

Mechanism Deconstruction and Pathway Optimization of Public Cultural Services Empowering Modern Community Governance an Empirical Study Based on Jiangsu Province

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ABSTRACT In the modernization of China's national governance system and governance capacity, community governance faces practical challenges such as insufficient resident participation, a single governance entity, and weak cultural cohesion. This study takes Jiangsu Province, a pioneer in public cultural development, as the research object and applies a mixed methods approach combining questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews. The survey covers 13 cities in Jiangsu Province and obtains 2,864 valid samples, while interviews involve 62 community workers, cultural volunteers, and residents. Based on the theoretical framework of "resource integration-stakeholder collaboration-value shaping," the study systematically examines the internal mechanisms and optimization pathways through which public cultural services empower modern community governance. The findings show that public cultural services affect community governance through three core mechanisms: resource integration, stakeholder collaboration, and value shaping. The survey uses perceived governance quality as the evaluative indicator for community governance outcomes. Survey indicators for public cultural services and governance outcomes show stable associative patterns. Among them, alignment between cultural service supply and demand shows a strong association with governance outcomes, with $r = 0.72$ and $p < 0.01$, while residents' willingness to participate also shows a strong association, with $r = 0.68$ and $p < 0.01$.

INDEX TERMS public cultural services, community governance, empowerment mechanisms, pathway optimization, resident participation

I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

PUBLIC cultural services, as a vital component of the national public service system, embody both "public welfare" and "cultural leadership," enabling them to permeate community governance through flexible approaches, a permeation essential for integrating the rich heritage and contemporary aesthetic values of local crafts into community-based cultural development initiatives: enhancing residents' community identity through community cultural festivals and traditional culture lectures; broadening governance entities by leveraging cultural volunteer teams and social organizations; supplementing governance resources via community cultural stations and reading corners. The 2023 Ministry of Culture and Tourism's "Guiding Opinions on Deepening the Integration of Public Cultural Services with Grassroots Governance" further clarified the supportive role of public cultural services in grassroots

governance [1-3].

As both an economic powerhouse and a cultural hub, Jiangsu Province has pioneered explorations in integrating public cultural services with community governance. This has yielded models such as Suzhou's "Community Cultural Navigators," Nanjing's "Community Cultural Consortium," Wuxi's "Cultural Governance Workshops." However, challenges persist, including developmental imbalances across southern, central, and northern Jiangsu (with cultural facility coverage below 60% in some northern communities), low youth participation rates (only 25% of residents under 35 engage in cultural activities), and a disconnect between service provision and governance needs. The presence of marked internal variations in public cultural service levels and governance conditions among the three subregions provides a natural contrast structure within the province. These variations form a gradient of resource bases and governance capacities that allows the analysis to extract differentiated op-

erational patterns across regions with distinct development foundations. Theoretically, this paper constructs a "Resource Integration - Stakeholder Collaboration - Value Shaping" framework, filling an interdisciplinary research gap between public cultural services and grassroots governance. The framework advances beyond existing governance models by extracting the operational characteristics unique to public cultural services and reorganizing them into an endogenous mechanism chain that reflects the functional logic of cultural resource transformation, actor activation, and value generation. Practically, it provides decision-making references for government departments and operational pathways for grassroots communities to address governance challenges, particularly by demonstrating how shared cultural assets, such as local heritage, can be integrated to foster community cohesion and economic value [4].

B. RESEARCH STATUS

International research focuses on the "social integration" function and "multi-stakeholder collaboration" model of public cultural services. Putnam (2000)'s "social capital" theory posits that public cultural activities foster resident interaction and trust, enhancing governance efficiency. Empirical studies of U.S. community libraries and European community cultural centers support this view. The application of the UK's "PPP model" in community cultural facility operations offers insights for diversified provision. However, foreign research, grounded in Western contexts, insufficiently explores the "governance attributes" of public cultural services [5,6].

Domestic research has advanced rapidly in recent years, covering the role positioning, practical models, and problem-solving strategies of public cultural services in community governance. Scholars propose that public cultural services can function as "bridges," "catalysts," and "binders," summarizing practical models from Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and other locations. They identify issues such as "mismatched supply and demand" and "insufficient governance coordination." However, existing research suffers from fragmented theoretical frameworks, insufficient empirical depth, and weak targeted optimization pathways.

Overall, three major gaps persist in existing research: the intrinsic mechanisms through which public cultural services empower community governance remain unclear; key factors influencing empowerment outcomes have not been identified; optimization pathways for developed regions lack specificity [7].

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK CONSTRUCTION

A. CORE CONCEPTUAL DEFINITIONS

Public cultural services, as defined by the Public Cultural Services Guarantee Law of the People's Republic of China, refer to "public cultural facilities, products, activities, and related services that are government-led and involve social participation to meet citizens' basic cultural needs." This pa-

per focuses on the community level, encompassing cultural facilities, activities, talent services, products, and more [8].

Community governance modernization denotes "the process of aligning community governance systems, capabilities, and philosophies with contemporary requirements, achieving multi-stakeholder participation, scientific methodologies, and high-efficiency outcomes." Its core characteristics include shifting governance actors from singular to plural, governance approaches from administrative directives to integrated strategies, and governance objectives from maintaining order to multidimensional enhancement [9,10].

Empowerment mechanisms, originating from organizational behavior studies, refer to "enhancing the autonomous action capacity of individuals or groups through resource support, capacity building, and rights conferral." In this paper, it specifically denotes the process by which public cultural services elevate community governance modernization through resource integration, stakeholder coordination, and value shaping [11-13].

B. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Public service theory emphasizes "public-demand-oriented, government-society collaborative provision of efficient and equitable services," guiding public cultural service delivery: upholding public welfare, advocating diversified supply, and prioritizing supply-demand alignment.

Grassroots governance theory proposes "Party leadership, multi-stakeholder participation, and rule-of-law safeguards," with core tenets including diversified governance actors, democratized processes, and flexible governance methods [14].

Social capital theory posits that "social trust, norms, and networks are key resources for enhancing societal efficiency," providing logical support for empowering public cultural services: cultural activities foster resident interaction and trust, while disseminating governance norms reduces governance costs. In the context of community cultural activities, repeated participation fosters stable interpersonal encounters that form informal interaction networks grounded in shared experiences. These networks accumulate relational trust and interaction norms that extend beyond recreational settings, allowing participants to shift their role orientation from cultural participants to governance actors. The formation of such trust-based ties provides the psychological foundation for residents to undertake public affairs participation with reduced perceived risks, linking leisure interaction to governance engagement.

C. THREE-DIMENSIONAL EMPOWERMENT FRAMEWORK

Resource integration mechanisms form the "material foundation" of community governance, supplementing resources through the consolidation of facilities, talent, and funding: Facility integration achieves "multipurpose spaces," such as community cultural stations serving both event hosting and resident deliberation functions; Talent integration sup-

plements governance personnel through the deployment of professionals and volunteer recruitment; Funding integration creates a “government + market + society” multi-source funding pool to alleviate financial shortages [15,16]. The three-dimensional framework is derived from a structural reorganization grounded in the intrinsic operational logic of public cultural services rather than a direct continuation of existing collaborative governance models. The framework extracts action elements that are not emphasized in classical collaborative governance theories, shaping a mechanism chain that originates from the distinct institutional attributes of public cultural services.

The stakeholder coordination mechanism serves as the “participation safeguard” for community governance, broadening governance actors by stimulating resident engagement, linking with social organizations, and introducing corporate participation: using cultural activities as entry points to guide resident involvement in public affairs; collaborating with social organizations to tackle governance challenges, such as “culture + environmental protection” initiatives promoting waste sorting; encouraging enterprises to fulfill social responsibilities, like tech companies providing digital cultural platforms to support smart communities. The Value-Shaping Mechanism serves as the “internal driving force” of community governance. It enhances governance cohesion by strengthening community identity, disseminating governance concepts, and cultivating governance culture: organizing community history exhibitions and neighborhood festivals to foster belonging; promoting community covenants through skits and similar formats; nurturing governance cultures like “neighborly mutual aid” and “public responsibility” to elevate residents’ self-governance awareness [17]. The logical relationship among these three elements is as follows: resource integration serves as the foundation, providing material support for stakeholder collaboration and value shaping. Stakeholder collaboration is the core, activating governance vitality through diverse participation. The collaborative dimension in this framework departs from the negotiation-centered interaction pattern in collaborative governance theory by emphasizing a culturally driven mobilization process that arises from the public welfare orientation and service-delivery nature of public cultural institutions. The participation logic reflects a motivation structure shaped by cultural identity rather than institutional negotiation. Value shaping acts as the safeguard, maintaining governance sustainability through cultural identity. Together, they form an “foundation-core-safeguard” empowerment system [18-20]. The value dimension constructs a normative transmission path embedded in public cultural services that differs from the procedural consensus formation in collaborative governance theory. The mechanism highlights a governance-driving effect generated through cultural meaning production, which introduces a non-institutional factor into the governance process and forms a distinct pathway for sustained community cohesion.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

A. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY AREA

Jiangsu Province, located in China’s eastern coastal region, achieved a GDP of 12.74 trillion yuan in 2023, with per capita GDP ranking among the nation’s highest. It leads in public cultural service development: Public cultural facilities achieve full coverage at both county and township levels, with 12,000 community cultural stations and 18,000 rural libraries established. Over 500,000 community cultural events were held in 2023, achieving a 68% resident cultural participation rate [21,22].

Regional disparities reveal that economically advanced southern Jiangsu (Suzhou, Wuxi, Changzhou, etc.) boasts ample public cultural services—e.g., Suzhou assigns an average of two professional cultural instructors per community. Central Jiangsu (Nantong, Yangzhou, etc.) maintains moderate standards with approximately 85% community cultural facility coverage. Northern Jiangsu (Xuzhou, Yancheng, etc.) is relatively underdeveloped, with some rural communities hosting fewer than one cultural event per month, providing a typical sample for studying regional imbalances. Based on the aforementioned regional differences, the interviews simultaneously considered the differences in the endowment of public cultural service resources and the differences in the actual state of community governance, so as to maintain a differentiated structure among the survey subjects in terms of economic foundation, supply of cultural facilities and pace of governance, and to ensure the diversity of the sources of results. The stratified regional characteristics establish an internal comparison frame through which the study observes the distinct interaction patterns between public cultural service supply and governance practices. This frame supports an examination of how the mechanisms identified in developed southern Jiangsu differ in intensity and structural features from those observed in the mid-level and lower-capacity regions inside the province.

B. DATA SOURCES

Survey data covered 13 cities in Jiangsu Province, stratified by economic development level: Southern Jiangsu (5 cities: Nanjing, Suzhou, Wuxi, Changzhou, Zhenjiang): 1,200 questionnaires distributed, 1,086 valid responses collected; Central Jiangsu (3 cities: Nantong, Yangzhou, Taizhou): 800 questionnaires distributed,

724 valid responses collected; Northern Jiangsu (5 cities: Xuzhou, Lianyungang, Huai’an, Yancheng, Suqian): 1,200 questionnaires distributed, 1,054 valid responses collected. The sample comprised 48.2% males and

51.8% females; Age distribution: 25.3% aged 18-35, 48.7% aged 36-60, and 26% aged 60+. Occupations included: enterprise employees (28.5%), public institution staff (22.3%), retirees (21.2%), freelancers (18%), and others (10%) [23,24]. This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Nanjing Xiaozhuang University, and was performed in accordance with the principles of the

Declaration of Helsinki. All eligible participants signed an informed consent form.

In-depth interview data was collected from diverse community types:

- Hudong Community (Suzhou Industrial Park, Southern Jiangsu): High-end commercial housing community;
- Fuzimiao Community (Qinhuai District, Nanjing): Old urban district community;
- Hepingqiao Community (Chongchuan District, Nantong, Central Jiangsu): Mixed-use community;
- Zifang Community (Yunlong District, Xuzhou, Northern Jiangsu): Shantytown redevelopment community.

The selection of interview communities was based on three criteria: geographical differences, differences in community form, and differences in the development stage of public cultural services. Geographical differences were defined by the economic and cultural service foundations of the three major regions (north, central, and south); community form differences were defined by residential attributes and spatial structure; differences in the development stage of public cultural services were judged by the maturity of previous construction. Based on these criteria, four communities located in different regions of the north, south, central, and south, with significant differences in community form and at different stages of public cultural service development, were selected to obtain interview data across regions, types, and development stages. This ensured interviewees represented varied regions and demographics, reflecting multiple perspectives. The aforementioned communities exhibit distinct characteristics in terms of public cultural service levels and governance performance. Hudong Community had well-developed public cultural facilities and a stable resident demographic in its early stages; Fuzimiao Community had a high proportion of cultural space but aging infrastructure; Hepingqiao Community had developed a mixed structure of commercial and residential functions; Zifang Community, after undergoing urban redevelopment, had a coexistence of new and old residents. Significant differences existed among the communities in terms of the adequacy of public cultural service provision, the frequency of cultural activities, and resident participation. Interviews revealed governance scenarios at different stages of development, providing a structural comparison for subsequent analysis.

To analyze the interview materials, all transcripts were transcribed into text form and processed through a multi-step coding procedure. The analysis adopted a thematic coding approach in which initial codes were generated through repeated reading of the transcripts to identify recurring meanings related to resource integration, stakeholder interaction, and value formation. The initial codes were then consolidated into intermediate categories through constant comparison across interviews, and these categories were refined into stable themes that matched the analytical dimensions used in the quantitative section. During this

process, two researchers conducted independent coding, and inconsistencies were resolved through discussion to ensure the reliability of the extracted themes. The coding results formed the basis for summarizing mechanism characteristics and interpreting the patterns reflected in the statistical findings.

C. VARIABLE DEFINITION AND MEASUREMENT

The dependent variable is “Perceived Governance Quality,” measured across three dimensions: diversity of governance actors (government, resident, and social organization participation); application of governance methods (application of legal, cultural, and technological approaches); and resident satisfaction with governance effectiveness (resident satisfaction with community environment, services, and order). A 5-point Likert scale was employed, with total scores ranging from 1 to 5, where higher scores indicate greater governance effectiveness. This measure reflects residents’ evaluative judgments concerning governance outcomes and describes the perceptual dimension of governance performance within the sample. The dependent variable is “Public Cultural Service Empowerment Level,” measured across three dimensions: Resource Integration (cultural facility coverage, number of professional personnel, funding investment), Stakeholder Collaboration (resident participation rate, frequency of social organization cooperation, corporate involvement), and Value Shaping (community identity, dissemination effectiveness of governance concepts, cultivation effectiveness of governance culture). This variable also employs a 5-point Likert scale [25].

Control variables include community type (commercial housing communities, older communities, shantytown-to-residential conversion communities), resident age, education level, and income level, to eliminate interference from irrelevant variables on the research results [26].

D. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Based on the theoretical framework, the following research hypotheses are proposed:

H1: The resource integration mechanism of public cultural services has a significant positive association with perceived governance quality;

H2: The stakeholder coordination mechanism of public cultural services has a significant positive association with perceived governance quality;

H3: The Value-Shaping Mechanism of public cultural services has a significant positive association with perceived governance quality;

H4: The degree of alignment between cultural service supply and demand mediates the relationship between public cultural services and perceived governance quality, with higher alignment yielding stronger enabling effects;

H5: Resident participation willingness mediates the relationship between public cultural services and perceived governance quality, with stronger participation willingness leading to more pronounced enabling effects.

TABLE 1. Table of Basic Information and Data Sources of Jiangsu Province

Category	Subcategory	Cultural Expression Effect
Basic Conditions of Jiangsu Province	Economic & Cultural Service Foundation	• 2023 GDP: 12.74 trillion yuan (ranks among the top in China in per capita GDP); • Public cultural facilities: Full coverage at county-township levels, including 12,000 community cultural stations and 18,000 rural libraries; • 2023 community cultural activities: Over 500,000 sessions; • Residents' cultural participation rate: 68%.
Basic Conditions of Jiangsu Province	Regional Differences in Public Cultural Services	• Southern Jiangsu (Suzhou, Wuxi, Changzhou, etc.): Economically developed with sufficient supply; e.g., each community is equipped with 2 professional cultural instructors on average; • Central Jiangsu (Nantong, Yangzhou, etc.): Medium level; community cultural facility coverage rate $\approx$ 85%; • Northern Jiangsu (Xuzhou, Yancheng, etc.): Relatively weak; some rural communities hold less than 1 cultural activity per month.
Data Sources	Questionnaire Survey (Covering 13 Cities of Jiangsu, Stratified Sampling by Economic Level)	• Southern Jiangsu (5 cities: Nanjing, Suzhou, Wuxi, Changzhou, Zhenjiang): 1,200 questionnaires distributed, 1,086 valid ones recovered; • Central Jiangsu (3 cities: Nantong, Yangzhou, Taizhou): 800 questionnaires distributed, 724 valid ones recovered; • Northern Jiangsu (5 cities: Xuzhou, Lianyungang, Huai'an, Yancheng, Suqian): 1,200 questionnaires distributed, 1,054 valid ones recovered; • Sample Demographics: Gender (male 48.2%, female 51.8%); Age (18-35 years old 25.3%, 36-60 years old 48.7%, over 60 years old 26%); Occupation (enterprise employees 28.5%, public institution staff 22.3%, retirees 21.2%, freelancers 18%, others 10%).
Data Sources	In-Depth Interview (Selected Community Types)	• Southern Jiangsu: Hudong Community (Suzhou Industrial Park, high-end commercial housing community), Confucius Temple Community (Nanjing Qinhuai District, old urban community); • Central Jiangsu: Hepingqiao Community (Nantong Chongchuan District, mixed community); • Northern Jiangsu: Zifang Community (Xuzhou Yunlong District, shantytown renovation community).

Note: 1 Jiangsu's 2023 GDP and public cultural facility data are quoted from the Jiangsu Statistical Yearbook 2024 [21]; 2 The stratified sampling method for the questionnaire survey refers to the research design in [23]; 3 Regional differences in public cultural services are based on the analysis results in [3].

To test the above hypotheses, a mediation effect model is constructed with public cultural services as the independent variable, perceived governance quality as the dependent variable, and the matching degree of cultural service supply and demand and residents' willingness to participate as mediating variables. Structural equation modeling is used to statistically test the indirect effects of the mediation path to obtain the significance of the mediation path.

IV. MECHANISM DECONSTRUCTION OF JIANGSU PROVINCE'S PUBLIC CULTURAL SERVICES EMPOWERING MODERNIZED COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE

Based on the theoretical framework of 'Resource Integration - Stakeholder Collaboration - Value Shaping,' and drawing from the analysis of 2,864 questionnaires together with the coded themes derived from 62 interview transcripts in Jiangsu Province, the analysis shows that public cultural services shape modernized community governance through three core mechanisms. The mechanism chain is built upon the functional transformation process of public cultural services rather than the consensus formation sequence presented in collaborative governance theory. The mechanism chain reflects a progression from cultural resource activation to actor mobilization and governance value reinforcement, establishing a logic path distinct from institutional negotiation models. These mechanisms form a progressive relationship in practice: "Resource Support → Stakeholder Participation → Value Consolidation," collectively driving

the transformation of community governance from "administrative control" to "multistakeholder co-governance" [27-30].

A. RESOURCE INTEGRATION MECHANISM: SUPPLEMENTING THE MATERIAL AND CAPABILITY FOUNDATIONS OF COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE

Effective community governance relies on the sustained supply of resources such as facilities, talent, and funding. Public cultural services bridge resource gaps through "facility repurposing, talent deployment, and fund pooling," establishing a conversion pathway from "cultural resources → governance resources." Empirical data from Jiangsu reveals that 82.3% of surveyed community workers believe "the allocation of public cultural resources has significantly enhanced both the hardware and software capabilities of community governance." This mechanism manifests in three key aspects:

B. STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION MECHANISM: ACTIVATING PARTICIPATION MOMENTUM AMONG GOVERNANCE ACTORS

The core of modernized community governance lies in achieving multi-stakeholder collaboration among "government – residents – social organizations – enterprises." Public cultural services leverage "cultural activities" as a connecting thread, breaking down participation barriers between actors and forming a progressive participation pathway: "passive participation → active participation → collabora-

tive cogovernance.” The progression from leisure interaction to governance participation arises from the interpersonal trust cultivated during recurring cultural encounters. These encounters generate a sense of mutual familiarity that lowers the psychological distance among participants, enabling them to treat the public sphere as an extension of their established interaction networks. This transition is supported by the accumulation of social capital, which provides both relational assurance and normative expectations that guide residents toward broader collective action. Empirical data from Jiangsu shows that residents who participate in community public cultural activities achieve a governance participation rate of 72.4%, 2.5 times higher than non-participants (28.6%). This mechanism derives its effectiveness from the trust-driven interaction structure embedded in the activity process, which transfers the affective ties formed during leisure engagement into collective action tendencies: First, cultural activities lower participation barriers for residents, stimulating the transition “from cultural participation to governance participation.” Communities across Jiangsu design low-barrier cultural activities tailored to different demographics, attracting initial resident engagement before gradually guiding them toward governance issues. For middle-aged and elderly groups, activities like square dance competitions and calligraphy/painting exhibitions incorporate community governance elements. For instance, Yulong Community in Tinghu District, Yancheng, organized a “Community Square Dance Competition,” requiring teams to choreograph dances themed around “Community Beauty” while collecting members’ suggestions for the community environment. In 2023, this approach gathered 136 suggestions, leading to upgrades of three fitness facilities. For youth, activities like “Community Cultural Markets” and “Digital Cultural Creation” activities. For instance, Pingjiang Road Community in Gusu District, Suzhou, hosts a monthly “Youth Cultural Market” where young vendors can set up stalls free of charge upon completing one community governance survey (e.g., community commercial landscape research, elderly needs assessment). In 2023, this initiative attracted 320 young participants, generating 18 research reports that provided crucial insights for community commercial planning. For children, “Community Cultural Ambassadors” programs are implemented. For instance, Shazhou Community in Nanjing’s Jianye District organized children to draw “community maps” marking preferred and disliked areas. Parents then accompanied them to provide feedback to the community. In 2023, this initiative gathered 89 suggestions from a child’s perspective, leading to the renovation of two children’s play areas. During interviews, one young resident shared: “I initially came just to set up a stall at the market. Later, through participating in research, I realized there were many areas in the community that needed improvement. Now I actively pay attention to community announcements and am willing to attend governance meetings.”

Second, leveraging social organizations as bridges to

extend “cultural service capacity → governance service capacity.” Jiangsu Province has cultivated a cohort of dual-function “culture + governance” social organizations. Building on their foundation of providing public cultural services, these organizations gradually expand into governance functions. For example, Nanjing’s “Neighborhood Culture Development Center” initially focused solely on organizing community cultural events, but since 2022, it has undertaken community “cultural governance projects.” Through “cultural interviews,” it collects resident needs, develops governance solutions, and assists in implementation. In 2023, it served 15 communities, addressing 23 issues such as “community meal delivery for the elderly” and “companionship for seniors living alone.” For example, Suzhou’s “Cultural Volunteers Association” established a training system transitioning “cultural volunteering → governance volunteering,” equipping cultural volunteers with governance skills like conflict mediation and policy advocacy. In 2023, it trained 5,600 volunteers cumulatively, with 3,800 participating in community governance services. Additionally, social organizations foster cross-community cultural collaboration to facilitate governance experience sharing. For instance, Wuxi’s “Community Culture Alliance” organized cultural exchange activities across 20 communities while sharing governance case studies. In 2023, it replicated governance models like “cultural mediation” and “volunteer points systems” across 12 communities.

C. VALUE-SHAPING MECHANISM: ENHANCING INTERNAL COHESION IN COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE

The sustainability of community governance relies on residents’ identification with and sense of belonging to their community. This identification is reinforced through the interpersonal networks cultivated during shared cultural participation, where repeated contact strengthens social bonds that consolidate residents’ willingness to contribute to collective affairs. The shared meaning derived from these encounters aligns with the accumulation of social capital, providing a relational basis that sustains long-term governance involvement. Public cultural services shape shared community values through the transmission pathway of “cultural identity → community identity → governance identity,” providing spiritual support for governance. Empirical data from Jiangsu shows that residents who believe “community cultural activities enhance their sense of belonging” exhibit a 91.3% willingness to participate in governance and an 88.7% satisfaction with governance outcomes. This mechanism operates through three key aspects:

First, unearthing community cultural characteristics to build an emotional bond through “community memory → community identity.” Communities across Jiangsu Province have strengthened residents’ emotional identification by tracing historical roots and cultivating distinctive cultural identities: in historic cultural districts like Yangzhou’s Dongguan Street Community and Suzhou’s Pingjiang Road Community, initiatives such as “Community History and

TABLE 2. Table of the Subject Synergy Mechanism of Public Cultural Services Empowering Community Governance in Jiangsu Province

Operation Path of the Mechanism	Typical Cases & Empirical Data	Core Implementation Measures	Objectives & Effects
Reducing Residents' Participation Threshold via Cultural Activities (Cultural Participation → Governance Participation)	1) For middle-aged and elderly groups 2) For young groups 3) For children	- Design low-threshold cultural activities for different groups to guide attention to governance issues; - Integrate governance elements (suggestion collection, research participation) into activity organization.	- Lower the psychological and behavioral threshold for residents to participate in governance; - Realize the progressive transformation of residents' participation from "passive cultural participation" to "active governance participation".
Extending Service Capabilities via Social Organizations (Cultural Service Capability → Governance Service Capability)	1) Nanjing Neighborhood Culture Development Center; 2) Suzhou Cultural Volunteer Association; 3) Wuxi Community Culture Alliance.	- Cultivate dual-function social organizations of "culture + governance"; - Establish a training system to improve the governance capabilities of cultural social organizations/volunteers; - Promote cross-community cultural cooperation and governance experience sharing.	- Take social organizations as a bridge to connect public cultural services and community governance; - Expand the scope of governance subjects and improve the professionalization level of community governance.

Note: 1 The operation logic of dual-function social organizations ("culture + governance") is based on the theoretical framework in [7]; 2 The typical case of Nanjing Neighborhood Culture Development Center is cited from the practical research in [4]; 3 The data on resident participation rate is derived from the survey results in [24].

Culture Exhibitions" and "Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Community" showcase local historical evolution and traditional crafts. In 2023 alone, over 120 exhibitions were held, attracting more than 50,000 resident visits. One elderly resident remarked in an interview: Seeing the old photos and artifacts in the exhibition made me realize how long our community's history is. It feels like my connection to the community has grown stronger." In newly developed communities like Nanjing Jiangbei New Area's Research and Innovation Park Community and Wuxi High-Tech Zone's Science City Community, "community cultural brand cultivation" has fostered distinctive events such as "Neighborhood Culture Festivals" and "Maker Culture Weeks," establishing a "young and vibrant" community cultural identity. Within six months of residents moving in during 2023, community identification rates reached 76.5%—significantly higher than traditional new communities (52.3%). Additionally, some communities have translated cultural identity into behavioral norms through "Community Cultural Covenants." For instance, Zhongcheng Community in Nantong's Hai'an City organized residents to co-create a Community Cultural Covenant covering "neighborly mutual aid" and "public space stewardship." After signing the covenant, damage rates to community facilities decreased by 42%, and neighborhood conflicts dropped by 35%.

Second, collective cultural activities fostered "shared experiences → governance consensus." Jiangsu communities organized group cultural events to build resident consensus through participation. For instance, the province-wide "Community Neighbors Festival" held over 860 events in 2023, with average participation exceeding 300 residents per community. These events featured "governance discussion sessions" to gather resident opinions on topics like "community eldercare" and "environmental improvement." Consensus-driven initiatives were then implemented. For instance, Luotang Community in Jiangyan District, Taizhou,

discussed "community meal services for the elderly" during its Neighborhood Festival. Residents unanimously agreed on a "government subsidy + resident co-payment" model, achieving full coverage of meal delivery services within two months. The "Community Cultural Volunteer Day" initiative, launched simultaneously across all 13 cities in the province, saw cumulative participation of 128,000 residents in 2023. Volunteers collaboratively addressed community challenges such as cleaning neglected sanitation areas and assisting isolated seniors. Post-event surveys revealed a 38% increase in residents' endorsement of "community co-governance." Additionally, cultural activities targeting specific groups—such as "New Citizen Cultural Integration Programs" and "Cultural Care Activities for the Elderly," effectively fostered mutual understanding and tolerance. For instance, Shengze Town in Wujiang District, Suzhou, launched "Cultural Integration Classes" for migrant workers to help them understand local culture and community governance rules. In 2023, migrant workers' participation rate in community governance rose from 35% to 68%.

Third, disseminating governance culture concepts to cultivate a "proactive participation → shared responsibility" governance mindset. Jiangsu Province integrates the governance principles of "co-governance, shared benefits, and collaborative development" into residents' daily lives through public cultural platforms:

- Establishing "Governance Culture Walls" in community cultural facilities. For example, Nandajie Community in Zhonglou District, Changzhou, features walls displaying "Community Governance Case Studies" and "Resident Participation Stories." By 2023, over 150 entries had been updated, with an 89% resident viewing rate. Integrating governance education into cultural activities, such as the "Community Governance Scenario Play Competition." Residents gain insights into community governance through scripting and performing

skits.

For instance, in Quliang Community, Haizhou District, Lianyungang, 45% of participating residents stated they would “actively engage in community governance more in the future” after the competition. Additionally, distributing “community governance cultural promotional items”—such as fans and eco-bags printed with governance concepts—during cultural events reached 3.5 million residents province-wide in 2023, with 1.2 million items distributed. Survey data indicates that residents exposed to “governance cultural promotion” scored 4.2 points (out of 5) on “community responsibility awareness,” significantly higher than those not exposed (2.8 points).

D. KEY INFLUENCING FACTORS IN MECHANISM OPERATION

Correlation and regression analyses of Jiangsu’s empirical data identify critical factors affecting the effectiveness of the three mechanisms, with “cultural service supply-demand alignment” and “resident participation willingness” as core variables:

Based on correlation and regression analysis, structural equation modeling is introduced to examine the mediating path between the matching degree of cultural service supply and demand and residents’ willingness to participate in the relationship between public cultural services and perceived governance quality. The model fit index is within an acceptable range. The estimation results of the mediating path show that the matching degree of cultural service supply and demand has a significant indirect effect on the relationship between public cultural services and perceived governance quality, with a standardized indirect effect coefficient of 0.214 and a confidence interval that does not cross zero. Residents’ willingness to participate also has a significant indirect effect in the above relationship chain, with a standardized indirect effect coefficient of 0.197 and a confidence interval that did not cross zero. The significance of the mediating path indicates that public cultural services influence perceived governance quality through a transmission chain formed by resource allocation structure and participation motivation structure.

The degree of matching between supply and demand for cultural services shows a high correlation with resource integration mechanisms, subject collaboration mechanisms, and Value-Shaping Mechanisms. Furthermore, in the mediation effect model, an indirect transmission path is formed from public cultural services to perceived governance quality. The significance of the mediation effect indicates that public cultural services influence governance outcomes through adjustments in the supply and demand structure, exhibiting a stable transmission relationship. Regarding “cultural service supply-demand alignment,” its correlation coefficient with the resource integration mechanism effect is $r=0.72$ ($p<0.01$); that with the stakeholder coordination mechanism effect is $r=0.69$ ($p<0.01$); that with the Value-Shaping Mechanism effect is $r=0.65$ ($p<0.01$).

Data indicates that communities with high supply-demand alignment (resident demand-to-service fit $\geq 80\%$) achieve 92.5% resource utilization and 78.3% resident governance participation—significantly higher than communities with low alignment (61.2% resource utilization, 32.7% resident participation). These variations outline the distributional features observed across different communities and serve to describe the internal structure of the empirical patterns. A typical case is Tieshinqiao Community in Nanjing’s Yuhuatai District. Through a “Resident Cultural Needs Survey” (online questionnaire + offline interviews), they identify the highest demand for “health culture” and “parent-child culture.” Based on this, they adjust service offerings to include health lectures and parent-child craft activities. In 2023, resident participation in these activities reaches 91%, driving governance participation up from 58% to 82%. In contrast, some communities neglect needs assessment and organize activities like traditional opera performances and calligraphy training, resulting in participation rates below 30%. This leads to significant resource waste and fails to effectively boost governance participation.

Residents’ willingness to participate maintains a stable correlation with the subject-based collaborative mechanism and Value-Shaping Mechanism, forming an indirect path from public cultural services to perceived governance quality in the mediation effect model. The significance of the mediation effect shows that the motivation for participation plays a transmitting role in the process of public cultural services influencing governance outcomes, enabling the impact of public cultural services to gradually accumulate at the resident level and be reflected in governance evaluation. Regarding “resident participation willingness,” its correlation coefficient with the effectiveness of the main body coordination mechanism is $r=0.68$ ($p<0.01$), and with the Value-Shaping Mechanism effectiveness is $r=0.66$ ($p<0.01$). Regression analysis shows that a 10% increase in resident participation willingness leads to an 8.5% rise in the implementation rate of community governance projects and a 7.2% increase in resident satisfaction with governance. Key factors influencing participation willingness include “participation convenience” and “sense of fulfillment from participation”: Regarding participation convenience, communities offering online participation channels (e.g., online cultural event registration, online deliberation platforms) achieve an 81.5% resident participation willingness—1.8 times higher than communities relying solely on offline channels (45.3%). Regarding sense of fulfillment, communities with “participation incentive mechanisms” (e.g., volunteer point redemption, governance contribution recognition) achieve a sustained participation rate of 76.8%, significantly higher than communities without such mechanisms (38.2%). For example, Yicheng Community in Yixing City, Wuxi, establishes a “culture + governance” points system. Residents earn points for participating in cultural activities and governance services, which can be redeemed for rewards like books and movie tickets. In 2023, the resident points

TABLE 3. Table of the Subject Synergy Mechanism of Public Cultural Services Empowering Community Governance in Jiangsu Province

Operation Path of the Mechanism	Typical Cases & Empirical Data	Core Implementation Measures	Objectives & Effects
Exploring Community Cultural Characteristics	1) Historical and cultural blocks; 2) Newly-built communities; 3) Community cultural conventions.	• Sort out historical culture and cultivate characteristic culture to form unique community cultural symbols; • Develop community cultural conventions to transform cultural identity into behavioral norms.	• Build an emotional bond between residents and the community through cultural memory; • Enhance residents' emotional identity to the community via characteristic cultural symbols and behavioral norms.
Organizing Collective Cultural Activities	1) Community Neighborhood Festival; 2) Community Cultural Volunteer Day; 3) Activities for special groups.	• Hold collective cultural activities with "governance topic discussion sessions" to collect residents' opinions; • Launch targeted cultural activities for special groups to promote inter-group understanding and inclusion.	• Enable residents to form governance consensus through shared cultural experiences; • Promote the inclusion of special groups and expand the foundation of community co-governance.
Spreading Governance Cultural Concepts	1) Governance culture walls; 2) Governance education in activities; 3) Promotional materials: 1.2 million items.	• Set up "governance culture walls" in community cultural facilities to display governance cases and stories; • Integrate governance education into cultural activities (e.g., scenario drama competitions); • Distribute governance cultural promotional materials to spread governance concepts.	• Integrate "co-construction, co-governance, and shared benefits" concepts into daily life; • Cultivate residents' awareness of active participation and shared responsibility for community governance.

Note: 1 The relationship between cultural identity and community governance is based on the social capital theory application in [13]; 2 The typical case of the Community Neighborhood Festival is quoted from the empirical study in [30]; 3 The communication effect of governance culture walls refers to the research conclusions in [12].

redemption rate reach 92%, and the proportion of residents continuously participating in governance increases from 42% to 69%.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper analyzes the mechanism and pathway through which public cultural services (PCS) relate to perceived governance quality in community settings, leveraging an empirical study across Jiangsu Province. Building on the regional structure of Jiangsu, the optimization pathways are refined by integrating the differentiated resource bases of southern, central, and northern areas into the mechanism chain. The research constructs a "Resource Integration - Stakeholder Collaboration - Value Shaping" theoretical framework, providing both a theoretical foundation and practical reference for addressing common grassroots governance challenges, such as insufficient resident participation and weak cultural cohesion. The framework forms a refined explanatory model that diverges from classical collaborative governance theories by centering the analysis on the service-oriented institutional attributes of public cultural services and identifying a mechanism chain driven by cultural resource transformation. This contribution delineates a distinct pathway through which public cultural services reshape governance practices.

The analysis presents how PCS-related indicators correlate with shifts toward 'multistakeholder cogovernance,' with three interconnected mechanisms outlining the structural features observed in the surveyed communities. The Resource Integration Mechanism serves as the "material foundation," effectively bridging facility, talent, and funding gaps through methods like facility repurposing and multi-

source funding pools. For northern Jiangsu, resource integration requires a shared platform that reallocates dispersed cultural spaces across township clusters, forming a stable supply structure under limited initial conditions. Empirical evidence shows that 82.3% of community workers in Jiangsu believe cultural resources significantly enhance governance capabilities. The Stakeholder Collaboration Mechanism acts as the "participation safeguard" and "core," utilizing low-barrier cultural activities as a connecting thread to activate diverse governance actors—government, residents, social organizations, and enterprises. Northern Jiangsu needs a cross-regional support mechanism in which mature organizational models from southern Jiangsu are transferred through inter-city cultural volunteer hubs to stabilize participation structures. This leads to a progressive participation pathway from "passive cultural participation" to "active governance participation." For example, residents participating in cultural activities show a 72.4% governance participation rate, 2.5 times higher than non-participants. Furthermore, social organizations transition their "cultural service capacity" to "governance service capacity," tackling complex issues like eldercare. Finally, the Value-Shaping Mechanism functions as the "internal driving force" and "safeguard," strengthening community cohesion by translating cultural identity into a shared governance identity. In northern Jiangsu, cultural identity formation requires continuous thematic activities that shorten the recognition cycle and embed governance norms into recurring community narratives. This is achieved by unearthing local cultural characteristics, organizing collective activities (like the "Community Neighbors Festival" incorporating governance discussions), and actively disseminating co-governance concepts. Evidence shows that highly

identified residents have a 91.3% willingness to participate in governance.

The analysis further highlights two critical influencing factors for mechanism optimization. The interpretation of the optimization pathways is grounded in the contrasting empirical patterns revealed among the three subregions, whose divergent resource endowments and participation foundations present a structured gradient of mechanism performance. This gradient forms the basis for summarizing pathway optimization with a clear emphasis on the conditions characteristic of developed regions within the province. Cultural Service Supply-Demand Alignment is paramount, showing high correlation coefficients (r up to 0.72) across all three mechanisms. These coefficients portray the structural relationships within the survey data and delineate the intensity of their statistical association. Communities with high alignment achieve 92.5% resource utilization, contrasting sharply with the waste seen in low-alignment communities. Resident Participation Willingness is also key, strongly correlating with collaboration and value shaping. Convenience and a sense of fulfillment (often via incentive mechanisms like the "culture + governance" points system) are essential for sustaining participation. Ultimately, the Jiangsu case study validates the progressive relationship of the framework: Resource Support $\rightarrow$ Stakeholder Participation $\rightarrow$ Value Consolidation, offering a clear pathway for modernizing grassroots governance through cultural empowerment. By aligning this mechanism chain with Jiangsu's regional differences, southern areas extend mature experience, central areas stabilize growth patterns, and northern areas progress through cumulative enhancement supported by regional resource linkage.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Zhen Xu designed, collected and analyzed the data, and drafted the manuscript. Zhen Xu conducted the study, critically revised the manuscript for important intellectual content, and gave final approval of the version to be published. Zhen Xu participated fully in the work, take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content, and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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HUMAN RESEARCH SUBJECTS

This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Nanjing Xiaozhuang University, and was performed in accordance with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. All eligible participants signed an informed consent form.

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