

The resolving mechanism of “the predicament of helping the falling elders”——An experimental study

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, there are many news reports about “the predicament of helping the falling elders”. Many scholars treat this predicament as a social and moral issue. Few scholars explore it in the whole social context. This thesis discusses the influencing factors of the dilemma, including the positive and negative aspects of the news reports, individual sense of security and reward-punishment mechanism. Based on two priming experiments, this paper proves the following hypotheses: (1) the positive news report enhances people’s willingness to help the old; (2) the higher the level of the subject’ sense of security, the greater his willingness to raise the old up; (3) the reward-punishment mechanism also enhances people’s willingness to give a hand. These conclusions show that this predicament is not simply a moral or legal issue, but an outcome of the transaction among the parties involved, macro systems and micro contexts. In addition, this study also found that there are significant differences in people's willingness to help the old between acquaintance society and strangers society. And, social justice has a positive impact on people's tendency to help. Therefore, the news media should bear the social responsibility that guides positive public opinion when pursuing objective news report. At the same time, the state should design the appropriate reward-punishment mechanism to resolve the dilemma.

KEY WORDS: the Dilemma of helping the old up; Priming effect; News report; Sense of security; Reward-punishment mechanism