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New-generation Migrant Workers' Urban Adaptation: A Case Study of Jianggan District in Hangzhou City

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Abstract New-generation migrant workers are the "elite" among migrant workers, and whether they can really adapt to the city is one of the real problems to be urgently solved during China's new urbanization, related to the success of new urbanization construction. From the perspective of livelihood capital, this paper uses the measuring indicators in line with the new-generation migrant workers' livelihood characteristics, to analyze the typical characteristics and causes of new-generation migrant workers' urban adaptation in Jianggan District of Hangzhou City based on field survey data. In the study, it is found that the new-generation migrant workers' urban adaptation characteristics are focused on life adaptation, work adaptation and cultural adaptation, but the adaptation in the three areas is not good and there is a big room for improvement.

Key words New-generation migrant workers, Urban adaptation, Livelihood capital, Jianggan District

1 Introduction

Since the reform and opening up, more and more rural surplus labor forces have left home to the city to seek new development, leading to farmers' frenzied hunt for work in cities^[1-2]. Migrant workers have made a significant contribution to rural development, urban prosperity and modernization in China^[3], but due to the fetters of urban-rural dual system of census register and employment, it is difficult for them to really enjoy the fruits of urban civilization. In recent years, with the inter-generational alternation of migrant workers, new-generation migrant workers have gradually become the main body of migrant workers and play an important role in economic development and urban construction^[3-4]. New-generation migrant workers usually refer to the rural population working in the city born after the 1980s. They were born after the reform and opening up, with ages between 16 and 30 years^[3]. Compared with their parents, new-generation migrant workers have stronger sense of rights, awareness of citizenship, and higher career expectations^[5-6]. Therefore, it is one of the core priorities in new urbanization construction to help them adapt to urban society and make them integrated into city^[6]. The concept of "livelihoods" is widely used in the study field of poverty, rural development, migrant population^[7-8]. "Adaptation" generally refers to the reac-

tion after entering into a new environment^[9-10], and many scholars have conducted a lot of studies on the connotation, analytical framework, influencing factors and drive mechanism of urban adaptation from different angles^[11-15], but there are less studies specifically for new-generation migrant workers' urban adaptation^[16-18]. Jianggan District is in the center of Hangzhou City, covering an area of about 210 km². In recent years, there has been rapid economic development in Jianggan District which attracts about 380000 people from elsewhere, making it become the main settlement for migrant workers. From the perspective of the livelihoods, this paper takes Jianggan District for example to analyze typical characteristics and causes of new-generation migrant workers' urban adaptation, in order to provide scientific reference for the better integration of new-generation migrant workers into Hangzhou City.

2 Research methods

Livelihood is a means of living, far more than the concept of income^[19], and it has now been widely used in research fields of poverty and migrant population. In this study, based on our previous studies^[2, 4], we divide the livelihood capital of new-generation migrant workers into four categories: physical capital, human capital, financial capital, social capital. (i) Human capital. It refers to the workers' accumulation of knowledge and skills obtained through the investment in education, training, health and other aspects. Education level and training have important significance to non-agricultural livelihoods, so two indicators are used to measure human capital. (ii) Physical capital. It is a long-standing form of production materials after removal of the natural resources in the production process. It is the material wealth as well as the surrounding infrastructure owned by migrant workers. Taking into account the flowing characteristics of new-generation migrant workers, the housing situation in the city is used to measure physical

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capital. (iii) Financial capital. It mainly consists of cash income, loans obtained from formal and informal channels, and grant aid. The financial capital of new-generation migrant workers is mainly from the remuneration obtained by labor, loans obtained from formal and informal channels, and grant aid. Thus, new-generation migrant workers' cash income, opportunity to have access to bank credit, and opportunity to borrow money from friends and relatives, are used to measure the financial capital. (iv) Social capital. It is the expected collective or economic benefits derived from the preferential treatment and cooperation between individuals and groups. Social capital will be higher if one can get higher interests from the interpersonal relationships, especially from the relationships with friends and relatives, so the number of friends and relatives is used to measure social capital. The new-generation migrant workers' urban adaptation is the constant adjustment by migrant workers on life, work and cultural adaptation after going to city, in order to adapt themselves to the living environment of city. With new-generation migrant workers in Jianggan District of Hangzhou City as research object, the research group conducted a random questionnaire survey and interview in July 2014. 450 questionnaires were sent out, and all of them were recovered, with recovery rate of 100%. There were 442 valid questionnaires, with validity rate of 98.2%. The content of questionnaire was entered into the computer to form Excel database, and then mathematical and statistical methods and SPSS18.0 software were used for analysis.

3 Results and analysis

3.1 New-generation migrant workers' life adaptation

From Table 1, it is found that for the question "How is your relationship with the locals?", only 12.0% of people opt for "very satisfied"; 56.2% of people opt for "average"; 3.6% of people opt for "unsatisfied"; 1.4% of people opt for "very dissatisfied". During the survey, some people do not want to publish accurate assessment or find it difficult to accurately assess, so they just opt for "average". Through conversation, it can be found that these who say "average" actually do not think the locals are friendly with not much contact, but there is no conflict. They just feel that the birds of different feathers do not flock together^[20]. Most of the new-generation migrant workers go to city with the help of their relatives, friends or fellow-townsmen. The number of relatives and friends in Hangzhou is an important measure of social capital. As shown in Fig. 1a, the number of relatives and friends of new-generation migrant workers is not large, and expanding social circle is an important way to enhance their social capital. In the constraints of urban-rural dual system, new-generation migrant workers find it difficult to equally socialize with urban residents, and the original geographical relations are their primary social relations in city. In addition to urban residents' discrimination, it is quite difficult for them to integrate into the urban life^[20-21]. Judging from the housing (Fig. 1b), the new-generation migrant workers solve the housing mainly through house renting and dormitory, reflecting the

low overall living standards of new-generation migrant workers. In the survey, it is found that the new-generation migrant workers are more willing to settle in cities than the first-generation migrant workers, and they want to be able to enjoy the benefits of urban residents and incorporated into the urban housing security system to become permanent resident of the city, which also reflects the inter-generational difference in the logic of life^[22]. However, high property prices in Hangzhou have troubled most of the new-generation migrant workers, and become an important factor that affects their urban adaptation^[23].

3.2 New-generation migrant workers' work adaptation

Work adaptation is an important aspect of new-generation migrant workers' adaptation to the city^[1]. From Table 2, it is found that in terms of job satisfaction, the new-generation migrant workers are most dissatisfied with the income, accounting for 18.1%, nearly 2 times of dissatisfaction with the working environment; the satisfaction with relationships with colleagues and superiors is high, and more than half of the respondents are "quite satisfied" or "very satisfied." The new-generation migrant workers live in the environment of reform and opening up, and they lack training opportunities, which makes them lack hard-working quality. They mostly pursue self-enjoyment, and hope to be rooted in the city; they do not want to engage in dirty, tired, poor physical labor. However, high property prices and high consumption levels in city is in stark contrast with their income, which requires them to pay the unbearable economic costs, so they show higher expectation on income. From the income (Fig. 1c), the monthly income of new-generation migrant workers is mostly concentrated in 2000 - 4000 yuan, and the proportion reaches nearly 70%; the new-generation migrant workers with monthly income of more than 4000 yuan account for only 19.2%. Compared with the first generation migrant workers, their income is higher, but lower than that of urban residents. The low economic status has not been effectively improved, and the financial capital needs to be improved. Although they have a strong desire to stay in the city and have attachment for city, they are dissatisfied with their low income obtained through back-breaking work. Unfair treatment reduces their enthusiasm for employment, and they want to get more opportunities, work experience and job skills to obtain higher income^[24].

3.3 New-generation migrant workers' cultural adaptation

Cultural adaptation is the inherent basis of individual's mental activity and behavior, and it is necessary to study new-generation migrant workers' cultural adaptation and touch their inner world to help them to be truly integrated into city^[25]. From Table 3, new-generation migrant workers are satisfied with the cultural adaptation, which is inseparable from the urban inhabitants' open mind and tolerant attitude. 11.3% of respondents are very satisfied with the city's culture, and only 1.8% of respondents are not satisfied with the city's culture. The degree of satisfaction with customs and cultural integration in the city needs to be improved, and 6.1% of

people are not satisfied. Due to the closed environment in the past, new-generation migrant workers' overall quality is low and their life style is conservative, inevitably resulting in the clash with the city's mainstream culture and all kinds of discomfort. Over time, they get acclimatized to the urban environment and are increasingly aware of urban lifestyle. After slowly accepting urban culture, such discomfort will be gradually reduced until it disappears^[26]. Faced with a better educational environment and educational opportunities, the new-generation migrant worker is no longer synonymous with low education^[27]. As can be shown in Fig. 1d, illiterate new-generation migrant workers account for only 0.2% of respondents; 40.8% of respondents have received junior high school or technical secondary school education; 29.6% of respondents have the education of junior college and above. This shows that the new-generation migrant workers have generally received relatively formal schooling, most of them complete junior or senior high school education, and even some of them receive jun-

ior college education. Although the new-generation migrant workers have high cultural quality, they lack corresponding job skills, becoming a major bottleneck in the smooth adaptation to the urban environment^[21]. Survey shows that 63.7% of the new-generation migrant workers have not received skill training, indicating that new-generation migrant workers and the society are insufficiently aware of the need for vocational skills training. One of the reasons for some migrant workers and enterprises' neglecting of skills training is migrant workers' occupational instability^[28]. Compared with the first generation migrant workers, the new-generation migrant workers have higher career pursuit, but they lack toughness and maturity, so in the initial stage of career pursuit, they'll be confused and panicky^[26]. Despite having cultural knowledge, it is difficult to secure a satisfactory easy job in the city when they do not adapt to the urban culture, finally they fall into the situation of frequent change of job^[21].

Table 1 The new-generation migrant workers' life adaptation and satisfaction level in Jianggan District

Life adaptation	Very satisfied		Satisfied		Average		Dissatisfied		Very dissatisfied	
	Number of residents	Proportion %	Number of residents	Proportion %	Number of residents	Proportion %	Number of residents	Proportion %	Number of residents	Proportion %
Relations with the locals	53	12.0	117	26.4	249	56.2	16	3.6	6	1.4
Current living conditions	35	7.9	129	29.1	227	51.2	47	10.6	3	0.7
Social status	28	6.3	93	21.0	240	54.2	61	13.8	19	4.3

Table 2 The new-generation migrant workers' work adaptation and satisfaction level in Jianggan District

Work adaptation	Very satisfied		Satisfied		Average		Dissatisfied		Very dissatisfied	
	Number of residents	Proportion %	Number of residents	Proportion %	Number of residents	Proportion %	Number of residents	Proportion %	Number of residents	Proportion %
Relations with colleagues, superiors	61	13.8	172	38.8	189	42.7	18	4.1	1	0.2
Working environment	40	9.0	153	34.5	208	47.0	37	8.4	3	0.7
Income	27	6.1	105	23.7	229	51.7	70	15.8	10	2.3

Table 3 The new-generation migrant workers' cultural adaptation and satisfaction level in Jianggan District

Cultural adaptation	Very satisfied		Satisfied		Average		Dissatisfied		Very dissatisfied	
	Number of residents	Proportion %	Number of residents	Proportion %	Number of residents	Proportion %	Number of residents	Proportion %	Number of residents	Proportion %
Like city culture	50	11.3	160	36.1	223	50.3	6	1.4	1	0.5
Well adapted to city culture	44	9.9	160	36.1	229	51.7	8	1.8	0	0.0
Customs well integrated into the city	41	9.3	134	30.2	239	54.0	21	4.7	6	1.4

4 Conclusions

In this paper, based on the livelihood characteristics of new-generation migrant workers, we establish the livelihood capital evaluation indicator system for the new-generation migrant workers, and take Jianggan District in Hangzhou City for example to analyze the characteristics and causes of new-generation migrant workers' urban adaptation. The study shows that livelihood capital is closely related to employment, income, and life of new-generation migrant workers, and has an important impact on their urban adaptation. The life adaptation, work adaptation and cultural adaptation of the new-generation migrant workers in Jianggan District are still at a

low level, and there is a big room for improvement. Based on the livelihood characteristics of new-generation migrant workers, this paper conducts the exploratory research on new-generation migrant workers' urban adaptation from the perspective of livelihood capital, which not only enriches the city fusion theory, but also has practical significance for the citizenization of new-generation migrant workers in the city. However, the findings of this paper need further in-depth analysis, and the future research focus is to be placed on the exploration of impact of livelihood capital on new-generation migrant workers' urban adaptation through binary logistic regression model.

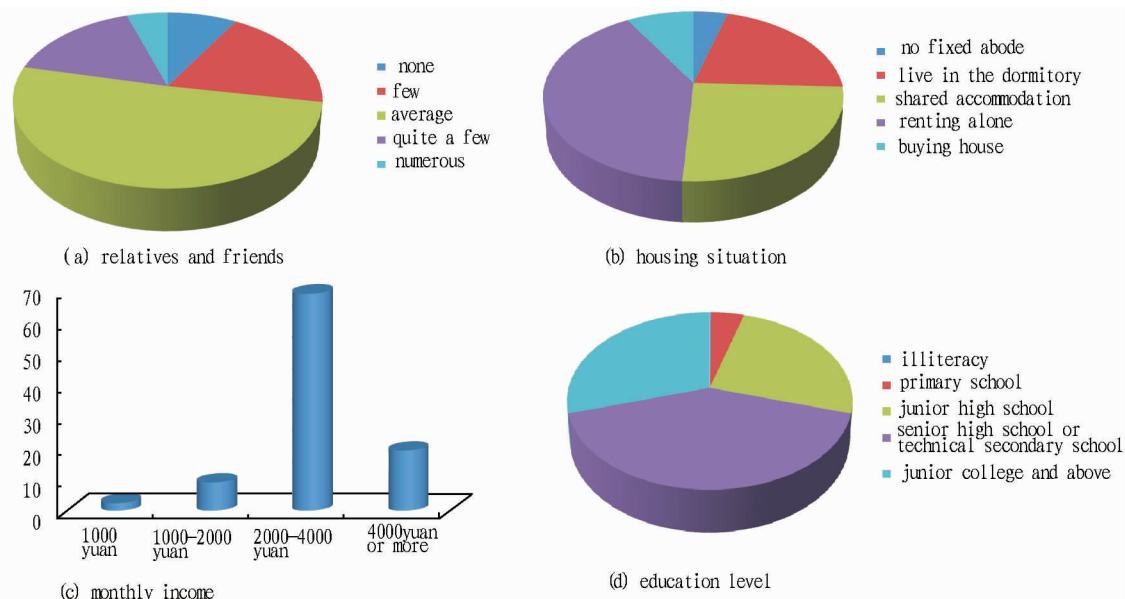


Fig. 1 The new-generation migrant workers' life, work and cultural adaptation in Jianggan District

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