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A Study on the Influencing Factors of Labor Participation Rate Among Low-Age Migrant Elderly Population

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Abstract: With the intensification of population aging, China's demographic dividend is gradually disappearing, and the issue of labor participation among the younger mobile elderly population has aroused widespread concern from all sectors of society. This paper primarily utilizes data from the China Migrants Dynamic Survey (CMDS) to collect and analyze relevant factors influencing the labor participation of the younger mobile elderly population. It examines these factors from various angles, including demographic characteristics, family dynamics, health status, economic conditions, and social security. Furthermore, a logit regression model is established to conduct a regression analysis on the influencing factors of labor participation among the younger mobile elderly. Through empirical analysis, it is found that age, gender, intergenerational support, and health status have significant impacts on the labor participation of this population group. Based on these empirical results, relevant suggestions are proposed at the individual, societal, and national levels to enhance the labor participation of the younger mobile elderly population.

Keywords: Younger Elderly Population; Labor Participation; Logit Model

1. Characteristics of Low-Age Migrant Elderly Population

According to relevant demographic definitions, the low-age elderly population refers to individuals aged between 60 and 69. Under China's household registration system, migrant population excludes those who are separated from their registered residence but remain within the same city's jurisdiction. Therefore, the low-age migrant elderly population studied in this paper comprises individuals aged 60-69 who reside in a place different from their registered residence.

1.1 Relatively High Proportion of Low-Age Migrant Elderly in the Elderly Population

According to the 2020 survey on health services for migrant elderly conducted by the National Health Commission, migrant elderly account for 7.2% of the total migrant population in China, with a median age of 64. Among them, approximately 54% are aged 60-64, and 24% are aged 65-69. Compared with the overall elderly population nationwide, the age structure of migrant elderly tends to be younger.

1.2 Good Physical Health Among Low-Age Migrant Elderly

Given the unique characteristics of migrant populations, it can be inferred that the health status of low-age migrant elderly is generally better, as they would not choose to migrate across regions after retirement if not in good health. In self-assessed health information gathered from a 2017 survey, 42.00% reported being in good health, and 38.80% reported being basically healthy, indicating that the majority of migrant elderly are in good physical condition.

1.3 Strong Re-employment Willingness Among Low-Age Migrant Elderly

Although low-age elderly in China have reached retirement age, most of them enjoy good health and possess rich social experience and intellectual capabilities. Amidst the intensifying aging population in China, low-age elderly generally exhibit a strong willingness to re-enter the workforce. Research by Li Yutong (2021) revealed that seeking employment/work is one of the top three reasons for the migration of low-age elderly. When comparing the employment status of elderly across different age groups in urban and rural areas, the employment rate of low-age migrant elderly reached 48.4%, significantly higher than that of middle-aged and young-old migrant elderly. Song Yunqian (2020) and Lv Zhijun (2019) found in their sampling survey of low-age elderly in Jiangsu Province that the re-employment willingness among this group was as high as 60%.

2. Research Data

To investigate the influencing factors of labor participation rate among young-old migrant populations and to promote their employment engagement, this paper utilizes the data from the 2017 China Migrants Dynamic Survey (CMDS) for research purposes.

3. Empirical Analysis

3.1 Variable Distribution and Composition

After screening and deducting invalid samples, a total of 5004 samples were obtained for this study. Among them, male samples account for approximately 57.1%, while female samples make up about 42.9%, indicating a slight male dominance. Based on the analysis of migration reasons, a larger proportion of young-old female migrants choose to migrate due to family reasons, resulting in a relatively lower labor participation rate compared to males. In terms of registered residence, approximately 47.2% have urban residency, and 52.8% hold rural residency, demonstrating a relatively even distribution. Educationally, most individuals have primary or middle school education levels. As for marital status, 88.1% of young-old migrants have spouses or are cohabiting. Regarding intergenerational support, 62.4% of young-old migrants have received financial assistance from their children. From a health perspective, 48.9% of young-old migrants are in good health, 35.9% are in basic health, and only 15.2% are in poor health, indicating that the majority of this population group is in good physical condition. In terms of medical insurance, 82.3% are covered by medical insurance, suggesting that China's medical insurance system provides healthcare security for the majority of young-old migrants.

3.2 Analysis of Regression Results

Table1: Logit Regression Results for Labor Participation Rate among Low-Age Migrant Elderly Population

Labor Participation Rate of Low-Age Migrant Elderly Population		Regression Coefficient	OR (Odds Ratio) Value
Demographic Factors	Gender (Male=0)	-0.698***	0.498
	Age	-0.160**	0.771
	Hukou Location (Rural=0)	-0.156	0.856
	(Education Level) Primary School	-0.369	0.692
	Junior High School	-0.516*	0.597
	High School/Technical Secondary School	-0.208	0.812
	College and Above	-0.0944	0.910
	Annual Income (Unit: 10, 000 yuan)	-0.255**	0.775
Family Factors	Marital Status (Married=0)	0.126**	1.134
	Number of Employed Family Members	-0.008	0.992
Economic Factors	Intergenerational Financial Support (No=0)	-0.856***	0.425
Health Status	(Health Status) Fairly Healthy	1.048**	2.851
	Unhealthy	-1.005***	0.366
Security Factors	Insurance Status (Not Participating=0)	0.331	1.393

Based on the regression results, when comparing low-age migrant elderly females to males, the probability of females participating in social labor decreases by 69.8%, indicating a higher labor participation rate among male low-age migrant elderly. In terms of age, the older the low-age migrant elderly, the lower their probability of participating in labor, with a decrease of approximately 16.0% in labor participation rate for each additional year of age. Regarding registered residence, the labor participation rate of low-age migrant elderly with urban hukou is 15.6% lower than those with rural hukou, albeit this variable is not statistically significant. From an educational perspective, compared to uneducated low-age migrant elderly, those with some level of education tend to have reduced labor participation, though the decrease is minimal among those with the highest educational level. In terms of income, higher annual income among low-age migrant elderly is associated with a lower probability of participating in labor. In terms of marital status, unmarried low-age migrant elderly have a labor participation rate approximately 12.6% higher than those who are married. With respect to family employment, as the number of employed family members increases, the labor participation rate of low-age migrant elderly decreases, but this variable is not significant. In terms of financial support from children, low-age migrant elderly who receive financial assistance from their children have a significantly lower probability of participating in social labor. As for health status, generally, healthier low-age migrant elderly have a stronger willingness to participate in social labor, while those in poor health or unable to care for themselves have a lower willingness. Lastly, in terms of medical insurance, participation in medical insurance tends to promote labor participation among low-age migrant elderly, though this variable is not statistically significant.

4. Policies and Recommendations

Based on the above analysis and regression results, it is evident that gender, age, education level, and health status are significant factors limiting the labor participation of low-age migrant elderly. Therefore, this paper proposes the following recommendations targeted at individuals, society, and the state:

Firstly, we should stimulate the vitality of labor participation by breaking down ideological barriers, particularly the traditional mindset of "men go out to work, women stay at home" and the concept of "enjoying a peaceful retirement."

Secondly, establish an elderly education industry to elevate the literacy and cultural levels of the elderly population, with a focus on skill training.

Thirdly, improve the social security system to enhance the health of the elderly population. This includes not only strengthening medical insurance but also refining pension insurance and other relevant systems.

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