

On the Issue of Human Capital of the Working Older Generation of Modern Russia

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Abstract

Practice has shown that the onset of retirement and pre-retirement age in modern Russia adds new problems to the working older generation, caused by significant changes in lifestyle and new views on human labor activity. The implemented pension reform in Russia, which added five years to the day of retirement, significantly exacerbated the problems associated with the employment of people of retirement age. The article offers scientifically based recommendations for increasing human capital at the expense of the working older generation, taking into account regional and other characteristics. In modern conditions, human capital can play an important role in solving many problems during the military conflict between Russia and Ukraine, especially in increasing the military-industrial potential of our state. In conditions of labor shortage, experienced personnel of engineers, technologists, managers can significantly strengthen Russian industrial and other enterprises.

Keywords: *Human Capital, Workers, Senior Employees, Stereotypes, Factors.*

Introduction

Human capital in a broad definition is an intensive productive factor in the development of the economy, society and family, including the educated part of the labor force, knowledge, tools of intellectual and managerial work, living environment and work activity. In other words, it is a set of useful qualities of an individual, which under certain conditions can give a positive effect if used correctly at an enterprise, in an organization. Human capital is a necessary condition for maintaining the competitiveness of the country's and the state's economy in the world markets in the context of globalization, as well as the most important characteristic of the activities of legislative and executive authorities in the country. The most important demographic phenomenon at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries was the global increase in life expectancy of the population and, as a consequence, the growth of the proportion of elderly people in the total population of the world. The aging of the population of many countries of the world is due, first of all, to a significant increase in human life expectancy as a result of an increase in the level and quality of living conditions, improvement of health care, ecology, nutrition, and lifestyle in general. Meanwhile, the human capital of older generations is a practically ready resource of workers and employees, with already acquired necessary competencies, vast work experience, and a necessary resource in a situation of acute labor shortage during military operations against Ukraine. The missing component for involving this large reserve army of labor is the correct motivation of this social category of people, both by the federal center and by regional authorities and administration. At the same time, of course, certain investments and the formation of public opinion will be required based on the use of federal television channels and other media, which, as practice has shown, form the necessary worldview among Russians. Certain work in this direction is already being carried out in modern Russia. Thus, in 2015, the "Strategy of Actions in the Interests of Senior Citizens

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in the Russian Federation until 2025" was approved and is being implemented. The government document noted that senior citizens make a significant contribution to the combined intellectual potential, to the socio-economic development of the country, possessing knowledge and experience and creating material goods; They also preserve traditions and spiritual and moral values, passing them on to other generations (Strategy, 2016). In demographic studies by domestic and foreign scientists, a stable opinion has emerged about which countries can be considered aging. "Demographically aging" countries are those where the share of people aged 65 and older is 15 percent or more of the country's total population. The trend of population aging, characteristic of many European countries, has clearly emerged in the Russian Federation. It has been calculated that over the past 50 years, the population of Russia in the 65+ category has doubled and reached 24.1 million people at the beginning of 2023. With such a rate of population aging in modern Russia, the share of the elderly population by 2033, according to forecasts from the same Rosstat, will significantly exceed 20% (In Russia, 2023). In some publications, this negative demographic result is called "social collapse" (Research, 2016).

Based on these and other statistical data, the Russian Federation today is among the demographically old states. In this regard, a problem has arisen in Russian society - how to integrate older people into the modern economy with maximum benefit for the growth of human capital in the regions and the country as a whole. In these conditions, in order to strengthen the country's human capital, there is a need to develop legal norms regulating the social protection of older workers upon reaching retirement age (maintenance and indexation of pensions, bonuses for seniority and length of service in a position, etc.), as well as encouraging employers to take effective measures to provide material incentives for experienced personnel to continue working at the enterprise (organization), as well as to retrain personnel and improve their skills in connection with changes, for example, with the digital transformation of the economy, the introduction of artificial intelligence, etc. These and other timely legal and socio-economic measures will, in our opinion, help to mitigate the negative consequences of population aging and the impending "social collapse". Russian economists note that in recent decades, significant changes have occurred in the domestic economy towards a reduction in the share of physical labor (Kapelyushnikov R.I., 2012, p.33), which, in the conditions of labor shortage, creates favorable conditions for the labor activity of older Russians.

Working pensioners are economically beneficial for the Russian state: their pensions are not indexed from 2016 to 2024 inclusive, and during the same period, employers made all contributions to various social funds for them (Safonov A.V., 2024). Suffice it to say that the tax on the pensioners' wage fund was the same, regardless of age - 30%.

Due to these and other reasons, as studies of the human capital of the older generation have shown, rich production and life experience, existing competencies and creativity are not fully used by employers in modern conditions. Suffice it to say that according to official statistics (according to the Social Fund of the Russian Federation), in Russia there are only less than 8 million (more precisely, 7.87) working pensioners out of 41 million people receiving a pension in 2024. In other words, only every fifth labor veteran is involved in the Russian economy. The authors of the article tried to find out the reasons for this situation. The reasons for the decreased attention to the use of human capital of the older generation include both subjective and objective factors. Subjective factors include employers' clear preference for younger candidates for vacant positions; objective factors include low life expectancy in Russia, poor health with a host of chronic diseases, and the decreased availability of medical care in recent years, which have a negative impact on the use of human capital of the older generation in the modern Russian economy.

Literature Review

Works of Foreign Scientists on The Problems of Population Aging

In recent decades, the number of published scientific works by both foreign and domestic scientists has increased significantly, devoted to the current problems of population aging and the involvement of

older people in socially useful activities in order to increase human capital in the economy and solve many social problems at the same time. Such foreign researchers include Becker G.S., who is credited with a comprehensive empirical and theoretical analysis of human capital (Becker G.S., 1994). The problems associated with the aging of the country's population have been most fully covered in their works by such famous foreign scientists as: Cumming E. and Henry W.E. (1961), Bengtson V.L. (1993), Havighurst R.J. and Albrecht R. (1980), Laslett P. (1996), Parsons, T. (2000), Van Dalen, H. P., Henkens, K., Schippers, J. (2010), Bussolo, M., Coettl, J., & Sinnott, E. (2015), et al.

Monographs and Articles by Russian Scientists About Working Pensioners

The works of Russian demographers devoted to the problems of population aging in our country contain conceptual provisions and scientifically substantiated recommendations on how to avoid the so-called social collapse caused by the increase in life expectancy and, accordingly, the increase in the share of elderly people, including those of working age in the total number of people inhabiting the country. Such fundamental works include monographs and articles by Sapozhnikova T.I. (Sapozhnikova T.I., 2007), Safarova G.L. (2005), Yatsemirskaya R.S. and Belenkaya I.G. (1999). Among domestic researchers, authors of works on the older age groups of the Russian population, it is necessary to note the works of V.A. Acharkan, Yu.A. Belyaev, V.G. Dobrokhleb, M.G. Kolosnitsyna, M.Ya. Sonin, E.E. Shestakova and other scientists who studied the prospects for involving people of retirement age in the country's economy and the problems associated with this, and A.G. Solovyova, who studied the problems associated with working pensioners, and A.A. Reshetyuk, who analyzed the physiological rehabilitation of the elderly at work. Among domestic researchers, authors of works on older age groups of the Russian population, it is also worth noting the works V.A. Acharkan (1975), Yu.A. Belyaev (2009), V.G. Dobrokhleb (2008), M.G. Kolosnitsyn and M.A. Gerasimenko (2014), M.Ya. Sonin (1974), E.E. Shestakova (2007). The studies and publications of Acharkan V.A. & Soloviev A.G. (1975), Rzhansitsyna L. S. (2020), who studied the problems associated with working pensioners, and A.A. Reshetyuk (1990), who analyzed the physiological rehabilitation of the elderly in production, undoubtedly deserve attention.

Problems Faced by The Working Older Generation in Modern Russia

After listing the studies that attempted to study the problems associated with the aging of the population of modern Russia, with retraining and employment of older Russians in order to rationally use their human capital for economic development, the authors identified a number of important factors.

In the doctoral dissertation of Yu. G. Bychenko and subsequent works of this Russian scientist, the real possibilities of using the human capital of pensioners in labor activity are analyzed. This became necessary in connection with the political, social and economic transformations that were carried out in Russia in the post-Soviet period (Bychenko Yu. G., 2005). The results of their research on the education system and retraining of older people were published by such Russian scientists as: Anikeeva O.A., Volzhina O.B., Mityaeva A.M. (2019), and others. In these works, researchers analyze the human capital of the working older generation, highlighting their skills and experience, as well as problems associated with their involvement in economic activity. Most of them correlate with the Madrid Plan of Action on Aging (International, 2002), focusing on the economic, political, legal, psychological and other aspects of the use of human capital of older generations in modern Russia. During the period of digital transformation, as studies by Asian researchers have shown, human capital carriers can be successfully used in modern economies. Remote work, as noted in a research paper by researchers Suzanne T. Jamaledine Chmeis and Hala M. Zeinesta, published in the Asian Business Research Journal, is being widely adopted by businesses "to reduce costs while increasing productivity" (Suzanne T. Jamaledine Chmeis and Hala M. Zeinesta, 2024).

In modern Russia, due to the aging of the population, economists are faced with the acute problem of the effective use of human capital of people who have received the right to retire. However, due to management errors, including a sharp increase in the retirement age and the cancellation of indexation for working veterans, the number of Russians wishing to continue working after receiving the right to

a well-deserved rest has noticeably decreased. Ten years ago, in 2014, according to the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation, there were 15 million workers out of 41 million pensioners in Russia. After the abolition of pension indexation for working veterans in 2016, the number of this category decreased almost by half. According to the Russian Government, in 2019, only 4.58 million people over 60 years old continued to work, and only in 2023 did this figure increase slightly to 5.7 million people (Number, 2023). In 2024, the number of working Russian pensioners increased to 8 million people after receiving information about the resumption of indexation of pensions for working pensioners Polyakova E. (2024). Two important factors played a negative role in the decrease in their numbers: changes in pension legislation towards increasing the retirement age for men to 65 years, for women to 60 years in accordance with the Federal Law of 2018 (Federal, 2018) and the official refusal of the Federal Center to index pensions for working pensioners. In our opinion, the fair decision to index pensions for this category of Russians, starting in February 2025, will play a positive role in terms of stimulating older people to engage in labor activity. According to some estimates, in our country, a fifth of workers over 65 years old retain their resource potential, and this important human capital can and should be realized in the Russian economy.

In the second half of the 20th century, scientists identified two periods in the social stratum united by the concept of "old age" - the "third" and "fourth" ages, which complete the life cycle of an individual. Foreign researchers B. Neugarten and E. Shanas introduced the scientific term "ageism", meaning age discrimination (Neugarten B., 1974). Meanwhile, in the middle of the last century, the Soviet researcher Z.G. Frenkel put forward and tested the idea of lengthening life through active old age" (Frenkel Z.G., 1949), which, in our opinion, is becoming relevant in modern Russia, which has been conducting military operations in Ukraine for the third year to demilitarize and denazify the ruling regime. Moreover, in the states of the European Union and other developed countries of the West, a similar concept of "successful aging" put forward by scientists J. Rowe and R. Kahn is currently enjoying success. According to Western researchers, people of the "third age" age more slowly, continuing to work and maintaining their brain activity through continuous learning and expanding contacts with people of a younger age group (Rowe J.D. & Kahn R.L., 1987).

The term "third age", introduced into scientific circulation by P. Laslett in 1996, represents, according to most scientists, a working age, and its holders are still quite energetic and can successfully engage in political and economic activities (Laslett P., 1996). In the West, the 46th President of the United States Joe Biden, born on November 20, 1942, is currently cited as an example of active political activity. Such an advanced age of a prominent American politician did not become an obstacle in the presidential elections of 2008 and 2012, when Biden was elected Vice President of the United States of America, and in the 2020 elections - the head of the White House. Among the notable positive steps during his presidency, he deserves credit for allocating almost \$ 2 trillion to restore the national economy after the pandemic (Joe Biden. 2024). Another clear example of political longevity is Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi. In 2024, 83-year-old N. Pelosi announced that she intends to run for the US Congress for a new term (Pelosi, 2023). One of the reasons for such a long working life of US citizens is, in our opinion, the high level of health care and science, including, of course, gerontology. It should be noted here that both Joe Biden and Nancy Pelosi, and a number of other American politicians are no longer in the third, but rather the "fourth age", but are full of strength and creative plans, which allows them to age slowly and be useful to society.

The increase in the number of elderly people in modern Russia entails a change in policy towards individuals of the third and fourth ages, including the formation of a gerontoculture in this environment, designed to ensure slow active aging, the desire to work fruitfully, maintaining vitality and the usual dynamic stereotype.

According to researcher K. G. Kyazimov from the Academy of Labor and Social Relations, state authorities and management bodies, employers together with trade unions and educational authorities should develop a number of effective measures aimed at promoting professions and specialties needed by the economy, and not only those in demand on the labor market, but also attractive to Russians of the third and fourth ages (Kyazimov K.G., 2018). At the same time, it is necessary not only to determine

the needs of the regional economy for the necessary personnel, but also to improve the mechanism for forming regional orders for the training of elderly people at all levels of professional education. In modern Russia, the onset of a 5-year increase in the retirement age for older people is associated with many difficulties and problems that are closely related to changes for the worse in their standard and quality of life, due to a relatively low pension. In our country, employers still have a biased attitude towards people of pre-retirement and pre-retirement age, which is usually manifested in their reluctance to often extend a contract or employ a representative of not only the fourth, but also the "third age", giving preference to young applicants for a vacant position. The article by researcher Nikolaeva L.N. analyzes current problems of employment of pensioners, as well as factors influencing the growth of unemployment among Russians of retirement and pre-retirement age. L.N. Nikolaeva attributes the problems of employment of older people to not very prestigious and low-paid vacancies that Russian employers offer to older people (watchman, janitor, doorman, cleaner, etc.). They are more willing to hire teachers, doctors, other medical workers, as well as people with construction specialties. This also includes low salaries for pensioners (Nikolaeva L.N., 2018). According to the authors, the reform of the pension system and the increase of the retirement age by 5 years has significantly complicated the problem of employment of elderly people, to whom millions of Russians have been added who have entered the social stratum of the so-called "pre-retirees", who, as practice has shown, also have many difficulties with employment in these difficult times. It should be noted that it is precisely today, in difficult geopolitical conditions, that there is a need not only to determine the directions of state policy concerning the provision of assistance to senior citizens, their families, social institutions interacting with this category of citizens, but also to actively involve senior citizens in the life of society. Most researchers agree that in the situation of labor shortage that has developed in the Russian Federation in recent years, such an attitude towards personnel with valuable work experience and competencies is unacceptable and wasteful. We must learn to eliminate these negative stereotypes in relation to older people who have valuable human capital.

The analysis of the practice of using human capital of older ages in the economy of modern Russia allows the authors to conclude that the country's leadership, the ruling class and employers do not clearly enough understand the importance of this problem in the current geopolitical situation.

If the country's leadership, the ruling class and employers understand the importance of this problem, then their actual activities do little to convince us otherwise.

Method and Data Collection

In the article, the authors used a variety of research methods. The authors of this article applied a number of scientific approaches and methods for studying problems related to one degree or another to the human capital of older workers. This is, first of all, a sociological approach, which involves studying the social and economic problems of older ages. Based on sociological surveys of businessmen and entrepreneurs, it was possible to identify a pattern, which is that Russian employers turn to the human capital of older people, as a rule, in two cases: 1) when there are no young candidates with the necessary competencies on the labor market and 2) when there is a general labor shortage in the region, and the needs of an enterprise or firm force them to look for the necessary personnel.

Other scientific methods were also used in the study: statistical, comparative, institutional and some others. Thus, using the statistical research method, the authors were able to identify the trend of aging of the population of modern Russia, establish the number of working pensioners, the trend of a decrease in their number in 2016-2021, some increase in the use of human capital of older people in 2022-2024. Using the comparative method, the authors were able to show the similarities and differences in the approach to the problem of employment of pensioners and the use of their human capital in different countries. The institutional method made it possible to show the role of government and management bodies in the implementation of relevant state programs. The information base for the study was legislative acts and regulatory documents of the Russian Federation on the problems of employment and employment of elderly people, scientific publications on the problems of gerontology in domestic

and foreign publications.

It has been proven that in recent decades the population of many countries of the world has been aging, and therefore the number of elderly people has increased significantly. This trend is typical for both Asian and European countries. In modern Russia, the number of elderly people, despite the increase in the retirement age by 5 years (according to the federal law of 2018), is also increasing year by year. In this regard, the authorities and management of the Russian Federation are faced with acute problems related to retraining and employment of pre-retirement and retirement age people. The article attempts to analyze these problems and outline the main ways of implementing state policy on the use of human capital of the working older generation in the economy of modern Russia.

Low pensions that the social Russian state pays to veterans of labor encourage many representatives of the third generation in our country to either continue working in the same place or get a new job. Until now, the retirement of an ordinary Russian is held under the slogan: "Welcome to poverty!" (Moiseev V., 2009).

Another equally important factor is the desire of veterans of labor to maintain the established dynamic stereotype, which makes them constantly toned, to feel needed by their family, the people around them in the work collective and the state. This is evidenced by the statistical data of the Pension and Social Funds of the Russian Federation, summarized in the following table.

Table 1. Number Of Working Pensioners In 2014-2023

Years	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of employees (million)	14,325	14,917	15,26	9,883	9,669	9,667	9,315	8,891	8,513	7,870
Percentage of total number	34,9	36,0	35,7	22,9	22,2	22,0	21,4	20,7	20,3	18,8

The table shows that in 2014-2016, when the army of working pensioners numbered 15,000,000 people, their human capital was used in the economic and social spheres quite widely. However, after an incorrect management decision (the abolition of pension indexation for working pensioners), the percentage of older Russians engaged in socially useful activities fell almost 2-fold from 36% in 2015 to 18.8% of the total number of labor veterans who retired in 2023, of whom, according to the Social Fund of the Russian Federation, there were 41.78 million people as of January 1, 2023 (Vinogradova E., 2023).

Researchers of problems related to the working older generation in modern Russia note the fact that often the decision of employers to continue working with older people is decisively influenced by the qualities of the applicant, related to human capital, first of all, the presence of the competencies required by the employer, education in the profile of the upcoming work, his health and others (Vidyasova L. A., Grigorieva I. A., 2023). At the same time, along with an objective assessment of the human capital of the older generation, a number of employers often do not hide their mistrust of his health, abilities and creativity when hiring a pensioner. According to the research center of the Superjob.ru portal, which surveyed more than 500 large Russian companies from all regions of the Russian Federation, businessmen prefer to take young people on internships and train them from scratch, considering this event more profitable than accepting 45-year-old people as interns, whose candidacies are often not even considered (Employers, 2024). In connection with these and other circumstances confirming the facts of underestimation of human capital of elderly people by Russian entrepreneurs, it is necessary to adopt a set of legal, economic and other measures to eliminate discriminatory practices in relation to this category, especially in the context of the current shortage of experienced personnel for Russian industry, transport, and agriculture.

The socio-economic role and significance of the older generation are determined by the level of professional competence of the older generation, their knowledge and work experience, which not only strengthens the human capital available in the region, but in some cases, according to some researchers, can create competition between different age groups in the Russian labor market (Shemyatikhina L. Yu., 2015). In addition, individual representatives of the older generation have entrepreneurial skills and can, as practice has shown in recent years, provide a stable income for the family and subsequently pass on the family business to subsequent generations.

Russian researchers, as a result of sociological surveys, have identified the difficulties faced by Russians who continue to work after reaching retirement age (Lyudmila I. Voronina, Tatiana Kasyanova, Tatiana Radchenko, 2019). We have summarized these difficulties in the following table.

Table 2. Difficulties of the Working Older Generation

Difficulties of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Stress from employer attempts to force an older worker to write a letter of resignation of their own free will	18,0
Older workers' experience is undervalued	14,2
The pace of work has increased dramatically. It is impossible to cope with the number of changes	26,3
Feeling of age discrimination	6,7
Insufficient knowledge or work skills	6,7
No difficulties	43,6

It follows from the table that almost half of the respondents (43.6%) do not experience difficulties in their work. And only some of the working pensioners (6.7%) said that they feel discrimination based on age. As practice has shown, the optimal use of the human capital of the older generation is negatively affected by law enforcement practices and weak state control over compliance with current labor legislation. In addition, people of retirement age who continue to work and use their human capital in the economy expressed their dissatisfaction with the authorities' decision not to index their well-deserved pension, which has been subject to high inflation in recent years, to interviewers and on social networks until 2024. During the next consideration of the issue of indexing pensions for working pensioners in 2021, Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov directly stated that the government will not index pensions for those who have additional income in the form of a salary (Zamakhina T., 2021). This is despite the fact that, as noted above, millions of elderly Russians continue to work because they need money in the context of rising inflation and the associated rise in the cost of imported medicines, food products, and other essential goods, as well as rising housing and utility rates.

Conclusion

According to the authors, the reform of the pension system and the increase of the retirement age by 5 years has significantly complicated the problem of employment of elderly people, to whom were added millions of Russians who entered the social stratum of the so-called "pre-retirees", who, as practice has shown, also have many difficulties with employment in these difficult times.

It should be noted that today, in difficult geopolitical conditions, there is a need not only to determine the directions of state policy concerning the provision of assistance to senior citizens, their families, social institutions interacting with this category of citizens, but also to actively involve senior citizens in the life of society. The authors agree with the opinion of researcher K. G. Kyazimov from the Academy of Labor and Social Relations that state authorities and administration, employers together with trade

unions and educational authorities should develop a number of effective measures aimed at promoting professions and specialties needed by the economy, and not only those in demand on the labor market, but also attractive to Russians of the third and fourth ages. At the same time, it is necessary not only to determine the needs of the regional economy for the necessary personnel, but also to improve the mechanism for forming regional orders for training older people at all levels of professional education (Kyazimov K. G., 2018).

In fairness, it should be noted that in modern Russia, regional authorities organize various courses, schools for improving professional skills, refresher courses and acquiring a new specialty for people of retirement and pre-retirement age. A number of regions create conditions for private business, for example, becoming a repairman for household appliances, computers, printers, mastering one of the IT technologies, etc. In 2024, advertisements for free training and assistance with employment for elderly people are often found on the Internet. They are offered free training in programs for mastering IT technologies, marketing, marketplaces, management, design, other professions in demand on the labor market, and are also given the opportunity to become a freelancer or work remotely from anywhere in the world. At the same time, organizers of training for older people and employees of companies called "Employment Assistance" offer HR consultations, advise to take free training "in one of 40+ professions", organize assistance with starting a career, publish announcements of open vacancies and even channels with vacancies, career marathons, etc. Many of the listed events for the employment of older Russians are held under the auspices of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Russian Federation (Free, 2024).

In order to improve the efficiency of work on retraining and employment of older citizens, it is proposed to make appropriate changes and additions to the Federal Law of 12.12.2023 No. 565-FZ "On Employment of the Population in the Russian Federation", which could improve the organization of this important work on the scale of both a separate region and the country as a whole. In our opinion, there is also a need to introduce innovations into the Unified Digital Platform in the Sphere of Employment and Labor Relations "Work in Russia" in terms of prompt notification of older citizens about vacancies in the domestic labor market and the requirements for applicants for a particular sought-after profession, indicating the average salary. These and other measures of government and management bodies, together with the interest of employers, are capable, in our opinion, of using this human resource of the older generation of Russians, who possess a certain human capital, to the maximum possible extent.

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