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## **Abstract**

The nation is rapidly graying. Such statement is mentioned in a report by American Council on Education, 2007. Aging society has becoming a global phenomenon, as the rapid growing number of older people in the world. This problem leads to various social problems such as workforce shortages, health and medical care burden and increasing demand for financial investment.

Older adult education (OAE) is a process of knowledge creation, providing older adults with ways to improve their knowledge and skills and help them to live better life in their third ages. OAE has been being increasingly adopted and deployed in many countries as an effective approach to improve the life quality of retired older adults, to keep them both physically and mentally healthy, and to help them back to workplace. In many countries, governments invest huge manpower, material resources and financial resources to found OAE organizations and provide the education as a public service. There are also numerous researches on OAE ranging from theories to practices. A challenging problem of OAE is that it lacks systematic approach to maximize the value of OAE services, i.e., curriculum that makes both the older learner and the education provider maximally satisfied and profited from the education, due to the variety of older learners' requirements and uncertainty of education providers' objectives.

Service science is a research field of studying complex service systems in which specific arrangements of people and technologies take actions that provide value for others. Maximization of service values is one of the hottest research topics in this field. Value cocreation has been proposed as an effective mean to maximize service values. It emphasizes collaboration between service providers and consumers. Many service value co-creation models are proposed and proved effectively in business services.

In this work, we study the value co-creation of OAE curriculum development from service science perspective, aiming at investigating a systematic approach to achieving the maximization of OAE service values. We first propose a structure and process model for OAE value co-creation from service science perspective. OAE as non-profit public service, its value can be achieved through value co-creation; older learners are co-creators of OAE value.

We then conduct case studies to validate the proposed research hypothesis. We choose three representative OAE universities in China as cases and investigate their mechanisms of developing OAE services and curriculum and compare analysis results with hypothesis and summarize new findings. Through case studies, we find that our hypothesis is almost consistent to the mechanism of curriculum development in OAE universities but with some new specialties.

Finally, we make comparison of three chosen OAE universities and also compare OAE university with other modes of OAE and general school education to find more specialties of curriculum development of OAE universities. Based on case study and discussion results, we propose a new curriculum development process model for value co-creation of OAE university with high educated learners called a four-stage spiral model. The novelty of the proposed model is that it formalizes the curriculum development process in OAE university through the whole life cycles and each iteration of the four steps in the model is a waterfall process. The new novelties make the spiral model distinct from KIKI model from which the spiral model is derived.

**Keywords:** Older adult education, service science, service value co-creation, curriculum development, four-stage spiral model