

## Enlightenment and Application of Yin-Yang Self-Harmonization Thought in Emotional Intervention of Psychological Counseling

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### ABSTRACT

"Yin-Yang Self-Harmonization" is a core thought of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) proposed in Treatise on Febrile Diseases, emphasizing that individuals have an inherent tendency to self-regulate and restore the dynamic balance of Yin and Yang, which is the internal foundation of physical and mental self-healing. Modern emotional intervention in psychological counseling mostly introduces Western theoretical systems. From the perspective of local culture, emotional regulation can be essentially understood as the imbalance of Yin and Yang at the psychological level. The core of counseling work is not for counselors to directly "repair" the emotions of clients, but to create appropriate conditions to activate the inherent Yin-Yang self-harmonization ability of clients and promote the emotional system to return to dynamic balance. This paper sorts out the theoretical origin and core connotation of Yin-Yang self-harmonization thought, analyzes the internal consistency between this thought and emotional intervention in psychological counseling, discusses its application paths from four dimensions: counseling goal establishment, counselor-client relationship construction, counseling technology application, and counseling termination timing grasp combined with local psychological practice, and puts forward precautions for practical application. The study holds that Yin-Yang self-harmonization thought provides a new theoretical perspective for local emotional intervention in psychological counseling, highlights the psychological subjectivity of clients, and has reference value for constructing a counseling model adapted to the cultural and psychological characteristics of Chinese people.

**KEYWORDS:** Yin-Yang Self-Harmonization; Local Psychological Counseling; Emotional Intervention; Yin-Yang Theory; Psychological Self-Healing

### 1. INTRODUCTION

With the continuous development of domestic mental health services, the localization of psychological counseling has attracted increasing academic attention. Excavating ideological resources from traditional Chinese philosophy and TCM to supplement and enrich modern psychological counseling practice has become an important research direction (Zhao & Liu, 2020). The Yin-Yang theory constructed in Huangdi Neijing and Treatise on Febrile Diseases not only guides TCM physical diagnosis and treatment, but also contains rich wisdom of physical and mental regulation, among which **Yin-Yang Self-Harmonization** thought is particularly unique. Zhang Zhongjing proposed in Treatise on Febrile Diseases that "those with Yin-Yang

self-harmonization will surely heal themselves," pointing out that the human body has an inherent mechanism of self-reconciliation and tendency to balance. The essence of treatment is to facilitate the inherent repair power of the body rather than external intervention to replace the body's regulatory process (Zhang, 2005).

In the practice of emotional intervention in psychological counseling, some work models tend to fall into the misunderstanding of counselor-led intervention and solving emotional problems for clients, ignoring the clients' own potential for psychological repair. Emotional fluctuations, repression and hyperactivity can all be regarded as manifestations of the imbalance of Yin and Yang at the psychological level: violent anger and hyperactivity belong to excessive Yang, depression and low spirits belong to excessive Yin, and anxiety and entanglement belong to the disorder of Yin and Yang interaction. The thought of Yin-Yang self-harmonization enlightens us that the focus of emotional intervention is not for counselors to directly eliminate negative emotions, but to create a safe psychological environment and help clients mobilize their internal regulatory forces to achieve the rebalancing of Yin and Yang at the psychological level (Wang & Lü, 2014).

At present, there have been many domestic studies discussing the application of Yin-Yang and Five Elements theory and emotion restriction therapy in psychological counseling (Wang, 2006), but there are still few studies that specifically focus on **Yin-Yang Self-Harmonization** and systematically explore its practical paths in emotional intervention of psychological counseling. This paper sorts out the connotation of Yin-Yang self-harmonization thought, explains its theoretical consistency with modern emotional intervention, and explores practical application paths, so as to provide theoretical references for local psychological counseling practice.

## 2. THEORETICAL ORIGIN AND CORE CONNOTATION OF YIN-YANG SELF-HARMONIZATION THOUGHT

### 2.1 Theoretical Origin

Yin-Yang self-harmonization thought is rooted in the philosophical concept of pre-Qin Taoism that "all things carry Yin and embrace Yang, and the vital energy creates harmony between them". The Book of Changes emphasizes that the interaction of Yin and Yang gives birth to all things, and "harmony" is the ideal state for the sound operation of things (Zhang, 2016). Huangdi Neijing laid the physical and mental view of Yin-Yang balance, proposing that "when Yin is calm and Yang is firm, the spirit will be in order", and taking the dynamic balance of Yin and Yang as the fundamental standard of physical and mental health (Anonymous, 2010). Zhang Zhongjing explicitly pointed out in Treatise on Febrile Diseases - Differentiation and Treatment of Taiyang Disease: "For all diseases, if there is sweating, vomiting, purging, blood loss, or body fluid loss, those with Yin-Yang self-harmonization will surely heal themselves" (Zhang, 2005).

This discussion was originally used to explain the prognosis of exogenous febrile diseases, and later physicians expanded it to all physical and mental diseases: the key word of "self-harmonization" lies in "self", which represents the inherent self-organization and self-regulation ability of the body; "harmony" is not a static absolute equality, but a dynamic and coordinated steady state of the two opposing sides (Zhang, 2012). Later, Wang Chong further expounded in Lunheng that "when one rectifies oneself and behaves properly, Yin and Yang will harmonize themselves," extending Yin-Yang self-harmonization from physical pathology to the spiritual and psychological level of human beings (Yan, 2019).

## 2.2 Core Connotation

First, internal **subjectivity: the power of balance and repair comes from the individual himself**. Yin-Yang self-harmonization is not a balanced state forcibly created by external forces, but an inherent tendency of the individual himself. External treatments such as medicine and acupuncture only play a supporting and dredging role, and the final recovery of balance depends on the individual's own regulatory function. There is no process in which external forces directly complete the rehabilitation for the individual (Xu & Tang, 2016). Projected to the psychological level, that is, clients inherently have the potential for emotional regulation and psychological repair, and counselors cannot directly "cure" the emotional pain of clients.

Second, **Dynamic balance: "Harmony" is a dynamic steady state of growth and decline, not an absolutely static state without conflict**. Yin-Yang self-harmonization does not mean the complete absence of negative emotions, nor does it require individuals to always remain positive and happy. Yin and Yang have the characteristics of mutual restriction, growth, decline and transformation, and joys, angers, sorrows and happiness are all normal human emotions. "Harmony" means that all kinds of emotions can be generated, circulated and expressed normally, and no single emotion will be hyperactive or repressed for a long time. The psychological system can return to a steady state after fluctuations (Zhang, 2012).

Third, **Principle of facilitating adjustment according to the situation: external intervention focuses on guiding according to the situation, and confrontation and suppression should be avoided**. The treatment principle of TCM is "carefully observe where Yin and Yang are located and regulate them, with balance as the goal". Regulation means dredging and supporting, rather than forcibly suppressing one side. Facing excessive Yang, it is not just to simply suppress Yang Qi; facing excessive Yin, it is not just to simply supplement Yin, but to remove the obstacles that hinder the realization of self-harmonization and create conditions for self-repair (Wang, 2002). Corresponding to psychological counseling, when facing negative emotions such as anger, sadness and anxiety, it is not appropriate to simply persuade clients to "not be sad or angry", but to remove psychological obstacles and help clients' internal regulatory forces to play their role.

Fourth, dual causes of disharmony: first, the internal self-harmonization ability is damaged; second, the external disturbance is excessive. The disharmony of Yin and Yang in emotional psychology comes from the continuous disturbance of external pressure and traumatic events on the one hand, and on the other hand, the individual's self-regulation pathway is blocked, and the original self-harmonization mechanism cannot operate normally. Counseling intervention should not only recognize the external realistic pressure, but also focus on repairing the blocked internal psychological regulation ability (Yang & Du, 2017).

## 3. INTERNAL CONSISTENCY BETWEEN YIN-YANG SELF-HARMONIZATION THOUGHT AND EMOTIONAL INTERVENTION IN PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING

### 3.1 Value Position Consistency: Client-Centered, Respecting Client Subjectivity

Humanistic psychological counseling emphasizes that clients have the inherent potential for self-actualization, and the task of counselors is to provide empathy, sincerity and unconditional positive regard to create a safe atmosphere, and clients will rely on their own strength to achieve growth (Rogers, 2004; Jiang, 2019). Yin-Yang self-harmonization thought also places the individual's inherent self-repair ability at the core, and the two are highly consistent in the position of subjectivity. The difference is that Yin-Yang self-harmonization is rooted in

the traditional Chinese culture of physical and mental integration, and emphasizes more the holistic perspective of physical-mental unity and the dynamic growth and decline of Yin and Yang in emotions.

### **3.2 Intervention Goal Consistency: Pursuing Dynamic Psychological Steady State Rather Than Eliminating Negative Emotions**

Modern emotion regulation theory holds that mental health is not the absence of painful emotions, but that individuals can flexibly experience and accept various emotions and have emotional resilience. "Harmony" in Yin-Yang self-harmonization is also dynamic balance, allowing emotional fluctuations, and does not take the complete elimination of negative feelings such as sadness and anger as the goal, but pursues the independent circulation and recovery of the emotional system, which echoes the contemporary emotional intervention concept (Yan, 2019).

### **3.3 Intervention Logic Consistency: Focusing on Removing Obstacles Rather Than Forced External Transformation**

Many emotional disturbances are not caused by the clients' complete lack of regulatory ability, but by trauma, cognitive conflicts, defense mechanisms and social pressure blocking the internal self-harmonization pathway. The work of counselors is to remove the blocking factors so that the clients' inherent psychological regulation power can operate again, which is consistent with the logic of Yin-Yang self-harmonization that "facilitating self-harmonization rather than replacing the individual to achieve harmony" (Xu & Tang, 2016).

### **3.4 Cultural Adaptation Consistency: Conforming to the Chinese Cognitive Model of Physical-Mental Integration**

In Chinese culture, the body and mind are inseparable, and emotional disturbances are often accompanied by physical sensations. Yin-Yang self-harmonization adheres to the unity of form and spirit, and the imbalance of emotional psychology and physical state influence each other, which is more in line with the thinking habit of local clients to understand psychological pain, and can be used as a theoretical resource for the construction of localized psychological counseling (Yang & Du, 2017).

## **4. APPLICATION PATHS OF YIN-YANG SELF-HARMONIZATION THOUGHT IN EMOTIONAL INTERVENTION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING**

### **4.1 Establishing Counseling Goals: Replacing "Eliminating Negative Emotions" with "Facilitating Self-Harmonization"**

Affected by public cognition, many clients enter counseling expecting counselors to help them completely eliminate anxiety, sadness and anger. Based on Yin-Yang self-harmonization thought, counselors need to renegotiate counseling goals with clients: the counseling goal is not to be completely free of negative emotions, but to restore the clients' own emotional regulation ability, so that emotions can circulate naturally, and they can gradually return to psychological steady state after encountering pressure (Wang & Lü, 2014).

Cognitive clarification can be carried out in the early stage of counseling: negative emotions themselves are normal manifestations of "Yin" or "Yang" in psychology, and emotional pain comes from the excessive preponderance of Yin or Yang and blocked circulation, not that emotions themselves are guilty. The goal setting is adjusted from "no longer sad" to "being able to accept sadness and anger, and being able to calm down after experiencing emotional fluctuations", taking activating the clients' internal self-harmonization ability as the core goal.

## **4.2 Constructing Counselor-Client Relationship: Creating a Safe Holding Space as External Conditions for Yin-Yang Self-Harmonization**

According to the logic of Yin-Yang self-harmonization, the external environment cannot directly create balance, but appropriate external conditions are the premise for the activation of internal self-harmonization. The counselor-client relationship is the most important external soil for clients' psychological repair (Jiang, 2019). First, empathic acceptance, without value judgment on emotions. When clients express rage, repression and despair, do not rush to correct or enlighten them, and do not judge that "you should not think so". Negative emotions are signals of excessive preponderance of Yin or Yang in psychology. First, allow emotions to be fully presented, just like "guiding according to the situation" in TCM, to provide space for the repressed psychological Yin and Yang to interact (Wang, 2002). Second, the counselor positions himself as a "facilitator" rather than a "repairer". Counselors maintain the attitude of "helping without overintervening", avoid excessive arrangement, do not make decisions for clients, and do not give a large number of direct solutions. The function of counselors is to understand and reflect the clients' inner world, remove psychological obstacles that hinder self-harmonization such as shame and self-denial, and return the initiative of change to the clients themselves (Rogers, 2004). Third, grasp the Yin-Yang dynamics of the counselor-client relationship. When clients have emotional outbursts (Yang), counselors accept them with calmness (Yin); when clients are closed, silent and withdrawn (Yin), counselors moderately and gently drive expression (Yang), so as to achieve the mutual complement of Yin and Yang at the level of counselor-client interaction and create a holding environment for the clients' internal self-harmonization.

## **4.3 Specific Application at the Counseling Technology Level**

### **4.3.1 Emotional Catharsis and Dredging, Removing the Blockage of Self-Harmonization Pathway**

Many emotional disturbances originate from long-term emotional repression, the failure of psychological Yin and Yang to interact, and the blockage of the self-harmonization mechanism. Using techniques such as empathic catharsis and the empty chair to encourage clients to fully express their repressed feelings, so that the overly restrained "Yin" or the overly hyperactive "Yang" can be relieved. The focus is not on immediate improvement after catharsis, but on removing the blockage so that the clients' internal regulatory mechanism can regain operational space (Ding, 2025).

### **4.3.2 Dialectically Viewing Emotional Opposition, Promoting the Mutual Rooting and Complementation of Yin and Yang**

Many clients fall into black-and-white thinking: either blindly pursuing positive optimism and rejecting all sadness, or indulging in pain and failing to see internal resources. Carry out cognitive work combined with the thought of the mutual rooting of Yin and Yang opposition: pain and pleasure, vulnerability and strength are two sides of psychology, and they are rooted in each other. Sadness can prompt people to reflect, and anger often indicates that the self-boundary needs to be respected. Guide clients to see the interdependent relationship between the two opposing sides of emotions, reduce the rejection and confrontation against a certain type of emotion, reduce internal conflict and consumption, and promote the mutual complement of psychological Yin and Yang (Wang, 2006).

### **4.3.3 Making Good Use of Situational Inspiration, Avoiding Forced Suppression and Correction**

Yin-Yang self-harmonization emphasizes "regulating without attacking" and opposes forced suppression. When clients have irrational ideas, avoid directly refuting and correcting them. Adopt Socratic heuristic questioning, gradually explore along with the clients' feelings, help clients see the contradictions themselves, and generate

new understandings that belong to them, rather than counselors instilling a new set of cognitions. Externally instilled cognitions are external impositions, and only the clients' self-realization is the true realization of Yin-Yang self-harmonization at the psychological level (Zhang, 2012).

#### **4.3.4 Giving Consideration to Both Body and Mind, Promoting the Co-Regulation of Form and Spirit**

Based on the TCM concept of the unity of form and spirit, psychological Yin and Yang and physical Yin and Yang influence each other. In the counseling process, pay appropriate attention to physical signals such as sleep, work and rest, and physical tension. Guide clients to cooperate with breathing relaxation and mindfulness awareness, and feedback psychological emotions through physical regulation, so as to achieve the coordinated regulation of body and mind, which conforms to the holistic view of the integration of form and spirit in Yin-Yang self-harmonization (Yan, 2019).

#### **4.4 Grasping Counseling Termination and Prognosis: Taking the Recovery of Clients' Self-Harmonization Ability as the Termination Indicator**

From the perspective of Yin-Yang self-harmonization, the judgment standard for counseling termination does not entirely depend on the clients' complete emotional stability at present, but more on whether the clients have rebuilt their emotional self-regulation ability: even if they encounter setbacks again and have negative emotional fluctuations, the clients themselves can perceive, accept and gradually calm down, and no longer completely rely on the support of counselors (Xu & Tang, 2016).

When clients can independently complete the growth and decline circulation of emotions and have self-repair ability, it indicates that the internal Yin-Yang self-harmonization mechanism has been restored, and counseling can be gradually terminated at this time. Avoid taking "clients are completely free of pain" as the termination standard, otherwise it is easy to cause clients' long-term dependence on counselors, which violates the principle of "self-help as the foundation" of Yin-Yang self-harmonization (Jiang, 2019).

### **5. PRECAUTIONS IN PRACTICAL APPLICATION**

First, Yin-Yang self-harmonization is ideological **enlightenment and cannot directly replace the modern psychological counseling technology system**. It provides a local perspective and intervention philosophy, does not exclude mature technologies such as empathy, cognitive adjustment, and psychodynamics, and is used to guide how to use technologies rather than completely replacing the existing counseling framework (Zhao & Liu, 2020).

Second, distinguish between "Yin-Yang self-harmonization" and laissez-faire. "Self-harmonization" does not mean letting clients passively wait for self-healing. Many clients have severely impaired internal self-harmonization mechanisms due to trauma and severe depression and anxiety, and cannot recover by themselves. Counselors must take the initiative to carry out assessments, and those who meet the clinical symptom standards should be referred to psychiatric intervention in time. It is not advisable to unilaterally hope that clients will recover on their own (Yang & Du, 2017).

Third, prevent the simplification and mystification of concepts. Yin and Yang are analogical generalizations of psychological states. Do not rigidly and simply correspond psychological phenomena to Yin and Yang labels, and avoid dogmatically applying the simple correspondence of "anger = Yang, depression = Yin". Focus on grasping the spiritual core of "subjectivity, dynamic balance, and facilitating adjustment according to the situation" behind it (Zhang, 2016).

Fourth, adhere to a dialectical view of external realistic factors. Yin-Yang self-harmonization emphasizes internal ability, which does not mean ignoring realistic dilemmas. Major external pressures and traumas will continuously disturb psychological Yin and Yang. On the one hand, counseling activates internal regulatory forces, and on the other hand, it also assists clients in dealing with dilemmas at the realistic level, taking into account both internal and external aspects (Wang & Lü, 2014).

## 6. CONCLUSION

Yin-Yang self-harmonization thought is rooted in traditional Chinese medicine, and its core is to respect the inherent self-repair power of individuals to tend to balance. Introducing this thought into emotional intervention in psychological counseling brings important enlightenment: the essence of emotional intervention is not for counselors to eliminate the painful emotions of clients by external force, but to create safe and holding psychological conditions, remove psychological blockages, awaken the clients' internal psychological self-harmonization ability, and promote the dynamic rebalancing of Yin and Yang at the psychological level (Zhang, 2012).

Yin-Yang self-harmonization provides a theoretical perspective with local cultural characteristics for the localization of psychological counseling, and enriches the value position, counseling goals, counselor-client relationship and technical ideas of emotional intervention. In practice, it needs to be combined with modern mature psychological counseling theories and technologies to avoid dogmatic and mystified misuse. At the same time, risk assessment should be done well to distinguish general psychological distress from psychological disorders requiring medical intervention (Zhao & Liu, 2020). In the future, case studies can be combined to further explore the practical schemes of Yin-Yang self-harmonization thought in different emotional issues and different client groups, so as to promote the further development of Chinese local psychological counseling theory and practice.

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