P$ -value, it is found that at the significance level of 0.05, the resource integration capacity of charitable organizations is  $0.003 < 0.05$ , the social mobilization capacity is  $0.002 < 0.05$  as well as the information transfer capacity is  $P < 0.001 < 0.05$ , all three dimensions have a significant effect on community governance performance, and according to the standard regression coefficient, it is found that The resource integration capacity, social mobilization capacity, and information transmission capacity of charitable organizations are positively correlated with community governance performance.

**Table 1.** Analysis of path coefficients for structural equation modeling

X	→	Y	Standardized regression coefficient	SE	$z$ (CR)	$P$
Resource integration capacity	→	Community governance performance	0.077	0.026	3.016	0.003
Social mobilization capacity	→	Community governance performance	0.100	0.032	3.136	0.002
Information transfer capacity	→	Community governance performance	0.367	0.061	5.971	***

### 4.3. Mediation effects test

From **Table 2**, it can be seen that all three sub-dimensions of social capital, social networks, social norms, and social trust, mediate the effect of charitable organization capacity on community governance performance. In particular, in the information transfer capacity → social norms → community governance capacity path, the mediation effect reaches 0.116, which has the highest mediation effect value among all paths, suggesting that institutional norms play a key role in the transformation of information flow and community performance.

**Table 2.** Summary of the results of the overall mediation test

	c	a	b	a*b	a*b (95% BootCI)	c'	Test conclusion
Philanthropic organization capacity → social capital → community governance performance	1.004**	0.827**	0.754**	0.623	0.489 ~ 0.578	0.380**	Partial Mediation

From **Table 3**, it can be seen that social capital has a partial mediating effect in the impact of charitable organization capacity on community governance performance.

**Table 3.** Summary of test results for sub-hypothesis mediation

	c	a	b	a*b	a*b (95% BootCI)	c'	Test conclusion
Resource integration capacity → social trust → community governance performance	0.197**	0.189**	0.237**	0.045	0.022 ~ 0.068	0.086**	Partial Mediation
Resource integration capacity → social norms → community governance performance	0.197**	0.121**	0.244**	0.030	0.010 ~ 0.053	0.086**	Partial Mediation
Resource integration capacity → social networks → community governance performance	0.197**	0.153**	0.236**	0.036	0.013 ~ 0.058	0.086**	Partial Mediation
Social mobilization capacity → social trust → community governance performance	0.267**	0.255**	0.237**	0.060	0.037 ~ 0.090	0.102**	Partial Mediation
Social mobilization capacity → social norms → community governance performance	0.267**	0.228**	0.244**	0.056	0.030 ~ 0.084	0.102**	Partial Mediation
Social mobilization capacity → social networks → community governance performance	0.267**	0.206**	0.236**	0.049	0.025 ~ 0.076	0.102**	Partial Mediation
Information transfer capacity → social trust → community governance performance	0.537**	0.384**	0.237**	0.091	0.070 ~ 0.121	0.222**	Partial Mediation
Information transfer capacity → social norms → community governance performance	0.537**	0.479**	0.244**	0.117	0.092 ~ 0.153	0.222**	Partial Mediation
Information transfer capacity → social network → community governance performance	0.537**	0.455**	0.236**	0.107	0.080 ~ 0.144	0.222**	Partial Mediation

## 5. Research conclusions

First, the capacity of charitable organizations significantly improves the performance of community governance: the capacity of resource integration alleviates the lack of grassroots resources and introduces multiple resources from the government, enterprises, and the public. The capacity of social mobilization expands the boundaries of participation and enhances the residents' sense of responsibility and awareness. The capacity of information transfer serves as an "information lubricant" and improves governance efficiency in policy interpretation, demand feedback, and risk early warning.

Secondly, social capital plays a partly intermediary role: empirical evidence verifies that there is a partly intermediary effect of social capital in the path of "organizational capacity→governance performance." Thirdly, the triadic interactive relationship: the interactive relationship of "charitable organization capacity-social capital-community governance performance" has empirical support and practical significance.

## Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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