

# Research on the development of Elderly Human Resources in the population aging- a case study of Lijiang

Chen Rong<sup>1,a</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Economics and Management, Beijing Jiaotong University, Beijing, China

953205034@qq.com<sup>a</sup>

**Key words:** Population aging, Older adults, Human resource development.

**Abstract.** With the acceleration of population aging in China, the government and society are under great economic pressure of elderly support system. To this end, the government began to advocate the concept of active and healthy aging. People also begin to rethink the view of the elderly and the policy designed for them, among which the development of elderly human resources has received more and more attention. In recent years, some cities in China, the rapid development of the tourism industry brought opportunities for the development of human resources. Lijiang is a tourist city and many older adults live here, so it is of great significance to choose Lijiang to study the development of elderly human resource. This is also a reference for other tourist cities.

## 1. Introduction

By the end of 2018, according to the data from the national bureau of statistics, there were 249.49 million people aged 60 or above in China, accounting for 17.9 percent of the total population. However, it is internationally recognized that a country has entered an aging society as long as the population aged 60 or above accounts for 10 percent of the total population. This indicates that the aging situation in China has become very severe [1]. However, from the point of view of positive and healthy aging, if reasonable and effective development can be carried out, huge elderly population in China also can be regarded as a kind of abundant human resources treasure, which can not only alleviate the social pressure of population aging, but also conducive to the elderly to realize its social value. Moreover, the industry of the elderly can be gradually improved, and at the same time, the whole society may change some negative views on the elderly.

With the continuous development of tertiary industry in China, some tourism cities have brought opportunities for the development of human resources for the elderly due to their unique development advantages. In recent years, the aging rate of Lijiang has been accelerated. In order to actively deal with the profound transformation of population structure and the aging problem, the local government has formulated the "eleventh five-year plan" for the development of the elderly in Lijiang. There has been some progress in the positive development of human resources for the elderly, but there are also shortcomings. Therefore, the author will deeply sort out and analyze the current situation and existing problems of local elderly human resources development, and put forward relevant opinions and suggestions.

## 2. Tourism and aging development in Lijiang

Lijiang is located at the junction of Yunnan-Kweichow Plateau and Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, in the northwest of Yunnan province. Lijiang was badly hit by a big earthquake in 1996, but it was also because of this earthquake that Lijiang began to appear in the public eye. Later, with the propaganda of film and television literature works and the efforts of the local government to build the image and tourism brand of Lijiang. Lijiang gradually changed from an isolated city on the southwest border into a famous tourism city with over 40 million tourists and tourism revenue of 82.19 billion yuan every year. Relying on its rich tourism resources, the economic development vitality of Lijiang keeps increasing, bringing opportunities for the flow and development of labor force.

According to the sample data of the national population change sampling survey conducted by the national bureau of statistics in 2015, the sampling ratio was 0.8 percent. Among the 38,902 people

sampled in Yunnan province, 3,393 were aged 65 or above, accounting for 8.72 percent of the total population, an increase of 0.71 percent compared with the data in 2014. In terms of the proportion of 60-year-olds in the total population, the aging level of Lijiang has exceeded 10 percent since 2009. Although the aging level of Lijiang declined in 2010 and 2012, the aging level of Lijiang has gradually deepened since 2013. From 2013 to 2017, the proportion of 60-year-olds in the total population rose by 1.66 percent. Although 3.13 percent lower than the national level, the aging problem has begun to worsen (Fig.1). From the perspective of working population, the number of young working population in Lijiang has been decreasing year by year, and the proportion has been decreasing gradually likewise. The number of youth labor force population decreased by 3.02 percent from 2009 to 2017 (Table.1).

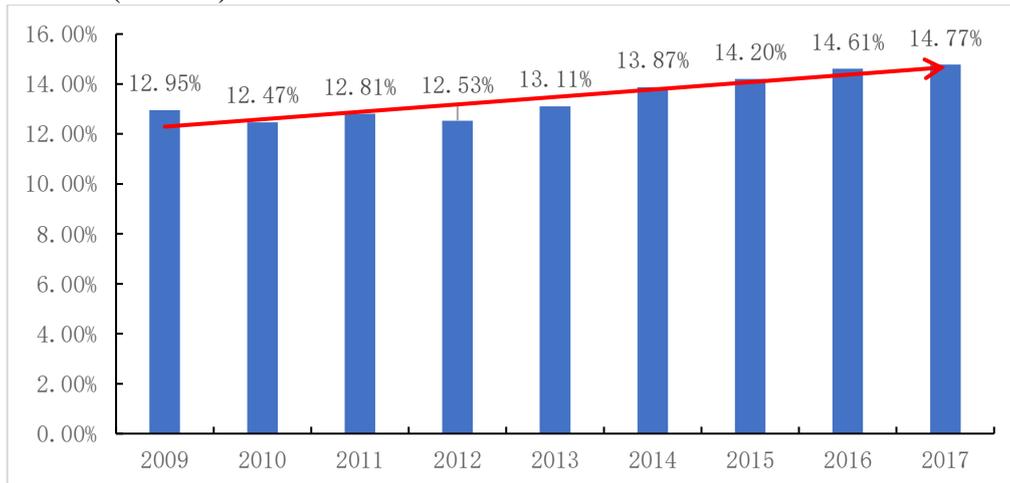


Figure 1. The change of the proportion of 60 population in the total population of Lijiang from 2009 to 2017 (%)  
(The data are from statistical yearbook 2010-2018 and statistics bureau of Lijiang)

Table 1. Changes of the proportion of youth labor force population in the total population in Lijiang from 2009 to 2017

Year	Year-end population	Youth labor force (person)	Proportion of youth workforce(percent)
In 2009	120,536,9	353,915	29.36%
In 2010	120,449,8	345,891	28.72%
In 2011	121,186,7	340,305	28.08%
In 2012	118,963,5	329,467	27.69%
In 2013	120,152,0	327,817	27.28%
In 2014	120,090,7	327,871	27.30%
In 2015	120,856,4	325,083	26.90%
In 2016	121,798,7	325,775	26.75%
In 2017	122,700,9	323,177	26.34%

(The data are from statistical yearbook 2010-2018 and statistics bureau of Lijiang)

To sum up, while the aging development speed is accelerated and the population of young labor force is decreasing. There is still an obvious gap between the development of elderly human resources and economic and social development in Lijiang. How to take advantages of the elderly human resources to develop the local economy and alleviate the old-age security, as well as promoting the organic combination of these two resources, both of which are very realistic questions. Finally, turning the silver wave into a golden force requires the joint efforts of the government and social organizations of Lijiang.

### 3. The development situation of elderly human resources in tourism market in Lijiang

Although the elderly group has disadvantages in physical strength and the ability to accept new things, the potential for re-development with rich life experience and work life experience should not be underestimated. Based on the current situation of Lijiang, the local government has gradually realized

that the development of human resources for the elderly in the context of aging development can rely on their own advantages of tourism resources. The author mainly analyzes from the following three aspects.

### **3.1 A university for the aged has been established, with some functions for tourism**

In 2013, Lijiang cultural center established the university for the elderly. In April 2017, this university was listed as the second batch of pilot units for the standardized construction of universities for the elderly in the national cultural system. The university for the elderly mainly relies on the resources of the cultural center and adheres to the educational purpose of "increasing knowledge, enriching life, cultivating sentiment, promoting health and serving the society" to train the elderly in literature and art, and guides some of the younger or older people to contribute to the development of tourism in Lijiang. For example, the elderly should be trained in skills (dancing national dances and singing national songs), and then set up cooperation with tourism service companies which are named Lishui Jinsha and Lijiang Qianggu Qing to build a platform for the elderly to create value in performances and earn income through performances. Due to the acceleration of economic globalization and the intermarriage between Naxi minority (it is 1 of the 56 ethnic groups in China) and other ethnic groups, more and more young local Naxi minority can no longer speak Naxi dialect (the language of the Naxi minority). In addition, with the rapid development of tourism in Lijiang, more and more people from other provinces and countries are seeking better development opportunities in Lijiang. There is a huge demand for such group of people to learn local Naxi dialect and Naxi cultural knowledge [2]. Therefore, some elderly Naxi people also participated in the Naxi dialect teaching and recording audio for some Naxi language textbooks in Lijiang cultural center [3]. The elderly play an important role in language training. They teaching young people about the Naxi dialect and the knowledge which related to the Lijiang in the classroom, making a new generation of young people deeply understand the Naxi wisdom of the older and better engaged in the construction of Lijiang tourism. Ultimately, making the culture connotation of the Lijiang Naxi tourism more appealing, which can promote Lijiang internal economic cycle effectively.

### **3.2 Hiring older adults to perform in tourist attractions**

When entering some scenic spots in Lijiang, tourists will see a group of older adults holding hands and dancing in a circle which is called "Tongluoli". "Tongluoli" is a very important part of the Naxi culture. This activity reflects the good wishes of the local people for peace, tranquility and the strong local spirit of solidarity. When tourists feel a little numb in the commercial streets, they may feel very comfortable to see such a group of elderly people who are dancing in the national costume. Some tourists even participate in this activity, in which the way of travelling and content for tourists are sublimated. We can see that the elderly, driven by the government, can not only earn money but also exercise their bodies and improve the cultural confidence of Lijiang's tourism industry. In this way, the pressure of local government on medical care for the elderly has also been alleviated, and in the modern society with increasingly rapid aging rate, such development forms promote the virtuous circle of local social development.

### **3.3 Dongba paper production, Naxi ancient music training**

The government invited the older generation to participate in the protection and commercial activities of Dongba paper (Dongba paper is a special paper used by Naxi Dongba priests to record sutras and draw paintings). Firstly, some cultural departments of Lijiang have been declared the inheritor of the Dongba paper. The government support them in many aspects. For example, recording the knowledge and skills of inheritor with texting, imaging, taping and other variety of ways, then giving appropriate financial support (municipal heritage people 5000 yuan a year, the county heritage people is 2000 yuan RMB per year) [4]. Secondly, the best development company of Lijiang Dongba paper called "Dongba paper lane". The government will provide support to this company every year such as tax breaks or give them relatively cheap rent if they want to run a new store in the scenic spot. Only the government has fulfilled these promises, they can recommend the experienced papermaker to this company to participate in the production of products, and the part of the young elderly are also

involved in the process of the store products making and the introduction of the commodities.

Naxi ancient music (it is the oldest music in Yunnan province and one of the oldest in China or the world) has three characteristics: first, the repertoire is old; second, the instruments are old; third, the players are older adults, and most of whom are in their 70s and 80s (This activity provides a new way for the human resource development of the older adults from 70 to 80 years old in Lijiang). In this respect, the government of Lijiang also guides a large number of local elderly people to learn Naxi ancient music and encourages them to participate in Naxi ancient music performances. In this process, both enterprises and society have created huge economic benefits.

#### **4. Problems existing in the development of human resources for the elderly in Lijiang**

##### **4.1 The acquisition of information resources is lagging behind**

At present, the Lijiang municipal government is actively guiding the elderly to participate in the local tourism development activities, but the elderly still with problems in obtaining information. It is not only difficult for the elderly to obtain effective employment information, but also difficult for enterprises to obtain the information of the elderly with the demand for re-employment. Generally speaking, the older adults who have strong desire to re-work can't find a direct way to realize their own value, and this part of the older adults' resources are not used effectively. In addition, in terms of Naxi dialect training and cultural training, many enterprises in Lijiang have to train young people at a high cost and in a long period due to the lack of smooth access to information, which leads to the waste of social resources. Finally, the sources of employment information are also unreliable. Because of the imperfect of the Lijiang old talent market, employment information in people's lives and on the Internet has become difficult to distinguish between true and false. At the same time, in this era of rapid development of information, the elderly's ability to accept the new message is limited because they lack of certain ability to distinguish true and false information. This is easy to be used by criminals, and ultimately the loss outweighs the gain. On the other hand, the elderly can only get information through social network, that is, information provided by relatives and friends or the original organization. If they break away from this network, the elderly can only stay at home.

##### **4.2 The development of resources for elderly who are not Naxi minority is insufficient**

Lijiang is not only dominated by Naxi minority, but also by many other ethnic groups including Han residents. In addition, with the acceleration of the vertical and horizontal flow between the contemporary population areas, the proportion of the elderly who are not Naxi minority in the total elderly population in Lijiang has gradually increased. However, the government failed to effectively and fully guide these elderly people into the tourism market in the development of resources. It is reflected in the following aspects: First, in the performance of the tourist scenic spots, the government mainly recruits the elderly of the Naxi minority. Second, focusing on the display of the Naxi culture and only does the cultivation of the cultural knowledge of the Naxi minority because they ignore the fact that Lijiang is a place where ethnic minorities live together. As a result, the training of cultural knowledge of other ethnic groups has been ignored, and this part of the elderly human resources has been shelved.

##### **4.3 The system of value assessment, compensation management and rights protection for the elderly is not perfect**

This kind of problem is a common problem in the development of human resources for the aged in various regions of China. The government of Lijiang has not established a complete set of value assessment concepts and systems for the elderly in various regions, and there are still relatively backward concepts, such as family members do not understand and support their parents' re-employment, or want their parents to stay at home to look after their babies [5]. This reflects that both the family and the society do not fully understand the value of the elderly, so it is not conducive to the establishment of the local elderly value evaluation system. In terms of salary management, the local elderly are generally engaged in jobs with relatively low salary and unstable positions. There

are bigger problems on protecting the rights of the elderly in Lijiang. First, it has to do with the country's relatively behindhand retirement policy. Second, it has also to do with the imperfect human resource development policy for the elderly in Lijiang. Specifically, the elderly human resources development is still in the state of decentralization, uncertainty, spontaneity and lack of strategic as well as long-term development planning and supporting measures. From a comprehensive point of view, the rights and interests of the elderly human resources protection system needs to be further improved and established.

## **5. Suggestions on promoting the development of elderly human resources in Lijiang**

### **5.1 Improving the quality of job training for the elderly**

First of all, the government should provide relevant knowledge training for the elderly through universities for the elderly or other institutions to improve the elderly's ability to distinguish the authenticity of employment information. It can be done in the form of young people helping the old, because mutual help can save social resources while achieving the goal. At the same time, the government should also strictly control the false employment information in the market, while maintaining the order of the job market. Second, on the basis of improving the elderly's ability to distinguish the authenticity of information, the government and relevant departments should focus on improving the elderly's employability, the key of which is to carry out scientific training courses and activities. The government should provide some targeted training. For example, in Sweden and other Nordic countries, many departments are encouraged and supported by the government to organize various forms of training for the elderly, so that many elderly people get professional training opportunities in employment [6]. For the elderly who are not Naxi minority are willing to participate in tourism construction, the government should organize relevant companies to help them learn Naxi cultural knowledge. For example, they can compile Naxi native language textbooks and provide them with regular Naxi conversation and writing training. The last one is that the enterprise should establish a good training system for elderly human resources based on value and knowledge sharing. Resource sharing refers to the realization of value creation sharing through knowledge exchange, knowledge sharing and communication among enterprises. To put it simply, it means establishing a mentoring training mechanism to use the knowledge, experience and skills of the elderly workers to motivate the young employees. Afterwards, the young people also feedback the new knowledge to the elderly workers. Form a good atmosphere for the elderly to drive and help the young. In this process, it not only harmonizes the relationship between the elderly and the young workers, but also improves the ability of the elderly to adapt to employment.

### **5.2 To establish an effective human resource awakening mechanism for the elderly**

Why the government of Lijiang has not developed enough human resources for the elderly? One important reason is that it has not established a corresponding awakening mechanism, because in terms of the employment of the elderly, it needs not only the promotion of government and enterprises but also needs the elderly to have the intention of re-employment. In view of the special situation that Lijiang is a tourist city, the government and relevant departments can encourage the local elderly, especially the young elderly, to start their own businesses again. Specifically, they can be encouraged to find jobs by providing them with low-rent houses and shops in major tourist attractions (such as the ancient city of Lijiang, Shuhe ancient town, Yulong snow mountain, etc.) and tax relief. The government can also encourage employers to employ a retired old person and recruit a young person to employment to arouse the employment awareness of the elderly. Enterprises should also emphasize fairness. Fair and diversified incentive modes can reflect enterprises' humanistic care for the elderly, thus arousing the vitality of enterprises' human resources for the elderly.

### **5.3 Governments, companies and communities work together to eliminate the idea hindrance gradually**

One of the key problems to be solved in the development of human resources for the elderly is the

obstacle of ideology. In view of the influence of the traditional family concept, we should start from the grass-roots community and do a good job in basic publicity [7]. Because the elderly can be directly communicated through the community and the government can conduct direct publicity on the basis of the community then gradually changing the current situation that traditional families do not understand the re-employment of the elderly. In view of the social prejudice against the elderly, the government needs to continue to formulate and improve policies on human resources development for the elderly, and enterprises also need to carry out publicity. At the same time, large-scale publicity should also be carried out in combination with the media, so as to gradually change the society's attitude towards the re-employment of the elderly. Enterprises should change their minds and gradually increase employment opportunities and jobs for the elderly. Only when enterprises accept the employment of the elderly can they truly solve the balance between supply and demand of human resource development for the elderly [8]. Finally, after the society gradually changes its attitude towards the elderly, the social value evaluation system of the elderly can be gradually enriched.

#### **5.4 Establishing a perfect information platform for the employment of the elderly**

To build an employment platform for the elderly. Firstly, the government of Lijiang can rely on the current network technology to establish an employment platform network for the elderly and regularly release relevant employment information on the network. Secondly, deleting the false employment information timely. However, since some older adults are not familiar with the network operation, the government can also publish some employment information in the employment section of local newspapers or encourage news office to increase the employment information inquiry section of elderly people in newspapers. Finally, communities play an essential role, which is the most familiar and accessible place for the elderly to obtain information besides the family. Therefore, the community can strengthen the collection of information about the elderly re-employment function, and regularly published. In addition, it can also promote some enterprises that have the demand of hiring the elderly to connect with the community, so that the elderly can easily and quickly obtain some reliable employment information.

#### **5.5 Establishing a human resource flow system for the aged that matches posts**

The core of person-post fit is the mutual adaptation between matching of individual characteristics and post characteristics. Since the elderly have intellectual capital, such as work and life experience, professional knowledge, etc. From the standpoint of the enterprise, firstly, they should scientifically identify and evaluate the capabilities of the elderly, then reasonably guide the flow of human resources for the elderly. Secondly, establishing a reasonable career development mechanism with talent training system for the elderly and a rehiring system for retired employees. We will ensure that the basic working rights and interests of the elderly are protected. For example, the economic activities of the elderly can be characterized as labor relations, so that the labor standards of the elderly can be consistent with workers to the maximum extent. We will formulate flexible labor contract terms and social security policies to protect the legitimate rights and interests of the elderly in employment and the interests of employers [9].

### **6. Conclusion**

To sum up, although the elderly human resources in tourist cities can be partly effectively developed through the development of tourism, there are corresponding problems when the local government makes use of these resources. We need to realize that the aging rate is accelerating in China, and compared with other developed countries, the aging problem in China is still restricted by social civilization, material wealth, social security level, pension service system and so on. Overall, we are facing many challenges now. Therefore, it is particularly important to develop and utilize the talent resources of the elderly. Lijiang Municipal Government and other relevant departments should make good use of local tourism resources and guide local elderly people to participate in tourism activities, such as performance, training and display of Dongba culture. We should also be aware of the existing problems and strive to establish a smooth information platform that can expand the scope of

employment for the elderly, then encourage local enterprises to establish a reasonable salary mechanism which can promote the sustainable development of local economy and reduce the economic pressure that brought by population aging ultimately.

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