

Research on the Path of Universities Resources Serving Community Elderly Education

-- Taking Wenzhou as an Example

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Abstract

With the accelerated development of population ageing, in particular, a large number of elderly people with a good academic foundation, low age and good health have joined the elderly group, exacerbating the contradiction between the unbalanced and inadequate development of education for the elderly, with universities for the elderly in large and medium-sized cities generally being 'hard to find a place to study'. "How to make each elder learn what they want" has become a hot spot of the whole society. At present, Wenzhou's community education for the elderly shortage of resources is very common, and urgently need to find ways to crack the ideas and methods, but only rely on the government's financial investment is difficult to really get through the last kilometer of education for the elderly. The universities in Wenzhou, as the carrier of educational resources gathering, have the ability and more responsibility to provide senior education services for the neighboring communities. This study takes the resources available in Wenzhou's universities as an entry point, analyzes the problems existing at the institutional level, open level, curriculum level and manpower level of the resources of Wenzhou's universities to serve the community's elderly education, and puts forward the suggestions of sound mechanism, integration of resources, establishment of signboards and team building strategies.

Keywords

University resources in wenzhou; Community education; Elderly education.

1. Introduction

According to the latest data from China's National Bureau of Statistics, as of February 2023, China's elderly population aged 60 and above has exceeded 280 million, accounting for about 19.8%. These elderly are predominantly middle- and lower-aged elderly, with more than half of them aged 60 to 69, and more than 1 in 10 of them having received education beyond high school. With the accelerated development of population aging, in particular, a large number of people with a good cultural foundation, low-age healthy older people to join the ranks of the elderly, exacerbating the unbalanced development of elderly education, inadequate contradiction, large and medium-sized cities, universities for the elderly in general, demand outstrips supply.

According to Wenzhou Municipal Bureau of Statistics data show that at the end of 2022, the elderly population aged 60 years and older has more than 1.72 million in Wenzhou, accounting for nearly 18% of the number of elderly people to participate in various types of science learning activities over to 200,000, but all kinds of elderly university enrollment is only 50,000,

the proportion of educated is less than 3%, once again confirming that the local university of the elderly can no longer meet the demand for elderly people's learning. The community as an important position to carry out elderly education is an important carrier to truly realize the goal of "learning and enjoyment for the elderly", and it is also an important way to solve the last kilometer of elderly education.

Community education for the elderly is not only the main way to carry out lifelong learning, but also a key part of building a harmonious society, but at present, the development of community education for the elderly in China is relatively slow. The relevant system has not yet been perfected, and the development of education for the elderly faces the dilemma of a shortage of resources and an inadequate mechanism, which makes community-based education for the elderly unable to meet the needs of the elderly in their pursuit of self-development.

At this stage, China's higher education is booming, data from China's Ministry of Education statistics, the gross enrollment rate of higher education in 2023, 60.2%, an increase of 0.6 percentage points over the previous year, ahead of schedule to complete the "14th Five-Year Plan" target. There are 11 universities in Wenzhou, covering an area of more than 15,000 acres, with a total of about 12,000 teachers and 148,000 students in Wenzhou. However, among the 11 universities in Wenzhou, only Wenzhou Open University is responsible for community education and elderly education. Several outstanding universities in Wenzhou, as the collector of social education system, have not yet actively engaged in community education and elderly education, and the resources of universities have not been tilted to community education for the elderly. Universities, as the leading force in the construction of a strong educational country, whether analyzed from pedagogical theory or sociological theory, have responded to the national policy of active aging, integrated into the social education, and enhance the function of serving the community.

2. The Realistic Dilemma of Wenzhou's Universities' Resources to Serve the Community's elderly Education

2.1. The Lack of Institutional Safeguards Affects the Enthusiasm of Wenzhou's University Resources to Serve the Community's Elderly Education

2.1.1. Unclear Administrative Division of Labor and Unclear Responsibilities for Elderly Education

The vast majority of Wenzhou's universities do not include elderly education in their development plans, nor do they have departments and agencies specializing in elderly education. Due to the lack of governmental systems related to community education for the elderly, the universities in Wenzhou are unable to act according to the rules and actively participate in the development of community education for the elderly, and therefore the responsibility of serving community education for the elderly has become useless. At this stage, it has become an urgent task to clarify the management and operation mode of community gerontological education in universities in Wenzhou.

2.1.2. Teacher Professionalization Needs to Be Improved

Most of the existing community gerontology teachers come from the community, have not obtained a teaching certificate, and have not yet received professional gerontology education. Although teachers in universities have teaching certificates and professional teaching ability and level, only a few of them are really involved in community gerontology education, and most of the universities in Wenzhou have not yet set up a special gerontology education management organization, which cannot effectively mobilize teachers in the school to actively participate in the community gerontology education cause. The existing teaching team of community elderly

education is in urgent need of professional guidance and expansion from the universities in Wenzhou.

2.1.3. Inadequate Financial Support Mechanisms at All Levels of the Sector

In the traditional perception, the funding of universities is limited to the realm of higher education, with little investment in the fields of continuing education, social education, and lifelong education. An interview with the dean of one of the second-level colleges of College Z showed that the university has been providing services for elderly education since 2012, but the responsibility for elderly education is divided among the school of continuing education, and its importance is limited to responding to the assessment of the higher authorities compared to the business of skills training and part-time qualifications, and the proportion of funds related to elderly education in the overall budget of the college is less than 5 percent. Compared with other education expenditures, the school has the phenomenon of “finalization” of elderly education. Therefore, the Wenzhou municipal government should learn from the development experience of community-based elderly education at both domestic and international levels, and establish a sound funding mechanism for universities in Wenzhou to serve community-based elderly education.

2.2. Wenzhou's Universities Have a Low Degree of Openness to Resources, and it is Difficult to Increase the Quantity and Improve the Quality of Community Education for the Elderly

2.2.1. Low Motivation of Faculty Participation in Teaching in Wenzhou's Universities Constrains the High-quality Development of Community-based Elderly Education

Through visits to several universities in Wenzhou, it has been found that the form of teachers' participation in community education for the elderly is relatively homogeneous, with special lectures and counseling as the main forms of short-term training, rather than systematic and comprehensive lectures on a long-shift basis. This kind of short-term training lectures generally have random class time, the course content lacks continuity and systematic, it is difficult to meet the actual needs of the elderly groups. The fundamental reason for this is that universities in Wenzhou have not invested in community education for the elderly.

2.2.2. University Site Resources in Wenzhou are not Fully Open, Limiting the Expansion of Community-based Elderly Education

The full utilization of existing resources in Wenzhou's universities is a key factor in improving the overall level of community education for the elderly. However, Wenzhou's universities teaching venues and teaching facilities and equipment and other resources have not been fully open to community education for the elderly. In the research group visited and found that all universities in Wenzhou due to the COVID-19 have set up a gate channel at the entrance of the school, all off-campus personnel are registered system, and the vast majority of universities need to be submitted to the school office system for off-campus personnel to enter the school application, that is, to a large extent will be the neighboring community of older people refused to be on the outside of the campus. This greatly hinders the opening up of the existing resources of universities in Wenzhou to the community, and thus fails to alleviate the enormous pressure on community-based elderly education and limits the vision of the duty of community-based elderly education to expand its scale.

2.3. Curriculum System has not Yet been Established, Urgently Need the Help of Universities in Wenzhou

2.3.1. Unreasonable Course Structure and Unclear Value Proposition

As an important carrier in education and teaching, the curriculum must be set according to the needs of the learning subjects during the preliminary research. In the context of aging in the

new era, the existing community elderly education courses, although in line with the learning needs of the elderly groups, are mainly recreational courses, the proportion of knowledge-based courses is not more than 10%, the course structure is seriously out of balance. Moreover, the content of community-based elderly education courses is still in a nascent state with regard to the needs of the times and the development of specialized courses, and a clear positioning of the value of elderly education in the new era has yet to be identified.

2.3.2. Lack of Professionalism in Building the Curriculum

At present, Wenzhou's community education courses for the elderly urgent problem is the lack of professional guidance from universities. Wenzhou city-level university for the elderly, for example, the existing 17 categories of specialties, different specialties of the introductory, primary, intermediate, advanced and training classes have the corresponding teachers to issue and publish self-published teaching materials or school-based teaching materials. However, the vast majority of communities have not cooperated with universities in Wenzhou, and the construction of existing gerontological education specialties and the management of teaching materials are still in a vacuum. In addition, the professionalism of the gerontological education program also needs to refer to the evaluation feedback from the elderly groups. However, the existing evaluation indicators of community-based elderly education are relatively simple, and there is no set of comprehensive program evaluation system. Therefore, the professional construction of community-based elderly education needs the active guidance and cooperation of universities in Wenzhou.

2.4. Inadequate Staffing Hinders the Developmental Nature of Wenzhou's Universities Resources to Serve Elderly Education

While China is moving into an aging society, human resources are still the foundation for the prosperous development of any career, and if there are not enough teachers, there is no way to develop community elderly education. At this stage, Wenzhou's community-based elderly education is mainly responsible for full-time social workers, but due to the community's own wide range of responsibilities, heavy work, coupled with the community is equipped with a limited number of full-time social workers, in the development of community-based elderly education is often carried out by different social workers to take turns to follow the community-based elderly education management personnel shortage of the problem has become an obstacle to the healthy development of community-based elderly education is one of the important reasons.

Wenzhou's universities administrators and full-time teachers have their own work, in addition to the Wenzhou Open University dedicated to the elderly college specializing in "Wenzhou's universities for the Elderly" administrative affairs, there is no other teachers or administrators to take the initiative to participate in elderly education, not to mention the service of community-based education for the elderly.

Community gaps in elderly education personnel urgently need full-time college teachers, college administrators, community social workers and other social personnel to supplement the education of the elderly.

3. Research on the Path of Serving Community Elderly Education with the Resources of Universities in Wenzhou

3.1. Collaborate with All Parties to Improve the Management Mechanism of the Resources of Universities in Wenzhou to Serve Community Education for the Elderly

3.1.1. Formation of a Governmental Working Group to Provide for a Community-based Management System for Elderly Education

In the process of managing the university elderly education alliance, it is necessary to carry out the flat vertical management of a service-oriented government organization, optimize the existing resource allocation in the temperature of the university at the same time, and fully mobilize the enthusiasm of the universities to link the community to run the school. In the internal management mechanism, the universities need to set up a special department for community education for the elderly to unify the management, change the management is not clear, responsibilities are not clear, the phenomenon of service is not in place for the service of the community education for the elderly to create an orderly operation of the space.

3.1.2. Broadening the Sources of Funding to Provide Security for the Funding of Community Education for the Elderly

Universities in Wenzhou can expand their sources of funding in the following ways: First, the national and local governments should allocate a certain amount of special funds for gerontological education to universities in Wenzhou to serve the community in gerontological education. The aging society has quietly arrived, the state advocates all walks of life for the elderly education services, but community education for the elderly as a kind of public welfare, need a lot of financial, material and human resources to support to ensure that universities to carry out community education for the elderly in terms of quantity and quality. Secondly, universities in Wenzhou should allocate a part of the annual budget for community education for the elderly. Universities in Wenzhou not only should regard the service of community education for the elderly as a people's livelihood project and benefit the people, but improve their investment in community education for the elderly year by year according to the special budget reported by the university's education department and the actual demand of community education for the elderly. Thirdly, universities in Wenzhou have to strengthen the cooperation between schools and enterprises and rely on social forces to serve the community education for the elderly together. Universities, like communities, are limited by funding, teaching space and management personnel and other issues. Although some enterprises have funds and venues, but the lack of cooperation with the relevant departments and institutions, therefore, hope to provide services to the community to create their own brand effect of enterprises and the lack of funding, teaching space and management personnel of universities and the community can be realized cooperation, universities with the community to complete the performance appraisal goals, the enterprise's own social credibility can be improved.

3.2. Integration of Resources to Stimulate the Infinite Potential of Universities in Wenzhou to Serve the Community's Elderly Education

Combined with the actual situation of universities in Wenzhou, organic integration of resources. First of all, there should be a unified development plan. When formulating the five-year development plan, the key work plan of the academic year and the semester goal, each Wenzhou university should incorporate community education and elderly education into the school planning according to the actual situation of each school and the real demand of community education for the elderly, and carry out the performance appraisal at the end of the year.

Furthermore, cross-border integration of traditional disciplines should be carried out. Discipline integration refers to the recognition of differences on the basis of breaking the boundaries between disciplines, and promote the integration of inter-disciplinary, cross-disciplinary activities. The integration of disciplines of gerontological education mainly in universities is more inclined to teaching integration, which is specifically manifested in the establishment of departments or colleges specializing in gerontological education, which will transform the original scattered gerontological teaching tasks into a unified gerontological education teaching program, and then save teaching resources and teaching costs. Unified teaching activities will help communication between teachers and students in various disciplines and form a feedback mechanism for teaching evaluation, thus improving the quality of teaching in elderly education.

Finally, the existing teaching resources should be reorganized. Teaching resources in warm universities can be divided into tangible and intangible resources. The integration of tangible resources refers to the integration of fixed assets, space venues, books and other figurative resources. While the integration of intangible resources refers to the integration of abstracted resources such as campus culture and academic knowledge. The fusion of tangible resources improves the efficiency of using resources in Wenzhou universities by broadening the resource supply channels and summarizing various types of resource information. The integration of intangible resources not only relieves the pressure of community-based education for the elderly, but also helps the elderly group to develop the habit of lifelong learning.

3.3. Concentrate the Characteristics and Establish the Gold Standard of Serving Community Elderly Education In Wenzhou's Universities

Creating special disciplines of gerontological education in Wenzhou's universities. Firstly, the critical provincial and municipal universities headed by Wenzhou University should take the lead in forming a team of teachers with special characteristics of Wenzhou elderly education, and all the teachers in Wenzhou's universities who are engaged in or willing to be engaged in elderly education should be absorbed into the team, so as to establish a pool of teachers for elderly education in Wenzhou; Secondly, we should rely on teachers of various disciplines and teachers of elderly education to formulate teaching and training plans based on the characteristics of the universities and the current situation of elderly education in the communities. Finally, the universities in Wenzhou need to set up a teaching and research office of elderly education, establish and improve the teaching system of elderly education in our schools, and at the same time, should also be equipped with all the teaching equipment related to elderly education. Universities in Wenzhou need to play a vital role of preliminary research and demonstration work, the school's advantageous disciplines with the organic integration of gerontological education, to create a university characteristics of gerontological education.

3.4. Making the Best Use of Talents to Create a Special Team of Universities in Wenzhou to Serve the Community Elderly Education

3.4.1. Setting up a Mechanism for the Reappointment of Retired Teachers and Guiding Elderly Teachers to Retire without Retiring from Their Posts

According to the Ministry of Education and other ten departments jointly issued the National Silver Teacher Action Plan, Wenzhou ought to actively mobilize retired teachers from universities to continue to devote themselves to the cause of elderly education. The municipal government should coordinate with the Municipal Education Bureau, the Municipal Bureau of Human Resources and Social Security, and the universities and other units to first safeguard of top-level design and system protection, and to clarify the duties and obligations of the retired and rehired teachers. While guaranteeing the treatment and safety of retired teachers, it is also

necessary to scientifically and reasonably set up an exit mechanism to ensure the high-quality development of elderly education by means of learning and teaching evaluation.

Secondly, efforts should be made to crack the regional shortage of teacher resources. Such as Taishun, Wencheng, Cangnan and other counties and municipalities due to the lack of universities, universities teacher resources are relatively scarce. Therefore, Wenzhou city area without universities in the counties and municipalities ought to actively docking local human resources bureau, education bureau and primary and secondary schools, through the return of retired primary and secondary school teachers, in order to solve the community gerontological education human resources gap.

Finally, universities with communities can hire retired master professors, primary and secondary school principals, primary and secondary school outstanding teachers and other educational experts with a certain degree of influence in the community to serve as guidance counselors or visiting professors of community elderly education. While guiding the reform of gerontological education in weak communities, they can also guide the growth of young teachers, give targeted play to the leading role of experts and celebrities, enhance the competence level of front-line teachers in community gerontological education, and improve the quality of education and teaching.

3.4.2. Strengthening the Team of Social Workers in Elderly Education and Attracting Elderly Education Majors to Participate in Community Elderly Education.

As the front line of grass-roots management, the community undertakes the functions of management, service, education, supervision. And also cooperates with and assists the government and its dispatching organizations in accomplishing the relevant tasks. However, communities generally have problems such as heavy workload, high work pressure and shortage of staff. Most of the management functions of community elderly education are undertaken by social workers or grid workers, who have to take care of community elderly education while completing their own work. Under the premise of limited personal energies, this unsustainable working condition does not guarantee the high-quality development of community elderly education. Therefore, the community elderly education social work team is in urgent need of the injection of new forces. The government should successively carry out the expansion of community workers, to provide more community gerontological education management positions, so that more gerontological education students to devote themselves to community gerontological education, which not only solves the problem of difficult to find employment for college students, but cracks the problem of insufficient personnel of community workers.

3.4.3. Setting up Special Student Organizations, Specializing in Serving Elderly Education and Enriching Student Volunteer Activities

Led by the Wenzhou Municipal Committee of the Communist Youth League, the Youth League Committee of various universities to participate in the establishment of special student organizations, in universities and communities to open the elderly course period, the organization of the students involved in the elderly education management and service, and the form of the second classroom credits to determine the results of the management and service work of the students, the participation of the Youth League Committee of the universities and the student body to regularly conduct an assessment evaluation, improve the evaluation of the awards and merits of the mechanism. Through the online platform of Zhejiang government services network and Volunteer Zhejiang, open the student volunteer service system, regularly release the volunteer activities of universities and communities in elderly education and service for the elderly, enrich the spare time of universities students in Wenzhou, and help Wenzhou to build a elderly-friendly city construction.

4. Conclusion

The report of the Twentieth Party Congress emphasizes that education, science and technology, and human resources are the basic and strategic support for the comprehensive construction of a modern socialist country. It is necessary to provide education to the satisfaction of the people, promote the digitization of education, and build a learning society and a large learning nation with lifelong learning for all. Higher education as an important carrier of the national development of education, is to promote the construction of a learning society, learning country is an important force, is an important platform to serve all teachers and students to learn and develop. Wenzhou;s universities to do the above work at the same time, but also to take the initiative to undertake community education for the elderly, the concept of lifelong learning into the life habits of Wenzhou people. With the arrival of the aging society, the physical and mental health and learning needs of the elderly groups are once again placed on the social happiness index gauge. Universities in Wenzhou need to continue to give full play to their unique educational advantages, actively perform the important function of serving the community and serving the local community, fully utilize their own resources to carry out community education activities for the elderly, and help Wenzhou create an age-friendly city.

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