

A Study on Career Development Dilemmas and Countermeasures for Elderly Care Workers

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Abstract: The current situation in China is that the elderly service industry is developing rapidly, but the current situation of elderly care workers, as an important part of it, has many problems, which largely restrict the development of care workers. This paper investigates the professional dilemmas of nursing staff in city B of province S. It analyses the causes of the professional dilemmas of nursing staff from three aspects, including the dilemma of their professional development, social identity, and their psychological construction, and explores them at three levels: "the government", "nursing institutions" "individuals", providing scientific countermeasures.

Keywords: Aging Society; Elderly Care Workers; Career Development

Introduction

According to the data analysis of the 7th National Population Census Communique in 2021^[2], it can be seen that by the end of 2020, China's elderly population aged 65 or above accounted for 13.5% of the total population, while according to the China Development Report 2020: Development Trends and Policies on Population Aging in China^[3], it is predicted that China will enter a "moderate aging society" in the 14th Five-Year Plan period around 2035. "Aging will be a major constraint on China's social development for a long time to come, posing challenges to the level of economic development, social security capacity, and the ability to formulate and implement public policies. The number of people over 60 years of age is 75,912,202, and the presence of such a large group of elderly people is bound to create a high demand for elderly care workers. The question that needs to be asked is why there is such a shortage of professional caregivers. What is the reason for this situation? What can we do to try to solve this problem?

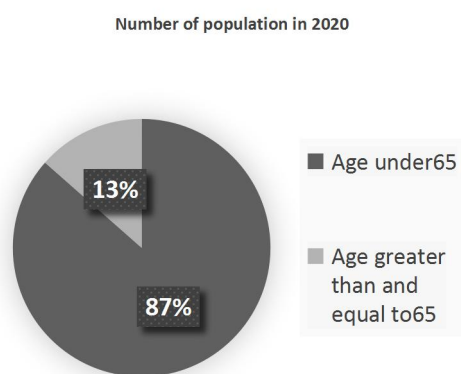
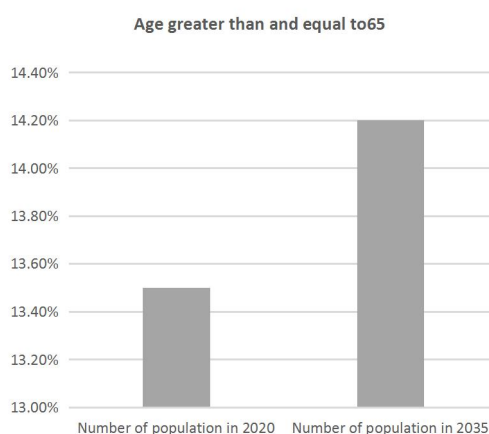


Figure1. Population distribution by age in 2020

Table 1. Percentage of population aged 65+



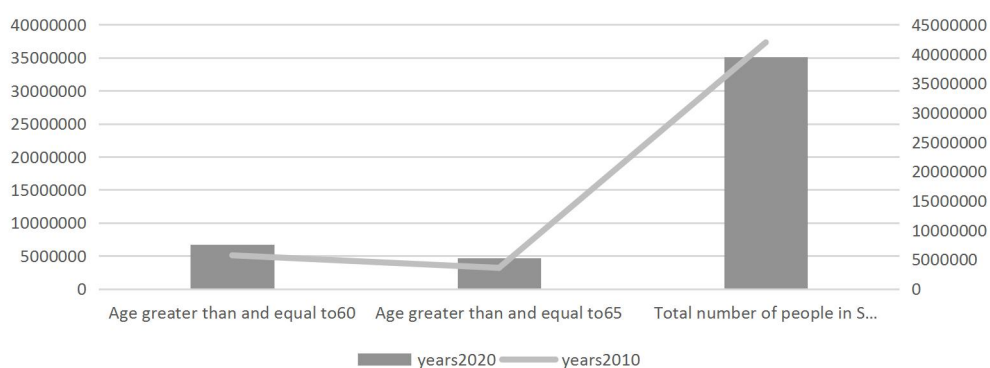


Table 2. Distribution of the number of people aged 60 and over 65 in Province S

1. Analysis of the current professional dilemma of elderly care workers



Figure2. Research Methodology and Argument Logic Diagram for this paper

1.1 Career development dilemma

The problem of poor career planning or development is not only a problem for the individual caregiver but also for the employer, i.e. the institution. The lack of career orientation makes it difficult for the caregiver to progress and develop in the long term. Career development requires a combination of personal and organizational goals and a longer-term work plan to implement continuous development.^[1] However, the main aspects of career development for caregivers are: 1. lack of career planning, 2. low level of self-awareness and 3. low job satisfaction. Most of the nursing staff surveyed have not experienced career planning, or have never planned their careers, and their self-awareness is very weak, which often puts them in a situation of "passive choice" and further falls into the "career development trap". In the course of the survey, it is easy to see that the career paths for nursing staff in elderly care institutions are very narrow, and it is difficult to have a long-term future development direction. The prospects for career development are also very limited. This situation has reduced the enthusiasm and motivation of caregivers. This is even more evident among the younger generation of caregivers, where the narrow career paths and lack of promotion mechanisms largely contribute to the "high turnover" and "instability" of caregivers. In addition, the lack of management capacity and the lack of attention to career development in the institutions themselves are also a major cause of this phenomenon.

1.2 Dilemma of social identity

The social recognition of the elderly care industry is low, not only for caregivers but also for the whole industry, which is at the "edge of social recognition". There is a lack of social recognition, especially in less developed areas, and people consider elderly care workers to be "waiting on others", "inferior" and "incapable", and The lack of social recognition is further exacerbated by the combination of lower pay and lower social security than other professions.

Low self-occupational identity and high occupational mobility. Professional identity is an important factor and basis for a stable and sustainable career. It is also the sum of the perceptions and feelings of the caregivers of the elderly towards their profession and, on the one hand, an important psychological guarantee for positive evaluations and positive behavioral guidance.^[iii] However, according to the survey, most caregivers do not feel a high sense of "fulfillment" in their profession, and it is difficult to gain recognition and respect for their work. The initial motivation for choosing a career may have been to serve older people, but this gradually changed to a mechanical, repetitive means of earning a living over time, further reducing job satisfaction and eroding professional identity and satisfaction.

1.3 The dilemma of psychological construction

Perceptual backwardness reinforces a sense of psychological inferiority. According to the results of the survey, the majority of caregivers in elderly care institutions come from rural areas, and most of them are influenced by the traditional culture and ideology of the society, the practitioners themselves have prejudiced stereotypes about the profession of elderly caregivers. Under the influence of this perception, many caregivers have developed a strong sense of inferiority and have lost the ability to treat their work and profession correctly. This leads to a lack of enthusiasm for their work and a lack of psychological construction.

In the course of the survey, it is easy to see that many elderly care workers in city B can only perform some basic caregiving tasks due to a lack of professional skills, but on the other hand, these tasks require a lot of time, which often results in a mismatch between the effort and the reward of the caregiver's work, which in turn leads to a lack of professional dignity at the psychological level and a significant decrease in self-efficacy.^[iii] This leads to a lack of professional honor and a significant reduction in self-efficacy. At the same time, the nature of the work is such that the majority of clients are elderly people, who are generally less able to care for themselves and have obstinate or paranoid personalities, which can also cause a great deal of psychological stress for nursing staff. Taken together, the influence of multiple factors greatly deepens their sense of job burnout and dissatisfaction, and they regularly experience negative psychological cues such as tension, anxiety and exasperation, which undermine the effect of psychological construction.

2. Responses to the professional dilemmas of elderly care workers

2.1 Functional level of government

Enhancing the involvement of government functions is an important and indispensable aspect of solving this problem. Increasing policy support and improving relevant laws and regulations is the source of motivation for the long-term development and vitality of the elderly services industry.^[iv] Although it can effectively improve the working environment of elderly care workers and, to a certain extent, their motivation and satisfaction, establish and improve the laws and regulations related to elderly care workers, guide and regulate the development direction of the elderly care industry. Improve the construction of institutional mechanisms for the elderly care industry. It is also important to effectively improve and enhance the social recognition of elderly care workers and to create a more suitable social environment for their practice. Due to social attitudes, the public generally lacks a correct understanding of the elderly care sector or is mostly prejudiced, and the social recognition and concern for elderly care workers is low. The relevant government departments should strengthen positive publicity for elderly care workers and actively create a favorable social atmosphere to help them enhance their professional image and improve their social status in the minds of the public. Various forms of publicity should be used, to

raise people's awareness of the elderly care industry, so that a social culture of respect and understanding for elderly care workers can be formed in society as a whole.

2.2 Institutional level

Design better job descriptions and career development and promotion systems for caregivers. Good management skills in an institution will greatly enhance the sense of belonging of care workers. Good management skills are not only reflected in the attention paid to “working hours”, “wages”, “job content”, “performance evaluation” and so on. It is also important to focus on the future career development and potential of caregivers and to establish a diversified salary management mechanism while also providing appropriate spiritual incentives to enhance their career satisfaction and alleviate their career difficulties.^[v] Based on improving the incentive system, elderly service organizations should also continue to improve the job settings and career promotion system for their employees, and reasonably construct career promotion channels for elderly care workers, while improving the career development system to enhance the motivation of elderly care workers and solve the problem of career hardship.

2.3 Individual level of caregivers

The greater the initiative, the better the career development. Therefore, in the course of their career, elderly care workers should combine their reality and make efforts to improve their career competitiveness based on accurate self-evaluation of their personal characteristics, such as obtaining more advanced qualifications, receiving higher-level vocational skills training, etc., and then reasonably planning their career in the light of social needs.^[vi] In addition, they should plan their career goals in line with the needs of society, correct their attitudes towards employment, establish the right career development direction and improve their professional competitiveness. The active planning of career development by elderly care workers and their reasonable response to career difficulties in the process of employment is not only important for the practitioners to relieve their own career pressure, but also for the whole elderly care team to enhance their professionalism and specialty.

3. Conclusion

The stability of the employment and career development of elderly care workers, as a major component of the elderly services or elderly care industry, will greatly affect the development of the elderly services industry. If their career development is not guaranteed, the development of elderly care services will also lose its good foundation. Therefore, how to effectively help elderly care workers to improve their employment and career development has not only become a new focus of academic research, but also the future of aging-friendly development in society. It is also hoped that based on the above analysis of the professional dilemmas of elderly care workers in City B, Province S, countermeasures and suggestions to improve their professional dilemmas will be put forward to help elderly care workers improve their professional dilemmas and promote the healthy and stable development of the elderly service industry. It is hoped that the above analysis will help to improve the career plight of elderly care workers and promote the healthy and stable development of the elderly service industry.

About the author

Feifan Chen, male, Han nationality, born in Hengyang, Hunan Province in September, 1998, is a postgraduate student majoring in administration, majoring in social security

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