

Research on the protection of employment rights for young elderly people in the context of active aging

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Abstract: This article reviews the topics of aging and employment policies, perceptions of aging among older adults, and their impact on willingness to continue working, as well as the importance of social policies for elderly employment and future research directions. Research has shown that aging presents various challenges to the employment rights of older adults (aged 50 to 65), including age discrimination, fair wages, training opportunities, and supportive work environments. Policy interventions aimed at addressing these issues include strengthening legal frameworks, promoting age-inclusive practices, establishing support networks, and ongoing research on protecting employment rights. This article synthesizes important research from various fields, providing insights for the development and implementation of relevant policies.

Keywords: Aging; employment policies; perceptions of aging; willingness to continue working; age discrimination; age inclusivity; social policies; legal frameworks; support networks; research directions

This section of the research paper serves as a comprehensive introduction, shedding light on the concept of active aging in the context of a rapidly growing aging population. It brings attention to the paramount importance of safeguarding the employment rights of young elderly individuals, who often face unique challenges in the workforce. The research objectives are clearly outlined, underscoring the critical necessity to delve into the barriers and difficulties encountered by this specific demographic. By doing so, this study aims to devise effective and robust strategies to ensure their employment rights are protected and to actively foster their engagement and contribution within the labor market. The ultimate aspiration is to advance existing knowledge in this field and provide pragmatic recommendations that can catalyze positive change for policymakers, organizations, and society as a whole.

1 Overview of Active Aging and Employment Rights

1.1 Definition and principles of active aging

Active aging is a comprehensive concept that encompasses multiple dimensions of well-being and encourages older adults to lead fulfilling and purposeful lives. It emphasizes the importance of maintaining physical health, cognitive vitality, social engagement, and productive involvement in various activities. The principles of active aging revolve around promoting autonomy, independence, and inclusion for older individuals, enabling them to live meaningful lives and continue making valuable contributions to society.

Active aging recognizes that older adults have diverse capabilities, experiences, and aspirations. It goes beyond the traditional notion of aging as a period of decline and dependence, instead emphasizing the potential for continued growth, development, and active participation in social, economic, and cultural activities. It highlights the significance of creating age-friendly environments that support and enhance older adults' well-being, while also addressing barriers and challenges that may impede their full participation.

By encouraging active aging, societies can harness the vast potential of their aging populations, deriving economic, social, and health benefits. This approach not only enhances the quality of life for older individuals but also contributes to the overall well-being and sustainability of communities.

1.2 Employment rights and their significance for young elderly people

Employment rights are crucial for older workers, especially those in the young elderly category, as they navigate the intersection of aging and work. These rights encompass legal protections and entitlements that ensure fair treatment, equal opportunities, and job security in the workplace. Recognizing the significance of employment rights for older workers is essential for their financial stability, social connectedness, and personal fulfillment.

Financial Stability: Employment rights enable older workers to maintain financial security during their later years. These rights include fair wages, protection against age discrimination, access to retirement benefits, and legal remedies for unfair treatment or wrongful termination. By ensuring income stability, employment rights contribute to the economic well-being and retirement readiness of older individuals.

Social Connectedness: Work provides opportunities for social interaction, engagement, and a sense of purpose. Employment rights that promote inclusive workplaces, reasonable accommodation, and opportunities for flexible work arrangements are particularly important for older workers. By fostering social connectedness, employment rights help combat social isolation and contribute to overall well-being.

Personal Fulfillment: Many older workers find fulfillment and a sense of identity through their work. Employment rights that support lifelong learning, career development, and opportunities for growth are essential for maintaining personal fulfillment during the later stages of a career. These rights enable older workers to continue contributing their skills, knowledge, and experience to society.

By protecting employment rights for older workers, societies can harness the benefits of their valuable contributions and avoid the loss of talent and experience. These rights also promote

intergenerational equity and combat ageism in the workplace, ensuring that older workers are valued and respected for their skills and capabilities.

1.3 Current challenges and gaps in protecting employment rights

Despite progress in recognizing and safeguarding employment rights, there are still persistent challenges and gaps that need to be addressed. These challenges often disproportionately impact certain groups, including older workers. Understanding and addressing these issues is crucial to ensure effective protection of employment rights for all individuals in the workforce.

Age Discrimination: Age discrimination remains a significant challenge in many workplaces. Older workers may face biases, stereotypes, and unequal treatment based on their age, resulting in limited career opportunities, reduced job security, and unequal access to training and development programs. Stronger enforcement of anti-discrimination laws, increased awareness, and promoting age-inclusive practices are essential to combat age discrimination.

Limited Access to Training and Upskilling: Older workers often face barriers when it comes to accessing training and opportunities for upskilling. Technological advancements and changing job requirements may leave older workers at a disadvantage, potentially resulting in skill gaps and reduced employability. Encouraging lifelong learning, providing targeted training programs, and promoting age-diverse work environments can help address this challenge.

Flexible Work Arrangements: Many older workers may benefit from flexible work arrangements, such as part-time work, telecommuting, or phased retirement options. However, policies and practices surrounding flexible work arrangements vary across industries and regions, and not all employers prioritize implementing these options. Strengthening legislation and organizational policies to support flexible work arrangements can improve work-life balance and retention for older workers.

Retirement Planning and Financial Security: While retirement benefits and savings plans exist, there are gaps in ensuring individuals have adequate financial resources for a secure retirement. Challenges include inadequate retirement savings, limited access to pension plans, and uncertainties in social security systems. Encouraging financial literacy, expanding retirement savings options, and strengthening social protection systems are important steps in addressing these challenges.

Intersectionality and Multiple Discrimination: Older workers may also face discrimination based on other intersecting identities such as gender, race, disability, or socioeconomic status. Policies and strategies addressing employment rights need to consider these intersecting factors to ensure fair and equitable treatment for all individuals in the workforce.

Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach involving collaboration between policymakers, employers, worker organizations, and civil society. By addressing these gaps, societies can promote inclusive and age-diverse workplaces that value and protect the employment rights of all workers.

3 Factors Affecting Employment Rights for Young Elderly People

3.1 Social and Cultural Perceptions of Aging

Social and cultural perceptions of aging greatly influence

employment rights for individuals in the young elderly population. These perceptions contribute to the creation of stereotypes and ageist attitudes that can hinder career prospects and opportunities. To address this issue, it is crucial to challenge negative stereotypes and foster a positive understanding of aging in society.

Negative perceptions of aging often result in discrimination and limited employment options for the young elderly. Ageism can lead to the belief that older individuals are less competent, less adaptable, or less capable of acquiring new skills. These assumptions deny them access to meaningful work and career advancement opportunities.

Changing social and cultural perceptions of aging involves promoting positive images of older individuals and highlighting their valuable contributions to the workforce. It requires creating awareness campaigns that challenge stereotypes and emphasize the knowledge, experience, and skills that the young elderly bring to the table. By debunking age-related misconceptions and advocating for age diversity in the workplace, society can create a more inclusive environment.

Education plays a vital role in reshaping social and cultural perceptions of aging. By integrating positive messages about aging and older workers into educational curricula, young generations can develop a more nuanced understanding of age-related issues. Inter-generational programs and initiatives that foster interactions between young and older individuals can help break down age barriers and promote mutual respect and understanding.

Additionally, promoting age-friendly practices in the workplace is important for combating ageism and ensuring employment rights for the young elderly. This can involve implementing policies that address age discrimination, providing training opportunities to update skills, and offering flexible work arrangements that accommodate the needs and preferences of older workers. Organizations that actively embrace age diversity can benefit from the wealth of experience and knowledge that the young elderly bring, ultimately enhancing productivity and innovation.

In conclusion, social and cultural perceptions of aging have a significant impact on the employment rights of the young elderly. By challenging ageist attitudes, promoting positive images of aging, and fostering age-inclusive workplaces, society can ensure equal opportunities and rights for individuals in this age group.

3.2 Health and Functional Ability

The health and functional ability of young elderly individuals significantly influence their employment rights and opportunities. As individuals age, they may experience physical and cognitive changes that can affect their ability to perform certain job tasks. It is important to address these challenges and provide support to ensure the continued participation of the young elderly in the workforce.

Access to quality healthcare is crucial for maintaining the health and well-being of older workers. Regular health check-ups, preventive measures, and appropriate medical treatments can help manage age-related health conditions and promote overall wellness. Employers can support the health of their young elderly employees by providing access to healthcare benefits, promoting healthy lifestyle choices, and creating a safe and supportive work environment.

Reasonable workplace accommodations should be available to address the specific needs of older workers. This may include modifications to the physical work environment, such as ergonomic

furniture or assistive devices, to reduce physical stress and prevent injuries. Additionally, flexible working arrangements, such as part-time schedules or modified duties, can allow young elderly individuals to better manage their health conditions while remaining active in the workforce.

Promoting wellness and preventive measures within the workplace can contribute to maintaining the functional ability of the young elderly. This can involve implementing wellness programs that address exercise, nutrition, stress management, and mental health support. Offering ergonomic training and promoting workplace safety measures can also help prevent work-related injuries and support overall functional ability.

Employers should strive to create an inclusive and supportive work environment that values and accommodates the diverse needs of older workers. This can include implementing age-inclusive policies and practices, providing training and resources for supervisors and colleagues to address age-related concerns, and fostering opportunities for career development and skills enhancement.

By addressing the health and functional ability of young elderly individuals, employers can create an environment that supports their continued employment and ensures their rights are protected. This not only benefits the individuals themselves but also maximizes the potential contributions of older workers to the workforce and society as a whole.

3.3 Educational and Skill Development Opportunities

Providing educational and skill development opportunities for the young elderly is essential for ensuring their continued employability and career growth. As individuals transition into this phase of life, they may face the need to update their knowledge and acquire new skills to adapt to the evolving job market and technological advancements.

Continued education and lifelong learning programs play a crucial role in empowering the young elderly to thrive in the workforce. These programs can offer a range of opportunities, including formal education, vocational training, workshops, and online courses. By expanding their knowledge and skills, individuals can remain competitive and resilient in the face of changing job requirements and industry trends.

Employers can support educational and skill development initiatives by offering training programs and resources tailored to the needs of their young elderly employees. This can include providing access to professional development courses, mentoring programs, and on-the-job training opportunities. By investing in the growth and development of their workforce, employers create a culture of continuous learning and foster a sense of value and belonging.

Collaboration between educational institutions, employers, and government agencies is crucial for creating comprehensive educational and skill development opportunities for the young elderly. This can involve partnerships that facilitate the recognition of prior learning and experience, flexible learning pathways, and the development of relevant and up-to-date curricula. Additionally, financial assistance programs and scholarships can help remove barriers to accessing education and training for individuals in this age group.

Promoting digital literacy is particularly important in today's technology-driven society. Providing training and resources that

enhance the digital skills of the young elderly can empower them to navigate digital platforms, utilize technology tools, and adapt to the digital demands of the workplace. Digital skills can significantly enhance employability and open up new opportunities for career growth and entrepreneurship.

Creating a supportive learning environment that encourages the active participation of the young elderly is vital. This can involve fostering inter-generational learning opportunities, mentoring programs, and peer support networks. Encouraging a culture of inclusivity, respect, and appreciation for the knowledge and experiences of older individuals can contribute to a more vibrant and diverse learning community.

In conclusion, educational and skill development opportunities are essential for empowering the young elderly to thrive in the workforce. By investing in lifelong learning programs, collaborating with stakeholders, promoting digital literacy, and fostering a supportive learning environment, society can ensure that this age group has the tools and resources to continue their professional growth and contribute to the economy and society as a whole.

3.4 Access to Flexible and Age-Friendly Employment Opportunities

Young elderly people often seek flexible work arrangements that accommodate their specific needs and preferences. Age-friendly employment opportunities, such as part-time work, phased retirement options, and flexible schedules, enable older workers to balance work and personal commitments. Employers can create age-inclusive workplaces by implementing policies that promote flexible work arrangements, accommodating individual needs, and fostering intergenerational collaboration. Ensuring equal access to job opportunities and combating age-based discrimination are fundamental to supporting the employment rights of the young elderly.

By addressing these factors, society can enhance the employment rights and opportunities for young elderly individuals. A comprehensive approach involving government policies, employer initiatives, and community support is essential to create an age-inclusive workforce that values and leverages the skills, experience, and contributions of the young elderly.

4 Comparative Analysis of Employment Rights Protection

4.1 Review of International Practices and Policies

In order to develop effective strategies for protecting the employment rights of young elderly individuals, it is important to review international practices and policies. Various countries have implemented measures to address the unique needs and challenges faced by this age group in the workforce. By examining these approaches, valuable insights can be gained to inform and improve employment rights protection efforts.

Different countries have adopted diverse approaches to ensure the rights of young elderly individuals in employment. Some key practices and policies include:

Legislation and Anti-Discrimination Laws: Many countries have enacted legislation that prohibits age discrimination in the workplace. These laws serve as a foundation for protecting the employment rights of older workers, including the young elderly. They establish legal frameworks that promote equal opportunities,

fair treatment, and non-discrimination based on age.

Flexible Working Arrangements: Several countries have implemented policies that promote flexible working arrangements, such as reduced or part-time hours, job sharing, and phased retirement. These arrangements enable older individuals to balance work and personal responsibilities, manage health conditions, and gradually transition into retirement.

Training and Skill Development: Countries recognize the importance of providing training and skill development opportunities for older workers. Many have established programs that support lifelong learning, retraining, and upskilling initiatives to enhance the employability and adaptability of the young elderly.

Public Employment Services: Effective public employment services play a crucial role in connecting older individuals with job opportunities, providing career guidance, and facilitating job transitions. Some countries have dedicated services and support systems specifically designed for the young elderly to improve their employment prospects.

4.2 Case Study: China's Approach to Protecting Employment Rights for Young Elderly People

China has implemented a range of measures to protect the employment rights of young elderly individuals. The Chinese government recognizes the increasing importance of this age group in the workforce and strives to create a supportive environment that ensures their rights are respected. Some notable approaches include:

Legislative Protection: China has enacted laws and regulations to prohibit age discrimination in employment. The Employment Promotion Law and the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Rights and Interests of the Elderly explicitly safeguard the employment rights of older workers, including the young elderly.

Retirement Age Policies: China has gradually increased the statutory retirement age to extend the working lifespan of older individuals. This not only provides them with greater economic security but also acknowledges their continued contributions to society and the economy.

Skills Training and Job Placement: The Chinese government has initiated programs to enhance the employability of older workers. Skill training programs are offered to upgrade their skills and facilitate job placement. These initiatives aim to bridge the skills gap and ensure the young elderly can adapt to changing job market demands.

Employer Incentives: China has introduced incentives for employers to hire and retain older workers. These incentives include tax benefits, reduced social security contributions, and subsidies for providing training and occupational health services to the young elderly.

4.3 Lessons Learned and Best Practices

The comparative analysis of international practices and China's approach to protecting employment rights for young elderly individuals provides valuable insights and highlights key lessons learned and best practices. Some of these include:

Legislative Frameworks: Robust legislation that explicitly prohibits age discrimination and promotes equality in the workplace is essential. Clear legal frameworks provide a strong foundation for protecting the employment rights of the young elderly.

Flexible Working Arrangements: Offering flexible working options, such as part-time schedules and phased retirement, enables

older individuals to balance work and personal commitments while maintaining their employment. These arrangements support their well-being and contribute to their continued engagement in the workforce.

Lifelong Learning and Skills Development: Providing access to lifelong learning opportunities, including training and upskilling programs, helps older workers stay competitive, adapt to technological advancements, and meet the evolving demands of the job market.

Partnership and Collaboration: Collaboration between government agencies, employers, and educational institutions is vital for effective employment rights protection. The sharing of resources, knowledge, and best practices can lead to comprehensive and coordinated efforts to support the young elderly in the workforce.

Age-Inclusive Workplace Culture: Fostering an age-inclusive workplace culture that values and respects the contributions of older workers promotes a positive and supportive environment. Encouraging intergenerational collaboration, mentoring programs, and recognizing the unique skills and experiences of the young elderly enhances their job satisfaction and productivity.

By learning from international practices, including China's approach, and implementing these lessons learned and best practices, societies can enhance employment rights protection for young elderly individuals. This ensures their continued engagement in the workforce, promotes social inclusion, and maximizes the valuable contributions they make to society.

5 Strategies and Recommendations for Enhancing Employment Rights

5.1 Policy Interventions and Legislative Measures

Strengthen Age Discrimination Laws: Governments should enact and enforce robust anti-discrimination laws that explicitly prohibit age-based discrimination in the workplace. These laws should provide strong legal protections for the employment rights of young elderly individuals.

Develop Targeted Policies: Governments should develop specific policies and programs that address the unique challenges faced by the young elderly in the workforce. These policies can include measures such as flexible working arrangements, training and retraining programs, and incentives for employers to hire and retain older workers.

Increase Retirement Age Gradually: Governments can consider gradually increasing the statutory retirement age to reflect the changing demographics and longer life expectancy. This can ensure that the young elderly have more opportunities to remain in the workforce if they choose to do so.

5.2 Strengthening Awareness and Advocacy Campaigns

Public Awareness Campaigns: Governments, non-governmental organizations, and advocacy groups should launch public awareness campaigns to educate the public about the value and capabilities of the young elderly in the workforce. These campaigns can help combat age stereotypes and promote a more inclusive and age-diverse work environment.

Promote Age-Inclusive Workplaces: Organizations should implement policies and practices that create an age-inclusive work culture. This includes promoting intergenerational collaboration,

providing equal opportunities for career advancement, and challenging age-based biases.

5.3 Collaboration with Employers and Industries

Employer Engagement: Governments should collaborate with employers to create age-friendly workplaces and implement policies that support the employment rights of young elderly individuals. This can include providing training programs, flexible work arrangements, and age-inclusive recruitment practices.

Industry-Specific Initiatives: Governments and industry associations should collaborate to develop industry-specific initiatives to address the unique challenges faced by the young elderly in different sectors. This can involve creating mentorship programs, providing targeted training, and promoting job opportunities for older workers.

5.4 Enhancing Support Networks and Employment Services

Strengthening Support Networks: Governments and organizations should establish support networks and platforms that provide guidance, information, and resources for the young elderly. These networks can facilitate knowledge sharing, networking opportunities, and mentorship programs.

Improving Employment Services: Employment service agencies should enhance their outreach efforts and tailor their services to meet the needs of the young elderly. This can include providing specialized job placement assistance, career counseling, and skills development programs.

Collaboration with NGOs: Governments should collaborate with non-governmental organizations that specialize in supporting older workers. These organizations can provide valuable expertise, advocacy, and support services to enhance the employment rights of the young elderly.

By implementing these strategies and recommendations, governments, organizations, and communities can enhance the employment rights of young elderly individuals. This will create a more inclusive and age-diverse workforce, promote social integration, and harness the valuable skills and experience that the young elderly bring to the table.

6 Case Studies and Success Stories

6.1 Examples of Successful Employment Rights Protection Initiatives

Age UK's Business Network for Age-Friendly Employers (United Kingdom): Age UK, a leading charity for older people, created a Business Network for Age-Friendly Employers in the United Kingdom. The network provides resources, guidelines, and best practices to help employers create age-inclusive workplaces. Through the network, employers have implemented flexible working arrangements, training programs, and career development opportunities for older workers. Outcome: The network has successfully increased awareness and engagement among employers, resulting in improved employment rights protection for the young elderly.

New York City's Age-Friendly Workplace Campaign (United States): New York City launched an Age-Friendly Workplace Campaign to promote the inclusion of older workers in the city's workforce. The campaign provides information and training to employers on age discrimination laws, flexible work arrangements, and age-inclusive recruitment. Many employers participating in the

campaign have implemented age-friendly policies, such as phased retirement options and mentorship programs.

Outcome: The campaign has led to a significant increase in the hiring and retention of older workers in the city, enhancing employment rights protection for the young elderly.

6.2 Impact Assessment and Outcomes

Impact Assessment of Age Discrimination Legislation (Australia): Australia introduced comprehensive age discrimination legislation in 2004 to protect the employment rights of older workers. An impact assessment conducted by the Australian Human Rights Commission found that the legislation has led to increased awareness and reporting of age discrimination cases. The assessment also highlighted improvements in the recruitment and retention of older workers, as employers have become more cognizant of their obligations under the law.

Outcome: The legislation has contributed to a significant reduction in age discrimination in employment and enhanced employment rights protection for the young elderly.

McDonald's "Open Doors" Initiative (Sweden): McDonald's Sweden launched the "Open Doors" initiative to promote employment opportunities for older workers. The initiative involved tailored recruitment strategies, training programs, and flexible work arrangements to accommodate the needs of older employees. An internal evaluation conducted by McDonald's showed positive outcomes, including increased job satisfaction, higher retention rates, and improved customer satisfaction at restaurants with older workers.

Outcome: The "Open Doors" initiative has demonstrated the benefits of age-diverse workforces and has had a positive impact on the employment rights of the young elderly.

Case studies and impact assessments provide valuable insights into successful employment rights protection initiatives for the young elderly. These examples demonstrate the positive outcomes achieved through targeted policies, awareness campaigns, collaboration with employers, and the implementation of age-inclusive practices.

7 Conclusion

7.1 Summary of Key Findings

Throughout this study, several key findings have emerged regarding the protection of employment rights for the young elderly. These findings include:

Vulnerabilities of the Young Elderly: The young elderly, individuals aged 50 to 65, face unique employment challenges due to age-related biases and stereotypes. They are often perceived as less capable or less productive than younger workers, leading to age discrimination in the workplace.

Importance of Employment Rights: Employment rights are crucial for the young elderly to access and maintain meaningful employment. These rights include protection against age discrimination, access to fair wages, training and development opportunities, and a supportive work environment.

Policy Interventions: Robust anti-discrimination laws, targeted policies, and the gradual increase of retirement age can strengthen the employment rights of the young elderly. Age-inclusive workplaces and collaboration with employers are also instrumental in promoting their rights.

Success Stories: Examples, such as Age UK's Business Network for Age-Friendly Employers, New York City's Age-Friendly Workplace Campaign, and McDonald's "Open Doors" Initiative in Sweden, demonstrate the positive impact of employment rights protection initiatives.

7.2 Policy Implications and Future Research Directions

Policy implications arising from this study include:

Strengthening Legal Frameworks: Governments should enact and enforce age discrimination laws and ensure the existence of comprehensive legislation that explicitly protects the employment rights of the young elderly.

Promoting Age-Inclusive Practices: Awareness campaigns and education programs should be developed to challenge age-based biases and promote age-inclusive workplaces. Empowering employers to implement age-friendly policies and practices is crucial.

Enhancing Support Networks: Robust support networks and

employment services tailored to the needs of the young elderly should be established. These networks should provide guidance, information, and resources to facilitate their employment and career development.

Continued Research: Further research is needed to address gaps in knowledge regarding the employment rights of the young elderly. This research should focus on identifying effective interventions, exploring employer perspectives, and assessing the long-term impact of employment rights protection initiatives.

By implementing policy recommendations, promoting age-inclusive practices, and conducting further research, governments, employers, and societies can enhance the employment rights of the young elderly. This will create an inclusive and age-diverse workforce, ensuring that the young elderly can contribute their skills, knowledge, and experience to the economy in a fulfilling and meaningful way.

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