

Analysis of 'Silver Hair Economy' from the Perspective of Active Aging - Take Shandong Province as an Example

Qianwen Zhang

School of University of Jinan, Jinan 250002, China

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Abstract: As China's aging population continues to deteriorate, the size of the elderly population is also increasing rapidly, and the huge elderly population poses challenges to many aspects of China's economic and social development. How to ensure and improve the quality of life of the elderly, explore the potential of the elderly, so that the elderly continue to participate in social production, has become a hot topic in the current society. Based on the perspective of positive aging, this paper explores the problems existing in the development of "silver economy" in Shandong Province from the perspective of policies and population in Shandong Province, and puts forward corresponding countermeasures for improvement.

1. Active Aging

Aging is an inevitable result of the extension of people's life span and the improvement of their quality of life in modern society, which has now become the general trend of world population development. China is the most populous country in the world. The results of the seventh census in 2020 show that the population of China aged 60 and above is 2640.2 million, accounting for 18.70 % of the total population, of which the population aged 65 and above is 1.964 million, accounting for 13.50 % of the total population. ¹How to protect the basic life of the elderly and play the value of the elderly has become a social problem to be solved at this stage in China.

At the Second World Assembly on Ageing in 2002, the World Health Organization formally introduced the concept of "active ageing," focusing on the increasing life expectancy and physical and physical improvement of older persons worldwide. The concept of 'active aging' provides new ideas for countries around the world to solve the problem of aging, and also provides new ideas for China to deal with the problem of aging.

Active aging not only needs to protect the health of the elderly and meet their daily needs, but also needs to stimulate their initiative to participate in society, and encourage the elderly to use their own material, spiritual, social and other aspects of resources to participate in economic, cultural, life and other fields, and continue to make due contributions to society.²

2. Active Aging And 'Silver Economy'

The 'silver hair economy' is also called the old age industry, the old age industry, refers to the economic industry related to the elderly population, because of the deepening degree of social aging

and people gradually pay attention to. The 'silver-haired economy' includes not only health care, medical care, pension services and other industries with older persons as consumer groups, but also the economy in which older persons participate as producers in society. In addition, the protection of rights and interests provided to improve the production and consumption ability of the elderly can also be used as a part of the “silver economy”.

2.1 Silver Economy and Consumption of the Elderly

Taking the elderly as the consumer group to develop economy can be said to be an active exploration under the background of aging, in line with the concept of active aging. The elderly is a very easy to be ignored consumer groups, but the elderly base large, time-rich, sufficient funds, with great market potential. Taking the elderly as a consumer object to develop the elderly industry is different from the traditional “burden theory,” which regards the elderly as a resource rather than a burden.

Aging industry market continues to heat up, "silver hair economy" ushered in unprecedented opportunities for development. According to the sample survey data on the living conditions of the urban and rural elderly in China in 2015, 65.6 % of the elderly said they had used special elderly products. At the same time, the demand for pension services also increased. From 2000 to 2015, the proportion of demand generated by the elderly aged 79 and below changed from 5.1 % to 11.2 %, and the total growth rate was 6.1 %. In the same year 's statistics, the proportion of people aged 80 and over in need of care rose from 21.5 per cent to 41.0 per cent, an increase of nearly 20 percentage points and a growth rate of twice the demand for people aged 79 and under. The industrial system was initially established and the market environment was continuously optimized. By 2025, the overall size of the elderly goods industry is expected to exceed 5 trillion yuan, technology, products, services, applications coordinated development, forming a good pattern.³ Nowadays, the industrial system has been initially established and the market environment has been continuously optimized. It is expected that by 2025, the overall scale of the elderly goods industry will exceed 5 trillion yuan, and technology, products, services and applications will form a good pattern.

2.2 Silver Economy and the Production of the Elderly

The structure of the elderly population in China is still relatively young, and the proportion of the younger elderly is large. According to the statistical data of 2015, the proportion of the elderly population aged 69 and below is more than half, reaching 56.1 %, the proportion of the population aged 70-79 is 30.0 %, and the proportion of the elderly population aged 80 and above is 13.9 %. The proportion of the young elderly is stable. Compared with 2000, the proportion of the young elderly in China has decreased by only 2.7 % in the past 15 years.³

It is not comprehensive to simply judge the withdrawal of the elderly from the production field by law. Although the young elderly have withdrawn from the production field after retirement, their social relations, work experience and even sufficient leisure time have become important reasons for many enterprises to re-employ the young elderly. The role of the elderly in production is becoming more and more important. For example, some childcare institutions hire retired elderly to send children, which is a successful attempt to introduce young elderly people into the field of production.

2.3 Banking Economy and Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Elderly

To develop the ' silver economy ', an important prerequisite is to protect the legitimate rights and interests of the elderly. The basic living and survival rights of the elderly are essential. In recent years, the government has been committed to the reform and construction of the pension service system.

Whether it is the distribution of urban and rural pensions, or the improvement of medical insurance level, all reflect the steady fight in the protection of the rights and interests of the elderly in China.

The preferential treatment of the elderly is also reflected in all aspects, such as Jinan bus card, many scenic spots of the elderly special tickets. According to the sample survey data of urban and rural elderly living conditions in China in 2015, the proportion of elderly people who have enjoyed preferential treatment for the elderly has reached 65.8 %. In detail, there are 20.8 % of the elderly who have enjoyed the reduction of public transport fares, 13.4 % of the elderly who have enjoyed the park ticket preference, and 10.1 % of the elderly who have enjoyed the tourist attractions ticket preference, and 9.1 % of the elderly who have enjoyed the general outpatient registration fee preference.³In recent years, the preferential treatment for the elderly in China has become increasingly perfect, and the preferential treatment for the elderly is gradually moving from particularity to inclusiveness.

3. Population Aging in Shandong Province

In terms of the elderly population, the elderly population over 60 years old in Shandong Province in 2017 was 21.73 million, accounting for 21.4 per cent of the total population of the province, exceeding the national average of 4.0 per cent. The population of older persons aged 65 and over is 1.3998 million, accounting for 14.0 per cent of the total population of the province, an increase of 0.8 per cent over 2016 and 2.6 per cent above the national average.⁴Shandong Province has a huge population resource, a large number of elderly population and a fast aging rate.

From the overall population structure, since 1982, the proportion of the elderly population aged 65 and over in Shandong Province has increased: from 5.6 per cent to 15.8 per cent between 1982 and 2019. Contrary to the growth trend of the elderly population, the birth rate in Shandong Province has generally declined since 1982, while the proportion of the population aged 0-14 is also declining. From 1982 to 2019, the proportion of people aged 0-14 decreased from 31 % to 18 %. With the increase of age, after this part of the young people entered the labor market, the proportion of labor force between 15 and 64 years old showed an upward trend, and then fell. In 1982, the proportion of the population between 15 and 64 years old was 63.4 %, and in 2007 it rose to 74.8 %. By 2019, this figure was 66.2 %.⁴Demographic dividends are decreasing, but the trend of ageing is accelerating. In general, due to the large population base, the working-age population in Shandong Province has been on a large scale, but in recent years, it has shown the problem of insufficient follow-up labor force. The elderly population continues to grow, and the aging degree is deepening.

According to the overall age structure of the elderly, among the elderly population in Shandong Province in 2017, there were 1293.8 million people aged 60-69 years old, accounting for 60.5 % of the total elderly population, of which 595.4 million people aged 70-79 years old, accounting for 27.8 % of the total elderly population; the elderly population aged 80 and over is 2.481 million, accounting for 11.7 per cent of the total elderly population. Shandong Province, the age structure of the elderly is still relatively young, 60-69years old young elderly accounted for the majority, for the young elderly re-employment provides a prerequisite.⁵

The above data show that the elderly population in Shandong Province has the characteristics of large base, rapid growth and high proportion of young elderly.⁶

4. Problems in Developing 'Silver - hair Economy' in Shandong Province

4.1 Unbalanced Supply and Demand of Aged Industry

The elderly industry in Shandong Province is still in its infancy. Compared with the large population base and large number of elderly consumer groups in Shandong Province, the elderly

industry and products are in short supply. According to statistics, Shandong Province has at least 580,000 beds in 2020, corresponding to only more than 26 million pension institutions and 280,000 beds in 2020, indicating that the supply of pension services exceeds demand.⁷ In addition, the number and types of elderly supplies in the consumer market are small, and the investment in the elderly supplies industry is relatively small, which cannot meet the needs of modern elderly daily life.

4.2 Older Products are Relatively Single, Product Updates Slow

In recent years, the elderly industry in Shandong Province has developed rapidly, and its scale has gradually expanded. However, compared with the highly developed cities in the north, the elderly products in Shandong Province show relatively single characteristics. Shandong Province ' s elderly products are still dominated by the elderly pension, health-related health care, medical and other products, the elderly mobile phones, climbers more high-end products are rarely involved, which is a waste of the elderly market in Shandong Province.

4.3 Investors have Insufficient Understanding of the Elderly Market

Elderly products are relatively single, the reason, investors lack of understanding of the elderly market is one of them. Many investors still regard the elderly market as a branch of health care. Compared with women's market and children's market, the elderly market has not enjoyed due attention. Shandong province's young people occupy more than 60 % of the scale, there is demand for health care market, more demand for entertainment market, such as the elderly university, fitness, etc. Investors ' understanding of the elderly market is too one-sided to effectively meet the diversified needs of the elderly.⁸

5. Suggestions on Developing 'Silver Economy' in Shandong Province

With the deepening of the aging degree, Shandong Province has also continued to build the elderly industry, and now has achieved initial results, but with Europe and the United States and other developed countries are lagging behind. Under the overall situation of healthy aging, the development of ' silver economy ' has become the general trend.

5.1 Improving the elderly care insurance system and pension insurance system

Whether regarding the elderly as consumers or producers, the development of the silver economy must be based on the health and life security of the elderly. Therefore, governments at all levels and relevant departments must improve the elderly care insurance system and pension insurance system, and take positive measures to develop the elderly industry.⁹

5.2 Fostering New Productivity of Aged Industry in Shandong Province and Stimulating New Power of Consumption for the Aged

Combined with the characteristics of unbalanced and imperfect development of the elderly industry in Shandong Province, improve the supply of elderly industrial products and services, change the industrial structure of the elderly, and adapt to today ' s elderly consumer market.

5.2.1 Government Plays A Leading Role in Adjusting Industrial Layout and Increasing Capital Investment

Although the needs of the elderly population are changing with the development of society, the

government and departments at all levels are not sufficiently sensitive, and there is a certain lag in policy formulation. The government should pay attention to the elderly industry and increase economic investment to directly promote the development of the silver economy.

At the same time, in order to promote the healthy and sustainable development of the “silver economy,” the government should play a leading role, improve the pertinence, coordination and systematicness of policy formulation, make a planned adjustment of the industrial structure of the elderly in the whole province from top to bottom, seize the opportunity, make good use of the elderly resources, and take the elderly industry as a new growth point of economic development.¹⁰

5.2.2 Promoting Industrial Integration and Attracting Investment

At present, the elderly products with the elderly as the main consumer group still have problems such as poor quality, few varieties, poor adaptability, insufficient refinement and small industrial scale.¹¹It is necessary for the market to play a self-regulation function, change the industrial structure according to the consumption needs of the elderly, and promote industrial integration, such as the integration of the elderly industry and sports brands, and the production of the elderly as the consumption direction.

While making the “silver economy” bigger and stronger, we should increase the publicity of the elderly industry, explore the huge business opportunities on the back of the elderly industry, actively attract potential investors, establish special financing institutions for the elderly industry, and stabilize the capital flow of the elderly industry.¹²

5.2.3 Using 'Internet +' to Arouse the Consumption Ability of the Elderly and Improve the Consciousness of Consumption Prevention

In the traditional concept, the elderly use funds for children to become a family or even grandchildren, and spend less on themselves. In addition, the products of the elderly are rare in the market. Many elderly people do not establish their own consumption consciousness as consumers. We can increase publicity through the Internet, establish the subject consciousness of the elderly themselves, change their consumption concept, let the elderly know what they really need and live for themselves. At the same time, online shopping can also make up for the physical shopping short board to some extent, expand the consumption choice of the elderly.

Older people lose money because of e-commerce fraud is not rare, they buy a lot of 'health food' for health and longevity but buy fake commodities, and finally because of the lack of consumer rights related knowledge. It is necessary to optimize the online shopping platform, prevent counterfeiters from polluting the market environment, enhance the awareness and rights protection ability of the elderly, and escort the consumption of the elderly.

5.3 Exploring the Potential of Older Persons and Promoting Reemployment of High Quality Older Persons

5.3.1 Government 's Reemployment Policy for Young Older Persons

In addition to policies on delaying retirement in the context of ageing, it is difficult for older persons who reach retirement age but still want to continue to work to find suitable jobs. In light of the current situation, the government should strengthen the work of the elderly in the new era, encourage them to continue to play a role, and formulate preferential policies for the elderly to find new jobs to ensure that the elderly can do something for themselves and support themselves.²

5.3.2 Exploring Flexible Employment Model for the Elderly and Creating Employment Information Database for the Elderly

Some young elderly people have extremely rich working experience, such as traditional Chinese medicine, teachers, domestic services and other industries tend to be experienced 'elderly', often have the phenomenon of retirement and re-employment; there are also some elderly people who have a lot of free time or personal hobbies, and they can also play a fist in cultural propaganda, receiving children and other aspects. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the flexible employment mode of the elderly, and encourage the elderly to re-enter the work market. It is necessary to understand the personal quality of the elderly, and timely collect and publish employment information to improve the adaptability of the elderly and the work, so as to form the employment information database of the elderly.

5.3.3 Stimulating the Work Intention of the Elderly and Exploring the Work Potential of the Elderly

The younger elderly still have unique advantages in experience, knowledge and social relations, especially the retired elderly in senior management positions and high-quality technical positions are still encouraged to contribute to the elderly capital and realize self-worth. In today 's highly developed science and technology, the labour potential of young older persons has not yet been fully tapped, and large profits from the elderly industry have been used to attract older persons to participate voluntarily in social work.

The elderly must establish a spirit of “giving off heat” that is still needed by the society. They can not only transform their original work experience into resources to continue their original work, but also explore their hobbies to re-enter new fields, and embed old things in their career planning of elderly life.

All in all, the proposal of ' active aging ' provides a new impetus for China with a deepening degree of aging, and also provides a new idea for Shandong Province with serious aging. The development of “silver economy” not only eases the contradiction between aging and social development, but also uses aging as a resource to promote the healthy and sustainable development of Shandong economy and even the whole national economy.

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