

Analysis of Female Employment in China's New-Type Urbanization

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Abstract. Since the Reform and Opening up, China's urbanization process has gradually deepened with the development of social economy. In order to solve the "new dual sector model" caused by urbanization, the Chinese government revised current policies and began to implement the new-type urbanization strategy in 2014, aiming to develop a people-oriented modern approach for the mass. During this period, the employment status of female employees has also changed with the continuous advancement of policies. This article aims to sort out the relevant researches on women's employment in the context of new-type urbanization and analyze their salary levels, career choices and regional employment differences, then to emphasize the various impacts of the current new-type urbanization on women entering the workplace and even starting their own businesses. After summarizing the important guiding or promoting role of new-type urbanization in women's employment, this paper also puts forward constructive suggestions on the still existing problems such as workplace discrimination and gender pay differences.

Keywords: New-type urbanization; female employment; women's salary level.

1. Introduction

Since the Reform and Opening up, China's urban-rural divide has been gradually loosened facilitating the rapid urbanization in parallel with the country's economic growth. In recent times, as China's economic transition from rapid growth to high-quality development, its urbanization process has also correspondingly shifted to a transition period of quality improvement, which forms an obvious gap between the agricultural-transferring-population and local residents [1]. To solve the negative impact of the "New Dual Sector Model" on economic development, the Chinese government has put forward a new urbanization development strategy that "focuses on human beings" in 2014, which has become an important strategic choice for realizing Chinese modernization [2].

Although existing studies have analyzed the current situation and causes of women's employment in the context of new-type urbanization from various aspects, the impact in terms of geographical differences, economic development and social thinking remain under-explored; in addition, despite the comprehensive transformation of urban and rural industrial structure, there is still a relative weakness in the provision of segmented planning and differentiated promotion paths for women's employment. It is worth noting that although the infrastructure construction, investment in education, and popularization of scientific concepts brought about by new-type urbanization have greatly improved the employment environment for women who have traditionally stayed away from the workplace, hidden sex discrimination still exists in the current transitional phase. With the rapid advancement of new-type urbanization, the employment situation of women, as an important force in social and economic development, is directly related to family well-being, social stability and economic development. Therefore, in-depth and improved research on the above issues is of great significance to the promotion of gender equality and the enhancement of women's social status.

2. Literature Review

New-type urbanization is the "urbanization for the people" with the pursuit of innovation, coordination, greenness, openness and sharing as the core concept, aiming to meet the needs of

various types of production and realize the integration of the "people, industry, city" [3]. According to previous theories, urbanization provides individuals with opportunities for education, employment, income enhancement and expansion of social networks, while the advancement of "new-type urbanization" is definitely more instrumental in the shaping of people's expectations, perceptions, values and actions, including norms on how the two genders should divide up and interact. Consequently, it does affect employment mostly due to factors such as one's household registration, the socio-economic status of parents and so on [4]. From a gender perspective, it also reshapes the situation of female workers in the job market, a group that historically has been subjected to the disadvantageous labor division in the family, where "man in charge of the outside world and the woman managing the household ". As a result, the employment of women workers in the new-type urbanization process is gradually becoming different from that of men in a number of ways.

At present, researches on female employment in the context of new-type urbanization mainly concentrate on the following dimensions: First a temporal longitudinal analysis is conducted, explaining comparative exploration of evolution in the female workers' job choice, salary levels, and reforms in employment services and security policies from 2014 to the present. This type of research mostly uses the theory of labor market segmentation theory and human capital theory to support for empirical research, and establishes an analytical model with time-fixed effects to explore the influencing factors of the dependent variable; secondly, by means of geographic cross-sectional comparisons, typical areas are selected with case studies following on the basis of econometric evidence. They mostly use questionnaires to explore the homogeneous and heterogeneous parts of female workers' employment situation, which end ultimately informing policy recommendations tailored to the specific contexts of urban development, regional economic reforms, and women's employment-related rights and interests; thirdly, from a socio-philosophical perspective, the gender difference equations, in conjunction with the theory of the modern concept of gender, are constructed to reflect the impacts of the situation of urbanization on the social trend and how it influences the choices and judgments made by women regarding the division of labor in the family and their career.

3. Overview of Female Employment in New-Type Urbanization

The basic principle of new-type urbanization is "people-oriented", which underscores the paramount importance of placing individuals at the core of the urbanization process and driving its progress by advancing the enhancement of citizens' rights to survival and development. Previously, although China's urbanization was in a rapid development stage, the lagging reform of the household registration system still seriously hindered the urbanization of the agricultural-transfer-population [5]. In 2020, China's urbanization rate of the resident population will reach 63.9%, while the urbanization rate of the household population will lag behind the rate of the resident population by 18.5 percentage points, at only 45.4% [6]. As spatial urbanization has not resulted in population urbanization, a new policy has emerged with the ultimate goal of "achieving common prosperity and comprehensive human development".

It is evident that new-type urbanization can give full play to the agglomeration effect of population and the economy, effectively alleviating the "big-city disease" by perfecting the coordinated development of large, medium-sized and small cities in the urban pattern [7]. At the micro level, this paradigm implies a more decentralized and balanced distribution of industries, employment, population and housing, and the formation of a new correlation between urban development and employment [3]. However, at the macro level, it is not enough to generalize the direction in which the current employment situation is affected by the new urbanization, only from the perspective of the dual economic structure of urban and rural areas, the upgrading of industries and the development of county economies.

3.1. Relevant Theoretical Foundation

3.1.1 Dual Sector Model and Employment

The theory of the dual sector model was first propounded by the American economist and Nobel laureate, William Arthur Lewis. He argued that due to the huge labor productivity differences between the industrial and agricultural sectors, the ultimate breakdown of this structure depended critically on the degree of development of the urban economy. Their economies, steeped in historical roots of traditional and rudimentary economic systems, have undergone a transformation with technological advancements, refined social division of labor, and the emergence of large-scale machinery industries. This evolution has led to the gradual emergence of a modern urban economic sector, thereby fostering a binary economic structure. The conventional urbanization model, however, has been marred by limitations such as inadequate comprehensive capacity in county towns, a monolithic industrial structure, and scarcity of employment prospects. In contrast, the new urbanization paradigm, with county towns as its point, holds immense potential in improving the employment quality for the agricultural-transferred-population, so that addressing the shortcomings of the traditional approach [8].

3.1.2 Exploration of The Female Labor Force Participation

In 1936, J. H. Pleck, a scholar at Wellesley College in the United States, proposed that individuals acquire socio-culturally assigned behavioral norms for their sex, also known as gender roles, through acquired learning during the socialization process. Gender stereotypes, on the other hand, originate from the differentiation of gender roles [9]. This differentiation arises from the varied experiences of various genders within diverse labor landscapes, where the differing divisions of labor engender specific requirements. Consequently, these requirements shape and derive the normative frameworks associated with gender roles. Under the traditional theory of the division of labor in the family, women tend to take on more work in childbearing and child-rearing, and it can be seen that the opportunity cost of family childbearing for women in the labor market affects their relative wages and employment opportunities. Relevant studies have shown that beyond the surge in female employment facilitated by educational expansion, shifts in industrial composition, and the accelerating urbanization process, population mobility is also one of the most important factors influencing changes in the gender concepts of men and women, thus affecting women's trade-offs between employment and family [10].

3.2. Research Status

3.2.1 Restrictions on Female Employment

As early as 2007, in their study on the employment of rural women who lost their land due to urbanization in Guangdong Province, Sun et al. pointed out that although education and training would affect employment, training contributes more to improving the employment rate of women; and for such landless women, the division of labor in the family did not influence their employment status as traditionally thought [11]. The key lies in the large-scale unemployment of the urban population caused by the process of "town to street" and "village to residential", which makes their employment an urgent problem to be solved. In 2014, China formally introduced the new-type urbanization policy, which provides a path for the citizenship of the agricultural-transferring-population, including women, and has led to new trends and characteristics in the urban integration and employment of this group. Zhao and Lu, in their study of returning female migrant workers in one village in China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, suggest that female migrant workers are more inclined to migrate to small towns in the context of new-type urbanization, and that the corresponding migratory dilemmas can be reflected in employment and other aspects, i.e., by using the push and pull factors in the Law of Population Migration to explain [12]. In other words, the push and pull factors are used to explain the current situation in which their employment is restricted by household registration and their own resources. The article points out that the migration dilemma is the primary cause of the unstable employment of women in the interviewed areas. Due to their low

education and the special physical characteristics of women, they can only engage in some informal jobs, which are concentrated in the catering industry, beauty and hairdressing industry, clothing, food processing and other. Low and unstable income has become the biggest dilemma for staying in the city.

Based on the previous research on married women's employment outside the home, Liang and Li further explored the impact of family migration under the background of new-type urbanization, using a binary logistic model for analysis, mainly introducing the number of acres of family land, years of education and annual family income as influencing factors, and pointed out the importance of accelerating agricultural modernization and freeing women from heavy agricultural labor [13]. In addition, the article also emphasized that education and training are still important factors restricting women's employment outside the home.

3.2.2 Gender Wage Gap

Hu and Li use the data from the 2008 China Household Dynamics Tracking Survey and adopt the deformation model of Mincer's wage equation to analyze the gender wage gap in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong [14]. They conclude that economically developed regions cannot be treated as a homogeneous body when analyzing the gender income gap. The innovation of the article is that in addition to incorporating years of education and job attributes into influencing factors, it also considers political capital, that is, whether the employee is a party member or a state agency staff member. One of their conclusions is that in Guangdong, a region with the largest proportion of non-public capital, the degree to which income is determined by the market is higher than in Beijing, which is the political center. In terms of gender income, although women in Beijing and Shanghai are not inferior in terms of human capital competitiveness and are not at a disadvantage in the labor market structure, they do not have a corresponding advantage in income. In the research of Guo et al., they stated that in order to narrow the gender wage gap, a production structure transformation characterized by an increase in the proportion of mental labor-intensive production sectors can be chosen [15]. Furthermore, the article also conducted a model analysis and comparison between women's employment in mental labor-intensive production sectors and raising children in the family sector, pointing out that the former has more advantages for women's income; in order to reduce women's childbearing costs and promote employment, the article also conducted a detailed evaluation of the structural impact of direct intervention policies on women's labor pricing and policies to reduce childbirth and raising costs.

3.2.3 Citizenship of Female Worker

On the issue of citizenship of the agricultural transfer population, Qi further explores it from the perspective of social policy [16]. She highlighted that the new-type urbanization has presented challenges to the identity of female new citizen groups, necessitating their urgent integration into the city through psychological rooting as soon as possible. Consequently, it is imperative to underscore the significance of incorporating a gender perspective into new-type urbanization policies, which includes promoting women's employment and safeguarding their legitimate rights and interests in the workplace. As early as 2015, Goodburn C conducted research on young migrant female workers in Shenzhen, China, and focused on the subtle shifts in married women's mentalities about gender roles in the context of education, marital choices for female children, and urbanization [17]. In fact, support in Chinese society for the idea of women's independence has generally risen in recent years. It is worth noting that Anne de Bruin and Liu also analyze women's unpaid work and leisure time, and add gender differences in unpaid work during urbanization and migration, based on their previous work on the impact of childcare on women's work [18]. They find that, although traditional gendered patterns of time use persist in rural households, both urban and migrant fathers engage in more care work than rural fathers, providing a good indication of the positive impact of new-type urbanization on female employment.

4. Conclusion

Since China implemented the new-type urbanization strategy in 2014, the employment status of women has undergone certain changes. Early before, rural women mostly migrated with their families, facing the relatively common unemployment situation of the rural population. As policies continue to advance, the choice of serving their family sector has weakened the impact of out-of-town employment to a certain extent; in addition, the urbanization of “the people” brought about by the new-type urbanization has gradually increased the contribution of education and training to women's career choices. Although female employees have not yet gained an advantage in terms of salary level with equal human capital competitiveness, the gradually improved and optimized female employment support policies are constantly making up for the gender wage gap and industry choice differences. Based on this, this paper puts forward the following suggestions: First, adhere to the new-type urbanization policy with its role in promoting the all-round development of people and provide good conditions for fair employment for women; second, improve the salary evaluation standards, promote industrial progress in economically underdeveloped areas, and balance the salary levels of women in the region; third, revise the traditional concept of family and social division of labor and encourage women to enter the workplace then serve the society.

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