

# Several Propositions on the Influencing Factors of Re-employment in Urban Younger Elderly

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**Abstract:** Dealing with the active aging of the population has become a major strategic problem in China's economic development. With the increasing number of elderly people in China, it is of great significance to explore how to promote the re-employment of the younger elderly, fully develop and use the power resources of the elderly, and relieve the pressure of social economy and family. Based on the relevant literature research, the paper constructs the integration model of the factors affecting the re-employment intention of young urban elderly people and further puts forward several hypotheses. The research suggests that society should change the social consciousness, give full play to the leading role of the government, improve the legislative and institutional system, and encourage enterprises to actively employ the elderly.

**Keywords:** Younger elderly; Re-employment; Influencing factors

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## 1. Introduction

According to the data released by the National Bureau of Statistics, the population aged 60 and above accounts for 18.70% of the total population; in 2022, the population aged 60 and above is 19.8%; by the end of 2023, the proportion of the population aged 60 and above has reached 21.1%. According to international standards, the population over 60 years old over 10% of the total population is a slightly aging society, and over 20% is a moderately aging society. This shows that China has entered a moderately aging society. In addition, while the average life expectancy of the population is increasing, the birth rate in China has dropped from 7.52% in 2021 to 6.29% in 2023. The aging problem of fewer children makes it urgent to develop and use part of the elderly resources.

In 2021, the United Nations proposed that in China, Europe, Latin America, and the United States of America, 20%–34% of older Americans feel lonely. Social isolation and feelings of self-loneliness are harmful, shortening the lifespan of the elderly and compromising their physical and mental health and quality of life<sup>[1]</sup>. In the face of this phenomenon, the Opinions of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council on Strengthening the Work of the Aging in the New Era emphasize the active view of aging and healthy aging, enhance the vitality of the elderly population, and support the elderly group to actively participate in social and

economic activities and public life. Steven P. Hooker pointed out that the physical health status directly affects the participation of the elderly in the society <sup>[2]</sup>. The younger elderly are the backbone of the elderly population and have certain advantages in physical and mental health. Encouraging the elderly, especially the younger elderly, to actively participate in political, economic, and social activities is not only an affirmation of the contribution to the reuse of human resources but also a humanitarian concern for the elderly.

## **2. Related literature research and theoretical models**

### **2.1. Definition of young urban elderly people**

In China, the elderly population is divided into younger elderly (60–69 years old), middle-aged elderly (70–79 years old), elderly (80–89 years old) and long-lived elderly (over 90 years old). Among them, the younger elderly are in good health and can think clearly, as they are usually economically independent and can take care of themselves, not only without care, but also can continue to work for the family or society, and are the main force in the power resources of the elderly. According to the division of China's elderly population and combined with China's retirement policy, the younger elderly are defined as 60–69 years old for men and 55–69 years old for women.

### **2.2. Factors affecting the re-employment of the young urban elderly people**

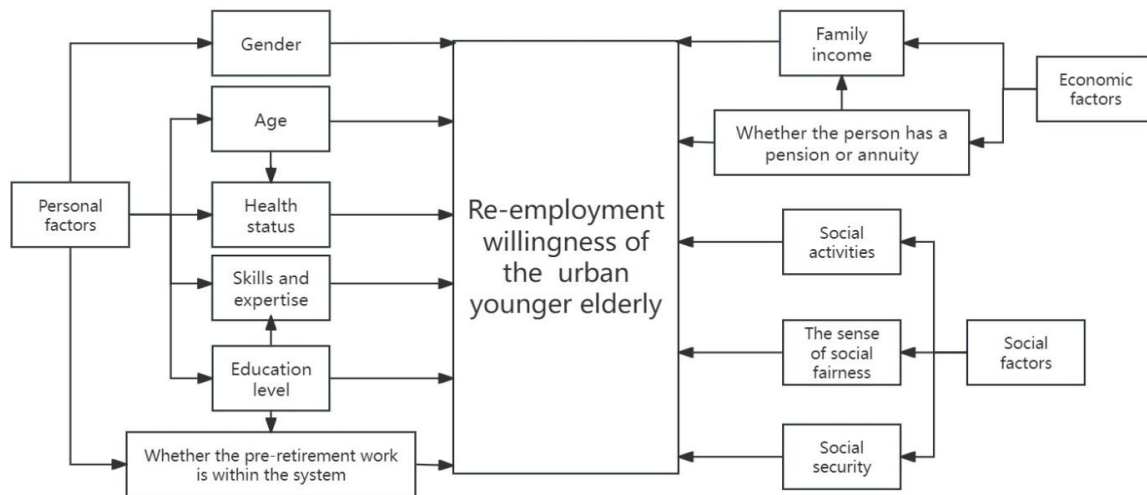
Many scholars have studied the influencing factors of the re-employment willingness of the younger elderly. Although the focus and results are different due to the differences in the samples, they can be roughly summarized as personal factors, economic factors, social factors, and so on.

In terms of personal factors, Lei found that the re-employment of young urban elderly showed obvious gender differences, and men's employment willingness was significantly higher than that of women <sup>[3]</sup>. Liao found in the data of the elderly status tracking questionnaire in urban and rural areas that gender, age, and educational level are the main factors affecting the re-employment and re-employment willingness of the elderly <sup>[4]</sup>. In terms of economic factors, Hui found that the more economic income, the weaker the willingness of the elderly to find jobs <sup>[5]</sup>. Liang found that elderly people who hold pensions after retirement are more inclined to find jobs after retirement <sup>[6]</sup>. In terms of social factors, Li vowed to improve the rights and interests of the elderly group and establish a security system for the elderly when treating the elderly group <sup>[7]</sup>. Li and Zhang found that the pension and commercial pension insurance in the pension security have a significant impact on the re-employment of the younger elderly <sup>[8]</sup>. The research results of the scholars have laid a good theoretical foundation for the research of this paper. The paper will discuss the factors affecting the re-employment willingness of the young urban elderly from three aspects, including personal factors, economic factors, and social factors.

### **2.3. Model construction of the factors influencing the re-employment willingness of the urban younger elderly**

In addition to the influencing factors above, the author thinks that other various factors will also have an impact. The effect of age on health status has been described above, while the education level is related to the economic status, whether the work before retirement is within the system, and whether the elderly have skills or expertise. The educated elderly may acquire more abilities and generally work better. Among the economic factors, pension has a certain impact on the family income. The elderly who have a pension subsidize the family income and increase the family income. Social activities in social factors and the sense of social equity influence and complement each other. When the elderly participate in social activities, they enhance their social and self-

identity and have a deeper sense of social equity. At the same time, an increasing sense of social equity helps the elderly to participate more actively in social activities. Based on the above analysis, the author constructed the integration model of the factors influencing the re-employment willingness in urban younger elderly, as shown in **Figure 1**.



**Figure 1.** Integration model of the factors influencing the re-employment willingness in urban younger elderly

### 3. The proposal of several propositions

#### 3.1. Personal factors

##### 3.1.1. Gender

Considering that younger older women may spend more time in family care, gender factors will have an impact on re-employment willingness.

##### 3.1.2. Age

After the aging of the elderly, with the growth of age, physical aging accelerates, and physical health gradually deteriorates. Age will affect the re-employment willingness of the younger elderly to a certain extent.

##### 3.1.3. Education level

The younger elderly with high education levels have a wider range of re-employment choices, a strong sense of self-efficacy, and a stronger sense of residual heat, and the higher their willingness to re-employment.

##### 3.1.4. Health status

With the continuous growth of the younger elderly, physical function gradually declines, the physical health condition is not as good as before, only the physical health condition is good, the re-employment willingness will be high.

##### 3.1.5. Skills and expertise

Most younger elderly with special skills may show high enthusiasm for employment due to their long-term accumulated skills and experience, especially when the potential job opportunities match their professional skills.

### **3.1.6. Pre-retirement work is within the system**

In the system, the work stability is strong, the welfare benefits are good, the work status is more recognized by society, and employment discrimination is small. Therefore, the younger elderly who work in the system are more likely to continue to choose to work in the system after retirement.

To sum up, the following propositions are proposed.

H1a: The re-deployment willingness of males is higher than that of females in the younger elderly.

H1b: Age has a negative impact on the re-employment willingness of the younger elderly.

H1c: Education level has a positive impact on the re-employment willingness of the younger elderly.

H1d: Health status has a positive impact on the re-employment willingness of the younger elderly.

H1e: Skills and expertise have a positive impact on the re-employment willingness of the younger elderly.

H1f: The younger elderly who work within the system before retirement are more willing to find jobs.

## **3.2. Economic factors**

### **3.2.1. Family income**

The level of family income affects the willingness of the younger elderly and affects their children's support for their re-employment. The higher the family income, the lower the re-employment willingness of the younger elderly, and the more their children hope their parents can enjoy their old age.

### **3.2.2. Pension or annuity**

The younger elderly who do not have a pension or annuity are unable to secure their livelihood. The quality of life of younger elderly with low pensions or annuities still cannot meet their physical and mental needs. Therefore, to obtain more economic resources, the younger elderly without pension or annuity are more willing to participate in re-employment.

To sum up, the following propositions are proposed.

H2a: Family income has a negative impact on the re-employment willingness of the younger elderly.

H2b: Pension or annuity has a negative impact on the re-employment willingness of the younger elderly.

## **3.3. Social factors**

### **3.3.1. Social activities**

The elderly who can actively participate in social activities can not only enrich their leisure time but also improve their personal status and life attitude in time. From the actual situation of the urban elderly in the country, the elderly who are keen on social activities such as traveling together, dancing, participating in the elderly class, and so on, generally have a low willingness to participate in re-employment.

### **3.3.2. Social security**

As the improvement of the social security system for the elderly is conducive to ensuring the quality of daily life of the elderly, the re-employment willingness of the elderly with social security is generally lower than that of the elderly without social security.

### **3.3.3. The sense of social fairness**

The sense of social fairness is the feeling of the degree of social fairness, that is, the feeling of equal social relations between people. The elderly who can feel fairness in society can be more optimistic and actively participate in social activities and are not easily affected by the sense of age discrimination in employment.

To sum up, the following propositions are proposed.



H3a: Social activities have a negative impact on the re-employment willingness of the younger elderly.

H3b: Social security has a negative impact on the re-employment willingness of the younger elderly.

H3c: The sense of social fairness has a positive impact on the re-employment willingness of the younger elderly.

## **4. Countermeasures to promote the re-employment willingness of the young urban elderly**

### **4.1. Publicize a positive outlook on aging and create a good atmosphere of productive aging**

The joint efforts of the whole society are needed to eliminate the social and employer discrimination against the younger elderly in re-employment. Through the publicity of a positive outlook on aging, cultivate the social awareness of the younger elderly re-employment, so that the younger elderly can achieve happiness and even success at an old age. Social organizations need to provide a platform for the younger elderly to participate in social services, enhance their awareness of independence, self-esteem, and self-confidence, make a positive outlook on aging deeply rooted in the hearts of the people, and transform the younger elderly from social life to social participation so that they can feel the atmosphere of productive aging while integrating into the team or organization. In addition, among young people, it is more necessary to publicize the idea of supporting the re-employment of the younger elderly, so that the idea of participating in society, realizing self-value, and creating social value can be supported by their children, to better create a good atmosphere of productive aging.

### **4.2. Enterprises to develop relevant systems to take in the younger elderly re-employment**

Taking care of the younger generation is one of the reasons that cause the younger elderly to not work. In the face of this situation, enterprises need to provide flexible working schedules and workplace selection and implement a flexible working system, so that the younger elderly can better balance their work and life. When setting up positions for the elderly, enterprises consider the employment space of the young and middle-aged people, create new positions for the younger elderly, and release job information for recruiting the younger elderly through various ways. This can make it easier for them to adapt to the work, accept the work, better develop their work potential, realize their self-worth, and use their professional experience while gaining social recognition. Enterprises can also improve their working environment and conditions for the retired elderly. For example, factories in Germany and other developed countries provide working seats for elderly employees. The elderly can improve their sense of gain and happiness from the working environment, and the physical burden can also be reduced.

### **4.3. The establishment of skills training institutions and special service platforms for the elderly through the government**

Due to the lack of skills, even the idea of re-employment of some younger elderly people cannot be realized. The government must expand and improve vocational education institutions for the elderly to enrich their spiritual culture. The government should actively develop resources and information service platforms for the elderly with a desire to work. The government can also tailor specifically for them, providing policy advice, job opportunities, vocational skills training services, as well as flexible employment opportunities within various sectors such as schools, hospitals, community domestic services, public service management industries, and so on. Furthermore, it is essential to explore models suitable for facilitating employment among the elderly through fixed-point experiments. Lastly, it is crucial to establish the volunteer service model with Chinese

characteristics.

#### **4.4. Improvement of relevant national laws, regulations, and welfare policies**

The legislature should further refine laws and regulations to ensure the employment rights and interests of the younger elderly, while also clarifying the responsibilities of each subject in employment for the younger elderly. Legal protection and legal basis should be provided for the elderly. According to data from the seventh National Population Census, 8.8% of China's total employed population is aged 60 or above, with a low employment rate among this demographic. Age discrimination is one of the problems faced by older individuals seeking employment. A relevant survey found that 76.86% of recruitment positions have age limitations, leading to prejudice against older job seekers in aspects such as recruitment, employment, promotion, and dismissal based on age-related decline in working ability and poor adaptability. This constitutes age discrimination towards older job seekers and excludes them from the labor market regardless of their ability, experience, and performance. To address this issue, the country must establish a comprehensive system of laws, regulations, and policies that protect the employment rights and interests of the elderly. Laws prohibiting age discrimination should be formulated so that older individuals can achieve "equal employment" opportunities within society. Furthermore, a robust employment and welfare system for the elderly should be established including provisions for pension benefits, medical insurance coverage, and industrial injury insurance to safeguard their basic living needs as well as social security rights and interests, ultimately ensuring their sense of security and belonging within society.

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#### **Disclosure statement**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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