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THE POTENTIAL OF RUSSIAN LABOR FORCE AND POPULATION ISSUES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Abstract:

The population crisis in Russia significantly impacts its labor market and human resource management. This article examines the demographic changes affecting labor potential, analyzes the effects on HR planning, recruitment, training, retention, and productivity, and suggests strategic responses.

Keywords:

Human resource management, Russia, labor potential, population crisis, labor market.

1. The historical background of the population crisis

As of 2024, Russia's population stands at approximately 144.8 million, ranking it ninth globally. Despite this significant number, the population has been in decline since 1992, starting from a peak of 148.7 million. This decrease has had profound and ongoing impacts on Russia's development due to conflicts, natural disasters, epidemics, and social unrest. The country has faced four major population crises in the 20th century, leading to severe demographic challenges that continue to affect its progress.

Russia experienced four population crises in the 20th century:

- 1) The First Population Crisis (1914-1920s): including World War I, the 1917 Revolution, civil war, famine, and epidemics, resulting in a population decline of approximately 11.8 million people.
- 2) The Second Population Crisis (late 1920s to early 1930s): Due to the cessation of NEP policies, large-scale industrialization, collectivization, and repression, approximately 56.5 million people lost their population.
- 3) The Third Population Crisis (1941-1945): The Great Patriotic War resulted in a population reduction of approximately 21.27 million people.
- 4) The Fourth Population Crisis (early 1990s present): Due to economic and political transformation, declining living standards, and the impact of global population development patterns, the population continues to decline.

2. Population issues in different regions

In the most common form in Russia, there are four types of regions characterized by special manifestations of population issues.

1) Urban areas in western Russia like Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Kaliningrad face population decline due to aging, low birth rates, and family disruptions. Immigration mitigates this decline but also brings ethnic diversity and environmental pressures. These regions have low unemployment and good socio-economic conditions but face industrial pollution and racial conflicts.

2) Central Russia's less urbanized areas, including central black soil, Volga Vyatka, and parts of the Volga Economic Zone, suffer from long-term population outflow, leading to an older population and higher mortality rates. Rural areas are particularly affected by gene bank disruptions, alcohol abuse, and shortened life expectancy. Urban areas experience severe unemployment due to declining production levels.

3) Newly developed regions in northern and eastern Russia have seen an influx of immigrants, resulting in a younger age structure. However, emigration and harsh living conditions lead to decreasing populations, reducing labor resources and development prospects.

4) State autonomy regions in southern Russia, such as republics in the North Caucasus and southern Siberia, have high natural population growth despite some emigration. The young age structure, highest life expectancy, and strong family values contrast with overpopulation and land shortages, especially in rural areas. This results in high unemployment among young people, fostering a tense socio-economic environment prone to ethnic and religious conflicts, complicating economic development and leading to forced migration, perpetuating socio-economic backwardness in southern Russia.

3. The current situation of population issues

At the beginning of the 21st century, Russia faced the following major population issues:

- 1) Population decline: Since 1991, the population has been continuously decreasing.[4]
- 2) Natural population loss: low birth rate, high mortality rate.[1]
- 3) Population aging: The proportion of elderly population is increasing, and labor resources are decreasing.[6]
- 4) Shortened life expectancy: Due to health issues and poor living conditions, life expectancy is lower.[6]
- 5) Gene bank degradation: Decreased population quality.[1]
- 6) Maintenance of family system: Unstable family structure and high divorce rate.[3]
- 7) Racial and religious tensions: The relationship between races and religions is tense.[5]
- 8) Changes in immigration flows: Lack of effective immigration policies.[8]
- 9) Uneven population distribution: The population is concentrated in big cities, while the population in rural areas is decreasing.
- 10) Employment and unemployment issues: high unemployment rate and unstable labor market.[7]

4. The impact of population issues on human resource management

1) Labor market tightening

Since 1992, Russia's population has continued to decline, leading to a tightening of the labor market. Enterprises are facing recruitment difficulties, especially in the Far East and Siberia, where labor shortages are particularly severe. This situation poses a huge challenge to the normal operation and expansion of enterprises. [2]

2) Aging labor force

Population aging is another major issue facing Russia. With the increasing proportion of elderly population, the proportion of young labor in the labor market is gradually decreasing, which affects the innovation capability and production efficiency of enterprises. [9] The aging labor force has also increased the medical and social security costs for enterprises.

3) Gender imbalance

The gender imbalance in Russia is severe, and the lack of male labor has affected the diversity and inclusiveness of the labor market. [7]. This imbalance not only limits the choices of companies in recruitment, but may also lead to a monotonous work environment, affecting the innovation and competitiveness of the enterprise.

4) Talent loss

The outflow of highly skilled talents is another major challenge facing Russia. A large number of high-quality talents have flowed to European and American countries, leading to a decline in domestic scientific research and technological innovation capabilities. This talent loss poses a serious threat to the long-term development and competitiveness of the country.

5. Response strategy

- 1) Strengthen talent attraction and retention
- 2) To address the issue of talent loss, Russia needs to attract and retain key talents by providing competitive salaries and career development opportunities. For example, companies can provide more training and development opportunities to help employees improve their skills and career development.
- 3) Improve the skills and qualities of the workforce
- 4) Investing in education and training is key to improving the skills and qualities of the workforce. Russia can improve the overall quality of its workforce by strengthening vocational education and training to meet the needs of economic development. This not only helps to improve labor productivity, but also enhances the competitiveness of enterprises.
- 5) Promote diversity in the workforce
- 6) To fully utilize the potential of different groups, Russia needs to take measures to promote gender equality and diversity. For example, companies can establish diversity policies to ensure fairness in recruitment and promotion processes, and create an inclusive work environment.
- 7) Optimize human resource planning
- 8) Through precise human resource planning, Russia can better predict labor demand and arrange human resources reasonably. This includes developing a long-term human resources strategy to ensure that the enterprise can obtain the necessary labor resources in the future.

Conclusion

The population problem in Russia poses a serious challenge to human resource management. Effective strategies like increasing birth rates, extending life expectancy, and improving immigration policies are key to addressing the crisis. Comprehensive use of economic, social, and political means is necessary for ensuring population security and sustainable labor resources development.

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