



Over-Age Migrant Workers, Where is the Road – A Study on the Current Situation of Over-Age Migrant Workers’ Pension in Sichuan Province

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Abstract. In the context of the increasingly severe aging in China, the realistic dilemma and the way out for over-aged migrant workers are explored to provide a scientific basis and reference value for the national policy formulation in the future. A total of 862 questionnaires were distributed in this research. The analysis results show that: over-aged migrant workers still hope to age in their hometowns, some of them have changed their concept of aging, their awareness of self-aging has increased, and they accept community aging; in general, the income of over-aged migrant workers is low, and their willingness to purchase insurance is not strong; most over-aged migrant workers have no rights and interests protection; and it is difficult to find employment. Based on the current situation faced by over-aged migrant workers, the following policy suggestions are put forward: (1) expand employment channels and improve technical ability; (2) grant equal civil rights and coordinate pension insurance; (3) optimize and improve social security system; (4) promote social family mutual pension.

Keywords: over-age migrant workers · pension · rights and interests protection

1 Research Background

The No. 1 document of the central government, “Opinions of the State Council of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on the Key Work of Comprehensively Promoting Rural Revitalization in 2023”, mentions “safeguarding the employment rights of over-aged migrant workers.” In addition, the “2021 Migrant Worker Monitoring Survey Report” points out that the total number of migrant workers in China will be 292.51 million in 2021, and the number of over-aged migrant workers is also gradually increasing. We must admit that there are more migrant workers, and they are getting old. Why do they continue to be employed when they should enjoy a happy old age? How is it used? Who will be responsible for them when they grow old? How to retire? What risks will they face when playing in their spare time?

Understanding the reasons why over-age migrant workers still work at such an old age and the problems they encounter in their work; improving the research on employment

and pension for over-age migrant workers is the primary purpose of this project team's research. In this study, the significance is: to protect the rights and interests of migrant workers, to make full use of the labour force and realize social governance, and to create a good industry atmosphere and social atmosphere.

2 Literature Review

The state defines over-age migrant workers as those still working beyond the legal retirement age of the state. In addition, according to the Provisional Measures of the State Council on the Retirement and Retirement of Workers, the current retirement age of workers in China is 60 years old for men and 50 years old for women workers. Accordingly, this project team considers over-age migrant workers as male and female migrant workers aged 60 and above and 50 and above who are still working.

Regarding whether self care can become the main way of rural elderly care, Li Qiao and Chen Jian have summarized that self care will become mainstream, and there are four main types of rural self care: land self care, mutual assistance self care, savings self care, and reemployment self care. In the case where the rural social security system and elderly care service market have not yet fully developed, self care will serve as a transitional elderly care method [1]. According to research by Guo Xiaohua et al., the current problems faced by elderly migrant workers are mainly in terms of economy, security, and rights [2]. Zhu Huijie pays attention to the health, employment, and social security status of the elderly, explaining the survival status and main problems faced by migrant workers [3]. Among the older generation of migrant workers, the older they are, the poorer their mental health is and they are at a disadvantage in the urban employment competition cabinet, mostly in the casual labor market [4]. However, human capital and social capital largely determine whether migrant workers stay in the city for work or permanently return home [5]. Regarding the research on the life changes and satisfaction of elderly migrant workers returning to rural areas, scholars such as Li Fang found that after returning to rural areas, elderly migrant workers have low satisfaction with life, reduced personal income, and low pension security, but their intimacy with their children has increased [6]. However, some scholars' research has found that the wave of migrant workers returning to their hometowns for entrepreneurship and employment continues to rise, indicating that migrant workers have sustained resilience and vitality. Meng Decai and Liu Shilin pointed out in their research that "urban return" entrepreneurship has become a new force for active county economic development and can drive rural labor force to transfer to nearby employment, and drive industrial transfer in underdeveloped areas. However, they still insist on working after retirement, mostly considering elderly care [7].

It can be seen that the research on over-age migrant workers is still relatively superficial. Most of the literature is still in the legal perspective, and the protection of migrant workers' rights and interests is still in the literary expression. Very little information is available for field investigation, which has yet to reach a certain depth or solve existing problems. This is the purpose and origin of this study. In China's aging society, the survey of the employment and pension of over-aged migrant workers is undoubtedly of theoretical and practical significance. It can solve the follow-up problems of over-aged migrant workers' retirement.

3 Research Method

The target population of this project was over-age migrant workers, aged 60–80 years old for men and 50–80 years old for women in Sichuan Province. The questions in the survey questionnaire were designed from the social issues of this project by understanding the primary status and needs of over-age migrant workers and combining them with national policies and relevant literature. The survey was directed at three main areas: personal data, work intentions and status, retirement patterns and pension security.

The study did not use a rigorous random sample and selected some areas in Sichuan province with a relatively high concentration of migrant workers, such as Caiquan Xinjie, Puyang Street, Yimin vegetable market and other street locations. The survey area included rural bazaars, wholesale markets, construction sites, distilleries, vegetable markets, processing plants, artisans' homes, city streets, neighbourhoods, transport starts and other places for selected street surveys. The survey was conducted on a combination of online and offline methods. Paper questionnaires were distributed and collected online, mainly on the questionnaire platform "Questionnaire Star." Eight hundred sixty-two questionnaires were distributed, with 777 valid questionnaires and an effective rate of 90.14%.

4 Results and Analysis

Of all respondents, the ratio of men to women was 354:423. Women accounted for a large proportion; the age group mainly concentrated in the 60–69 years old, accounting for 58.30%; 70–79 years old or less accounted for a minor proportion of the population, accounting for only 9.39%; literacy mainly concentrated in elementary school and below, accounting for 44.02% followed by illiteracy, accounting for 22.01%, junior high school accounted for 21.0%. Education is generally low; income in 2000–3000 yuan accounted for 28.83%, 3000–5000 yuan accounted for 28.06%, and 1000–2000 yuan accounted for 19.56% in low income.

Understanding the information about going out to work in other channels accounted for 50.0%, followed by the introduction of residents of the same village or relatives, accounting for 45.7%. In comparison, the head of the contractor led 14.9%, the human resources market accounted for 12.4%, the Internet accounted for 8.6%, and finally, government department organizations accounted for 8.4%. No labour rights protection accounted for 54.6%. Oral promises accounted for 24.0%. Written contracts accounted for 19.6%, life and death promises 1.7%, and the violation severely damaged the rights; The highest percentage of reasons for working in the survey was 31.7% for retirement savings, and the lowest percentage was 5.8% for the increasing experience. (Table 1).

On the employment side, other aspects accounted for 18.79%, construction accounted for 17.85%, accounting 17.5% of manufacturing, wholesale, and retail accounted for 16.92%, accommodation and catering accounted for 9.1%, residential services 8.87%, agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, and fishery 5.72%, transportation 5.25%, the employment environment is challenging. Among the respondents, 33.02% think there are various other problems, 30.57% believe there are problems with local employment industries and job types, 20.42% think there are significant skill barriers for migrant

Table 1. Job reason statistics

Work reasons	Counting	Percentage of
High income	287	19.2%
Good development prospects	138	9.2%
Saving for retirement	474	31.7%
Expanding your network	107	7.2%
Increase your experience	86	5.8%
Inspiring Potential	109	7.3%
Other	293	19.6%

workers, and 15.99% think employment information asymmetry, lack of skills, poor information, industry restrictions, and other problems plague them during employment. The percentage of over-aged migrant workers working 8–12 h is 54.5%, reflecting the long working hours of older adults. 73.4% agree with the implementation of supportive policies to encourage returning to their hometowns to start their businesses, and 60.09% also agree with the development of relevant vocational training for migrant workers, who have no professional and technical skills, are over-aged and have declining physical fitness, and have fewer employment opportunities and a smaller range of occupations provided by the city, making it more difficult for them to integrate into urban development.

According to the survey, self-saving or pension insurance pension accounted for 55%, family children pension accounted for 40%, and community pension accounted for 5%. Over-age migrant workers prefer self-saving or insurance assistance and then family children pension (Table 2).

Investigate the retirement place. The household location accounted for 45%. The current residents accounted for 20%, did not think about accounting for 20%, prefer to retire in their hometown. Urban and rural residents' basic medical insurance accounted for 43%, did not buy for 24%, not accurate insurance purchase accounted for 18%, lack of medical insurance-related knowledge and awareness, and the promotion of medical insurance is not fully popular. The survey did not buy insurance reasons, no money to buy accounted for 39.39%, can not estimate the loss accounted for 21.72%, the insurance income is not expected accounted for 19.19%, do not understand accounted for 11.62%, expensive accounted for 8.08%, the willingness to buy insurance is not strong.

Table 2. Statistics of retirement places

Aging in place	Counting	Percentage of
Self-saving or pension insurance	427	55%
Family Child Retirement	311	40%
Aging in the community	39	5%

In big cities, the range of occupations and industries left for over-aged migrant workers gradually decreases. However, the number of job seekers is increasing progressively yearly. Over-age migrant workers pursue the maximum labour hard-earned income, lack the awareness of paying pension insurance, and do not consider pension life insurance after retirement. The Labor and other labour rights and interests laws do not cover over-age migrant workers. Most industries in which over-age migrant workers are engaged are industries with high risks, long working hours, and challenging conditions.

The older generation, who grew up under challenging conditions, inherited the virtues of practicality and willingness to suffer from hardship from the previous generation and believed that they should work until old age. At the same time, they want to continue working to prove that they are still valuable to society and realize their value through hard work, which reflects their unwillingness to quit the leading labour group in the community. To reduce the pressure on their children, over-aged migrant workers hope to earn more money to support their children materially. Over-age migrant workers have formed their consciousness of old age and have “old age anxiety,” so they can save money for their old age while still saving money by working.

First, expand employment channels and improve technical skills. Develop a variety of skills training for over-age migrant workers, diversify employment methods, and stop over-age migrant workers from falling into the “difficult employment” dilemma. Second, give equal civil rights and coordinate pension insurance. Improve China’s pension insurance system and popularize pension insurance among over-age migrant workers so that they can have an additional layer of material protection after retirement. The social system should give equal civil rights to migrant workers, integrate them into the social security system, and provide and let them enjoy social welfare. Thirdly, we should promote the social family mutual aid pension. Home care has always been the idea and concept of most people’s old-age care. It is necessary to enhance services in this area and promote social services and work development to meet the social old-age needs of over-age migrant workers. Fourth, optimize and improve the social security system. Actively explore the social security suitable for these groups, encourage localities to introduce protection policies, and optimize and improve the social security system so that over-age migrant workers can work without worries.

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