



## **Development of human resources for the low-aged elderly in China**

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### **Abstract**

This paper reviews the literature on the development of human resources in the low-aged elderly in recent ten years. This paper introduces the overall situation of the human resources of the low-aged elderly in China, including the background of development, related concepts and theories. On this basis, this paper elaborates the feasibility, necessity and influencing factors of the development of human resources in the elderly in China, and summarizes the specific measures to develop the human resources of the low-aged elderly. Then, by combing a series of hot and controversial topics about the development of low-aged elderly human resources in China, put forward the future research direction. At present, under the background of China's home-based pension, community pension as the basis and institutions to supplement, this paper argues that how to develop the old-age women' human resources in China to develop the home care service industry will be a research focus in the future, to a certain extent, which will ameliorate the current socialization of the lower status of domestic work.

**Key words:** low-aged elderly, human resources, development, feasibility

### **Introduction**

Human resources are the direct creators of social wealth. The scale and speed of economic development of a country or region are closely related to the quantity and structure of human resources. In the human resources of a country or region, in addition to the working population of the main age, there are still some relatively special part, which including elderly human resources that population whose age is more than normal labor, but continue to engage in or willing to engage in social work.

Nowadays, the aging of China has been increasing, the population of China has been expanding, and the population dividend has gradually contracted. We can see that the aging of the population has already begun to pose a threat and influence to our country's economic sustainable development. At the same time, China has begun to appear labor shortage, pension gap and other issues. It can be seen that the development and utilization of the elderly human resources has become an urgent issue to be solved urgently.

In recent years, the elderly human resources has become a hot topic in the field of human resources management, labor economics, demography and so on. Domestic scholars' research literature around this topic shows a rapid growth trend, which contributed a great deal of knowledge for solving the problem of China's population aging and the development of older human resources. After reviewing and sorting out the literature materials on "elderly human resources" in the past ten years, this paper points out the future research direction. This paper will summarize the background, related concepts and theories, overall situation, feasibility and necessity, influencing factors, measures and hotspots and controversies related to the development of human resources in the elderly.

### **The Background of the Development of China's Low-aged Elderly Human Resources**

As early as 2012, China has been the first decline in the working age population, which

makes the supply of labor reduced and the dependency rate increased. At the same time, China's population dividends began to shrink in 2012, and the proportion of the elderly population aged 65 and above in the total population is expected to rise to 14% in 2020, which means that the development trend of China's aging is severe, it will threaten the healthy and sustainable development of our economy.

And as early as 1990, Copenhagen meeting put forward the concept of healthy aging, which is the result of the deepening of population aging. The "healthy aging" refers to that the vast majority of the elderly are in the healthy state of the physical, psychological and social function, so that the social development is not affected by excessive population aging. Among them, the health state of the elderly social function can be achieved through the development of elderly human resources and the promotion of social participation. Based on the concept of healthy aging, the concept of "positive aging" was put forward at the Second World Assembly in the United Nations in 2002 and incorporated into the "Political Declaration". Positive Aging affirms the social value of the elderly, which regards health, participation and security as a strategy of response to the challenges of population aging. It is clear that this is not only the needs of the elderly, but a right. From the concept of "healthy aging" and "positive aging", it can be seen that the participation of the elderly in the whole society has become the general consensus of the international community to solve the problem of aging population, and the development of the elderly human resources is an important way to realize the elderly social participation.

When referring to the elderly human resource problem, the primary problem is to correctly understand the elderly human resources. The United Nations Second World Assembly on Aging has put forward many new ideas and understandings, the most important and far-reaching is the theory of "resources on the elderly". In the past, the elderly human resources we talked about, in essence, is a kind of old age wealth theory, rather than the true sense of the concept of elderly human resources. The theory of "resources on the elderly" thinks that the value of the elderly is mainly historical value, the value of fait accompli, and will not happen new changes. The "elderly human resources" mentioned in the World Aging Conference is a concept that truly embodies the meaning of "resources". The theory of "elderly human resources" believes that the elderly group is not only the formation of social wealth, but also can create a new value of resources, that is, they affirm the elderly have the ability to continue to create and value. In short, according to the theory of "elderly human resources", the elderly human resources have the same value as other groups of human resources, can be used and can be developed.

## **The Related Concepts and Theories of Elderly Human Resource Development in China**

### **Related Concepts**

When it comes to issues related to the development of elderly human resources, we must first identify a number of important concepts, including "age", "labor resources" and "elderly human resources".

In terms of age, Cui Hongwei (2011) pointed out that compared with the elderly in their 80s, the elderly in their 60s certainly have better physical fitness and mental state, so the elderly of different age groups should be treated differently. We should further subdivide the elderly into: the low-aged, middle-aged and old-aged, currently the development of elderly human resources we talked about is mainly for the the low-aged elderly. Therefore, the development of elderly human resources this paper talked about is also for the low-aged elderly population.

For "labor resources", in the past, it is generally divided according to the labor age, which means that a large number of retired workers with the ability to work will be excluded from the labor resources after retirement. However, most of the time, the labor capacity is regarded as a new standard for the division of labor resources, we think that the elderly population with healthy body and labor capacity is an important component which cannot be ignored of the development and utilization of human resources in whole society.

Therefore, on the basis of the improvement of the concept of "labor resources", Luo Qin (2011) pointed out that "elderly human resources" refers to the population aged 60 and above with labor capacity, which is necessary for the development of economic and social undertakings. The concept covers three aspects: the elderly population engaged in paid production and social labor; engaged in unpaid, semi-labor or assisted labor; and engaged in all the activities that are useful for social and family. Similarly, on the basis of the former, Zhang Xufan (2011) subjoined the elderly population that has not yet engaged in any economic and social activities but has the willingness to participate.

### **Related Theories**

Because the development of the elderly human resources is an important way to realize the social participation of the elderly, this paper combs the relevant theories that promote the social participation of the elderly, including the interactive theory, the activity theory, the social role theory and the empowerment theory. These four theories respectively stressed the need to encourage the elderly to re-participate in social life and establish the positive self-identity from the following four angles: the interaction of the elderly with the society, narrowing the gap of elderly with the community, adjusting the mind of social role and stimulating the potential of the elderly. To a certain extent, the development of elderly human resources can help the elderly restore the past social status, adjust the mentality, reconstruction the contact of the elderly with the community.

## **The Overall Situation of Elderly Human Resources in China**

### **The Low-aged Elderly Human Resources is Rich**

According to the 2014 census, the number of 60-69-year-old elderly population is 81.82 in China, accounting for 6.64% of the total population, accounting for 64.7% of all the elderly population. And since 2001, the number of elderly population in China has been growing. It shows that China's population size and growth rate of elderly population create the conditions for the development of elderly human resources in China. In addition, Chen Lei and Zhou Liping (2015) pointed out that from these four aspects, including the labor capacity, labor will, health and education level, China's low-aged elderly population can still engage in most of the work in society.

Therefore, we can think that China's low-aged elderly human resources is rich, and the development of low-aged elderly human resources is not only a reasonable re-use of social resources and human capital, but also in line with the need and requirement of elderly population for labor, which is conducive to the development of social and economic.

### **The Development and Utilization are Low-level, Spontaneous and Disorder**

At present, the reemployment of retired workers is a kind of spontaneous, low-level and disordered behavior in China. Firstly, the re-employment management of retirees is not included in the normal track, and the channel of the reemployment is single and not perfect in system. Secondly, the remuneration of the reemployment staff without evidence, which is currently adjusted by the market and based on the need of work. It will lead to reduce the enthusiasm of working staff, cause the confusion of management and pay taxes according to law difficultly. Finally, there is a one-time dismissal fee and other non-standard pension behavior.

## **The Feasibility and Necessity of the development of low-aged elderly Human Resource in China**

### **The Feasibility**

The development of low-aged human resources in China is feasible. In the context of the aging population in China, we think China's development of low-aged human resources is feasible from the

following five aspects: the age structure, the health status, the re-employment intention, the development of science and technology and the industrial structure.

First of all, from the age structure, Xie Wei and Wang Yu (2010) pointed out that more than half of our elderly population still belongs to the working population. In China's elderly population, the proportion of the low-aged elderly people is higher than the middle-aged and the old-aged people, which forms a typical pyramid type. And the median age of the elderly population is only 67.6 years old, which has just reached the current retirement age in northern Europe. Secondly, Xiong Bijun (1990) found that, from the health status, about 70% of the elderly in China whose health status is good and general, and the population whose health status is poor is mainly old-aged elderly. Again, from the re-employment intention, Jiang Mingfu (2007) found that China's low-aged elderly population have a very rich work experience and a strong desire to continue to engage in their favorite career. However, the statistics of current re-employment rate in China is far lower than the proportion of the elderly who have the willingness to re-employment. Then, from the view of the development of science and technology, with the expanding of the emerging technological areas and the popularization and promotion of office automation and computer business, more and more elderly mental workers can continue to work. At the same time, the promotion of the intensity of social education and the opening of the specialist outpatient in individual hospital will create a condition for elderly intellectuals' re-employment. Finally, from the view of industrial structure, China's first and second industries are transferring to the tertiary industry as a whole, carrying out the transformation and upgrading of industry structure. At the same time, the rise of China's service economy transfers the employment approach to flexible and informal. And Zhang Xufan (2011) pointed out that the flexible employment approach of "part-time, atypical" is conducive to help the elderly population to enter the labor market again.

### **The Necessity**

The development of low-aged elderly human resources is necessary in China. In the context of aging population in China, small to the family, large to the whole society, the development of low-aged elderly human resources is necessary.

In terms of the need for the development of productive forces, Luo Qin (2011) found that, with the increasing number of work years and the continuous accumulation of social life experience, the elderly have experience of human capital that people of other age groups cannot compare with. And the social capital stock of the elderly is also unique, their ability to mobilize personal and social resources has a unique advantage in developing productive forces.

Hu Chuncai (1999) pointed out that the development of elderly human resource provides propulsion and powerful material basis for improving social participation in the elderly. In the current society, especially in the context of the family pension weakened in rural areas and the coverage rate of social pension is small, nearly half of the elderly had to do whatever they can and engage in production to support themselves. The development and utilization of the elderly human resources and let part of the urban and rural elderly engaged in social labor are necessary measures to solve the problem of elderly.

In terms of meeting the need to save state spending, Xiong Bijun (1990) pointed out that, on one hand, the development and utilization of the elderly human resources can increase the income of the elderly; on the other hand, it can reduce the maintenance factor by improving the self-support ability of the elderly, which can save a portion of the spend to expand reproduction and as a source of funding for the elderly social security fund.

In terms of meeting the needs of the labor market, Hu Chuncai (1999) pointed out that the development of elderly human resources would help to alleviate the structural problems of labor resources. And in the industrial sector transition period, China develops the service industry vigorously currently, Wei Yanyan (2012) pointed out that the development of elderly human resources and encouraging the elderly to do mental or light jobs can fill this part of the labor market gap.

### **Influence Factors of the Development of Low-aged Elderly Human Resource in China**

During the development process of the elderly human resources, there will be many conditions hinder the development of elderly human resources. Specifically, the main points are the following:

The first one is the high coverage of the pension. Hu Chuncai (1999) pointed out that the high coverage rate and replacement rate of the retired pension greatly weakened the desire for supplying the elderly human resources.

Followed by the retirement age. Hu Chuncai (1999) pointed out that the state's legal retirement age directly limits the supply of elderly human resources, especially the urban elderly population. Liu Dawei (2016) pointed out that, although China has begun to try to gradually postpone the retirement age, but in a sense, it is still a way to control the retirement age, which is not conducive for the elderly group to choose the employment way and years flexibly according to their own situation.

Again is the socialization of the housework is low. Zhang Wenjuan and Zhao Deyu (2015) pointed out that the low level of socialization of domestic labor in China directly causes the elderly, especially many elderly women, to put most of the energy into the family business, reducing the labor participation rate of the elderly.

Finally, is the impact of the concept of age discrimination. At present, there are many "old age values" that deviate from the development stage of economic and elderly population, such as age discrimination, the employment conflict between the elderly and youth and the negative influence of old age and so on. These all become constraints of the elderly re-employment from the social and psychological aspects.

### **Measures for the Development of Low-aged Elderly Human Resources in China**

In order to rationally develop and utilize the elderly human resources, individuals, governments, businesses and society need to assume their respective responsibilities. Low-aged elderly human resources need to excavate their own potential; the Government should give full play to the role of guidance; enterprises should rationally develop and use the elderly human resources; society should accelerate the transformation of old values.

Specifically, the elderly themselves should continue to learn, constantly improve themselves, accept lifelong education and update their own knowledge system. In addition, the elderly should also exercise more and establish a positive concept of re-employment.

As for the government, they should first strengthen their publicity and education, establish and improve laws and regulations. Secondly, they must improve the social security system for the elderly, develop the public welfare facilities appropriately and speed up the aging construction of community, which can protect the elderly into the labor force. At the same time, we must adhere to the pension road combined family pension and social pension, and develop the tertiary industry vigorously. In addition, you can learn advanced experience from the United States, South Korea, Germany and other developed countries, such as no limitation for the retirement age and providing the policy support for the employment of elderly directly.

As for the enterprises, on one hand, based on the physical condition, intellectual advantage and experience advantage of the elderly, enterprises can use the flexible work system for the elderly; on the other hand, enterprises can learn from Japan and other developed countries, using a variety of employment patterns according to the actual situation and practical needs of the elderly.

### **Summary and Prospect**

By combing the literature about the development of elderly human resources in recent ten years, it can be found that the researches on the background, current situation, feasibility, necessity, influencing factors and measures of the development of elderly human resources are relatively abundant. After analysis, this paper believes that in the future, the hot topic to be discussed related to

the development of elderly human resources will be in the following areas: whether the development of the elderly human resources will squeeze the employment of youth; how to use elderly human resources through postponed retirement age; the development of elderly human resources development in the area of home care service; the gender and urban-rural differences in the development of the elderly human resources. In the future, scholars can focus on these topics to further study.

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