

Framing the Training Needs Analysis: A Survey among Retirees in China

Xuan Tang^{1*} , Siti Rohaida Binti Mohamed Zainal²

¹School of Management, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia.

Email: tangxuan@student.usm.my

²School of Management, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia.

Email: siti_rohaida@usm.my

ABSTRACT

CORRESPONDING

AUTHOR (*):

Xuan Tang
(tangxuan@student.usm.my)

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This study aims to identify the types of training required by Chinese retirees and provide a foundation for creating a novel training service tailored to this demographic. It will be accomplished through qualitative and quantitative methods, including a document review and a questionnaire survey. According to the results, feelings of loneliness are related to not living with children and a lack of interest in engaging in social activities or taking advantage of educational opportunities. They need the interest training service because it will make them happier and less lonely.

Contribution/Originality: This research will determine the training needed by Chinese retirees and provide the foundation for creating a cutting-edge training program specifically for this group. The results show that feeling lonely is linked to not living with children, not wanting to do social things, or taking advantage of learning opportunities. They need the service because it will make them happier and feel less alone.

1. Introduction

Since China entered the aging society in 1999, the aging population has become an increasingly severe societal challenge. The overall population of the Chinese mainland was 1,411.78 million as of midnight on November 1st, 2020, with 253.38 million aged 0-14 accounting for 17.95%. The population aged 15-59 years was 894.38 million, accounting for 63.35%; the population aged 60 and up was 264.02 million, accounting for 18.70%; and the population aged 65 and up was 190.64 million, accounting for 13.50% (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021). To define a country as aging, its aging population must be more than 7% aged 65 or over. In addition, 10% of its population is 60 or over (United Nations, 1956). There is no doubt that China is in such a state.

China has evolved into a country with an aging population, which brings various possible societal issues, such as the safety of the elderly, convenience, spiritual care, and the demand for sports and sporting activities. It is tied not only to social stability but also to the pleasure of countless families.

To address these problems, the central government seeks to encourage the coordinated growth of the elderly care industry, enhance the basic elderly care service system, and utilize existing resources to develop community-based senior care. These methods are mentioned clearly in an official policy called the Outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China and the Vision for 2035 (Baidu, 2021).

This research seeks to identify the types of training required by Chinese retirees and lays the groundwork for developing an innovative training service catered to this population. It will be performed using qualitative and quantitative techniques, including a document review and a questionnaire survey. We believe the spiritual culture and quality of life of the elderly in China must be strengthened through interest-based training programs distinct from traditional care services to alleviate feelings of isolation.

2. Literature Review

Many scholars have paid attention to the training of retirees. They have also done research and exploration in related fields, including elements such as their motivation for choosing a training service and the format of the training service. Gimmon et al. (2018) discovered that the motivation of older people to become entrepreneurs is primarily based on pull factors such as self-fulfillment, improving personal well-being, self-realization, and strengthening personal interests. Older people may pursue entrepreneurship as part of their 'active aging' perceptions. Suppose the retirees are trained and well equipped with entrepreneurial skills in beekeeping. In that case, they will have an avenue to invest part of their pension and reduce energy costs to obtain a sustainable income (Olaitan et al., 2008).

Olanike (2016) carried out a study and found that cognitive training improves the daily functioning of the elderly. The study suggested that people over sixty should take part in regular memory training that focuses on teaching mnemonic strategies like organization, visualization, and association for remembering verbal information. They should also do visual search and identification, and they should be required to take part in training that focuses on the ability to organize and communicate ideas and thoughts in an organized way.

Cook (2011) investigated retirees' value through social volunteering work. The researcher discovered that retirees gave up their paid work job, took on the retiree and volunteer responsibilities, and integrated these positions into their career self-concept to build a new sense of self. Retirees volunteer can help them feel better about themselves and their careers. It is called the "stage of redirection." This study combined the lives of the elderly with volunteer work, adding new impetus to the public welfare cause of society while also meeting the elderly's need for a sense of accomplishment. However, it still has a disadvantage because it emphasizes the contribution of the elderly rather than the harvest of spiritual culture.

[Santini et al. \(2021\)](#) created a new way for older people to learn. They discovered that a virtual coach (VC) should encourage older workers and retirees to engage in physical activity to maintain social contact and emotional well-being. The Embodied Conversational Agent (ECA) should be reactive, adaptable, expressive, sympathetic, and use pleasant and motivating language. The COVID-19 outbreak heightened users' desire to strengthen community bonds and improve emotional well-being. They contended that the VC could address the active and healthy aging paradigm by making low-cost healthy activities available anytime and place. This research made contributions to the retirees' health with the help of VC but ignored their spiritual life. Retired people need a rich spiritual and cultural life to help them reduce loneliness rather than solve health problems.

Moreover, some scholars also focused on retirees' second employment opportunities. [Ossola \(2017\)](#) examined the relationship between graphical factors, such as financial stability, readiness, intentional versus constrained retirement, overall mental health, and the rate of effectively having the option to reenter the labor force after retirement from a critical occupation through additional work opportunities. This study helped with the planned collection of data on retirement. It worked after retirement by explaining the main factors that affect a person's ability to get back to work and how practical work after retirement affects their mental health.

In addition, some scholars also believe that enterprises should assume some social responsibilities and provide jobs for retirees. Organizations that apply demotion offer early retirement and allow flexible working hours are more likely to be users for mainly standard work. Also, organizations that do not offer early retirement are less likely to employ early retirees ([Oude Mulders, 2015](#)). [Warmbrod \(1979\)](#) gave recommendations and information to institutions interested in implementing a retiree volunteer program. The information is divided into eight primary sections: identify program feasibility, raise awareness, implement the program, recruit and position volunteers, monitor and promote the program, and review and renew.

The elderly population has a greater frequency of social isolation, depressive symptoms, anxiety disorders, and anxiety, as revealed by [Igbokwe et al. \(2020\)](#). There are also some possible concerns for retirees that warrant our attention. Loneliness, depression, and anxious depression were not associated with the male gender; however, female gender, old age (75), and secondary and tertiary education were. The study examined negative mental states in older individuals and cautioned about a correlation between loneliness and depression in the elderly. However, they did not provide particular suggestions for combating loneliness. Significantly, minor cognitive impairment can impact memory, language, attention, visuospatial skills, and executive abilities ([Vahabi et al., 2021](#)).

The primary literature has investigated why older individuals choose training services, the role of training for older individuals; novel training methods for older individuals; second careers for older individuals; and corporate employees. However, there is still a dearth of research on interest-based training services for older people in China, which presents an opportunity for our research.

3. Methods

3.1. Documents Review

In 2021, Tsinghua University and Tongfang Global Life Insurance collaborated to conduct an investigation and write a report titled *The Chinese Residents' Retirement Readiness Index 2021*. Our research findings cited essential data from this publication, which was used as one of the supporting resources.

3.2. Questionnaire Survey

We developed a questionnaire with twelve questions based on the research issue. Six objective questions are posed primarily to ascertain the respondents' basic information. Four questions on the five-component scale understand respondents' demand for post-retirement training services. This is also the data we rely on in the subsequent data analysis. One multiple-choice question was employed to determine the respondent's interest in the training program. One subjective question is used to determine the user's location.

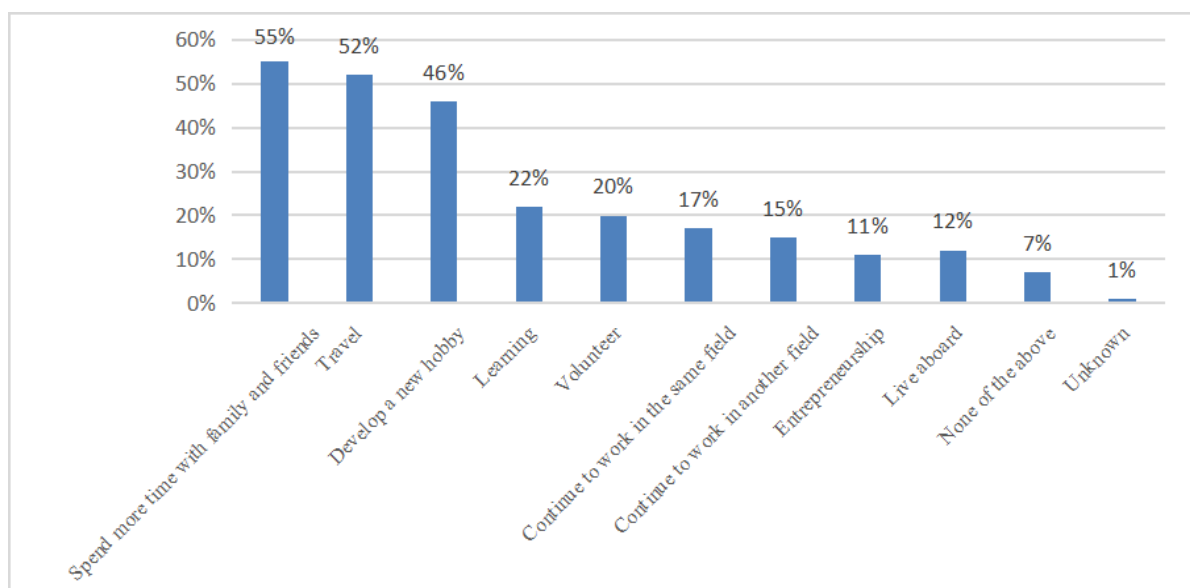
4. Results

4.1. Documents Review

In order to investigate the willingness of Chinese residents to live after retirement, [Tsinghua University and Tongfang Global Life Insurance \(2021\)](#) conducted a survey. They provided nine options for Chinese residents, including "spend more time with family and friends," "travel," "develop new hobbies," and "study" in the questionnaire of the "2021 Chinese Residents' Retirement Readiness Index Research Report". Respondents were asked to choose activities they would like to include in their retirement. The survey results show that most respondents look forward to leisure, entertainment, and self-relaxing retirement activities.

As shown in [Figure 1](#), the three most popular activities among respondents are "spending more time with family and friends," "traveling," and "developing new hobbies," which are selected by 55%, 52%, and 46% of respondents, respectively. It is not tough to see that nearly 70% of the respondents are willing to develop new hobbies and learn after retirement, which allows for the growth of our research objectives.

Figure 1: Vision of Retirement life for Chinese residents



Another popular option is to stay involved in the workforce after retirement. More than one-third of the respondents in the survey hope to continue their careers by working in a different field or starting a business after retirement. 22% of respondents want to continue their studies after retirement, and 20% want to volunteer.

4.2. Questionnaire data analysis

We distributed questionnaires to the country to better understand retirees' demands, attention, attitudes, and opinions on interest training. We collected 116 valid questionnaires, including 57 men and 59 women, covering 28 provinces, municipalities, and autonomous regions of China.

The survey results showed that the main reasons for the respondents' retirement were usual and unique, and a small part of them quit due to illness. "I often feel lonely and lonely" problems appear as much as 31.03% of the "Absolutely matched" and 26.72% of the "Mostly matched" phenomena. At the same time, the older adults in the sample are more than unwilling to live with their children together, and they worry that children will become a burden if they go home to see their parents. This worry can cause a retired older adult to lose their sense of emotion. That means that after retirement, most people feel lonely and lonely because of the monotonous life and the absence of their relatives. The monotonous life after retirement causes retirees to have more leisure time in their daily lives. In this survey, most respondents expressed that they hoped to enrich their lives in their leisure time and had high enthusiasm for interest in cultivation projects held in the community. These results are similar to what [Tsinghua University and Tongfang Global Life Insurance \(2021\)](#) have said.

In addition, among the respondents, urban and rural accounts accounted for 33.62%, meaning that the vast majority of retired workers can enjoy the convenience of modern community welfare and neighborhood committee management systems to a certain extent. At the same time, most of the retirees in the home, though other items need to help with the children, have open interest in community cultivation projects themselves. In the questionnaire study, 56.03% of retirees tend to use mobile phones, tend to dance, and 46.55% to 43.97% tend to, for example, do tea art, calligraphy, painting, and related training projects. As most retirees have no opportunity to make money, 34% say they are only willing to participate in training programs costing 20 yuan or less, and the training time is 1-2 hours a day.

Questions 5 to 8 used five subscales to collect respondents' attitudes about retirement interest cultivation in the questionnaire. These four questions were strongly related to the team's project. So, to make sure the data from the questionnaire was correct, the team chose four or five subscales from the questionnaire, like Q5-Q8, to test for reliability and validity on 116 samples.

As can be seen from [Table 1](#), the reliability coefficient value is 0.897, more significant than 0.8, indicating that the reliability quality of the research data is high. For the "α coefficient of the deleted item," the reliability coefficient does not increase significantly after any item is deleted, indicating that the item should not be deleted.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics (Cronbach Alpha)

| Items | Corrected Item-Total Correlation(CITC) | Cronbach Alpha if Item Deleted | Cronbach α |
|--|--|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| I often feel lonely and lonely. | 0.655 | 0.908 | 0.897 |
| I do not live with my children. | 0.831 | 0.846 | |
| I do not feel like I have much to do at home, so if I like hobby training programs in the community, I am willing to join them. | 0.792 | 0.860 | |
| I do not have much time to stay home with my kids, but there are programs in my community that I love, and I would love to attend. | 0.816 | 0.850 | |
| Cronbach α (Standardized): 0.897 | | | |

For the "CITC value," the CITC values of the analysis items are all greater than 0.4, indicating a good correlation between the analysis items and a good reliability level. In summary, the reliability coefficient value of the research data is higher than 0.8, which indicates that the data reliability is of high quality and can be used for further analysis.

As shown in Table 2, a validity study analyzes whether the research item is reasonable and meaningful. The data analysis method of validity analysis is factor analysis. Comprehensive analysis is carried out through KMO value, commonness, variance interpretation rate value, factor load coefficient value, and other indicators to verify the validity level of the data. KMO value is used to determine suitability for information extraction, and joint degree value eliminates unreasonable research items. The variance rate value is used for the level of information extraction, and the factor loading coefficient is used to measure the factor (dimensions). Item corresponding relationship from the table above shows that all the research items of the corresponding values were higher than 0.4, so the research item of information can be effectively extracted. In addition, the KMO value is 0.834, more significant than 0.6, and data can be effectively extracted.

Table 2: Validity Analysis

| Items | Factor Loadings Factor 1 | Communalities |
|--|--------------------------|---------------|
| I often feel lonely and lonely. | 0.828 | 0.686 |
| I do not live with my children. | 0.898 | 0.807 |
| I do not feel like I have much to do at home, so if I like hobby training programs in the community, I'm willing to join them. | 0.885 | 0.784 |
| I do not have much time to stay home with my kids, but there are programs in my community that I love, and I would love to attend. | 0.881 | 0.776 |
| Eigenvalues (Initial) | 3.053 | - |
| % of Variance (Initial) | 76.316% | - |
| % of Cum. Variance (Initial) | 76.316% | - |
| Eigenvalues (Rotated) | 3.053 | - |
| % of Variance (Rotated) | 76.316% | - |
| % of Cum. Variance (Rotated) | 76.316% | - |
| KMO | 0.834 | - |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Chi-Square) | 273.528 | - |

| Items | Factor | Communalities |
|---------|----------------------|---------------|
| | Loadings Factor 1 | |
| df | 6 | - |
| p-value | 0.000 | - |

In addition, the variance explanation rates of 1 factor were 76.316%, and the cumulative variance explanation rates after rotation were 76.316%>50%. It means that the information content of the research item can be extracted effectively. Finally, please confirm whether the corresponding relationship between the factor (dimension) and the research item is consistent with the expectation based on the factor load coefficient.

If so, it indicates validity; otherwise, it needs to be adjusted again. When the absolute value of the factor loading coefficient is more significant than 0.4, it indicates a corresponding relationship between option and factor.

KMO and Bartlett tests were used for validity verification. As can be seen from Table 3, the KMO value was 0.834, and the KMO value was more significant than 0.8, indicating that the research data were very suitable for extracting information (with good validity reflected from the side).

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test

| | | |
|-------------------------------|------------|---------|
| KMO | | 0.834 |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity | Chi-Square | 273.528 |
| | df | 6 |
| | p | 0.000 |

As shown in Table 4: When X1 influences Y1, the normalized path coefficient is 0.600>0, and the path presented significance at 0.01 level (z=8.067, P =0.000<0.01), indicating that X1 has a significant favorable influence on Y1. When X2 affects Y2, the normalized path coefficient is 0.650>0, and the path presented significance at 0.01 level (z=9.216, P =0.000<0.01), indicating that X2 has a significant favorable influence on Y2.

Table 4: A Path Analysis

| X | → | Y | Unstandardized Path Coefficient | SE | z (CR) | p | standardized path Coefficients |
|---|---|---|---------------------------------|-------|--------|-------|--------------------------------|
| X1 (I often feel lonely → and lonely.) | → | Y1 (I do not have much time to stay home with my kids, but there are programs in my community that I love and I would love to attend.) | 0.646 | 0.080 | 8.067 | 0.000 | 0.600 |
| | | Y2 (I do not feel like I have much to do at home, so if there are hobby training programs in the community that I like, I'm willing to join them.) | 0.656 | 0.071 | 9.216 | 0.000 | 0.650 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---------------------------------|------|----------|-----|--------------------------------|
| X | → | Y | Unstandardized Path Coefficient | SE | z (CR) | p | standardized path Coefficients |
|---|---|---|---------------------------------|------|----------|-----|--------------------------------|

Notes: → Indicates the path impact relationship.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

According to the research report of [Tsinghua University and Tongfang Global Life Insurance \(2021\)](#), as well as our investigation and analysis of retirement training for retirees, there is a correlation between older adults' feelings of isolation and their motivation to pursue hobbies and training courses, as well as a correlation between this isolation and not living with children. Also, they need the interest training service because it helps them feel less alone and makes them happier.

It refers to the interest training service provided by the community to retirees to address their spiritual and cultural needs based on the community's cultural life. The retirees referred to in the research include middle-aged and older people who are legally retired, can care for themselves, are not disabled, and have a solid foundation in terms of personal constitution, intellectual quality, quality, and other factors.

Unlike the nursing work that ordinary elderly care service centers are engaged in, this study relies on living communities to build a professional platform and provide a place for retirees to cultivate their interests and exchange social culture. Training teachers also dig from the community, taking advantage of their skills in the weekend rest for retirees to carry out relevant training courses, increase their economic income, and serve society with knowledge.

The platforms providing training services are mainly community management units of grassroots governments, which often have a good mass base and understand local conditions. The service should be separated from the administrative functions of the government, have the nature of low profit, and adhere to serving society. Therefore, the price of courses should be set close to the local people's livelihood.

At the same time, the management unit is responsible for providing venues, course arrangements, customer service, teacher management, etc., which provides a specific foundation for its business activities. When the number of customers grows, private capital can be brought in as a good way to add to the force.

Taking into account the real needs and interests of retirees, the training service should focus on their interests and hobbies and include hands-on classes. The main body is divided into two sections: entertainment and life skills. The entertainment category includes entertainment and social software, photography skills, travel information sharing, and the like to meet the spiritual needs of retirees for entertainment. Life skills include cooking skills, health care, popular investments, financial management, and the like to meet the needs of retirees to improve their quality of life. This is a brand new form of training, linking human resource management with the spiritual lives of retirees, providing spiritual and cultural activities for this particular group, and contributing to China's elderly service. Some researchers also found the availability of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a resource used to support the learning process independently to encourage the productivity of retirees. Retirees learn to independently

design ICT learning needs and activities as hands-on, experience-based learning practices (Winarno et al., 2021).

However, it still has some limitations. For example, the relevant departments of grassroots governments are busy dealing with daily affairs, and it is challenging to devote energy and time to this brand-new cause. For another example, Chinese people are still in the initial stage of paying for knowledge, and the consumption habit of the elderly to pay for knowledge is a little cultivated. These limitations show that the pension training business for retirees still has a long way to go.

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

All procedures performed in this study involving human participants were conducted by the ethical standards of the institutional research committee. Informed consent was obtained from all participants according to the Declaration of Helsinki.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors reported no conflicts of interest for this work and declare that there is no potential conflict of interest concerning the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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