What is the Conceptual Framework of NPO Community Elderly

Care from Stakeholder Perspectives: A Content-Analysis Based Review

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What is the Conceptual Framework of NPO Community Elderly Care from Stakeholder Perspectives: A Content-Analysis Based Review

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Abstract

Purpose: To clarify the distinctive roles and to explore a systematic understanding of the service system of NPO community elderly care, this study seeks to construct a theoretical basis for this industry from the stakeholder perspective.

Methodology: This study adopted the content-based analysis literature review to screen relevant studies to explore insights in formulating the theoretical basis for NPO community elderly care. This study made a synthesis and comparison of the definitions, theory schools, and typologies of stakeholder theory.

Findings: Themes of the development, classifications of stakeholder theory, and the practices of NPO community elderly care from stakeholder perspectives were coded. It was found that Wheeler and Sillanpa (1998)'s stakeholder model, as a theoretical prototype, helps to explain the roles of stakeholders from social dimensions.

Unique contributions to theory, policy and practice: this study contributed to constructing a conceptual framework exclusively for the industry of NPO community elderly care. In this way, it is implicated to lend some theoretical basis for clarifying the distinctive positions of stakeholders for the management of NPO and relevant stakeholders to overcome the challenges during the practice and providing insights for stakeholders (e.g., the government, NPOs) to promote the sustainable development of this industry.

Keywords: *Nonprofit Organizations, Community Elderly Care, Stakeholder Theory, Multi-Subject Participation, Content-Based Analysis Review*

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research background

1.1.1 China's population is aging fast

UNESCO stipulates that a country enters an aging society when 10% or more of its population is over 60 years old or when 7% or more of its population is over 65 years old (Henry & Van de Walle, 1982). According to the National Bureau of Statistics of China (NBSC), the proportion of China's population aged 65 and above was over 7% in 2001, which means that China has entered an aging society since 2001 (NBSC, retrieved on 1/20/2023). Based on the age composition ratio of China's population from NBSC, the author summarized the proportion of its population aged 65 and above as well as the elderly dependency ratio in China after 2010. See Table 1.

Table 1. The proportion of China's population aged 65 and above and the dependency ratio after 2010

Year	Total population (100million)	People aged 65 and above (million)	The proportion of total population (%)	Elderly dependency ratio (%)
2010	13.40	118.94	8.9	11.3
2018	14.05	167.24	11.9	16.8
2019	14.10	177.67	12.6	17.8
2020	14.121	190.64	13.5	19.7
2021	14.126	200.56	14.2	20.8

Source: Compiled by the author according to statistics from NBSC (2022)

It can be seen that the elderly dependency ratio in 2021 has increased by 9.5% from 11.3% in 2010 to 20.8% (NBSC, retrieved on 1/20/2023), and China's population is aging more and more.

1.1.2 Excessive government pressure on elderly care requires NPOs to participate in community elderly care

In China, local governments are the main body responsible for community elderly care services, but with the increasing demand for community elderly care, it will be difficult to continue to be undertaken by government for community elderly care.

On the one hand, the proportion of China's elderly population is constantly rising, a large number of young people are leaving home for development, and the traditional family pension foundation is weakened. However, the government-led establishment or operations of pension institutions has tight resources and cannot meet the growing demand for the elderly.

On the other hand, the material and spiritual needs of the elderly group for elderly care services are expanding rapidly. Such changes have put forward more and higher requirements for the development of social elderly services and the government to deal with the aging crisis (Zhang & Guo, 2021). Since the government cannot meet the growing demand for community elderly care services, the State Council proposed to build a 'home-based, community-based, and institution-supported elderly care service system' in the *Several Opinions of the State Council on Accelerating the Development of the Elderly Care Service Industry (2022)*.

Nonprofit organizations (NPOs) can participate in community elderly care as a potent supplement and reduce the government's pressure (Xu, 2019). Therefore, measures must be taken to enhance the sustainable development of NPO community elderly care with the help of social forces.

1.1.3 Challenges exist in NPO community elderly care

Albeit local governments in China encourage and support the participation of NPO community elderly care through various governmental actions such as formulating policies, there are still many factors affecting the sustainable development of NPO community elderly care.

First, in terms of funding sources, the financial support of NPO community elderly care is subject to the pension policies of local governments tremendously (Wang, 2015). Most NPOs have long been subordinate to government agencies in the execution of affairs and rarely receive policy subsidies or support except for some kinds of funding, such as direct government purchases and commissioned services.

Second, in terms of the evaluation and supervision system, it lacks a set of targeted and complete laws and regulations stipulated by the government regarding the NPO community elderly care services (Xu, 2019).

Third, in terms of public awareness, it lacks a trust basis in the public as the public still has a low understanding of NPO in China. What is worse, some NPOs' unethical conducts jeopardize the reputation of the industry, and further harm the enthusiasm of other NPOs to participate in community elderly care services (Hou & Teng, 2015).

Fourth, there are multiple kinds of internal factors that influence the sustainable development of

NPO community elderly care, such as unclear self-positioning, insufficient workforce, low degree of professionalism, and difficulty in providing differentiated services (Shi, 2018).

Therefore, considering the existing challenges from various stakeholders and based on the government's aim to propel the sustainable development of the industry, it is imperative and significant to probe in the distinctive roles of the multi-subject participation in NPO community elderly care theoretically.

1.2 Some basic concepts

NPO: Salamon and Helmut (1998) proposed the definition of NPO (acronym of nonprofit organization) that as long as an organization is organized, private, nonprofit, self-governing and voluntary, it can be called a nonprofit organization. They believed that NPOs are small in size, flexible and capable of stimulating the vitality of essential workers and, therefore, are ideally suited to fill the gaps caused by the shortcomings of the State (Salamon & Helmut, 1998).

Community: Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines community as a group of people with common characteristics or interests living together within a larger society. To make the concept of community consistent with the actual situations in China, the concept of community adopted in this study refers to the commonplace of people's lives within the management scope of the community neighborhood committees.

Community elderly care: refers to establishing places within the community that provide comprehensive elderly care services, such as life care and daily entertainment activities for the elderly, to alleviate the lack of care from the family and the lack of caregivers during the day (Du, 2016). The community elderly care in this study refers to the community home-based care model. That is, the elderly still live at home and is looked after by their families; at the same time, they also enjoy the elderly care services in the community provided by NPOs, such as free meals in the elderly restaurants, entertainment activities in the NPO premises, and home-based daycare.

Stakeholder: scholars define stakeholders from their own research perspectives, but overall, Freeman (1984) defines stakeholders most classically with the broadest applicability in business and strategic management (Donaldson & Dunfee, 1994). Freeman (1984) defines stakeholders as all individuals and groups who can influence the achievement of an organization's goals or are influenced by its process of achieving its goals.

2 RESEARCH GAP

There is a lack of theoretical basis for understanding different stakeholders in NPO community elderly care. Albeit there is emerging research on e-healthcare system and technology (Jonsson et

al., 2022), community pharmacy service (Yao et al., 2020), self-care in community-dwelling (Lawless et al., 2021), transitional care (O'Hara et al., 2020) and community-care approach for social work practice (Putri et al., 2020) from stakeholder perspectives in developed countries, the NPO community elderly care is still a new area in China, and it still lacks a theoretical basis for guiding the practice (Ji, 2021). There is still a lack of systematic probing in the positioning and functioning of NPOs in this industry as most of the prior research are descriptive to the current problems without explanatory or exploring research (Liu & Wu, 2019). Moreover, current research on community elderly care mainly focuses on the single-participation subject, and there is very rare research on multi-subject participation in NPO community elderly care to analyze their interrelations. Consequently, it brings difficulties in probing strategies to seek solutions to the problems as a whole in NPO community elderly care (Zhang & Mou, 2014).

Therefore, it is imperative and significant to form a theoretical basis for NPO community elderly care from multiple stakeholder perspectives to clarify the distinctive roles and to explore the practical service system of this industry.

3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To clarify the distinctive roles and to explore a systematic understanding of the service system of this industry, this study seeks to construct a theoretical basis for NPO community elderly care from a stakeholder perspective. Based on the research objective, some specific research questions are generated as below:

Research question 1: What is the overall development of stakeholder theory, including its historical development and classification approach?

Research question 2: What is the research status of NPO community elderly care from stakeholder perspectives?

Research question 3: Based on the findings of research questions 1 and 2, what is the conceptual framework of NPO community elderly care from stakeholder perspectives?

4 METHODS

4.1 Study design: Literature review

A literature review is employed based on the objective of this study. Fink (2019) defines a literature review as a systematic, explicit, and reproducible design for identifying, evaluating, and interpreting the existing body of recorded documents (Fink, 2019, p. 3). By synthesizing and refining scattered knowledge regarding all stages of the 'normal research cycle', literature review

helps to map, consolidate knowledge and identify knowledge gaps, thus developing a theory of a certain research area and facilitating subsequent research to build onto this ground (Tranfield et al., 2003).

4.2 Unit of analysis and sampling method

4.2.1 Unit of analysis

The preparation phase starts with the selection of the unit of analysis (Guthrie et al., 2004). Since our research objective is to increase the understanding to gain a more condensed description of NPO community elderly care in China from stakeholder perspectives to construct a tenable theoretical basis for this phenomenon, this study selected 'stakeholder theory' as the manifested unit of analysis. To delimit the research context more precisely, focus will be on 'the development of stakeholder theory,' 'the classification of stakeholder theory,' and 'stakeholder theory in NPO community elderly care' during the screening process.

4.2.2 Sampling method

Articles in relation to the development and the classification of stakeholder theory as well as NPO community elderly care from stakeholder perspectives, have been the object of the literature search.

To identify the most relevant articles, the author adopted the following search criteria:

1. Article databases: ScienceDirect (sciencedirect.com), Mendeley (mendeley.com), and CNKI (cnki.net)

2. Keywords searched: ('stakeholder theory development') OR ('stakeholder classification'), adding ('nonprofit organizations/NPO community elderly care' subsequently.

3. Article types: open access, peer-reviewed articles.

4. Article languages: English in ScienceDirect and Mendeley, Chinese in CNKI

5. Subject areas: business, management and accounting, nursing and health professions.

6. Publication period: Jan 2014 to April 2023.

7. Sources: both original and secondary research were considered. That is, when a reference was available to be sourced or retrieved, it would be adopted to review.

The preliminary screening result through the databases shows in Table 2:

Table 2: Preliminary search of literature from delimited databases

	Stakeholder theory development	Stakeholder classification	Adding 'NPO community elderly care'
ScienceDirect	38 articles	43articles	6 articles
Mendeley	31 articles	46 articles	9 articles
CNKI	50 articles	52 articles	14 articles

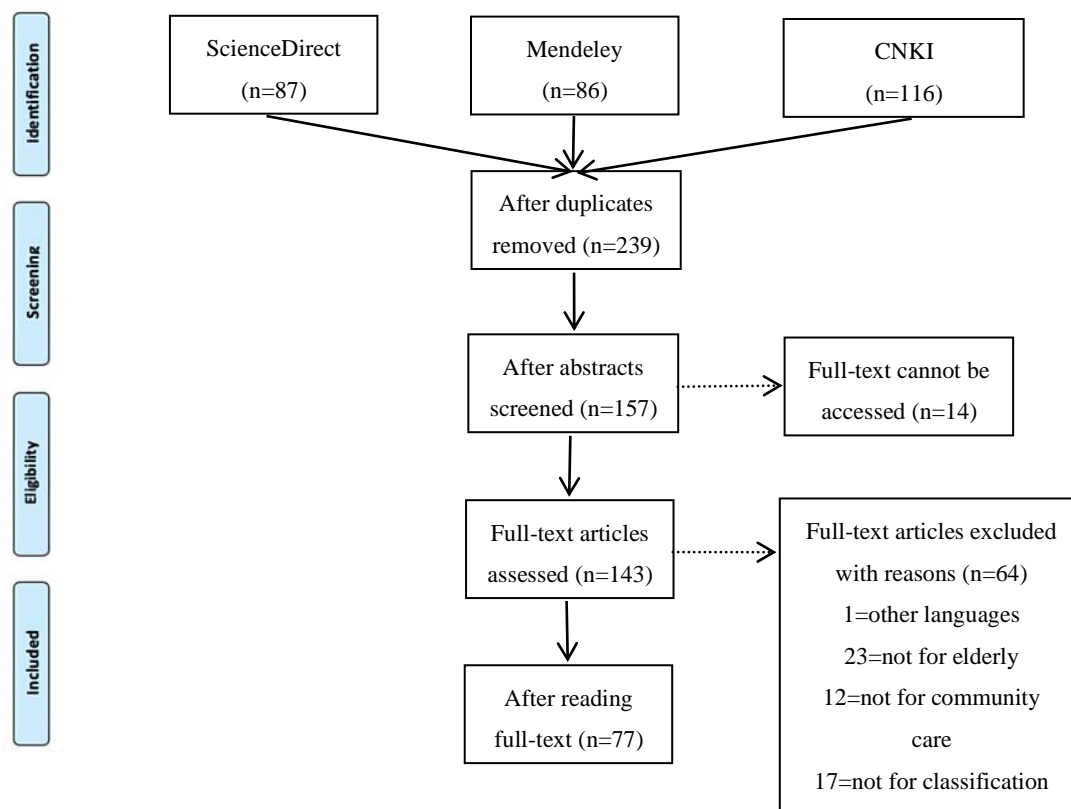The full paper selection process can be shown in the following figure:

Fig 1: PRISMA 2009 Flow Diagram

4.3 Data analysis: inductive content analysis

Content analysis has been used in social science for analyzing various qualitative and unstructured data collected from interviews, published materials, literature review, diaries, or

web-based documents (Seuring & Gold, 2012). The purpose of using content analysis as a research method is to provide new insights, increase the understanding of a specific phenomenon, and gain a broader and more condensed description of the phenomenon (Moldavska & Welo, 2017).

Content analysis is distinguished into two approaches: inductive (qualitative) analysis and deductive analysis (Moretti et al., 2011). The choice of the approach is determined by the main purpose of the study. Inductive content analysis (ICA) is used when there are no previous studies that deal with the phenomenon or when the former knowledge is fragmented, while deductive content analysis is recommended when the purpose of the study is to test a theory (Moldavska & Welo, 2017). The advantage of ICA is that information is gained directly from the data without imposing preconceived theoretical perspectives, and it focuses more on the background, context and thick findings based on the frequency of codes as complementary to theme development (Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019). Abstraction and interpretation are two basic tools for ICA, and abstraction helps transfer constituents to a higher logical level, showing a kind of classification (Moldavska & Welo, 2017).

Since it has been argued by numerous researchers (e.g., Ji, 2021; Liu & Wu, 2019) that there is a lack of theoretical basis for understanding different stakeholders in NPO community elderly care, and most of the former knowledge is focused on single subject participation rather than multi-subject participation of stakeholders in the industry (Zhang & Mou, 2014), it is reasonable to adopt ICA in this study. Moreover, ICA can be both descriptive and interpretative (Lindgren et al., 2020), where trustworthiness is crucial since the categories are created from raw data without a theory-based categorization matrix (Elo et al., 2014).

4.4 Procedure

According to (Mayring, 2014), one may distill four main steps to form the process model of ICA: (1) The data to be analyzed is delimited, and the unit of analysis is defined; (2) Formal characteristics of the data are assessed based on the frequency of the same or similar codes in the transcription, providing background for subsequent descriptive analysis; (3) Structural dimensions are selected to obtain easy-achieved classifications and manifest contents to develop categories; (4) The data is analyzed according to the categories.

5 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

A thorough review of the development of stakeholder theory is conducted, from which some insights into developing the theoretical basis of NPO community elderly care can be facilitated.

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5.1 The development of stakeholder theory

5.1.1 The initial development stage of stakeholder theory (1960s)

The initial idea of stakeholder: was proposed by Dodd from Harvard Law School and Berle from Columbia University Law School during their debate about corporate social responsibility (Pedrini & Ferri, 2019). But, the concept of stakeholder was not defined until 1963 by the Stanford Research Institute, defining stakeholders as the benefit-related groups of organizations without which they cannot survive. These groups include shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers, creditors and relevant communities (Freeman, 1984).

Shareholder first: In the 1960s, the US, the UK and other developed countries pursued the corporate governance ideology of 'shareholder first,' believing that shareholders were the owners of organizations; thus, the operations of organizations must serve the goal of maximizing shareholders' profits. The 'shareholder first' perspective overrides the stakeholder perspective, and it requires managers to make business decisions with the goal of maximizing shareholder benefits, which makes them have to focus on short-term goals and even harm the interests of stakeholders (e.g., employees) and the long-term development of the organization (Fu & Chen, 2007).

5.1.2 The early development stage of stakeholder theory (1970s)

In the 1970s, the turbulent business changes made managers hard to judge which changes needed to cope and which needed to take preventive measures (Freeman, 1984). Such changing environment called for new ideologies to tackle the challenges. Strategic management, systems theory and corporate social responsibility (CSR) were the main research interests in stakeholder theory in this period (Parmar et al., 2010).

Strategic management

Since the 1970s, research on stakeholder had began to appear in numerous strategic management literature. For example, Dill (1975) explored the stakeholder relationships from the perspective of 'influence' and 'responsibility,' arguing that an organization is accountable to its stakeholders and vice versa. Stakeholders can become active participants in strategic decision-making (Dill, 1975). Wharton School opened a stakeholder management course in 1977 to apply the concept of stakeholders to the strategic management of enterprises. Since then, both the academia and the industry have begun recognizing and accepting the stakeholder theory (Eskerod, 2020). Hussey and Langham (1979) developed a model of the organization and its environment with stakeholders to analyze the crucial role of management during the enterprise process

development. Additionally, when conducting the hypothetical strategic study, Mitroff et al. (1979) emphasized that managers should consider all interest groups that could influence or be influenced by key business decisions.

Systems Approach

Based on Ansoff (1965)'s view that contextual variables empower stakeholders to influence an organization's survival, Ackoff (1974) developed a stakeholder analysis approach within the organizational systemic design and argued that the organizational system could not be accomplished without stakeholder participation. He proposed that when solving problems at the level of organizational system design, stakeholder groups should be taken into account of because they are interdependent with each other (Ackoff, 1974).

Corporate social responsibility

Some CSR researchers have also begun to pay attention to the concept of stakeholder, resulting in much CSR literature that takes the stakeholder perspective as the studying point. They analyzed the relationship between minor stakeholder groups and organizations from a stakeholder perspective and emphasized that organizations should consider the interests of minor stakeholder groups such as the public, communities, and part-time employees (Parmar et al., 2010). Dill (1975) denoted that for long, stakeholders were treated only as extraneous factors in strategic planning and management or as legal or social constraints that limit the management's decision-making. Nevertheless, the role of stakeholders has shifted today from extraneous factors to internal factors that involve in decision-making, and some external stakeholders may even seek opportunities to actively participate in management's decision-making (Dill, 1975).

5.1.3 The modern development stage of stakeholder theory (1980s-2010s)

Strategic management further developed by Freeman (1984): who divided the strategic management process into three levels -- rational level, process level, and transactional level. The rational level explains how to identify stakeholders of an organization, analyzes the interests they pursue, and requires managers to be familiar with stakeholders in the evaluation of their roles and interests comprehensively and objectively. The process level is about how to develop stakeholder strategies, how to consider stakeholders' rights and benefits when analyzing the organization's goals and strategies, and how stakeholder behaviors influence the achievement. The transaction level involves interaction, communication and business dealings between organizations and stakeholders. Freeman (1984) pioneered the study of stakeholders from a management perspective as he constructed a theoretical framework for analyzing stakeholders

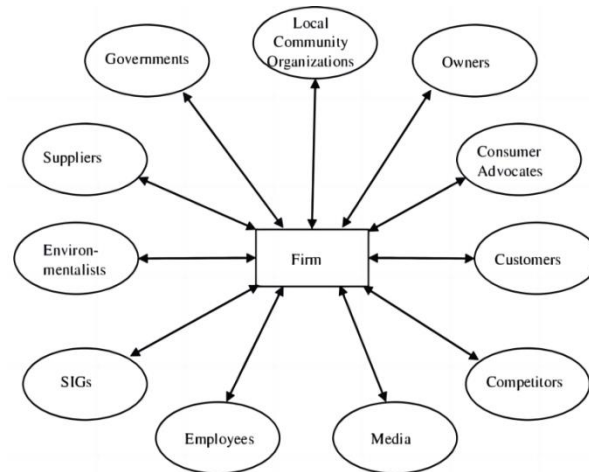www.carijournals.org

systematically. See Figure 2.

Fig 2. Stakeholder view of firm (Freeman, 1984, p. 25)

Although the research outcome did not develop a complete stakeholder theory, it made others realize that shareholders were not the only stakeholders of the organization and that other stakeholders are also crucial to its survival and sustainable development (Parmar et al., 2010).

Corporate governance from stakeholder perspectives: In the 1990s, researchers began to study corporate governance from stakeholder perspectives (Sakawa & Watanabel, 2020). For example, Clarkson (1994) believes that the organization is a socio-economic system composed of stakeholders, and the fundamental goal of corporate governance is to add value to its stakeholders. Hence, it needs to regulate a variety of relationships, such as those between shareholders and managers, major and minor shareholders, and shareholders and other stakeholders. The management should maximize the organization's value while protecting all stakeholders' interests. Williams and Hattton-Yeo (2015) further propose that the essence of an enterprise is the connection of dedicated assets that cannot be replicated by the market, which lays the foundation for stakeholder participation in corporate governance, and the essence of corporate governance is to explore whether stakeholders can share the ownership of enterprises. In addition, Mitchell et al. (2015) developed an interdisciplinary value creation stakeholder accounting (VCSA) based on stakeholder risk sharing, introducing the value creation stakeholder partnerships (VCSPs) as a mechanism for VCSA implementation. This mechanism helps capture the key process of stakeholder value creation through risk assessment, particularly in the field of entrepreneurship.

It can be seen that the research of stakeholder theory has developed from the stage of

'influencing organizational survival' and 'implementing strategic management' to the stage of 'participating in ownership distribution' (Fu & Chen, 2007).

5.2 Stakeholder classification approaches

In the 1980s, researchers gradually realized that simply studying the application of stakeholders in different fields was not enough to study the respective attributes and roles of stakeholders; further classification and sorting of stakeholders were needed on this basis (Miragaia et al., 2016). Representative classification approaches include the multi-dimensional segmentation approach and score-based approach (Wang & Wang, 2021; Wu et al., 2019).

5.2.1 Multi-dimensional segmentation approach

From a multi-dimensional perspective, representative scholars who conduct stakeholder segmentation research include Freeman (1984), Wheeler and Sillanpa (1998) and others. See Table 3:

Table 3. Classification breakdown of stakeholders from the multi-dimensional segmentation approach

Researchers	Classification basis	Type of stakeholders	Scope of stakeholders
Freeman (1984)	Ownership, Economic Dependency, and Social Interests	Stakeholders related to business ownership	Managers, directors and other shareholders who hold shares in the company
		Stakeholders who are economically dependent on the business	All managers, internal service institutions, employees, creditors, consumers, suppliers, competitors, local communities, management agencies, etc., who receive salaries in the company
		Stakeholders who have a relationship with the interests of the	Special groups, government leaders and the media, etc.

		company in society	
Savage et al. (1991)	**Classification basis**: dynamically classified by threat potential and cooperation potential. **Criteria**: (1) Whether key resources are held by the stakeholder; (2) Strength of the stakeholder to the company; its potential actions; (3) Possibly with whom to ally with	Supportive stakeholders *(High cooperation with the company and low threats; the company should adopt a collaborative strategy)*	Boards of directors, managers, employees, parent companies, suppliers, service providers, and nonprofits
		Marginal stakeholders *(Potential interests with the company; should adopt a participatory strategy)*	Consumer interest organizations, public shareholders, trade unions, etc.
		Hybrid stakeholders *(High potential threat and cooperation to the company; should adopt a monitoring strategy)*	Employees in short-supply positions, agents, customers, organizations that provide ancillary products or services, etc.
		Opposition stakeholders *(High threat potential to the company and low cooperation; should adopt a defensive strategy)*	Competitors, trade unions, governments, news media, etc.
Charkham (1992)	Contract relationship	Contractual stakeholders	Shareholders, employees, distributors, suppliers, lenders
		Public stakeholders	Consumers, regulators, government departments, media, local communities, etc.
Clarkson (1994)	Ways to take risks	Voluntary stakeholders	Individuals or groups who actively invest materials, capital, or human

			resources with the company
		Involuntary stakeholders	Individuals or groups who passively bear the risks brought about by business management and decision-making
	Closeness to the business	Primary stakeholders	People who significantly influence the company's survival and development, including shareholders, employees, investors, suppliers, customers, etc.
		Secondary stakeholders	People who indirectly affect or are affected by the operations of the company but do not have direct transactions with the company and thus do not fundamentally affect its survival, such as the media
Starik (1995)	Business operation dynamics	Real stakeholders	Individuals or groups that invest dedicated assets in the company
		Latent stakeholders	Individuals and groups who may or may be affected by the achievement of business goals
Frederick (1998)	The degree of direct connection with	Direct stakeholders	Shareholders, employees, creditors, suppliers, retailers, consumers,

	the interests of the company		competitors, etc.
		Indirect stakeholders	Domestic and foreign governments, social groups, media, the general public and other groups
Wheeler and Sillanpa (1998)	Social dimension and stakeholder closeness	Primary social stakeholders	Individuals or groups directly related to company activities, including customers, investors, employees, local communities, suppliers, other business partners, etc.
		Secondary social stakeholders	Individuals or groups who have indirect associations with the company through social activities, including residential communities, affiliated companies, numerous interest groups, etc.
		Primary non-social stakeholders	Individuals or groups who have a direct influence on the company but do not associate with its internal staff, such as natural environment, human offspring, etc.
		Secondary non-social stakeholders	Individuals or groups who have indirect influence on the company but do not associate with any people, such as environmental organizations, animal protection organizations,

etc.

Source: Compiled by the author

Due to space constraints, only the classification methods of the most representative scholars will be elaborated:

For example, Freeman (1984) classified stakeholders into three dimensions: ownership, economic dependence and social interests, which made people realize that the influence of stakeholders on enterprises can be divided into the levels of economy, politics, society, technology and management with different effects. Therefore, managers should adopt diversified management strategies for various stakeholders (Pedrini & Ferri, 2019).

Based on Clarkson (1994)'s classification method of primary and secondary stakeholders, Wheeler and Sillanpa (1998) classified stakeholders into four categories from social dimensions according to stakeholder closeness to the organization: primary social stakeholders, secondary social stakeholders, primary non-social stakeholders and secondary non-social stakeholders. Here, 'social' stakeholders refer to civil society, business at large and various interest groups (Wheeler & Sillanpa, 1998). See Figure 3:

①PSS

Suppliers,
Business partners,
Investors,   Staff,
Local
communities

②SSS

Government,   residential
community,   trade   union,
media, commentators,
Trade groups, competitors

Organization

Natural
environment,
human offspring

Environmental
organizations,   animal
protection organizations

③PNS

④SNS

PSS: primary social stakeholders   SSS: secondary social stakeholders

PNS: primary non-social stakeholders   SNS: secondary non-social stakeholders

Fig 2: Wheeler and Sillanpa (1998)'s Stakeholder Classification Model

5.2.2 Score-based approach

Mitchell et al. (1997) proposed the Theory of Stakeholder Identification and Salience, and the corresponding new way of defining stakeholder classification is called the Score-based approach. They suggested that according to the organization's specific situation, stakeholders can be scored from the following three attributes: legitimacy, power and urgency. Legitimacy refers to a stakeholder having legal or moral claims to the organization. Power refers to whether a stakeholder has the ability and corresponding means to influence the organization's decision-making. Urgency refers to whether the interest demands of a stakeholder can immediately attract the organization's attention. Mitchell et al. (1997) contend that whether an individual or a group is a stakeholder of the organization depends on whether or not it bears the attributes of legitimacy, power or urgency. As long as one holds one of these characteristics, it can be seen as a stakeholder of the organization.

Mitchell et al. (1997) designed the score-based approach to evaluate the salience of the three attributes mentioned above. That is, when the score is above some threshold value, the stakeholder is regarded to possess the relevant attribute. Based on this logic, stakeholders can be classified into three categories (i.e., seven sub-divided types) (Xie & Hu, 2016). See Figure 4 :
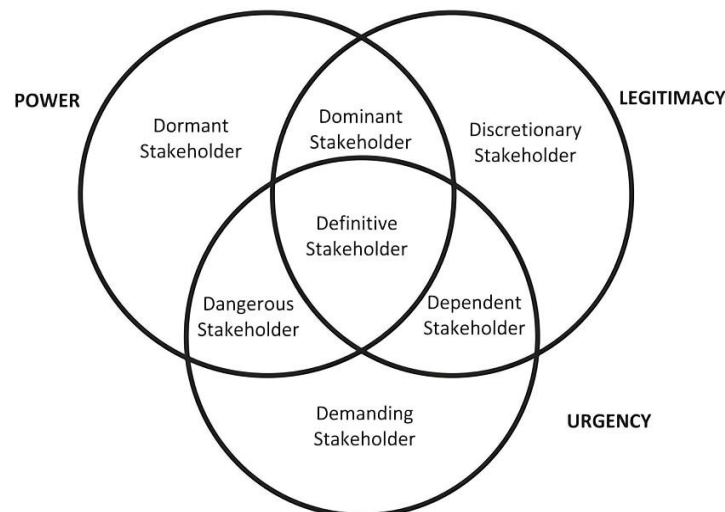

Fig 4. Stakeholders Salience Typologies (Mitchell et al., 1997)

The first type is called latent stakeholders, who possess only one attribute of power, legitimacy, and urgency. Latent stakeholders can be further refined into dormant stakeholders, discretionary stakeholders and demanding stakeholders. (1) Dormant stakeholders may empower their sustainability to the organization but lack legitimacy and urgency, so the power of this type of stakeholders (e.g., dismissed employees) cannot actually function. (2) Discretionary stakeholders possess legitimacy but lack urgency (e.g., CSR researchers) and power to influence the organization. (3) Demanding stakeholders possess urgency but lack legitimacy and power, such that they are troublemakers and tend to distract the management (Kapiriri & Razavi, 2021).

The second type is called expectant stakeholders, who possess two of the three attributes and maintain close ties with the organization. Expectant stakeholders include dominant stakeholders, dependent stakeholders and dangerous stakeholders. (1) Dominant stakeholders possess power and legitimacy; as such, their influence in the organization can be guaranteed by possessing the power of legitimacy. They hold the dominant position in the organization and the management should value their demands. (2) Dependent stakeholders possess legitimacy and urgency but lack power; as such, they have to depend on others to influence the organization. (3) Dangerous stakeholders possess power and urgency but lack legitimacy. This type of stakeholder might be dangerous because they may take violent actions that endanger the organization's interests (Yiapanas & Thrassou, 2022).

The third type is called definitive stakeholders, who possess all three attributes of legitimacy, power and urgency. For sustainable development of the organization, the management must value and meet the interests of definitive stakeholders at any time and explore ways to enhance their satisfaction. Typical stakeholders of this type include shareholders and customers (Rendtorff, 2020).

Managers need to prioritize the requirements of definitive stakeholders with all three attributes, followed by expectant stakeholders, and finally by latent stakeholders with only one attribute (Rendtorff, 2020). However, Mitchell et al. (1997) also purport that the classification is dynamic, as any stakeholder will change from one type to another when obtaining or losing certain attributes. That is, the attributes of stakeholders are dynamic other than static. The responsibility of the management is to analyze and monitor this possible change. Mitchell et al. (1997)'s score-based approach largely improves the operability of stakeholder classification and promotes the application of stakeholder theory in different fields (Xue, 2021).

Based on the above literature review, it can be seen that there is considerable research exploring stakeholder concepts, models and classification methods that facilitate people's understanding of

the complexities of today's business challenges, and the stakeholder theory has become a practical approach that provides insights for the management to understand how value is recognized among different roles of stakeholders (Parmar et al., 2010).

5.3 Review of NPO community elderly care from stakeholder perspectives

The literature search results throughout the recent decade from article titles, keywords and abstracts showed that there was rare research on this area, which implies that the difficulties in probing strategies to seek solutions to the problems in the industry is still pending to address. Nonetheless, some relevant topics studied in prior research may provide insights into NPO community elderly care from stakeholder perspectives, such as the significance, the modes and the limitations of multi-subject participation.

5.3.1 Significance of multi-subject participation in NPO community elderly care

First, multi-subject participation facilitates management's insights into accommodating various stakeholder needs in NPO community elderly care. For example, stakeholder salience among multi-subject participation is found to provide a valuable framework for developing insights into performance constructs in an NPO context through the case study of two NPOs providing intellectual disability services in Ireland (Conaty & Robbins, 2021). Moreover, awareness of stakeholder salience among multi-subject participation assists in understanding performance conflicts and tensions captured in salience asymmetries in relation to different stakeholders' power (Conaty & Robbins, 2021). Stakeholder salience among multi-subject participation can also facilitate identifying hostile stakeholders that might not be easy to detect initially. This happens particularly when powerless or non-focal stakeholders empathize with those who have been maltreated (Ferns et al., 2022; Ramoglou et al., 2023).

Second, multi-subject participation in community elderly care is conducive to enhancing the life quality and social well-being, and lowering the mortality and morbidity of the elderly (WHO, 2019; Thomas & Blanchard, 2009). Specifically, it provides care services to meet the various needs of the elderly, participates in policy stipulation such that the elderly can better express their demands, helps broaden financing channels (e.g., civil capital), and increase employment opportunities for the newly retired who might be reemployed to serve for the NPOs (Jiang, 2020).

Third, the social influences and debates against multiple subjects in NPO community elderly care are conducive to creating more inclusive, impartial and responsive public services in social work and elderly care services (Durose & Richardson, 2015). As such, the collaborative governance formed through multi-subject participation helps to promote the interdependence of multiple

subjects in society (Thomas & Blanchard, 2009).

Above all, multi-subject participation in NPO community elderly care facilitates identifying the distinctive roles and needs of various stakeholders, enhancing the life quality and social well-being of the elderly, and creating more inclusive, impartial and responsive public services.

5.3.2 Exploration of multi-subject participation modes from stakeholder perspectives

Schematic mode of the relationships among multiple subjects: Zhang et al. (2022) conducted interviews with the disabled elderly and their primary caregivers (N=118) in Beijing to explore the suitable kind of healthcare for the disabled elderly and to seek an appropriate elderly care mode to meet their needs. Results suggested that governmental incentives policies, affordable medical care services, rehabilitation training, bespoke daily healthcare and psychological interventions were called for. Zhang et al. (2022) also mapped out the schematic mode of the relationships among multiple subjects involved in the service supply process of home care for the elderly. See Figure 5:
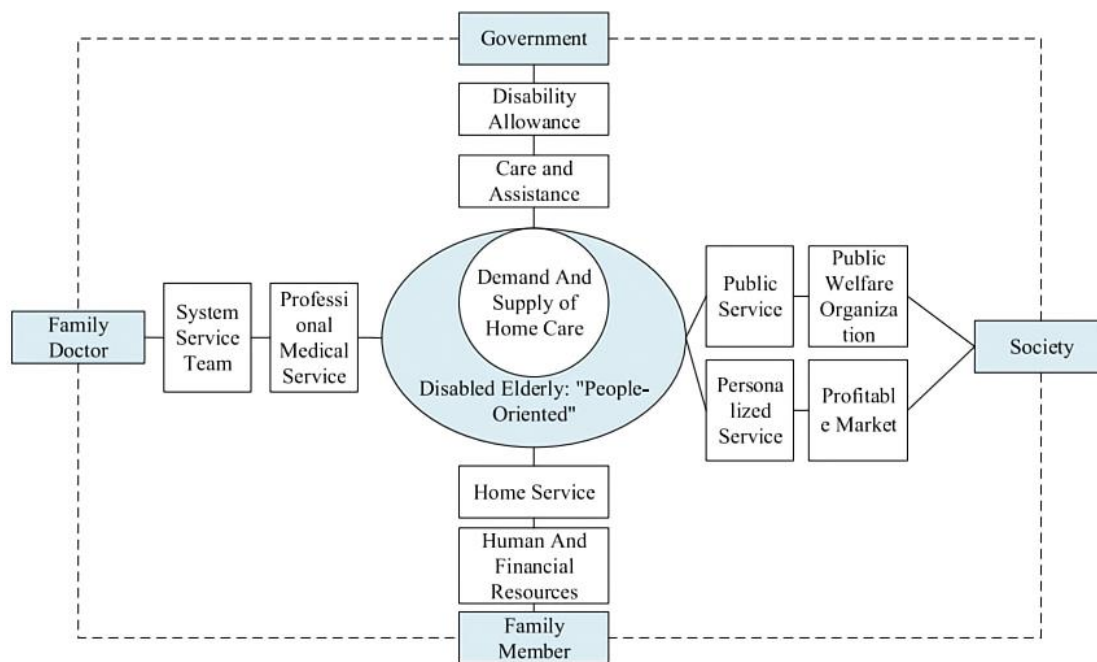

Fig 5. Schematic mode of the relationships among multiple subjects

for elderly home care (Zhang et al., 2022)

Note: the dotted line represents the subjects not having close cooperative relationships

Government Franchise Operation Mode: Davey and Patsios (1999) compared the formal and informal community elderly care services in the UK and the US, and proposed that NPOs may

collaborate with the government to supply community public services. They offered to employ the Government Franchise Operation Mode. That is, the government does not procure goods or services as a taxpayer but franchises the bid-winning NPOs to provide. Based on this, the government pension subsidy system may also be implemented this way (Wang et al., 2021). Specifically, NPOs are franchised to formulate and arrange the operational details of public services, products and projects on 'Elderly and Disabled Aid .' Given that residents should not be charged for these kinds of public services or only charged with a meager cost, the NPOs need to seek external funding sources, and the government makes up for the difference in the form of subsidies (Wang et al., 2021). However, the evidence of the quality of this model is of low quality according to a systematic review by Nijmeijer et al. (2014). Based on this evidence, franchising is predominantly positively associated with client volumes, physical accessibility and some types of healthcare quality, while findings regarding utilization, the elderly loyalty, efficiency and results for providers are mixed. They conclude that franchising can potentially improve outcomes in healthcare practices, but the evidence base is too weak for firm conclusions (Nijmeijer et al., 2014).

Contractual Developmental Mode: In the scoping review of the mode of Australian community elderly care, Henderson and Caplan (2008) argue that the reality of timely and equitable care for all older Australians living in the community was elusive because the multiplicity and rigidity of care services were sometimes unsatisfactory at the point of delivery. However, the ongoing rationing of residential care beds owing to people's desires for home care provides room for contractual developmental modes between the government, NPO and private business organizations for community care services.

Distinguishing the community elderly care and disabled care services: Leahy (2018) analyzed the operational problems of social organizations in terms of elderly disability care in Ireland. The research concluded that the main problem of aging was the challenges in health and suggested that Ireland's community elderly care and elderly disability care services should be strictly distinguished and dealt with by different social organizations. The community elderly care can be executed by NPOs, but the elderly disability care should be undertaken by professional nursing and medical institutions (Leahy, 2018).

5.3.3 Limitations of multi-subject participation in NPO community elderly care

First, due to the economic pressure of life and the excessive report by social media on incidental unethical NPO events (e.g., elderly mistreatment, accounts falsification to swindle support funding), the public in China lacks the spirit of social welfare and volunteerism and is

unenthusiastic to participate in volunteer activities (Ju & Meng, 2021). Nevertheless, some researchers claimed that the participation subjects of community elderly care are not limited to NPOs, volunteers such as college students are also part of it, through which the governmental pressure can be relieved and a better community environment can be cultivated (Russell et al., 2019).

Second, the elderly are considered passive recipients of community elderly care services traditionally, yet they can also be critical active participants (Williams & Hattton-Yeo, 2015). For example, the Wales government encourages the elderly to participate in community elderly care services, and their feedback will be treated as a mirror of the behaviors of local governments. In this way, the service effect of the government can be examined more objectively, and the adaptability and the perception of their life are also enhanced in the course of participation (Williams & Hattton-Yeo, 2015).

Third, NPOs are supervised by a number of regulatory agencies, such that there is a lack of effective communication and collaboration among them in the overall arrangement of the services (Cai, 2017). For example, in terms of the community catering service for the elderly, there are multiple regulatory agencies involving Civil Affairs Department, Food and Drug Administration, Industry and Commerce Bureau and Tax Office. However, when acute problems arise, the Civil Affairs Department, which leads the supervision role, is ineffective in mobilizing and coordinating the resources of others, resulting in harm to the interests of NPOs (Cai, 2017).

Fourth, the government still lacks a complete policy system to protect industry development (Zhang & Guo, 2021). For instance, after comparing the policy status of two communities in Shanghai, it was found that only NPOs could enjoy some preferential treatments from the government, such as site support and utility waiver in given periods, while other non-NPOs that also engage in this area were not eligible to enjoy similar treatments, resulting in their economic loss and even market exit (Zhang & Guo, 2021). To conclude, current policies for NPOs are not supportive enough of their sustainable development; while the policies are inequitable to non-NPOs and harm their motivations and interests to participate in the industry (Xu, 2019).

Fifth, the NPOs in China are not capable of operating the organizations in general. Consequently, it leads to a shortfall of trust basis for the government and the dilemma for NPO community elderly care. Therefore, the appropriate way to overcome such problems is to strengthen the operational capability of NPOs (Lin & Li, 2022).

It can be seen from the above review that current research on community elderly care mostly focuses on single-participation subjects, while there is very scant research analyzing the

interrelations among the multiple subjects from stakeholder perspectives. Consequently, it brings difficulties in probing strategies to seek solutions to the problems as a whole in NPO community elderly care (Zhang & Mou, 2014). Therefore, it is imperative and significant to form a theoretical basis for NPO community elderly care from multiple stakeholder perspectives to clarify the distinctive roles and explore the industry's practical service system.

5.4 Conceptual Framework of NPO community elderly care from stakeholder perspectives

5.4.1 Rationale for choosing Wheeler and Sillanpa's (1998) model as a theoretical prototype

It is necessary for the NPO management to classify stakeholders because different stakeholders are bound to differ in their influence on the NPO community elderly care services. Here, we argue that Wheeler and Sillanpa (1998)'s Stakeholder Classification Model contributes to formulating the theoretical prototype for NPO community elderly care. There are two reasons: (1) They classified stakeholders into four types according to the closeness of interests from the social dimension: primary social stakeholders, secondary social stakeholders, primary non-social stakeholders and secondary non-social stakeholders. Therefore, the model relatively well explains the attribute differences of respective stakeholders and their influences on NPO, which plays more the nonprofit social role than the business profiting role. (2) Other stakeholder models explore stakeholders' economic relevance from the business operations perspective. For example, Freeman (1984)'s stakeholder view model is based on the ownership, economic dependence and social benefits of different stakeholders. Savage et al. (1991)'s is based on the classification of threat potential and cooperation potential for enterprises. Charkham (1992)'s is based on the contractual relationships of enterprises. Clarkson (1994)'s is based on stakeholders' approaches to taking economic risks. Starik (1995)'s is based on the business operation dynamics of enterprises. And, Frederick (1998)'s is based on the interest relevance of stakeholders to enterprises. They all ignored that NPO participants also involve social groups (i.e., the elderly and volunteers) whose social attributes, such as economic status, personal experiences and perceptions of NPO, will all influence the sustainable development of NPO community elderly care. In view of this, it is believed that Wheeler and Sillanpa (1998)'s model best fits in adapting to the conceptual framework of NPO community elderly care.

5.4.2 Conceptual Framework of NPO community elderly care

According to the research objective of this study, the stakeholder groups described in Wheeler and Sillanpa (1998)'s model will be substituted. The stakeholders participating in NPO community elderly care include the government, volunteers, the elderly group, the media and the public. Their positions will be elucidated respectively in the following:

Government: acts as the primary stakeholder that directly influences the sustainable development of NPO community elderly care. It is argued that the government is the funder of NPOs, and the amount and frequency of funding, the approval procedure, and the formulation and issuance of policies are all led by the government, so it is obviously more critical than other stakeholders (Williams & Hattton-Yeo, 2015). In addition, based on the literature synthesis and review, it was identified that a dominant percentage - 13% of the 1,222 reviewed articles touched upon the subject of government-nonprofit relations, especially regarding the policy advocacy or political representation roles of NPO. Even more, 37.8% of the research on nonprofits was sponsored by the government (Zhang & Guo, 2021). This suggests a strong government intervention in research. Therefore, it is reasonable to state that the government takes the role of the primary social stakeholder in NPO community elderly care. Meanwhile, the neighborhood committees, street offices, party committees, and civil affairs are the administrative units affiliated with the Chinese government, so in this study, the author classifies these affiliated units as governmental roles in a unified manner.

Volunteers: are essential for the survival of many NPOs primarily based on their activity in pursuing their institutional mission (Zollo et al., 2019). Bastiaens et al. (2007) point out that volunteers are the primary helpers of NPO operators in community elderly care, and their service quality directly influences the life quality and perception of the elderly group. Moreover, volunteers' commitment to NPO was demonstrated to positively mediate the relationship between management effectiveness and NPO's organizational performance ($p < 0.01$). Volunteers' organizational identity also positively influences their commitment to NPOs, and positively moderates the relationship between management effectiveness and NPO's organizational performance ($p < 0.01$) (Zollo et al., 2019). Considering that volunteers play the moderating and mediating role other than the core determinant role in NPO's organizational performance, this study classifies volunteers as secondary social stakeholders.

The elderly care group: acts as the primary non-social stakeholder because they are the recipient of NPO community elderly care services. It can be seen that the elderly are usually the retired, the disabled, or the widows who have withdrawn or are withdrawing from social construction activities. What is worse, the ageist discourses and the subtext of negativity and devaluing of the elderly will very likely contribute to their feelings of worthlessness, a sense of being burdensome and having no value (Brooke & Jackson, 2020). It can be regarded that they are the vulnerable group or marginalized group in society. Therefore, it is plausible that the elderly care group is classified as the primary non-social stakeholders.

The media and the public: act as the secondary non-social stakeholders. They do not participate in daily NPO community elderly care services, but they indirectly influence the public attitudes and recognition of NPOs, such that it promotes or hinders the sustainable development of the industry. In terms of the media, Namisango et al. (2021) explain how social media drives organization-public collaborative outcomes such as social media-enabled service co-creation in NPOs. The role of social media is enacted in three ways: the action possibilities afforded by the media, the constructed symbolic meaning and values to NPOs, and the privacy preferences of disclosure and interaction as possibilities to minimum constraints (Namisango et al., 2021). In the era of media exposure, the governance design of private-public-nonprofits collaboration is crucial strategically for NPO community elderly care (Lundrigan et al., 2015), during which the social cohesion and the capabilities of stakeholders involved can be enhanced (Cabral et al., 2019). Considering that the value creation and appropriation principally stem from the collaboration process among private-public-nonprofits, it is plausible that the media and the public are classified as secondary non-social stakeholders.

The above review shows that the stakeholders are interrelated with each other with definite roles and functions, complementing each other. Therefore, based on Wheeler and Sillanpa (1998)'s model, this study constructs a conceptual framework of NPO community elderly care from stakeholder perspectives, as shown in Figure 6:
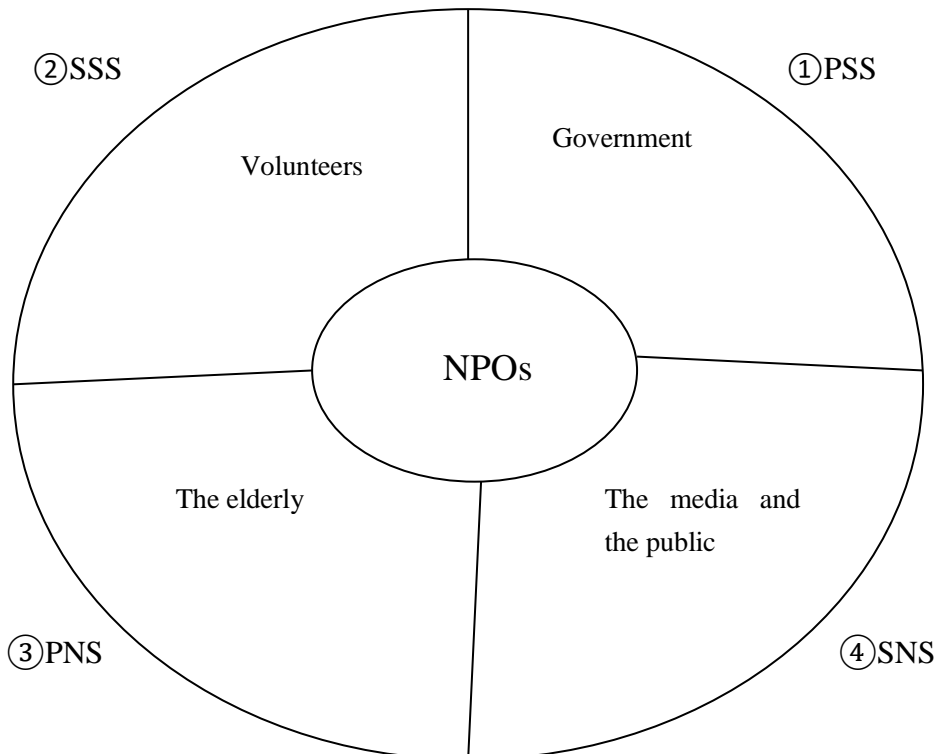
PSS: primary social stakeholders   SSS: secondary social stakeholders

PNS: primary non-social stakeholders   SNS: secondary non-social stakeholders

Fig 6. Conceptual Framework of NPO Community Elderly Care from Stakeholder Perspectives

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Concluding remarks

To figure out the relevant stakeholder typology that might best address our research aim: constructing a theoretical basis for NPO community elderly care, the author first conducted a content-based analysis literature review on the development of stakeholder theory, introducing its different definitions proposed by various leading scholars, probing in the theoretical schools from different theoretical viewing angles (e.g., strategic management, systems approach) throughout its development history, and summarizing the classifications of stakeholder based on different classification perspectives.

Subsequently, this study summarized and analyzed relevant literature on NPO community elderly care from stakeholder perspectives to explore insights in formulating the theoretical basis for the industry in China. Albeit the search result of the literature shows still scant studies in theoretical depth and methodological rigor in this area, some relevant topics provide insights in fulfilling our research aim. These topics include the significance, the modes and the limitations of multi-subject participation in NPO community elderly care. It was realized that the shortfall of previous research, mainly from a single stakeholder perspective, brings difficulties in seeking solutions to the interrelated problems in the industry. This drove the author to further clarify the roles of distinctive stakeholders in the practice of the industry.

Finally, this study adapted Wheeler and Sillanpa (1998)'s stakeholder model and proposed a conceptual framework of NPO community elderly care from multi-participation stakeholder perspectives. The reason for adopting their model is that it focused on the social dimensions of stakeholder interrelatedness, which is deemed appropriate in interpreting stakeholders' positions in the nonprofit sector. In contrast, other researchers principally focused on business and management dimensions. The positions of stakeholders in the conceptual framework were elaborated respectively, which include the government, the elderly, volunteers, as well as the media and the public. Here, the government acts as the primary social stakeholder; volunteers serve as the secondary social stakeholder; the elderly act as the primary non-social stakeholder;

and the media and the public act as the secondary non-social stakeholder.

6.2 Implications and Recommendations

The findings of this study on stakeholder salience and classification lay implications for NPO management in how to manage the needs of stakeholders, and for scholars in how stakeholder theory, particularly stakeholder salience among multi-subject participation can be further explored to understand the relationship between the NPO management and relevant stakeholders.

In theory, the findings of this study offer implications for researchers of NPO community care from a social perspective to recognize the needs and claims of relevant stakeholders based on our conceptual model constructed in abductive thinking. Therefore, it is recommended that researchers and policymakers make use of the conceptual model with other theoretical modes of the relationships among multiple subjects for elderly care (e.g., Zhang et al., 2022) to sketch out a more sustainable development plan for the NPO community elderly care services in China.

In practice, the findings of this study offer implications for NPO management in increasing awareness of the distinctive positioning of stakeholders in NPO community elderly care. For example, the primary social stakeholder - the government is seen 'dominant' by being perceived as powerful in financially supporting the NPO community elderly care services. The primary non-social stakeholders - the elderly group is seen potentially 'demanding' by being perceived as urgent in solving their aging and various elderly care needs. The secondary social stakeholders - volunteers are seen potentially 'discretionary' by perceiving their voluntary needs. And, the secondary non-social stakeholders - the media and the public are seen potentially 'dependent' by being perceived as legitimate, depending on the behaviors of NPOs. Therefore, it is recommended that managers should be aware of such characteristics of different stakeholders to enhance the sustainable development of the industry.

6.3 Limitations and future research

There are limitations to this study. For example, the conceptual framework of NPO community elderly care proposed in this study is based on a content analysis review. Therefore, the analysis is more inductive and formative than deductive and empirical. The importance and interrelations of stakeholders in NPO community elderly care were not empirically tested. As a result, the conceptual framework needs to be further validated by empirical research.

In the future, it is expected to conduct a meta-analysis of the literature review to scrutinize the interconnections between different stakeholders of NPO community elderly care and use statistical tools to verify their relationships empirically. In this way, a more robust theoretical

model of NPO community elderly care may be formed.

STATEMENTS AND DECLARATIONS

Conflicts of Interests: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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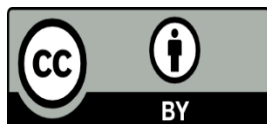
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