

The Value and Mechanism of Industrial Social Work in the Construction of Harmonic Enterprises

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Abstract. Corporate social work is application and practice of social work in the field of business. It can provide specialized service to corporate and its staff. Corporate social work can offer assistance to the employee confronted with obstacle, and can also be potential drive force for corporate development. Corporate social work can help employee in trouble and provide assistant service for staff, and help to the management practice and perfect the corporate system, and can solve very practical problems between corporate and staff, and can promote the identification between corporate and staff, corporate and environment, as well as corporate and society. It is the key to the problem of further development of the corporate and its staff.

Introduction

With the deepening of China's institutional reform, the diversification of enterprises and the exacerbation of labor conflicts, industrial social work becomes necessary and significant. Industrial social work is an important aspect of the implementation of social work, as well as of business management. On the one hand, it provides user friendly services, helps employees to deal with social and interpersonal issues, and enhances workers' ability to self-solve problems. On the other hand, it applies the professional approach of social work to the field of the management of enterprise organizations, improves the production environment and, indirectly, assistant organization to achieve its production goal. For social workers, industrial social work interfaces the complex environment that influences individuals and affect workers through the diverse environmental system. Services provided by industrial social work include counseling service, group service, substantive service plan, and defense service for workers, connection between communities and individuals, coordination of labor relations, construction of business community, management training, and counseling for trade unions.

Challenges

Industrial social work is a much less well-known professional social work practice. Industrial social work plays a significant role in the protection of workers' rights, improvement of employees' benefits, enhancement of enterprises' management efficiency of and many other aspects. Nevertheless, industrial social workers often encounter some difficulties and challenges in implementation.

Ethics Dilemma

In practice, social workers encounter the conflict of values and the ethical dilemma. According to the social work ethics, internationally accepted value of social work includes service, social justice individual dignity and value, importance of interpersonal relationship, integrity and ability; on the professional aspect, it includes the ethical responsibility to service objects, to co-workers, to themselves as professionals, to the social work profession and to the society as a whole (S.B Wang, 2007). Therefore, in the process of assisting service objects to deal with problems, how to take the ethical responsibility to service objects, as well as to the working organization, social work profession and the whole society, is the ethical dilemma that the social workers must face.

Alternative Objectives

In practice, industrial social workers also face a tough choice of working objectives. From the timing perspective, industrial social work objectives can be divided into “mission objectives”, “process objectives”, “immediate objectives” and “ultimate objectives”. In practice, mission objectives and immediate objectives emphasize on the introduction of social workers to solve problems and satisfy needs for service objects. In contrast, process objectives or ultimate objectives promote service objects’ growth and development, enhance their adaptability to the environment, eliminate the factors that prevent their growth and development, increase social resources and alter the environment to better fulfill their needs. Insisting on professional goals or following service objects’ requests, often perplexes professional social workers.

Relations Dilemma

Whether industrial social work should focus on enterprises, or on the employees and community environment where the enterprises located, has also become one of the dilemmas faced by industrial social workers. Industrial social work mode can be broadly categorized into three types: the first one is the factory mode, that enterprise organizations hire professional social workers and establish specific service departments; the second one is the contract mode, that is, enterprises contract with general service agencies and delegate the agencies to provide professional social services; the third one is the union mode, in which the trade unions of the enterprises appoint a full-time social worker (Q.S. Liu, 2008). Diverse working modes imply that it becomes a complex dilemma to choose from various target groups, professional values, and ethical responsibilities.

Paths

With the intensification of economic globalization and the expansion of the modern enterprise groups, industrial social work plays a significant role in the construction of a harmonious enterprise organization, not only at the level of enterprise development, but also at the employee and social environment level. Industrial social work’s application is mainly represented by the use of comprehensive social work practice. Specifically, one could analyze its application at the system and environment level, the organization level and the individual level.

At the System Level, Harmonic Enterprise Organizations are Founded on the Mutual Recognition Among Employees, Enterprises and Social Environments.

The focal point of industrial social work is to promote accordance and mutual recognition of the above three. Economic sociologists believe that enterprise is a result of the dual influences of social division of labor and market transaction costs. In fact, enterprises are not only a technical system, but also a conscious aggregate. Members of the enterprise strive for a common goal. Only when that common goal is achieved, can the specific needs of each individual member be satisfied. The realization of the goal cannot be separated from the accordance and mutual recognition among enterprise, its employees and the social environment objective, that is, the existence and development of modern enterprise organizations are maintained by the sense of identification. Similarly, the existence and development of enterprises are closely related to the macro system and policies.

Thus, industrial social work not only needs to attain the harmony among the enterprise system, the employee sub system and the social system, but also to obtain the consistency of the enterprise system, social mechanism, social policies, social culture and other macro systems.

At the Organization Level, Harmonic Enterprises are based on the Compatibility between Department Sub Systems and Organizational Goal.

Enterprise organizations themselves have many variable factors, such as the organization goal, fundamental structure, available resources, leaders’ abilities, the collection and process of

information, power allocation etc. Changes of an organization's members, such as changes of members' needs, motive, attitude, belief and value system, actually will affect their performance within the organization, and even impact the coordination and cooperation among departments, lending relatively large influence on the design and operation of organization structure. Therefore, industrial social workers adopt social work philosophy, methods and skills to create corporate culture and communication mechanism that are harmonic with enterprises, employees and departments. In this way, enterprise organizations can not only effectively coordinate the relationship between different departments and between employees and enterprise, but also realize the optimization of enterprise's goal and employees' goals.

At the Individual Level, One of the Industrial Social Work Missions is to Concern Enterprise Employees.

Industrial social work is the use of social work theory and method to manage the staff adaption, environment coordination, benefit guarantee and career development inside and outside the enterprise. It aims to enhance enterprise efficiency on the basis of the development of employees' career and benefit (Z. Gao, 2007).

Industrial social work is to uphold the social work philosophy and use professional social work techniques to serve enterprise employees when they have difficulty adapting to the enterprise environment or completing the life-threatening tasks. It can play a role in a great many aspects, from helping employees with problems in their work and life, encouraging their self-growth within the enterprise, to assisting corporates to obtain their goals under the premise of harmonious labor relations, and fulfilling the ultimate harmony between the enterprise and the environment. Specifically, through the implementation of industrial social work, enterprise can continuously enrich the welfare mechanism to satisfy employees' constantly changing and growing needs, especially the psychological needs, optimize organizational commitment and enhance employees' cohesion, improve organization atmosphere and staff morale, and reduce associated administrative costs, such as turnover, absenteeism, and accidental loss.

Conclusion

In China now the focus of social work still mostly remains at the community level, ignoring enterprises where people are more concentrated, problems are more complex and more aspects are involved. The reason that professional industrial social work has not been promoted and carried out, is mainly because in China it encounters several difficulties in the process of implementation, hindering industrial social work to further develop and play its functional role. With the continuous development of China's market economy and the constant enhancement of the level of industrialization, industrial social work will keep evolving and perfecting in practice, and thereby form a set of industrial social work theory and methods with Chinese characteristics. Through the implementation of industrial social work, not only can the enterprise deal with employees' problems, but also provide supporting service for employees' development; not only accelerate the carrying out of enterprise management system, but also effectively complement the system deficiencies; not only fix some practical problems of employees and enterprises, but also promote the mutual recognition between employees and enterprises, between enterprises and the environment, and between enterprises and the society, achieving the long-term development of employees and enterprises. The carrying out of industrial social work has become a significant assurance for enterprises to construct a harmonious organizational mechanism and to promote benign operation and coordinated development.

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