

Probe into Innovation in the Management of Empty Nest Elderly in Colleges and Universities

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Abstract:

College retirees due to various reasons from individual, family and social problems who are reduced to be empty nest elderly are attracting more concerns from the public over how to offer them assistance in their life, routine activities, mentality and medical care, which are also new challenges that the management and service for the retired elderly will face. This article discovers the basic features of nowadays college retirees, particularly the troubles and problems that exist in the jobs of empty nest elderly management, and puts forward strategies to the existing problems.

Keywords: College, Empty-nest Elderly Management Job, Innovative Strategies.

The ageing problem has been a severe social problem in China. Since China has entered into the ageing society, it becomes an obvious tendency that the population of elderly is larger in base, quicker in speed of increase, older in average age, lower in the ability of living, high rate of empty nest with at the end of 2015 there were already 222 million population that are over sixty years old, amounting to 16.1 percentage in the total number and moreover the ratio of over sixty-five in the total population has reach 10%, empty nest elderly in urban exceed half and the rate in middle-big cities climbs to 70%, the live-by-oneself elderly takes up 10% and there are approximately one hundred million aged people that live alone, the elderly unable to take care of themselves takes up 19% of the total number of elderly both urban and rural all over our country now, more and more problems brought by ageing without money, aging without preparation in advance, small-size family exist. As a place that gathers a lot of intellectuals with ageing, high rate of empty nest elderly becoming new features of college retirees, college should take innovative moves in the management of retired elderly in order to face the new situation, pay more attention to advance the scientific and humane service and management of the empty nest elderly (including those that live alone, lack of child, old,

extremely poor and loss of ability to live.), establish a mode that should suit the needs of the elderly, find the solutions to the problems that they are closely related, provide sound services, leading to a more friendly, harmonious school atmosphere to the elderly.

1. College Retiree Suffers from High Rate of Empty Nest and Advancing Age

For the college a professional organization of public institution which involves with talent cultivation, knowledge inherit, scientific research and service for the community, it has a huge, centralized, economic superior group of elderly, and offers a degree of protection for the aged, which makes college a special community that various problems concentrate on. Yet for the historical reason, many schools still keep practicing the management mode that the planned economy age leaves, carrying out numbers of functions that they should not perform, for instance to take up the responsibilities of finding them home, providing them with medical cares, benefits, entertainments, security in old age, which is a common phenomenon that signals blurred boundaries between government affairs and public institution duties and between society and public institution. With old age speeding up, difficulty in giving proper management to the college retiree and most of them spending a long time in school, moreover they are getting explosive in numbers arise from several times of university merger in the recent years, the problems of aging, advancing, high rate of empty nest mounting, the college retiree becomes a weak group in need of care and help. Take China West Normal University as example which is a school running for over seventy years, it has 1805 on-duty employees, 779 retirees, the latter number takes up 43.2% of the former number, and in the total number of retirees, people over eight is up to 27.2%, empty nest elderly up to 61.5%. Statistics points out that Family supporting elderly is up to 99.6% with 776 in the total number of college retirees, society institution supporting elderly is up to 0.4% with three people. We can see from the figure very obvious features of empty nest, advancing and family supporting old-age. To face the new features and challenges, college should take innovative actions to provide social management to the elderly and service mode, meet the elderly people's increasing material and cultural needs, offer them a higher quality of old-age life, realize the so-called "Properly looked after in old-age, Sound medical care in old-age, life-long education and teaching, valuable old-age life and happy old-age life."

2. Difficulties and Problems Facing the Management of Empty-nest Elderly in College

2.1 Spiritual Loneliness Increase and Depression Highlight

Many school retirees although need not to worry about their livelihood, physical condition, suffer from bleak mood, a typical symptom of "Empty-Nest Elderly Syndrome" which are commonly manifested by spiritual emptiness, doing nothing all day long, slow in response and action, mentally unhealthy devaluing themselves as nobody will love them, depressed, void, frustrated, cry and worst of all want to commit suicide. Once any uncomfortable exists with their body, they tend to become suspicious, consider something that will never be actual, eat less, have trouble sleep at night and gradually the mental disorder of anxiety, depression and dismay prevail, leading to diseases like senior mental disorder and senile dementia when the case develops. They had a limited scope of friend even when they are at works, and they will be unwilling to extend the limited scope at the retired days and seclude themselves from the crowd, and because most of retirees don't know how to use new digital media, the most common way for them to get in touch with their

children is cell phone. Lack of visiting and care from the young child makes them feel depressed, retracted from public, skeptical of the value of their existence, often in dull, desireless, hopeless state, particularly in some festivals like new year holiday the sad feeling has doubled. According to a survey, there are 53.6% empty nest elderly who feel lonely often, 21% elderly feel unhappy, 7.5% have thought about suicide, more than ninety percent eager about communication with others, and they want their child make phone calls as much as possible which have already become the backbone to serve as emotional support.

2.2 Inability to Take Good Care of Their Own Life and Find no Companion in Need

As the empty-nest college retirees grow older or were bothered by illness, their ability to handle their life independently decreases, which makes the encounters of troubles and annoyance frequent, and the problems can be arise from shopping, cooking, cloth-washing, cleaning house, goods moving and lifting, lamps and faucet broken. These can be put up when they are in good health, and the problems become unbearable when they are in sick. Especially for those suffering from amnesia and senile dementia disease, they are basically unable to live without helping from others, and they are fear of falling sick. At the same time, majority of elderly are victims of chronic diseases, they find no one to consult and make decision when big troubles happen. Moreover, the part that individual should pay for the bill of medical care increase years after years which makes doctor-seeking ever harder. As reports show that the empty-nest elderly who are in poor economic state is up to 52.4%, needing someone to look after but actually leaving alone is up to 18.4%. Some of the elderly are ignorant of scientific way to protect themselves from illness, in lack of self-protection, preparation methods for illness, which bring the situation worse. When incidences like fire, electric leaking, slipping, falling in ill suddenly, gas poisoning take place, the empty nest elderly are more often than ever be alone and no one will find out their death until several days later. In July 2016, an eighty years-old empty nest retired professor who used to work for the Nan Jing University was found dead after quite a number of days because of the smell of decay has influenced the neighbor.

2.3 Unsatisfactory Service and Management Quality

The increasing number of college retirees posts great challenge to the management for that their body is both in high risk of sick and venerable, their child left and the ability of living by themselves wore out, so that they tend to be more inclined to the institution they used to work for and vulnerable of being hurt psychologically. However, it doesn't raise enough attention and awareness from the college retiree service and management providers on the problems, leading to insufficient funding for the management and people engaged in the business, lack of organization dealt with, unfair treatment with the retiree's political life and absence of condolence and caring for the elderly. And Place for the elderly to learn and play in are badly scarce, or in very small size, with crude and shabby equipments which can barely not meet the needs of the elderly and the safety requirements. The mode of management for college retirees sticks with the "old trick" of management style which is notorious for low efficiency in working, no emphasis on actual effect on development but form, approach to carry out the political and ideological education is dull, uninterested and deprived of any participation and variety. Furthermore, most of the people who deal with the management job have never received trainings on that field, their quality can't be guaranteed, and some of the administrators still persist in the old management concepts, whose thought of service, responsibility,

professional ethics and creation is in reverse, making their job invisible of any progress for a long period, have no insight on the potential in the establishment of elderly professional club and the exploration of the old-aged intelligence, which are in line with the spirits of the old-age support by culture, community and action. Many parts of their job, concept and ability fall behind the needs of management job in the new age and the various needs for service on different levels of the empty-nest retirees.

2.4 Endowment Security System Need to Strengthen

First of all, the integration and coordination of the resources of school and of the local doesn't work out and of low rate of usage. Lack of communications among school, community and the social endowment security work, deficient of making use of social resources have consequences of single way of providing old-aged service, continuous deficient of the social security fund investment and lack of fund for the elderly undertakings, which brings to insufficient amount of endowment facilities, entertainment facilities, recreation facilities, and rehabilitation equipment, so far away from the increasing demand of endowment service with such unsatisfactory service. Secondly, looking at the college itself, the resource integration and coordination doesn't work out, too. The empty-nest elderly even though can use the various advantages resources including the school-owned hospital, activity center, gymnasium, library, psychological consultancy center, young volunteer and student union, the other resources are so scattered and are waiting for the coming into the community endowment system that the rate of usage is low and some of the resources that are valuable contribute to nothing for in lack of coordinated system operation, professional organization as supporter, which consequence in low level of specialty, redundant service provided, low service efficiency, even a waste of resources. Thirdly, the construction of endowment service system for the college retirees is in the slow track. Owing to the social system pattern, the management and service system for the college retirees can't be operated socially, moreover their needs of endowment service are of various levels, including physical and mental needs. For long run, we can't have a correct judgment on the situation of the retirees, and accordingly make appropriate classification with them. With the existing two supporters, family and the organization the elderly used to work, the old-aged need of social endowments is far from expectation, which will have great impact on their latter years of life, and hinder the social stability and harmony.

3. Strategies to innovate the management of college empty-nest retirees

3.1 Transform Thought, Adjust Concept and Fasten the Building of Healthy Old-age

As an expanding special weak group, the college empty-nest retirees have different needs compared with other people, including health, mentality, economic security and life care. Whether their needs are satisfied has close link with the realization of a healthy old-age. Therefore, it is necessary to help transform their concepts, adjust what they think and rebuild a healthy view of life value. Healthy education is not only an important measure to improve the quality of the elderly's life, but also the essential way to accomplish the healthy old-age business. We have to launch a widespread healthy education project with specific target, planned and systematic, make every efforts to publish the healthy old-age concept, spread the hygiene and health care knowledge, call for a more civilized, scientific and healthy life style, enhance their awareness and ability of self-protection, help shaping a healthy mind to face empty-nest, build a pattern for the elderly

to help by their own and by each other in the same age. And we should help eliminate the concept of raising a son to prepare for the old-age, get accustomed to the family construction change, and advocate those who are single fall in love and accompany each other in their old-age. The old-age should learn to make appropriate arrangement for their retire days, to develop new hobbies, participate in the senior citizen association and college specialized for the old-age education, learn something new, for instance new skills, new social rules to keep the same pace with the times, find the life value again. Last, they should be encouraged to get more in touch with the society, like chatting and gathering with friends, take active parts in the public welfare undertakings, entertain and find happiness by themselves, put highlight in the self mental adjustment to eliminate the negative effect of empty-nest, leading to a climb of old-age happiness index.

3.2 Enhance Awareness, Innovate Mechanism, Offer Accurate Help to the Empty-nest Elderly

First of all, we should enhance our awareness, making active move in the working and putting priority to the substantial results. With full awareness of the urgency, importance and difficulty of fulfilling the task of retiree job, college should invest more, put the two favorable treatments for retired employees into effect, deliver the three payments(of medical, retirement and living subsidy) to the hands of the elderly on time and in full amount. Strengthen the construction of service provide team, enhance their ability and quality, manage to transform the infrastructure construction of retiree management to brand building and comprehensive improvement from basic construction and people training, to transform the administration type from extensive to intensive, to transform the service provided from passive to active. On the other hand, build the empty-nest retiree file. We should integrate the in-campus resources, innovate working mechanism, establish new endowment institution, take active part in starting empty-nest elderly assistance, found the two tiers of elderly assistance team led by university and school, and propose the implement measures of the elderly assistance, conduct bottom-to-neck inspections to all college empty-nest elderly, especially for those over 70 years' old to build files for each of them, get to know every information of the assistance targets about how's their physical conditions, their family situation, where they go, what they do and what they need, their contact, caring situation, assistance service provided and in what form. Make a planned offer of caring and personalized service for the empty-nest retirees in order to have the job efficient and targeted. Besides, strengthen the security job of empty-nest elderly, adopt the rules of contact man responsibility. Carry out normalized, systematic rules to deal with emergency. In case of the happening of incidence, the contact man must be the first to arrive to the scene and give the best help he can do to the elderly immediately. Carry out sound long-term caring system for the empty-nest elderly, set up a special division of elderly caring by imitating the system of village governor, selected graduates and specially contract teacher, ensuring them a decent life. Frequently call for and lead the children of the empty-nest elderly to visit their parents, or live nearby, or hire people to take care of the old, or invite the old to live in their house, make joint efforts with the college to build the caring system for the empty-nest elderly, making the old feel condolence, loving and cheerfulness physically and mentally.

3.3 Build Diversified Activity Platform, Enrich the Life of Empty-nest Elderly

First, build diversified activity platform. Strengthen the construction and operation of senior association, senior school and senior activity center, making good use of the existing platform, in line with the principle of integration of teaching, studying and entertaining, giving full play to the “five-in-one” campus old-age recreation system which is rely on college, labor union organization as support, senior organization as leader, recreation backbone as core, community as allied force, put up with more enriched activities to fulfill the “empty-mind” of the old. Build platforms for the elderly with different hobbies to learn, exchange views, demonstrate and improve, in the middle of the activities they are involved in they can be moved and cultivated, their spirit will be replenished, and they will receive more understanding and positive judgment when they are having spiritual communication with the others in the same age, thus ensuring them a healthy, positive and open-minded psychological state. Secondly, in search of new management mode for the retirees. One of the great advantageous resources of the retiree job is the college young volunteers. Taking active moves in getting the young involved in the empty-nest service, promoting the mutual communication can not only revive the traditional virtue of respecting, caring for the old, have them consoled, accompanied, but also offer the young with experience of life and professional know-how, get to know more about the awareness of duty, build correct view of value. In 2005, the action plan for caring the empty-nest old-age of “Youngsters Shining with Seniors” was official launched in our school, and set up a special college student team for empty-nest elderly caring. After specific training, a group of volunteers succeeded to get in touch with 20 elderly family and form assistance pairs with each of them, the services they start to perform in the project contain “phone-call contacting once a week”, “visiting and chatting once for half a month”, “psychological counseling once a month”, “fellowship event once for a term of project”. Also, They will accompany the old to find doctors, do housework, help with file compile, teach them computer skills, how to use new media, play outdoors exercise, help them to solve problems and concerns, have them feel the loving from school, help them to benefit the society with their remaining force, gain more happiness and cheerfulness and pass the positive power over to the old.

3.4 Give Full Play to the College Advantages, Integrate Various Kinds of Resources and Strengthen the Endowment Security

Higher education should aim at improve the socialized endowment system in pace with the tendency of old-age enterprise development, make sound preparation for the coming of aging society and the surge of old-nest people in view of material, spirit, system, and mechanism, set up more community universities in active way of which the teacher and staff’s dormitories should be the major place, and which is to be ruled chiefly by the government, be involved with the social organizations, and be operated by the higher education, bring in more facilities for leisure, recreation, elderly caring, and rehabilitation nursing, set up the service hotline for the empty-nest elderly with which prompt and timely assistance for the elderly living afar will be in place and they will receive service of community visiting and appointment, leading to a gradually sound establishment of college elderly service which is mainly about daily caring, medical care, psychological treatment, exercise and emergency relief, culture and education and legal aid. With the help of the school infirmary, university can set up with sound and complete medical elderly provision system to provide regular physical examination for the old and provide in combination of medical, nursing and health

care management services, improve the quality of service, strengthen the regulation of staff involved, start actively with various types of health care education, advance the spreading of scientific knowledge of old-age health care and hygiene, increase their ability of self- protection, making the fulfillment of a reasonable, smooth operation of home old-age caring system, build a integrated information providing platform to make the service for the old last long. Other than that, college should open the old-age service provided platform to the social organizations that deal with elderly service, keep extend the boundary of service provided, guide the transformation of the thought of the olds with the new concept of “Caring for the old should be mainly on the family, supported chiefly by the public welfare institutions and state policy with part of the help from society and include the participation of everyone.”, and build a diversified endowment system market oriented, government policy and regulation backed, the third-party organization like charity organization led, help the old to past their remaining ages happily and safely.

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