

Policy-Driven Transformation of Smart Elderly Care Enterprises

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Abstract: Against the background of population aging, smart elderly care is regarded as an important approach to solving the challenges of elderly care. However, China's smart elderly care industry in its early stage exhibited a characteristic of emphasizing technology over services. In recent years, policy orientation has been gradually shifting from supporting technology research and development to scenario validation, operational services, and standard system construction. This study takes resource dependence theory as the core analytical framework, supplemented by discourse analysis, to systematically examine the transformation logic, paths, and mechanisms of smart elderly care enterprises from selling products to selling services driven by policies.

Keywords: Smart elderly care, Enterprise transformation, Resource dependence theory, Discourse analysis

I. INTRODUCTION

Against the backdrop of global population aging is facing together, and amidst the rapid technological advancement, how to better leverage technology to address the aging issue has become an important subject that requires urgent research by countries around the world. China is one of the countries with a relatively high degree of aging and is currently in an accelerated stage of population aging. According to the 2024 National Bulletin on the Development of the Aging Undertakings, as of the end of 2024, the population aged 60 and above in China reached 310.31 million, accounting for 22% of the total population, the population aged 65 and above reached 220.23 million, accounting for 15.6% of the total population. In addition, trends such as negative population growth and declining birthrates are evident (*Ministry of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2024*). The rapid development of population aging has brought challenges to China's economic and social development, and actively responding to population aging has received unprecedented attention, having been elevated to a national strategy. The issues of family miniaturization and empty-nesting are becoming increasingly pronounced, and the traditional model that primarily relies on family elderly care supplemented by institutional elderly care is facing severe challenges in terms of supply capacity and service quality. In this context, how to use modern information technology to improve the efficiency and coverage of elderly care services has become the focus of attention from all sectors of society. Smart elderly care, which uses emerging technologies such as the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, big data, and robotics to empower all aspects of elderly care services, is widely regarded as an important breakthrough to solve the elderly care challenge. However, the early development of China's smart elderly care industry has shown a clear characteristic of

emphasizing technology over services. A large number of enterprises have taken the sale of smart hardware, elderly care robots, and other products as their core business model, attempting to quickly enter the market by selling products. However, in actual promotion, this model has encountered multiple difficulties, including high product prices, low acceptance among the elderly, single application scenarios, high subsequent maintenance costs, and unsustainable profit models. Technological products have struggled to truly integrate into the daily lives of the elderly, and many smart elderly care projects have stalled, severely testing the market viability of enterprises. In recent years, the policy orientation at the national and local levels has been undergoing profound changes. The earliest related policies mainly focused on technology research and development and product promotion. Later, policies began to require real-scenario implementation and scale validation. Now, policies have entered a service ecosystem stage, with the focus shifting to operational services, business models, and standard system construction. This evolution indicates that the government is gradually shifting from technology support to service standard formulation and ecosystem cultivation. At the same time, resources such as financial subsidies, pilot access, and standard-setting discourse power are also being reallocated. For smart elderly care enterprises, changes in the policy environment are not merely adjustments to external conditions but are directly related to the way they obtain the resources they depend on for survival. The current policy shift essentially represents a reallocation of the external resources on which enterprises rely. If enterprises wish to continue to obtain resources such as policy subsidies, pilot qualifications, and participation rights in standard setting, they must proactively adjust their business models, shifting from simply selling products to providing comprehensive services, and in this process, build the capacity for humanistic care and long-term operation.

This study aims to introduce resource dependence theory as the core analytical framework and, supplemented by discourse analysis, to systematically examine the transformation logic, paths, and mechanisms of smart elderly care enterprises from selling products to selling services driven by policies. This paper attempts to answer the following core questions: How do policies change? How do enterprises adjust their behavior to obtain new policy resources? By combing through the trajectory of policy evolution and analyzing typical enterprise practices, this study hopes to reveal the interactive relationship between policy and enterprise behavior, thereby providing theoretical basis and practical enlightenment for the high-quality development of China's smart elderly care industry and the optimization of related policies.

II. RESEARCH THEORIES AND METHODS

1. Overview of Resource Dependence Theory

Resource Dependence Theory was widely adopted in organizational relationship research after the 1970s, proposed by Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald Salancik (Pfeffer, Jeffrey 2003). This theory holds that no organization is an isolated closed system, but rather an open system that cannot fully achieve resource self-sufficiency. In order to maintain survival and achieve development, organizations must continuously obtain various resources from the external environment. These resources include, but are not limited to, capital, technology, talent, information, and policy support. Since organizations cannot produce these resources themselves, they have to establish and maintain various forms of exchange and dependence relationships with other entities in the external environment (such as government agencies, upstream and downstream enterprises, and the public) in order to reduce uncertainty and thereby maintain the stable operation of the organization. In this process of resource exchange, external resource providers often hold a certain degree of control, thereby being able to constrain or influence the decisions and behaviors of the organization. That is, the survival and development of an

organization are to some extent constrained by external environmental conditions. However, resource dependence theory does not hold that organizations merely passively accept environmental influences. On the contrary, the theory emphasizes that organizations possess the ability to proactively respond to environmental changes. In order to reduce the risk of dependence on key external resources and enhance the stability and autonomy of their own development, organizations can adopt a variety of strategies to manage or even change the external environment. Common strategies include directly acquiring resource channels through vertical or horizontal mergers and acquisitions (M&A); establishing strategic alliances or cooperative partnerships with other organizations; actively participating in industry associations or standard-setting processes to influence rules; engaging in political activities or lobbying to shape policy directions; and diversifying operations to disperse resource sources.

Resource dependence theory provides an important analytical framework for understanding the interactive relationship between organizations and the environment. It reveals how organizations, under resource constraints, both adapt to the external environment and actively seek to change environmental conditions in order to obtain more space for survival and development. This theory has strong explanatory power and applicability for analyzing issues such as how policy changes trigger corporate strategic adjustments, organizational structure reforms, and business model transformations.

1.1 Applicability of Resource Dependence Theory in Research

First and foremost, this theory provides a clear analytical logic for understanding how changes in the policy environment become the core driving force for corporate transformation. According to resource dependence theory, no organization can survive independently of the external environment. It must continuously obtain resources such as capital, technology, market access, and legitimacy recognition from the environment (Pfeffer, Jeffrey 2003). In the field of smart elderly care, government policies are precisely one of the most important external resource sources for enterprises. When the policy orientation shifts from the early stage of technology support to the later stage of service standard formulation and operational model cultivation, the distribution rules of the policy resources on which enterprises depend (such as financial subsidies, pilot access qualifications, and discourse power in industry standards) also undergo fundamental changes. In order to continue obtaining these external resources on which they rely for survival, enterprises have to proactively adjust their organizational structures, business focuses, and business models, that is, shifting from simply selling technological products to providing comprehensive elderly care services.

What's more, this theory can effectively explain the motivations and paths behind corporate transformation behaviors. Resource dependence theory emphasizes that organizations do not passively accept environmental constraints, but rather adopt multiple strategies to manage and change environmental dependencies (Pfeffer, Jeffrey 2003). In this study, in the face of the reallocation of policy resources, smart elderly care enterprises do not simply respond passively. Instead, they proactively adapt to or even influence the new policy environment by adjusting their behaviors (such as participating in standard-setting, applying for pilot projects, and building service ecosystems). This transformation from selling products to selling services is essentially a strategic response adopted by enterprises to obtain new policy resources and reduce the risk of dependence on the original single technology subsidies.

In summary, this theory provides theoretical support for analyzing the dynamic interactive relationship between policies and corporate behaviors in this paper. Resource dependence theory holds that the relationship between organizations and the external environment is one of mutual interdependence and interaction (Pfeffer, Jeffrey

2003). In this study, on the one hand, policy, as an environmental variable, determines the direction of resource allocation, thereby guiding enterprises to transform towards service orientation. On the other hand, the transformation practices of enterprises will, in turn, provide feedback to policy makers, promoting the further improvement of policies from technology cultivation to service ecosystem. This two-way interactive relationship is precisely a manifestation of the continuous exchange and adjustment between organizations and the environment emphasized by resource dependence theory. Resource dependence theory can not only explain why smart elderly care enterprises transform due to policy changes, but also analyze how enterprises adapt to and influence the policy environment by adjusting their behaviors. Therefore, this theory provides a complete and applicable analytical framework for this study, helping to deeply reveal the transformation logic and internal mechanisms of smart elderly care enterprises from selling products to selling services driven by policies.

2. Overview of Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary research method, the core focus of which is on the use of language in actual social contexts, rather than merely focusing on formal linguistic structure (Van 1997). This theory and method hold that language is not a neutral, transparent tool of communication, but rather an important practical means of constructing social reality, shaping identity, and maintaining or challenging power relations (Gee 2014). The basic premise of discourse analysis is that people understand the world, express positions, and organize social activities through discourse (Gee 2005; Ni 2024). Therefore, studying how discourse generates meaning in specific contexts is crucial for revealing the rules and logic hidden behind social interactions. In specific operations, discourse analysis typically focuses on linguistic features such as lexical choices, sentence structures, rhetorical strategies, narrative patterns, and turn-taking in texts or conversations, and relates these features to wider sociocultural contexts, institutional backgrounds, or power relations for interpretation (Gee 2014). Discourse analysis provides a set of systematic methodological tools that enable researchers to go beyond surface texts and reveal the ideologies, value presuppositions, and social mechanisms behind discourse.

2.1 Applicability of Discourse Analysis in Research

Discourse analysis can reveal the implicit resource allocation logic and corporate behavior orientation behind policy texts (Fairclough 2010). Policy documents are not purely technical directives, but rather texts that carry specific value positions, problem definitions, and action expectations (Adams 2016). Through discourse analysis, one can clearly observe how policies gradually shift from early technology support to scenario validation and standard construction. Discourse change is essentially a signal that the government is redefining the smart elderly care problem and adjusting the direction of resource allocation. Discourse analysis can help researchers identify, from micro-level changes in policy discourse, the macro-level shift in the policy environment and its implicit requirements for enterprises.

Discourse analysis provides this study with a set of methodological tools that go beyond the traditional resource perspective. It can reveal, from the level of language and meaning, the deep logic of the transformation of smart elderly care enterprises driven by policies, and reveal how policy orientations are implemented through discourse construction. By integrating discourse analysis with resource dependence theory, this study can delve into the process of sense-making while explaining external resource constraints, thereby establishing a more comprehensive and multi-dimensional analytical framework.

III. POLICY ANALYSIS

Existing policies are shifting from promoting technological development to comprehensive services, from technology support to service standard formulation, and the trajectory of resource reallocation within the policy environment is clearly discernible. Through a systematic review of national and local policy documents from 2023 to 2026, the policy evolution can be divided into the following three stages: the technology-focused stage (2023), the scenario validation stage (2024 to 2025), and the service-oriented stage (2026). This study analyzes each stage at both the national and local levels.

The year 2023 is the technology-focused stage. The core characteristic of policies in this stage is a focus on technology R&D and product promotion, framing smart elderly care mainly as a technological task and responding to elderly care needs by encouraging innovation in smart elderly care products such as robots. At the national level, in January 2023, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and sixteen other departments issued the Implementation Plan for the “Robot+” Application Action, which clearly states that “by 2025, the depth and breadth of application of service robots and specialized robots in various industries will be significantly improved”, and requires the development of assistive, bathing, incontinence care, rehabilitation training, emotional companionship, and other assistive robots for the elderly and disabled, while actively promoting the accelerated application and validation of exoskeleton robots, elderly care robots, and others in real elderly care service scenarios empowered by new technologies. From the perspective of policy discourse, the core keywords of this stage are development, products, and technological breakthroughs, with policy resources mainly tilted toward the technology R&D end. At the local level, the Three-Year Action Plan for Promoting the Construction of Smart Nursing Homes in Shanghai (2023-2025) issued by the Shanghai Civil Affairs Bureau in December 2022 reflects preliminary local exploration. The Plan sets a quantitative target of “completing the construction of at least 100 smart nursing homes in the city by the end of 2025” and requires the introduction of nursing robots, disinfection robots, and smart nursing beds in smart living care scenarios. Although the Plan has begun to focus on people-oriented and full-scenario applications, incorporating user satisfaction into evaluation, it remains centered on institutional elderly care facilities, with limited coverage of community and home-based scenarios. In summary, the policy characteristics of the technology-focused stage can be summarized as “product-centered, with technology as the breakthrough”, and enterprise dependence on policies is mainly manifested in obtaining R&D subsidies and technology promotion support.

The stage from 2024 to 2025 is the scenario validation stage. The core characteristic of policies shifts from technology support in 2023 to setting mandatory validation indicators, requiring technology products to undergo scale testing in real scenarios, moving from laboratory qualification to scenario qualification. At the national level, in 2025, two departments issued the Notice on Launching the Pilot Work of Pairing Research and Scenario Application of Intelligent Elderly Care Service Robots, which explicitly states the need to completely break the closed-door development model of enterprises, requiring R&D enterprises to form joint research teams with real users (elderly care institutions/communities, etc.), and sets mandatory quantitative indicators: it requires no less than 200 units/sets deployed in home scenarios, validated covering no fewer than 200 households, no less than 20 units/sets deployed in institutional and community scenarios, validated covering no fewer than 20 elderly care institutions or communities, and the equipment must be used in real settings for at least six months. The keywords in policy discourse have shifted from development, products, and technological breakthroughs to real scenarios, scale validation, and hard indicators. This means that technology enterprises wishing to obtain pilot qualifications, subsidies, or standard-setting discourse power must establish cooperative relationships with service providers and submit large-scale real application data, which constitutes the most

direct policy signal for shifting from selling products to selling services. At the local level, multiple cities actively responded and strengthened the scenario validation orientation. In June 2025, the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Economy and Information Technology and the Beijing Municipal Civil Affairs Bureau issued a notice on launching the pilot work of pairing research and scenario application of intelligent elderly care robots, explicitly requiring robotics enterprises and research institutes to form consortia with third-party elderly care institutions, setting validation scales of 200 households for home scenarios and 20 institutions/communities for institutional scenarios, along with six months of real environment requirements. In June 2024, the General Office of Shanghai Municipal People's Government issued the Action Plan for Promoting the Technological Innovation Development of Elderly Care in Shanghai (2024-2027), which put forward further requirements, not only calling for the development of six categories of smart products such as care services and rehabilitation assistance, but also designing a commercial closed-loop mechanism, proposing to include high-end equipment such as rehabilitation robots in the community rental catalog and even explore inclusion in medical insurance coverage, and explore the establishment of special funds for the elderly care technology industry. In addition, in December 2025, the Minhang District People's Government of Shanghai issued the Innovation Development Plan of Shanghai Silver Tech Industrial Park, setting the short-term goal as "cultivating more than 100 elderly care technology enterprises, with an industrial scale reaching 5 billion yuan", and explicitly proposing to focus on breakthroughs in directions such as care services, emotional comfort, and smart elderly care solutions. In the policy discourse of this stage, expressions such as solutions, industrial ecosystem, and application demonstrations began to appear, marking a shift in policy focus from products to systematic service capabilities. In summary, the policy characteristics of the scenario validation stage can be summarized as "scenario-centered, with validation as the threshold". During this stage, policy resources began to shift from the R&D end to the validation and service ends.

Starting from 2026, the service-oriented stage begins. The core characteristic of policies further shifts to emphasizing operational services, business models, and standard construction. Policy discourse evolves from initial technology support to service standard formulation and ecosystem cultivation. At the national level, in January 2026, the Ministry of Civil Affairs issued the Guiding Opinions of the Ministry of Civil Affairs on Further Promoting Scientific and Technological Innovation in Civil Affairs, explicitly requiring the deep integration of elderly care technology equipment and products with typical service scenarios such as home, community, and institutional care, forming integrated solutions for comprehensive care of the elderly across multiple scenarios, and proposing "to improve and strengthen the elderly care and aging services industry focusing on intelligent elderly care service robots and smart elderly care products". At the local level, in April 2026, the Haidian District People's Government of Beijing Municipality issued the Announcement on the Public Solicitation of Comments on the Three-Year Action Plan for "Artificial Intelligence + Elderly Care" in Haidian District (2026-2028) (Draft for Comments), which clearly states the goal of making Haidian District a national leading model for "AI + elderly care services" by 2028, and requires focusing on three core scenarios (home, community, and institution), formulating and issuing construction standards for smart nursing homes and communities, encouraging enterprises to tackle core technologies through a "calling for proposals" mechanism, and leading the formulation of relevant standards. The Plan also proposes the establishment of a smart elderly care innovation laboratory and an elderly care robot data training center, transforming Haidian's mature experience into municipal or even national policies and regulations. The core characteristic of policy discourse has shifted from product validation in 2024-2025 to standard formulation, and from technology pilot to experience export.

Through the analysis of the above three stages, it can be seen that the policy evolution presents a clear trajectory: in 2023, policies were product-centered; from 2024 to 2025, policies shifted to validation-centered; in 2026, policies shifted to service-centered. The government is gradually transforming from a technology supporter to a service standard setter and ecosystem cultivator, and the distribution rules of key resources such as financial subsidies, pilot access, and standard-setting discourse power have fundamentally changed accordingly. For smart elderly care enterprises, policies no longer reward only the most technologically advanced enterprises, but rather give priority to those that can demonstrate scenario applicability, provide sustainable services, and participate in standard setting. This is the core policy logic driving enterprises to shift from selling products to selling services.

IV. ENTERPRISE TRANSFORMATION ANALYSIS

In the policy analysis section, this study has revealed that the policy orientation has undergone a transition from the technology-focused stage characterized by product-centered, to the scenario validation stage characterized by scenario-centered, and then to the service-oriented stage characterized by service-centered. In policy discourse, development, products, and technological breakthroughs have gradually given way to real scenarios, hard indicators, integrated solutions, and operational services, and the distribution rules of key resources such as financial subsidies, pilot access, and standard-setting discourse power have also undergone fundamental changes. According to resource dependence theory, any organization, in order to maintain survival and development, must continuously obtain key resources such as capital, legitimacy, and information from the external environment. When changes in the external environment lead to a restructuring of resource allocation rules, organizations must proactively adjust their own structures, strategies, or behaviors. In the field of smart elderly care, changes in the policy environment precisely constitute such an external shock of resource redistribution: the conditions for obtaining policy resources on which enterprises rely for survival, such as R&D subsidies, pilot qualifications, and standard-setting discourse power, have shifted from technological advancement to scenario applicability and service sustainability. Faced with this change, different types of enterprises have adopted distinctive transformation paths, but regardless of the path, the common logic of their strategic direction is consistent: shifting from simply selling products or technologies to providing comprehensive elderly care services. This study selects representative enterprises in the field of smart elderly care, analyzes their transformation paths and internal logics one by one, and on this basis, summarizes the overall mechanism of enterprise transformation.

Voicecomm Technology is an interactive artificial intelligence enterprise with deep technological accumulation in the fields of artificial intelligence and converged communications. In the field of smart elderly care, Voicecomm Technology initially entered the market as a technology provider, supplying software systems such as voice interaction and intelligent dispatching. Voicecomm Technology's transformation began in early 2026, when the company successfully won the bid for the "Southern Sichuan Wisdom Valley Artificial Intelligence Vertical Large Model Innovation Platform - Silver Economy Construction and Operation Project" in Neijiang City, Sichuan Province, with a total amount of nearly 300 million RMB, including approximately 150 million RMB for the preliminary platform construction costs and approximately 140 million RMB for medium- and long-term project operation costs (*CNR News* 2026). This winning bid event marked that Voicecomm Technology had successfully built a full-stack service closed loop of "construction + operation", with its business model shifting from one-time profit from technology product delivery to obtaining stable revenue streams through continuous operational services. Voicecomm Technology's transformation is not simply adding

a service segment, but rather a profound restructuring of the enterprise's organizational model. In the Neijiang project, Voicecomm Technology's role is positioned to build for the city a city-level smart elderly care service platform capable of supporting large-scale operation, improving service efficiency and service quality, and making the service process supervised and traceable. In other words, Voicecomm Technology is not responsible for installing a software system for the city and then leaving, but rather deeply embeds itself into the daily operation of the city's elderly care services, becoming a long-term operation partner of the city's elderly care service system. Voicecomm Technology's approach is to build a smart health and elderly care service platform, relying on vertical-domain AI agents to automatically identify, categorize, and match fragmented service demands. When an elderly person simply says "leg pain", the system will understand whether what is needed behind this is home physiotherapy, a doctor's appointment, or medicine purchasing on behalf, and based on the elderly person's health records, address, and historical habits, quickly match the nearest service resources and generate a dispatch order (*Voicecomm Technology* 2026). From the perspective of resource dependence theory, Voicecomm Technology's transformation path clearly presents the whole process of an organization proactively adjusting its behavior to obtain new policy resources. First, the change in the policy environment constitutes an external shock. As described in the policy analysis above, the scenario validation stage policies of 2024 to 2025 explicitly required mandatory validation scale, and by the service-oriented stage of 2026, policies further explicitly required production enterprises and downstream application enterprises to jointly carry out core technology research and product development, with policy discourse shifting from enterprises tackling technologies on their own to production and application enterprises tackling them together. The conditions for obtaining policy resources have undergone fundamental changes. An enterprise's separate demonstration that its product is good is no longer valid, it must prove that "my service partner and I have together solved a real problem in a specific scenario". Voicecomm Technology recognized this change and positioned the Neijiang project as the first replicable city-level smart elderly care benchmark project. Its ultimate goal is not merely to complete service delivery for the single city of Neijiang, but to precipitate a set of operational standards for city-level smart elderly care, covering all aspects such as platform architecture, service dispatching logic, offline outlet layout, home adaptation for aging renovation specifications, service supervision, and data traceability mechanisms. This strategic positioning directly responds to the allocation direction of policy resources and becomes the core competitiveness for obtaining policy resources. The case of Voicecomm Technology shows that in the service-oriented stage, the allocator of policy resources (the government) tends to give priority to enterprises that possess city-level service capabilities, can export replicable operational standards, and can promote the systematic optimization of the regional elderly care industry. And it is precisely by proactively building the composite capability of "technology as the body, service as the foundation" that Voicecomm Technology has successfully transformed from a pure technology supplier into a city-level elderly care service operator, thereby occupying an advantageous position in the new resource allocation pattern.

The transformation path of Xiaocheng Group provides another representative example. Xiaocheng Group initially entered the elderly care market by producing adaptive hardware products such as smart nursing beds, with selling products as its core business model, attempting to open up the elderly care market with high-quality hardware products. However, the change in the policy environment prompted Xiaocheng Group to re-examine its own development strategy. Starting from 2018, the company began its transformation from a single nursing device manufacturer to a trinity "product + service + platform" elderly care technology enterprise (*Tianjin Daily* 2026). The company not only continuously optimizes smart nursing equipment, but also builds a basic digital service platform, integrating the full-chain services of home care, health monitoring, after-sales support, etc.,

providing a one-stop elderly care solution for the silver generation. The transformation logic of Xiaocheng Group can be clearly explained by resource dependence theory. In the process of policy transition from the technology-focused stage to the scenario validation stage and the service-oriented stage, the types of resources on which enterprises depend have undergone a structural shift. In the early stage, the policy resources on which Xiaocheng Group depended were mainly subsidies related to product R&D and technology promotion resources, and its core competitiveness was reflected in high quality and low price. However, when the policy entered the scenario validation stage, merely perfecting the product was no longer sufficient to obtain priority allocation of policy resources. What policy makers need is no longer hardware products scattered among different enterprises, but a complete system that allows products to truly embed into services and services to truly reach the elderly. To this end, Xiaocheng Group began to build a basic digital service platform, integrating the full-chain services of home care, health monitoring, after-sales support, etc. From the perspective of resource dependence theory, the transformation of Xiaocheng Group reflects the vertical integration strategy to adopt to environmental changes. The enterprise is no longer satisfied with the single hardware manufacturing link, but rather extends to the service end and platform end, expanding its own discourse power and irreplaceability in the value chain of elderly care services, thereby obtaining stronger bargaining power and survival guarantees in the new policy resource allocation pattern.

Through the analysis of the above cases, the transformation mechanism and pattern of smart elderly care enterprises from selling products to selling services driven by policies can be summarized. This transformation process generally follows the following logical chain: first and foremost, changes in the policy environment bring about a reallocation of policy resources from technology orientation to service orientation. What's more, enterprises identify the changes in resource acquisition conditions and proactively adjust their strategies and organizational structures. Finally, enterprises shift from product-oriented to service-oriented or platform-oriented. When the external resource allocation rules on which an organization depends for survival change, the organization must respond to the environmental changes by adjusting its own structure, strategy, and behavior. In the field of smart elderly care, this adjustment is manifesting as a systemic strategic transformation from selling products to selling services.

V. CONCLUSION

This study, taking resource dependence theory as the core analytical framework and supplemented by discourse analysis, has systematically examined the transformation logic, paths, and mechanisms of smart elderly care enterprises from selling products to selling services driven by policies. By combing through national and local policy texts from 2023 to 2026, this study has revealed the trajectory of policy discourse shifting from development, products, and technological breakthroughs to real scenarios and scale validation, and then to operational services and standard construction. This evolution is not simply a shift in policy priorities, but rather a process in which the government redefines the smart elderly care problem and reallocates key resources (such as financial subsidies, pilot access, standard-setting discourse power, etc.).

Based on the perspective of resource dependence theory, this study finds that when changes in the policy environment lead to a fundamental restructuring of the rules for external resource allocation, enterprises must proactively adjust their strategies and organizational structures to survive and develop. The transition of Voicecomm Technology from a single technology supplier to a city-level smart elderly care service operator, and the transformation of Xiaocheng Group from an adaptive hardware manufacturer to a "product + service + platform" integrated enterprise, both embody this logic. Although the transformation paths of the two

enterprises have different emphases, their common core is consistent: both have chosen to abandon the old model of relying solely on technological products for one-time income, and have shifted to a new model of obtaining stable policy resources and market returns by deeply embedding themselves in elderly care service scenarios and providing continuous operational services.

This study combines discourse analysis with resource dependence theory, revealing how micro-level changes in lexical choices within policy texts translate into enterprises' cognitive adjustments and strategic responses regarding resource acquisition conditions, thus providing a new analytical path for understanding the dynamic interaction between policy and enterprises.

In addition, the findings have implications for both smart elderly care enterprises and policymakers. For enterprises, simply pursuing technological leadership is no longer sufficient to gain a place for survival in the new policy landscape. Only by embedding technology into real service scenarios, building sustainable operational capabilities, and actively participating in standard setting can they occupy a favorable position in resource reallocation. For policy makers, service-oriented policy tools should be further strengthened, scenario validation and operational evaluation mechanisms should be improved, and at the same time, attention should be paid to avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach to transformation, providing differentiated resource support and transformation pathways for different types of enterprises.

This study also has certain limitations. This study has only selected a few enterprises for analysis and fails to fully cover the transformation practices of small and medium-sized enterprises, start-ups, or non-profit organizations in the field of smart elderly care. In addition, the policy analysis involved in this study is mainly based on public texts from 2023 to 2026. Longer-term longitudinal comparisons await future research.

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