

# **Filial Piety Confucian Familism with Its Special Connection to the Treatments of Elderly People**

by

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B.Sc., University of Victoria, 2019

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of

**MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

in the School of Public Administration

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University of Victoria

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# Abstract

## Introduction

Against the backdrop of successful family planning in China, the aging of the society's population is increasing. With the increasing number of older adults, the support of the elderly has become a significant issue for society.

Filial piety and respect for the elderly are the fundamentals of Chinese society and its long history. One aspect of filial piety focused on the responsibilities of the family in eldercare. It advocates that the elderly need not only material help but also spiritual comfort and emotional support.

This culture of filial piety in a traditional Chinese society illustrates a path for responding to problems of the aging population. However, with the advent of an industrialized society, China's family structure has undergone fundamental changes. There is an increasing trend of families choosing to send the elders to long-term institutional care rather than home or community care. This has led to conflict between traditional filial piety principles and the new model of aging healthcare. As a result, it is important to understand whether the new institutional care in China will meet the material and spiritual needs of the elderly.

This paper aims to examine how Chinese values connect with eldercare treatments nowadays with the interplay of filial piety Confucian familism. More specifically, this paper discusses how Confucian values play in the relationship among eldercare locations, accessibility to care, and how filial piety has been expressed in the senior home before and during the COVID-19 pandemic in China. Also, since the available data on service and quality in nursing homes in China is limited, it is important to understand what administrators and caregivers are experiencing as a first step.

This paper examines the following issues during the COVID-19 outbreak.

1. To what extent does Filial-piety Confucian familism play a role in young and elder generation's attitudes regarding elder health care?
2. What challenges do the nursing homes face before and during the pandemic?
3. How was filial-piety expressed in the nursing home before and during the pandemic?

## Methodology and Methods

This project conducted a total of 15 in-depth interviews with selected interviewees, including both selected administrators and caregivers in five nursing homes in Shanghai, China. As the researcher was born and raised in Shanghai, the insights for this research came partially from the real-life experience and a personal understanding of Chinese culture. The researcher conducted this qualitative study in Shanghai during the time when there were restrictions on travel and interaction due to COVID-19. Regarding the location specialty, the researcher was able to conduct interviews in Shanghainese and observe the cultural rituals inherent in the region. The interviews were conducted to observe examples of experiences that administrators and caregivers observed or participated in. As such, the results are based on examples more so that opinions or attitudes. All interviews were recruited through email

exchanges and discussions were over WeChat (a Chinese communication app) and phone calls due to the pandemic restrictions.

## **Key Findings**

This study found that numerous young people in China chose to place their parents in nursing homes due to busy work schedules, house demolitions, and the need for long-term medical care for their parents. However, senior care institutions are still in the stage of exploration and standardization. Inevitably, there are some problems, including a shortage of professional medical staff and a limited level of medical services that can be provided.

It was found that this new and flourishing model of elderly care is also facing a series of problems that are prevalent around the world, such as high bed vacancy rate, endless psychological problems of the elderlies, and increased operating costs of nursing homes. This information has led us to question whether the elders are living well and to try to understand views of nursing homes and filial piety. We found that most elders have gradually changed their traditional concept of filial piety to a more modern one. The administrators and caregivers we interviewed said that “filial piety” is a respect from the heart, a mutual emotional exchange and understanding. It possesses equality and democracy between two generations. Their comments suggest that more elderly people living in nursing homes have low attachment to traditional notions of filial piety. In contrast, more children have a solid attachment to traditional filial piety because they struggled mentally before sending their parents to a nursing home.

In addition, the study found that filial piety was expressed differently before and during COVID-19. Prior to the pandemic, the administrators and caregivers suggested that individuals were more inclined to fulfill practical obligations and compassionate reverence needs. Whereas, during the pandemic, filial piety was expressed less practically and more emotionally due to the closure of institutions.

## **Future Research**

Further studies should expand the sample size by including more nursing homes in various districts of Shanghai. It would be helpful if researchers can interview the caregivers and administrators in person and visit some of the care homes to gather other information on the unique needs of clients and families. Further studies could seek to discover how filial piety plays a role in the nursing home after the pandemic has passed. The challenges of the aging models can be further analyzed and recognized through exploring public policies and the needs of China’s overall society. For example, China's future pension system might need to respond to how filial piety evolves. A comprehensive pension security system based on current filial views could be established where children might play different roles in the older adults' material life, care, and spiritual comfort.

This research offers suggestions to consider in future research relating to finding a role for elderly care homes in society in reducing some of the negative perceptions of these homes, developing a model that meets the needs of elderly and children, and training and developing staff. Firstly, research might seek to understand how to address some of the negative perceptions of the nursing homes and, possibly, change the view that nursing homes do not mean an abandonment of the elderly. Rather, research might seek to illustrate ways that

nursing homes might implement a modern version of filial piety which provides a way that elderly can live in a care home as well as participating with their children in their family homes. Secondly, the study might get input into a template or model for designing nursing homes to recognize the evolving changes and pressures on traditional views of filial piety. As needs of children and elderly in a society have changed, so have their expectation of filial piety and, given these changes, how do we develop elderly institutions to respond to the economic needs of children and society at large? Thirdly, the research might investigate the response to the concerns raised from administrators about the shortage of trained staff. This might involve identifying needs of qualified care professional and encouraging their training and developing in colleges, vocational and technical colleges, secondary vocational schools, and county vocational education centers.

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## **Acknowledgements**

In this two and a half years of postgraduate study, there were hardships and joys. There were also payments and rewards. However, there are more gratitude in my heart at this moment.

First of all, I would like to thank Dr. J. Barton Cunningham; a very excellent scholar with deep academic background, meticulous logical thinking, and rigorous academic style. He gave me a lot of care and encouragement during my graduate study. From the selection of my dissertation topic to the completion of the final draft, he carefully and patiently guided me and gave me many profound and valuable opinions. I must also thank Dr. Astrid Vanessa Pérez Piñán for giving me numerous constructive guidance on my dissertation. I am grateful for her support and assistance during this whole period.

I would like to thank all the professors in the School of Public Administration for the help and inspiration in my study and life.

In addition, I would like to thank my mom and dad who have always cared for me selflessly for more than 20 years. No matter how challenging the path has been, they have always supported for me both materially and spiritually, and I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to you all.

Finally, I would like to thank all the professors who participated in the evaluation and defense of my dissertation, who made me examine the results of my study in the past two and a half years, and who made me clearer about the direction of my future development. Graduating from graduate school does not mean the end of study, but the beginning of another new starting point. I will continue my new journey with the care and love of all of you.

# Introduction

## General Problem

China is a rapidly aging nation as a result of the baby boom, family planning policy, and a decreasing mortality rate over the decades. China is the only country globally with an elderly population of more than 100 million, and this number is increasing at an annual rate of 3.2 percent (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007). With nearly 10% of the population over sixty, it is predicted that this proportion will double by the year 2025 (Harper, 1992). Such aging is particularly acute in some large cities, where the impact of population policies has combined with lengthening life expectancies to rapidly increase the percentages of elderly residents. As Chinese society begins to face the challenge of the aging population, there are concerns about the impact of aging on the increasing costs related to the care of elderly and their health care needs.

Confucian principles have played a significant role in China's health care system for older adults. Over Chinese history, Confucian ethics are characterized by a virtue-based version of familism, which emphasizes that each family member ought to pursue the family's wellness. Fan (2006) stated that:

It contrasts with ethical individualism in that it takes the good of the family to be irreducible to the good of each individual family member. For Confucians, family integrity, continuity and prosperity constitute the most important and essential components of the family good that family members must strive to promote by virtuous conduct (p. 3).

In Chinese Confucian culture, filial piety “孝 (xiao)” is the source of perfect virtue, which is from a special kind of interpersonal relationship: parent-child relationship (Kang, 1992; Lin, 1992; Yang, 1998). For Confucius, a prosperous Confucian society describes one where children were treated gently, and the elderly are respected and rested. Therefore, once a Chinese child is born, he/she is responsible for taking care of his/her elderly parents and parents, and family integrity requires children to seriously exercise the virtue of filial piety (Fan, 2006). Home eldercare and community-based eldercare used to be the options that children and older people would choose, both from past traditional societies until today. However, Zhan *et al.* (2008) argued that there had been an increasing number of grown-up son and daughters who are unavailable to provide parental care due to their increased geographic mobility and reduced family size. Zhan *et al.* (2008) stated that

“after the welfare reform of the 1990s, formerly government-sponsored elder homes have become privatized, and large numbers of new private and community-run elder homes have opened for business (Zhan *et al.*, 2008, p. 544)”.

With economic development and globalization, China's family structure has undergone fundamental changes. The traditional concept of filial piety has been gradually weakening its effect on people. Individuals' views of family responsibility and family obligation are being constantly updated and changed (Chu *et al.*, 2008; Feng *et al.*, 2012; Zhang, 2012).

Long-term institutional eldercare has turned out to be a new thriving model for home elder care and community-based eldercare in urban China for individuals with enough need, money, and access. By 2017, more than 155,000 elderly care institutions were established

(Ministry of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2017a; Ministry of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2017b). Chu *et al.* (2008) and Zhan *et al.* (2008) demonstrate that the declining practice of filial piety, increased number of childless older adults, and the fundamental change of family structure are considered as the reasons that led to increased development of institutional elder care services in China. In China, nursing homes, assisted-living facilities, and retirement communities are usually lumped together instead of being considered separate enterprises (Zhan *et al.*, 2006). Chu *et al.* (2008) also noted that institutional care for elders in China could be separated into two systems: the social system and medical systems. As they state, "the medical system embraces geriatric hospitals and rehabilitation wards in general or psychiatric hospitals. The social welfare system includes nursing homes and elderly apartments" (p. 239).

Nevertheless, numerous studies have shown different perspectives on the quality and the structure of institutional care services in China (Chu *et al.*, 2008; Wang *et al.*, 2017; Zhan *et al.*, 2008). It was found that most administrative and frontline workers in nursing homes have not received a high level of training in elder care. Most of these workers were formerly retired and migrated from rural areas (Chu *et al.*, 2008). According to Zhan *et al.* (2008), "a few early retirees were working again to earn additional income and to be doing something meaningful" (p. 561). There is still a need for good-quality structured training in long-term care for institutional elder care services (Chu *et al.*, 2008; Zhan *et al.*, 2008). Moreover, Wang *et al.* (2018) have illustrated that "elder abuse is common in nursing homes in both Macau and Guangzhou. The prevalence of elder abuse was 11.48% and 8.24% respectively" (p. 155). In terms of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was also seen that numerous elder populations received inadequate treatments and even were forgotten in long-term care homes.

With the increasing aging population and the declining traditional pension model, the issue of elder health care has gradually become a focus for trying to understand how to best deal with China's aging population. The concepts of filial piety are increasingly more difficult to implement for people within a younger generations' minds because of the increasing demands to work longer hours. For some younger people, filial piety is not as strong as elderly people are sometimes seen as a family burden (Chu *et al.*, 2008; Fan, 2006; Zhan *et al.*, 2008). While numerous empirical articles analyze the elder population treatment in China, the findings are varied, and not many case studies respond to issues resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. It is significant to discuss how young generations and elderly people think of Filial-piety-centered Confucian familism today through listening to their experiences with elder care services in the developing health care model, long-term nursing homes. Also, since the available data on service and quality in the institutional eldercare in China is still limited, it is necessary to examine further the relationship between filial piety and the nursing home. The present study reviews administrators and caregivers' comments on elderly treatment in long-term care homes in an effort to promote the better well-being of the aging population in the future.

## **Project Objectives and Research Questions**

The purpose of this project is to develop a better understanding of how filial piety has been expressed in senior homes before and during the COVID-19 pandemic in China and how younger and older people view it.

This interview project was conducted in Shanghai, China. As a field study example, Shanghai is a directly-controlled municipality and is the most populous city in China. It has undergone

rapid expansion and economic transformation over the past years (Shanghai, 2014). As China, represented by Shanghai, has gradually stepped into the era of market economy, the traditional filial piety culture, which mainly focuses on showing filial respect to parents and elders, has been impacted. Based on the evidence of the possible changes in society, this report reviewed the following research questions:

1. To what extent does Filial-piety Confucian familism play a role in young and elder generation's attitudes regarding elder health care?
2. What challenges do the nursing homes face before and during the pandemic?
3. How was filial-piety expressed in the nursing home before and during the pandemic?

## **Organization of Report**

This project is organized into six chapters including introduction and conclusion. The second chapter reviews the literature and provides the historical background of the Confucian filial-piety-based familism with its associate modern meaning and measurement. It also contains an overview of the traditional eldercare models and a new thriving model called long-term institutional eldercare, nursing home.

The third chapter of this study describes the methodology and methods used to conduct the research questions. It provides the design, sample size, recruitment, and data analysis regarding the project itself. This chapter also outlines the research limitations. The fourth chapter provides the interview findings from the data collection and analysis based on the methodology. It is divided into five discussions about the individuals' attitudes between nursing homes and filial piety. Fifth, the discussion and analysis section offers comments on the findings in relationship to the addressing questions identified in the literature.

# **Background & Overview**

## **China's Aging Population Data Analysis**

According to the National Bureau of Statistics of the People's Republic of China (NBSC, 2020), the seventh census in 2020 shows that the total population of Mainland China is approximately 1.42 billion. At present, China is the only country globally with an elderly population exceeding 100 million, and this number is increasing at an annual rate of 3.2 percent (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007). China is moving from a "high-low" pattern of population growth to a "three-low" pattern: low fertility, low mortality, and low growth. The growth of China's total population has slowed but the proportion of its elderly population has increased in relationship to the younger population (China Development Research Foundation, 2020; NBSC, 2010).

Countries or regions with an elderly population over 65 years old account for more than 7 percent of the total population are considered as aging countries or regions. NBSC (2000) stated that China has gradually entered an aging society since 2000. The United Nations (2015) statistics demonstrate that nearly a quarter of the world's people aged 60 and over lived in China in 2015 (see figure 1, left). From the right side of this chart, it illustrates that the world's population aged 80 and over is also concentrated in a small number of countries. China, the United States, India, Japan, and Germany, being the top five countries in the elderly population, together account for 48 percent of the world's elderly, according to the UN's 2015 world population data (UNDESA, 2015).

Population aged 60 years or over and aged 80 years or over by country, 2015

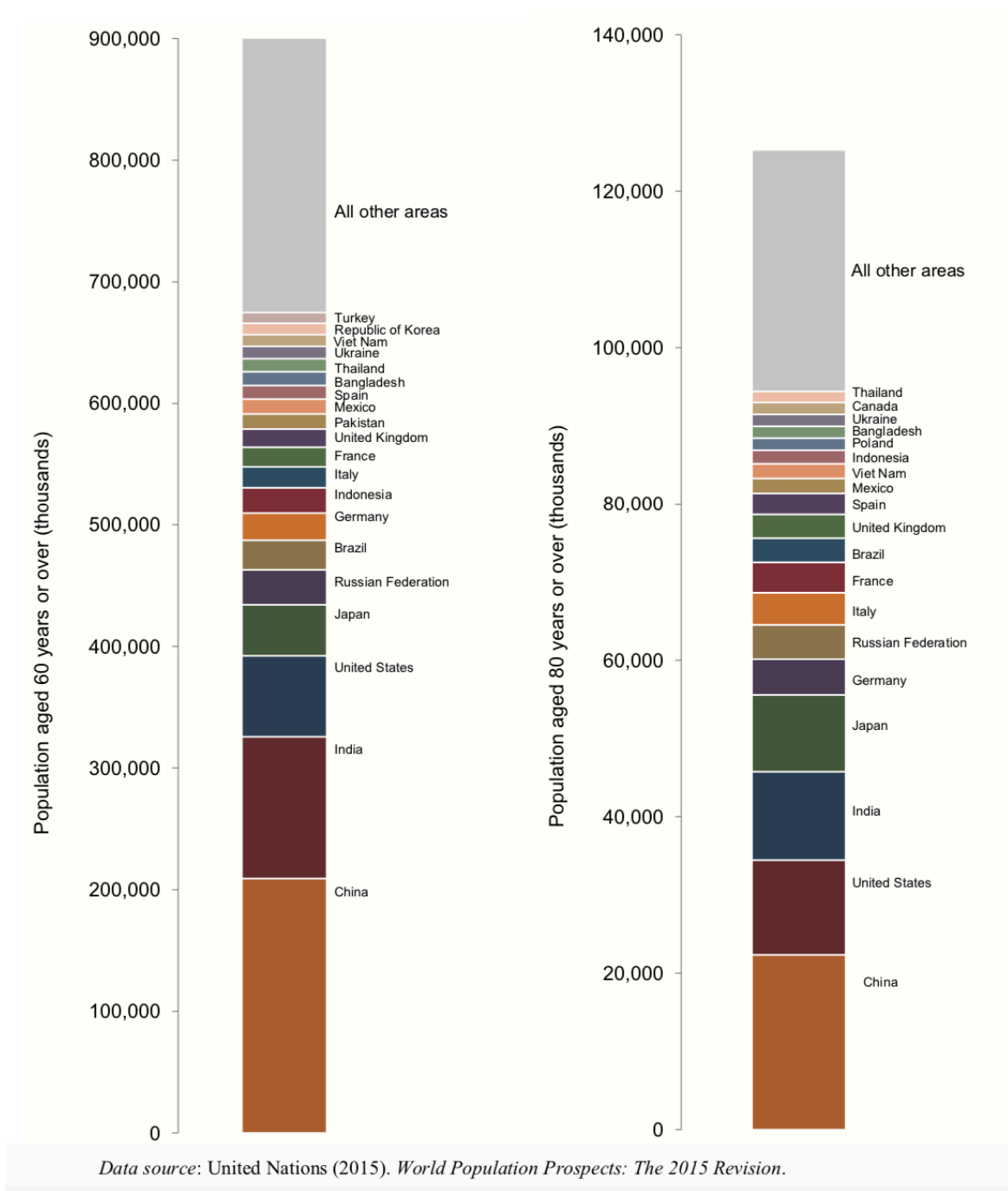


Figure 1. Population aged 60 years or over and aged 80 years or over by country in 2015 (UNDESA, 2015)

Moreover, data from the sixth census of the People's Republic of China (2010) showed that 13.26% of the population are aged 60 and over, up 2.93 percentage points from the 2000 census. Among them, 8.87% are aged 65 and above, up 1.91 percentage points from the 2000 census. The population aged 0-14 years comprised 16.60 percent of the population, decreasing 6.29 percentage points from the 2000 Census. However, in the decade 90-00, the proportion of the population aged 60+ and 65+ increased by 1.77 and 1.45 percentage points, respectively, and the proportion of children and adolescents in the 0-14 age range decreased 4.93 percentage points. It can be seen that the rate of population aging is accelerating, as is the rate of decrease in the share of children and adolescents.

### ***Factors Contributing to China's Aging Society***

There are numerous reasons for the rapid aging of China's population, but the most important and direct reasons lie in two aspects. The low fertility rate is caused by the long-term implementation of the family planning policy. The family planning policy, also known as the "one-child policy", was implemented in 1979 as a strategic solution to balance the rapidly growing population and stimulate economic development. It was adopted as a national policy in September 1982 and written into the Constitution in December. Its primary purpose was to advocate late marriage and late childbearing, prenatal and prenatal care, and planned population control. As a basic national policy, family planning may have played a positive role in China's population and development since its formulation, but it has also directly contributed to population aging. Also, the rapid economic growth, the progress of science and technology, the improvement of people's medical conditions, and the improvement of living standards have made remarkable achievements in health and longevity, and the life span of the population has been dramatically extended (China Development Research Foundation, 2020; Hesketh *et al.*, 2005). As a result of the combined effects of the above factors, the proportion of the young population in the whole population is smaller.

### ***Future Data on the Aging Population and The Dynamic Distribution of Age Structure in China***

According to the China Development Report 2020, by 2022, China's population over 65 years old will make up 14 percent of the total population. By 2050, China's aging population will reach a peak with 27.9 percent of the total population over 65 years old. Such a trend indicates China's total population will enter what has been defined as a long-term negative growth stage, where the degree of aging continues to deepen, and the aging trend becomes irreversible. (China Development Research Foundation, 2020).

Further projections suggest that, from 2020 to 2035, China's total population will reach its peak and enter the long-term negative growth stage. The peak time will be around 2030 when the population will be 1.42 billion-1.44 billion. After that, the total population will grow in an unfavorable direction. While the population size will increase from 1.36 billion to 1.38 billion by 2050, the number of older people in China as a proportion of the total population will continue to rise (China Development Research Foundation, 2020; NBSC, 2010).

In 2020, there will be about 180 million people aged 65 or above in China, consisting of about 13 percent of the total population. When the 14th Five-Year Plan is completed in 2025, more than 210 million people are aged 65 or above, accounting for about 15 percent of the total population. In 2035 and 2050, the number of senior citizens aged 65 or above in China

will reach 310 million and nearly 380 million, making up 22.3 percent and 27.9 percent of the total population. If the age of 60 or older is used as the criterion for defining the elderly population, the number of older people in China will be even more significant, with nearly 500 million by 2050 (China Development Research Foundation, 2020; NBSC, 2010).

The United Nations has previously studied and predicted China’s age structure dynamics and stated that the series of changes could be seen as an evolving pyramid (Figure 2-4, UNDESA, 2011). In 1950, the population structure was shaped like a pyramid. However, over the next 50 years, the bottom of the pyramid will slowly shrink while the middle and top begins to disperse in the early 21st century. Between 2030 and 2050, the elderly will make up a larger proportion of the population than the young, limiting the distribution of the pyramid. It is predicted that by 2050, the 60-64 age group will be the most significant proportion of the population. By the year 2100, the demographic structure will be lighthouse shaped, with the over-60 age group likely to be the highest (Feng *et al.*, 2012; UNDESA, 2011; Zhang *et al.*, 2012).

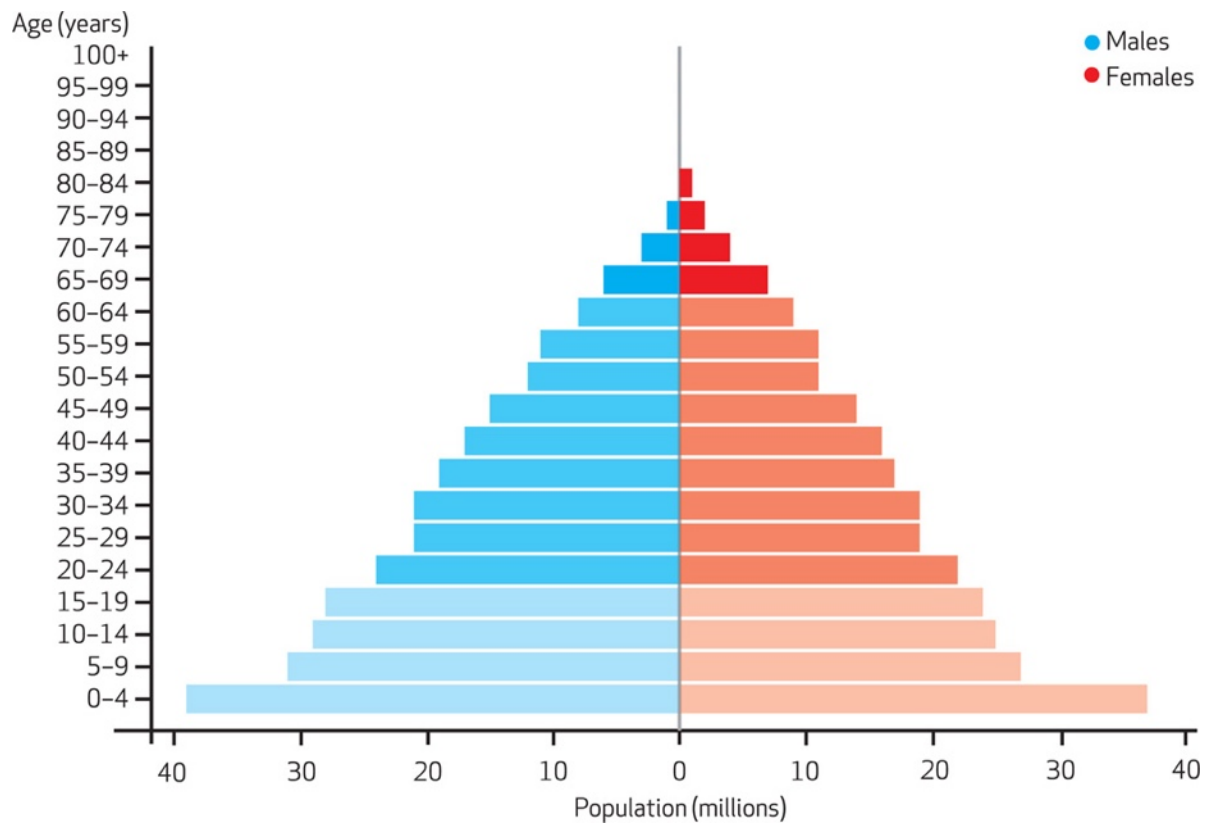


Figure 2. Age and gender structure of China in 1950 (UNDESA, 2011)

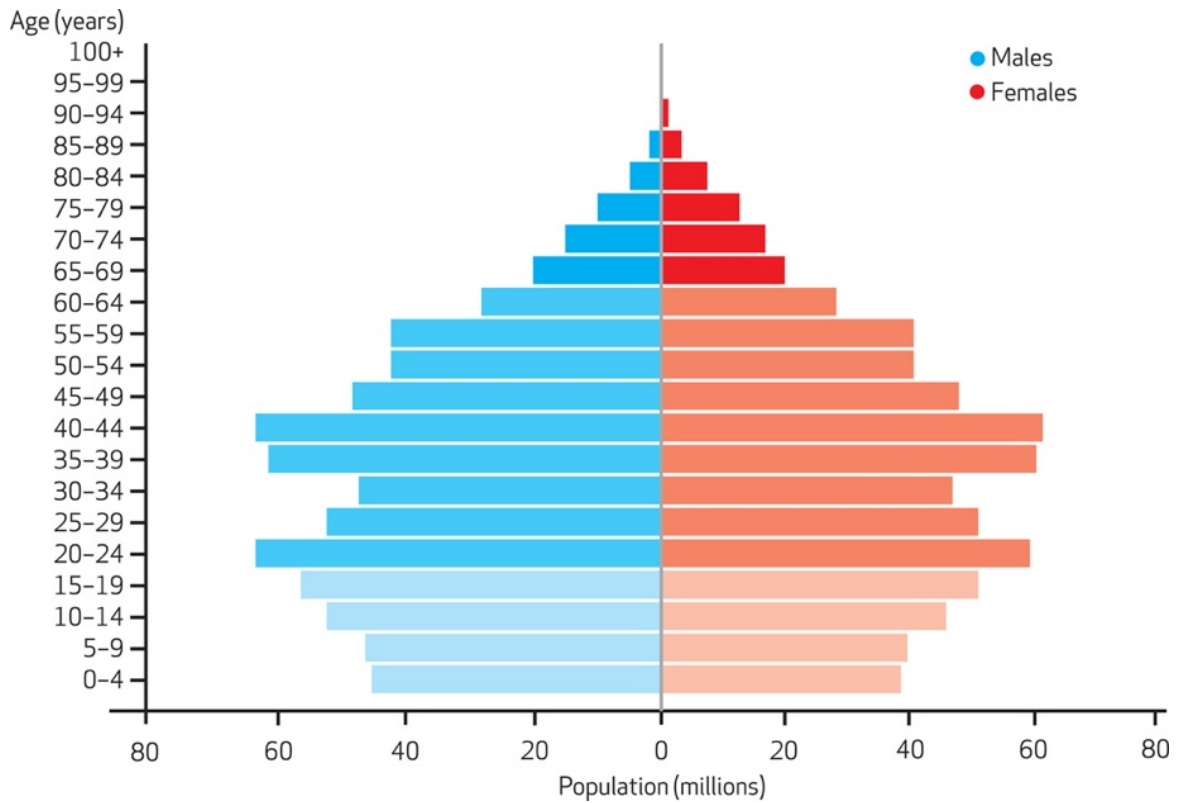


Figure 3. Age and gender structure of China in 2010 (UNDESA, 2011)

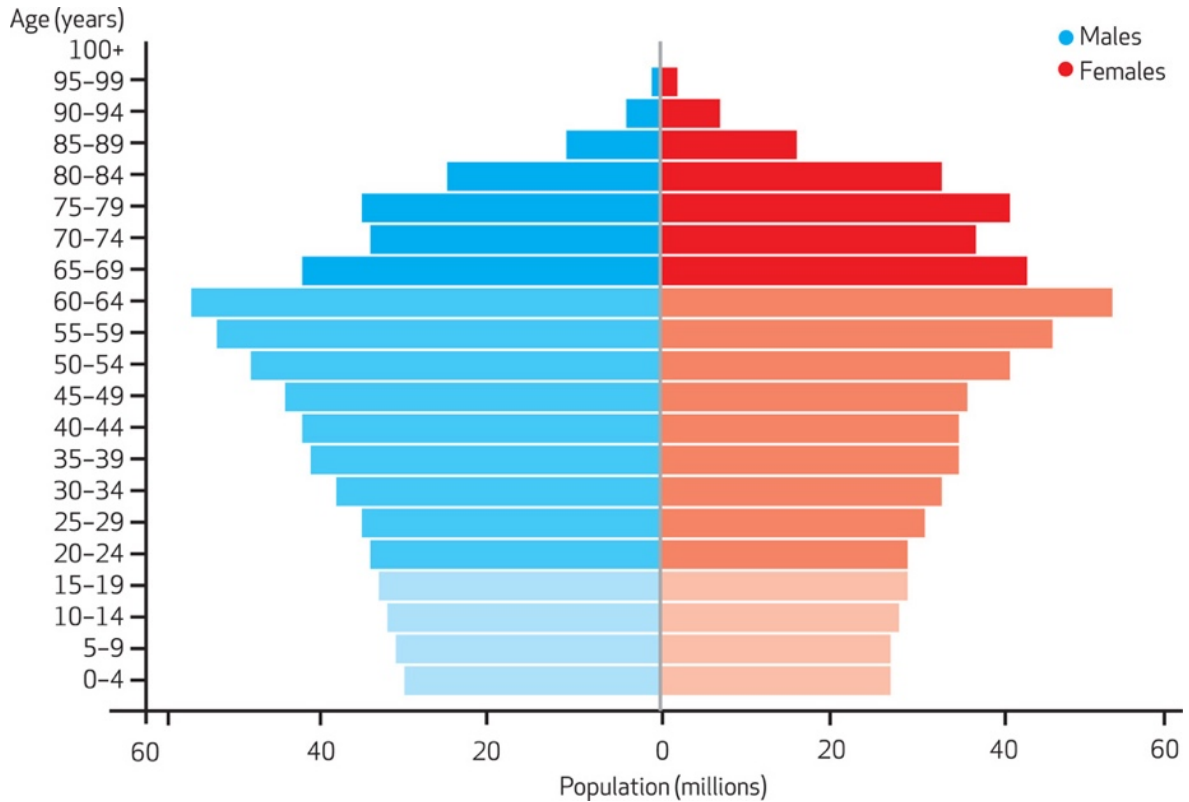


Figure 4. Age and gender structure of China in 2050 (UNDESA, 2011)

## Confucian Filial-piety-based Familism

As Chinese society begins to face the challenge of an aging population, the government is focusing on the impact of aging on economic problems and the care of vulnerable older people, drawing attention to the health care needs of China's elderly. The Confucian concept of family-centered filial piety plays an important role in China's elderly health care system. Filial piety “孝 (xiao)” is the foundational feature in this familyist virtue ethics, which is the source of the perfect virtue, because Confucianism founded by Confucius believes that the perfect virtue stems from a special kind of interpersonal relationship: parent-child relationship (Läänemets, 1996; Han *et al.*, 2018; Kang, 1992; Lin, 1992; Yang, 1998). Filial piety is one of the thoughts of Confucian ethics and morality. It is the most significant cultural trait that distinguishes the Chinese nation from other nations in the world.

### *Historical Background*

Since the founding of Confucianism, through the development of scholars in successive generations, a complete Confucian ideological system has gradually formed and become the mainstream philosophy of traditional Chinese culture. Its extensive and profound cultural character has been an important impact on the history of world culture and is still of great practical significance to today's society. However, Confucianism has had the most significant influence in shaping families and communities' behavior patterns and structures (Harrison, 2019, Park & Cho, 1995).

In Confucianism, there are five essential virtues that one has to pursue: Ren 仁 (benevolence), Yi 义 (integrity, uprightness), Li 礼 (rite and propriety), Zhi 智 (moral understanding), and Xin 信 (trust). According to Confucianism, family is the foundation of society (Park & Chesla, 2007, p. 303). With the moral and ethical principles, the definition of family includes

both the economic functions of production and consumption and the social functions of education and socialization. Family cohesion and community bonding are considered the foundation that holds together human societies and nations (Park & Chesla, 2007, p. 296).

Confucianism situates its explanation of various phenomena in the universe and believes that all moral rituals in the world are derived from the metaphysical natural laws of the universe and that human beings can achieve the unity of heaven and man through the practice of these moral rituals. Confucianism advocates a positive attitude towards entry into the world and the spirit of self-improvement, and its highest realm is “being a saint inside and a king outside”. Han *et al.* (2018) described this pursuit as

“the significance of life lies in the pursuit of benevolence, in the practice of righteousness, during which gentleman personality and the mentality of being a true man are achieved, thus fulfilling the expectation of becoming a saint or sage” (p. 6).

One of the classics of Confucianism is called *The Analects of Confucius*. Its content involves many aspects, and is an inexhaustible theoretical treasure for Chinese society. As a significant part of traditional Chinese culture, the concept of filial piety was entirely developed before *The Analects of Confucius*. However, it was presented as “dao”. Filial piety

has influenced Chinese civilization for more than 2,000 years. It was originated from the discussion and interpretation of Confucius and his disciples in *The Analects of Confucius*. The “filial piety” in the *Confucian Analects* is rich in ideological connotation, which lays the foundation of traditional filial piety in China. It is of great significance to present social and cultural construction to discuss the object, mode, function, and other contents of filial piety (Billington, 1997; Läänemets, 1996).

*Confucian Analects* is a collection of essays mainly composed of quotations. It mostly records the words and deeds of Confucius and his disciples in the form of quotes and dialogues. It also embodies Confucius’ values of politics, aesthetics, morality, and ethics, and utilitarianism. Seen as a Confucian classic, *The Analects of Confucius* has a profound and all-encompassing content. The thoughts in *The Analects of Confucius* mainly have three closely independent categories: ethical and moral category (benevolence), social and political category (rite and propriety), and cognitive methodology category (doctrine of the mean). Benevolence is, first of all, a natural state deep in one’s heart. The ultimate compromise must be good. This whole state of sincerity and kindness is benevolence. Confucius established the category of benevolence and elaborated ritual as a good social relationship and norm of treating people by benevolence and expressing benevolence, further clarifying the systematic methodological principle of “doctrine of the mean”. Benevolence is the ideological core of the *Confucian Analects* (Legge, 1971; Park & Chesla, 2007).

Interestingly, Fan (2006) cites extensively from *The Analects of Confucius*, which record many remarks on filial piety. Fan (2006) mentions that *The Analects of Confucius* is valuable and accurate, which focuses more on why filial piety cannot be disobeyed. Fan (2006) also emphasized the significance of Confucian stress on the moral of rites. Confucius said that children should be respectful to their parents, love their teachers when they go out, be careful in what they say, be faithful in what they say, be kind to all people, and be close to those who have a heart of love. After doing these, if one has residual energy, he/she ought to absorb cultural knowledge. Confucianism also emphasizes the need for extensive cultural learning and is known for its emphasis on education. Confucius pointed out that if one is more straightforward than literate, one is like a country bumpkin, which is vulgar; if one is more literate than simple, one is hypocritical and pompous. Only when simplicity and literary talent are properly matched is a gentleman. Confucius, a diligent and self-educated Confucian, believed that, in terms of the fundamentals of being a human being, being filial to parents and respect for brothers and sisters is more important than “learning literature” is “filial piety” and “fraternity” (Confucius & Lau, 2003; Fan, 2006; Han *et al.*, 2018).

With the two terms “filial piety” and “fraternal duty”, “filial piety” is a more fundamental virtue in the Confucian Analects. In this respect, Confucianism differs significantly from Christianity. Christianity also advocates respecting parents and loving brothers, but the most important thing is to love God and Christ. According to the Bible, Christ asks believers to worship the Father and Christ more than their biological parents. However, Confucius believed that anyone who could not put loving his or her parents a priority in life did not have the primary conditions to be a human being. This difference means that Confucian culture has a different view of the source of life from Christianity. Judaism and Christianity believe that God created everything, and humankind is also the creation of God, just like the universe. Therefore, people should be grateful to their parents. The Confucian culture believes that heaven and earth bring life to all things, and parents give birth to children. The Confucian culture believes that we are born between heaven and earth. It believes that we should respect and be grateful for what has been created and be attentive and thankful to the biological

parents. Also, differences could be extended to Christian and traditional Chinese wedding ceremonies. In the Christian wedding ceremony, gratitude and obedience to God are essential. However, in the traditional Chinese wedding ceremony, people would first worship Heaven and Earth (the father and mother of humankind and all things), then worship their biological parents. Finally, the husband and wife will worship each other in a way that makes both men and women virtuous. In addition, Chinese weddings have always had the ritual of the younger generation giving tea to their elders. This act also reflects a concept in filial piety, and the idea is that if I respect my family elders, I will also appreciate other elders in the same way (Confucius & Lau, 2003; Filial Piety: A Christian Perspective, 2014; Fan, 2006; Läänemets, 1996).

Chinese people are very grateful to their parents because they believe their parents are the source of individual life in Confucian culture. Parents are sacred, and filial piety is a significant part of Confucian religion. Confucian culture advocates that parents should make every effort to provide for them in material terms while alive, be respectful and obedient in attitude, and offer sacrifices to their parents after their death.

### ***Modern Meaning and Measurement of Filial Piety***

Regarding the historical background of Confucian filial-piety-based familism, filial piety is a central belief and cultural outline that suggests that adult children's values and attitudes align with their parents to ensure the continuance of parental well-being. Therefore, Chinese children tend to express love by taking care of their parents' needs as it is a life-long responsibility to perform filial piety in the Chinese culture. They are expected to sacrifice their own interests physically, financially, and socially for the benefit of their parents (Awasthi, K., & Awasthi, P., 2017; Läänemets, 1996). They can be classified as fulfilling practical obligations, compassionate reverence, and family continuity. These three types of support for parents are considered legitimate and used as the three-factor measurement of filial piety. The entire concept of life is based on mutual assistance and interdependence with the family. It is considered a privilege for older parents to be cared for by adult children (Lum *et al.*, 2016).

**Fulfilling Practical Obligations.** The fulfillment of practical obligations is described as arranging care for parents, providing financing, visiting parents, and being grateful (Lum *et al.*, 2016). This obligation can be divided into two parts, emphasizing the material satisfaction of parents' needs and their spiritual needs, both of which are indispensable. On the material level, the concept of filial piety is mainly reflected in supporting the parents. Traditional Confucianism believes that parents' kindness to their children is "as high as a mountain and deep as the sea". It is an essential expression of conscience for children to repay their parents' deep kindness when they become adults. The aging of parents accompanies the growing up of children's long years of contribution to the family, and care for children are essential factors that accelerate parents' aging. Secondly, traditional Chinese Confucian culture advocates remembering and repaying the kindness given by others for a lifetime. Although parents and children are physiologically related by blood and have the unshrinkable responsibility and obligation to raise their young children, children must learn to be grateful, remember their parents' kindness, and fulfill their commitment to support their parents when they are old. The most basic requirement for children to provide for their parents is to meet their parents' daily material needs and to improve their parents' material living standards through their efforts. In the long history of

development, there were many times when material things were extremely scarce. Many children give up material things to satisfy their survival to support their parents, which is extreme parenting. Still, from this, we can see the children's deep love for their parents and their adherence to the concept of parenting. This is the extreme of parenting, but it shows the deep love of children for their parents and commitment to the idea of parenting (Lum *et al.*, 2016; Yeh & Bedford, 2003).

**Fulfilling Compassionate Reverence.** Fulfilling compassionate reverence is described as trying to achieve the parents' best expectations, always being polite, making sure parents' unachieved goals are performed, and caring about parent's well-being (Lum *et al.*, 2015). Spiritual compassion for parents is a manifestation of genuine respect for parents from the bottom of one's heart and is a requirement for respect for parents and obedience to parents. It is well known that older people are prone to spiritual emptiness due to profound disconnection from social life, poor health, and children leaving home. In contrast, children's indifference to their parents' spiritual emptiness tends to create a vicious circle. According to traditional Confucian culture, children should treat their parents with kindness and gentleness. It is worth noting that although Confucianism advocates respect for and obedience to parents, it also focuses on admonishing parents, and children's filial piety to their parents cannot be unquestioning. We should think rationally and correct our parents' faults and make up for their shortcomings. To obey parents and be obedient to them is not respect for parents but is a reflection of irresponsibility to parents. The real reason for admonishing parents is to show great love and care for them. However, while criticizing children, parents should pay attention to the methods and means in use; otherwise, it will make the relationship with parents rigid and hurt their feelings (Fan, 2006; Lum, *et al.*, 2016).

**Ensuring Family Continuity.** Ensuring family continuity is described as making sure one child is central in carrying out the family lineage by ensuring continuity. Confucianism believes that filial piety is the first of all human ethics. It is important to produce children and grandchildren to continue to have a long lineage and last for hundreds of generations. The continuation of the clan lineage, the prosperity of the family, and the reproduction of children and grandchildren are the most important things for the family (Fan, 2006; Lum *et al.*, 2016). However, Westley *et al.* (2010) suggest that this third value is not an entirely necessary measure of filial piety today as the rising standard of living and cost of raising children, as well as increased education and employment, have led many young couples to choose personal freedom over the lifelong responsibility of parenthood.

## **Eldercare Models**

What are the locations where elder health care is provided with the principle of filial piety? Within the principle of Filial-piety-centered Confucian familism, the Chinese government offers three different retirement models. Among them, family and community-based eldercare are the traditional models. However, due to the aging trend in China, the government started to promote the development of elderly care institutions. Will people with traditional ideology accept this new health care model effect?

## ***Traditional Eldercare Models***

**Home Eldercare (家中养老).** For over 2,500 years, adult children in China have followed the principle of Filial-piety-centered Confucian familism in providing material and spiritual support for their aging parents at home (Bengtson, 2000; Streib, 1987). As Zhan *et al.*, (2008) stated:

“Since the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, the government has required by law that all adult children take care of their aging parents; only childless elders are cared for in welfare institutions by the public sector or the government” (p. 544).

Home elder care has always been the first option that children and elderly people would choose, both from past traditional societies until today. At least one of the married children should be responsible for staying at his/her parents’ home with his/her family to take care of their parents. As a traditional concept of eldercare that has been inherited for generations, family aging is a major influence in shaping attitudes of older people who are in the transition between tradition and modernity. Home eldercare is divided into three dimensions: life care, spiritual comfort, and economic support. Since human beings become more attached to family and less attached to material things as they become older, home elder care can make the elderly comfortable and satisfied in terms of emotional needs. At the same time, older adults living at home have a high degree of freedom of movement, and their privacy can be protected. However, the security of elderly people living alone at home is low, and in case of illness or accident, treatment will often be delayed (Bengtson, 2000; Fan, 2006; Zhan *et al.*, 2008).

**Community-Based Eldercare (社区养老).** Meanwhile, since an increasing number of people can afford to buy real estate, another home care-related option has appeared. It is called “community-based eldercare” which is a compromised version of the original one. Fan (2006) expresses that this option

occurs a situation in which elderly persons and their children live in the vicinity or the same building but in different flats (such as in the same building with the children living in the upper flats whereas their elderly parents in the lower flats) so that children can give a visit and offer assistance to their parents every day (p. 1).

Community-based eldercare allows the older generation members to live in their own original homes or in a community. The elders are usually cared for by family members, while community-related organizations undertake caregiving services to help the elderly in need. Compared to home elder care, there are urban-rural differences in its substitutability. For the elderly living in urban areas, community aging weakens the spiritual comfort and alleviates the financial support from their children. For the elderly in rural areas, community aging impairs the elderly's life care, but the impact on spiritual comfort and economic support is not obvious (Fan, 2006; Feng *et al.*, 2012).

Over the past two decades, numerous national policy initiatives have sought to develop community-based services, including the Starlight program. Between 2001-2004, the Starlight program invested ¥ 13.4 billion (\$2.1 billion) in urban community-based senior centers. By 2005, the program had established 32,000 Starlight eldercare centers nationwide. However, it became clear that these centers were not meeting expectations, and the program

slowly declined after 2005 due to declining government financial support. To date, community-based long-term eldercare services have not primarily existed in China (Feng *et al.*, 2012; Han *et al.*, 2020).

### ***Challenges and Issues Regarding Traditional Eldercare Models***

With the development of society and the implementation of family planning policies, China's family structure has undergone fundamental changes, which are firstly reflected in the gradual decrease in family members. According to the sixth national census in 2010 published by the National Bureau of Statistics, the average number of persons per family was 3.10, down 0.34 from 3.44 as compared to the fifth national census in 2000. As the family size in China is decreasing, and the number of "four-two-one (4-2-1)" (or even six-two-one or eight-two-one) families will gradually increase in the coming decades. In other words, a couple has to support four or more elderly people and raise one child, which will be unbearable both financially and in terms of time and energy. The younger generation cannot bear the social and life pressures caused by an aging population and the elderly has become a heavy burden for families. At the same time, as families become smaller and more nucleated, children may not be able to live with their parents and give them more care and attention; this family structure makes the traditional family pension unsustainable. The traditional eldercare originally undertaken by the family is bound to be transferred to society, and if this problem is not solved in time, it will inevitably lead to a series of social problems and affect social stability (Feng *et al.*, 2012; Zhang, 2012).

Also, due to the economic and social development, the mobility of the labor force has directly led to the decline of the traditional eldercare system. A large number of urban people go to foreign places for education or even to work abroad; a large number from rural areas migrate to cities to or do business (Hesketh *et al.*, 2005; Wang *et al.*, 2017). Due to the increased social mobility of young and middle-aged people, numerous empty-nest families (older adults who live alone or with their spouse only) have emerged in China, demonstrating specifically the increasing number of cases in which the elderly and their children live in different cities and regions. Even though children regularly provide the elderly with pension expenses, it is difficult for the elderly to receive life care and spiritual comfort from their children, and pension services cannot be guaranteed. Also, as parents and children get together less frequently, intergenerational emotions become increasingly indifferent, and family pensions have a mere nominal existence (Grujters, 2017; Zeng, 2007).

Under the wave of market economy, the traditional concept of filial piety has been gradually weakening its restraining effect on people, and people's view of family responsibility and family obligation is constantly updated and changed. Zhan *et al.* (2008) conducted qualitative research in Nanjing, China. It was found that Chinese's attitudes towards filial piety have been changing over the decades in terms of "their own social worlds and on the basis of their own social locations and contexts" (Zhan *et al.*, 2008, p. 543). As the younger generation's awareness of individual independence increases, people's recognition of the traditional family-oriented old-age care model decreases. The younger generation's thinking and consciousness are becoming more and more consistent and compatible with the concept of the market economy. The contemporary value of economic interests and blood ties have weakened the traditional morality and filial culture. As the experience of the elderly is no longer the wealth of children's growth and development, the value of the elderly to children has further declined, and the traditional concept of filial piety is gradually losing its role in maintaining the function of family old-age care. The phenomenon of not supporting the

elderly and even scolding and abandoning them happens from time to time (Chu *et al.*, 2008; Zhan *et al.*, 2008).

### ***A New Thriving Model of Elderly Health Care, Long-term Institutional Eldercare***

Nowadays, institutional elder care (养老院) in China has turned out to be an alternative to home eldercare and community-based eldercare in urban China for individuals with enough need, money, and access. The fundamental change of the family structure, the increasing number of empty-nest families, and a declining practice of filial-piety-centered Confucian familism are all part of the reasons that led to the increased development of institutional eldercare services in China (Chu *et al.*, 2008).

A long-term institutional elder care home (nursing home) is a social retirement service facility established specifically to receive self-care seniors and care for elderly people in their later years. These homes provide several comprehensive services such as food and living, cleaning and hygiene, life care, health management, culture, and entertainment. There are mainly two types of nursing homes: Public and Private. The nursing home has a 24-hour doctor on duty so that the elderly can live in peace and receive medical attention. In addition, almost all the people are of the same age in the nursing home, so there is no generation gap. Zhan *et al.* (2008) illustrated that nursing homes:

provide the advantage of having constant assistance in daily activities and medical care.

Some elders also see advantages in living together with other older adults of similar age.

Elder homes provide a place for them to communicate with other older adults who belong to the same age cohorts, are in the same life stage, and share similar life experiences (p. 563).

Usually, the senior's activities and rest time are controlled and regulated, and the medical staff assists seniors in providing three nutritious meals a day.

According to the Ministry of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of China (2017a), more than 155,000 elderly care institutions were established by the end of 2017. Of these, 29,000 were registered, including 15,000 institutions operated by the government sector and 13,000 by the private sector. The number of beds in elderly care institutions was 2.13 million in 2007 and increased to 7.45 million in 2017, i.e., 15.8 elderly care beds per 1,000 older people in 2007 and 30.9 in 2017. It can be seen that the function of institutional care is gaining more and more attention in the elderly service industry, and the establishment and development of nursing homes are accelerating (Ministry of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2017a; Ministry of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2017b).

The question is whether Chinese individuals with filial piety would accept this new way of elder health care. Zhan *et al.*, (2008) said older people received quality medical and direct care and a rich social environment with people of the same age. At the same time, the elderly also expressed that their children are continuing to provide emotional support and care instead of abandoning them in the long-term institutional home (p. 566). In contrast, Fan, (2006) argued that home care for the elderly is "morally more acceptable than institution-care for contemporary society" (p. 12). He indicated that for community-based care, one type of the traditional care model, children and relatives could quickly drop by the elderly's flat

every day, offering necessary assistance whenever needed without separating them from each other.

Numerous scholars have pointed out that eldercare institutions in China are still falling behind. Chu *et al.*, (2008) stated that the quantity of nursing homes in China is “inadequate with an additional mismatch problem between the supply and demand, the quality of care in most nursing homes is suboptimal” (p. 237). With regard to the treatments that the institutions provide, several researchers also focused on advance directive and end-of-life care preferences among Chinese nursing home residents in different areas such as Hong Kong, Wuhan, etc. Elders can express their wishes, extend the automatic period and direct their families and health care providers to provide care that meets their choices if they complete an advance directive before becoming incapacitated (Molloy *et al.*, 2000). The result shows that more than 90% of the nursing home residents had never heard of advance directives before (Chan *et al.*, 2011; Mao *et al.*, 2014).

## ***Research Focus***

The developmental approach to elder health care conflicts with the traditional Chinese culture of filial piety, which is closely related to the family approach to eldercare. Within the introduction of institutionalized eldercare, it is important to understand how it might have affected people’s perception of “filial piety”. The questions that deserve to be explored in relationship to whether institutionalization is acceptable to the general public include: Is sending an elderly person to an institution a sign of unfiliality on the part of the children? How do the elderly and their families feel about long-term institutional care nowadays? Also, due to the particular situation of this study period, how has the COVID-19 pandemic affected perceptions and eldercare and filial piety? We will describe the methodology for answering these questions in the next section.

## **Conceptual Framework**

The background chapter demonstrates that Confucianism is the foundation underpinning the long history of Chinese traditional culture. It is an important asset for Chinese rulers to regulate the family, govern the country, and bring peace to the world. It is also an ideological weapon to solve various contradictions and problems in society.

Over the last twenty years, the place of filial piety in Chinese society is possibly being challenged by the China’s rapid economic development, its aging population, the lack of social pension system, the long-term family planning policy, and children’s feelings that caring for parents in a heavier burden (Chu *et al.*, 2008; Fan, 2006; Zhan *et al.*, 2008). Also, with the rapidly spreading and the increasing acceptance of institutional elder care, there is evidence that long-term nursing homes are beginning to replace home elder care. These changes have raised numerous questions and hypotheses regarding the elder population and young generations’ attitudes towards nursing homes and the role of filial-piety-centered Confucian familism.

The conceptual framework (see figure 5) illustrates the relationship between filial piety and the decisions related to long-term eldercare institutions and its related factors. It is the central underlying background for understanding family and social context in terms of the research purpose.

Figure 5 illustrates a range of variables affecting the attitudes toward nursing homes and filial piety. On the outside, there are several social, economic and demographic changes in Chinese society and this is perhaps exaggerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Recognizing the wider context, the choices that people make for long-term elder care or family-centered care are intermixed by many societal changes. The framework below simply suggests that understanding these choices and attitudes is intermixed with several other factors occurring in society overall.

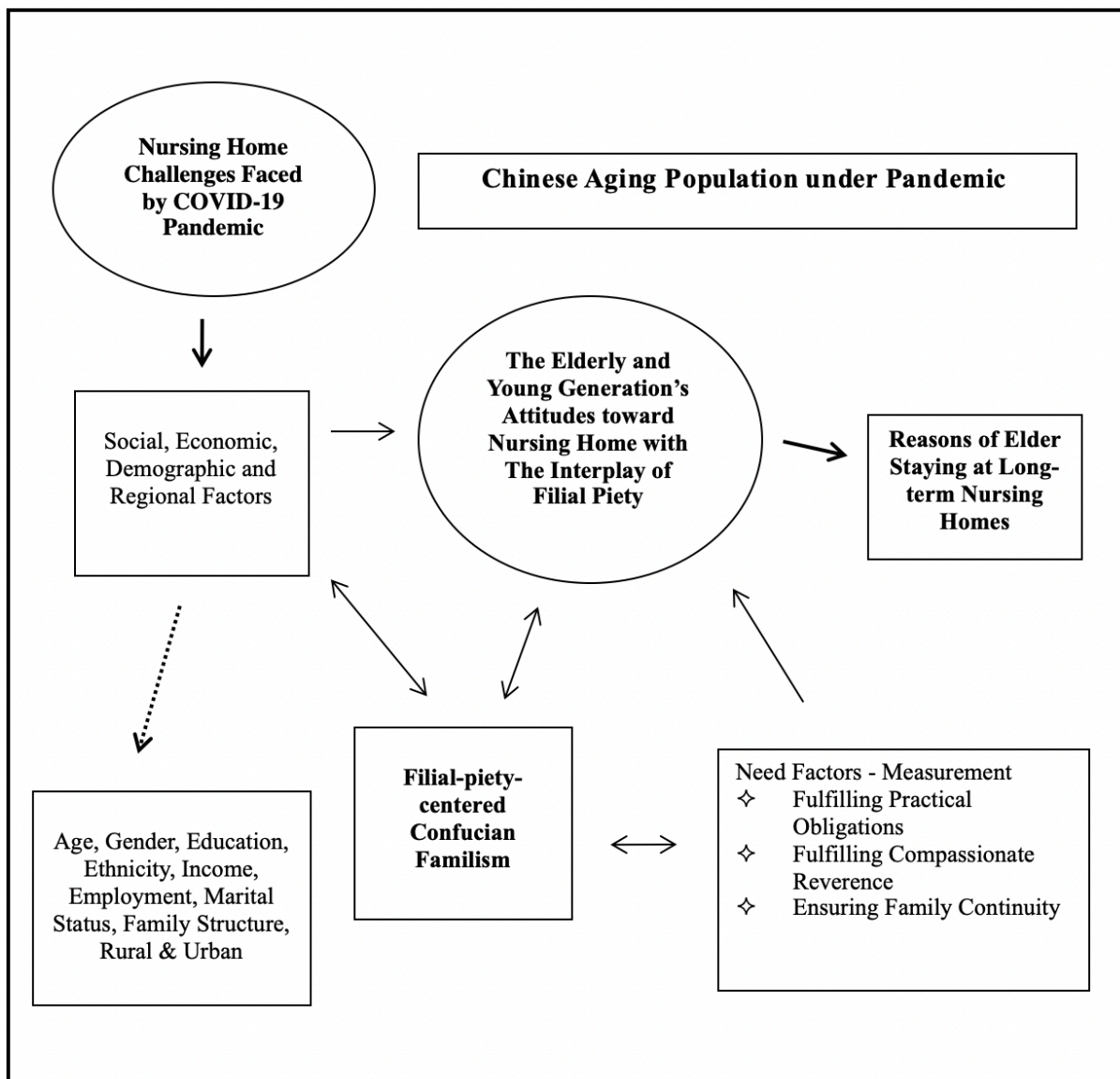


Figure 5. Conceptual Framework for understanding the relationship between the young generation and elder population's attitudes towards nursing home with the interplay of filial piety and its corresponding variables

## **Methodology & Method**

This project received ethics approval from the University of Victoria's Human Research Ethics Board before initiating the qualitative research. This section of the report details the methodology, methods used, and associated information, including sample size and limitations. As the research goal of this thesis was to examine how the newer models of eldercare as it connects with filial piety, an interview study was chosen because of potential advantages of gathering intensive data which might provoke useful ideas for future research (Hale & Brown, 2014).

### **Methodology**

This project conducted a total of 15 in-depth interviews with selected interviewees which included administrators and caregivers in five nursing homes in Shanghai, China. As the researcher was born and raised in Shanghai, the insights for this research came partially from the real-life experience and a personal understanding of Chinese culture. The researcher conducted this qualitative study in Shanghai during the time when there were restrictions on travel and interaction due to COVID-19. The researcher was able to conduct interviews in Shanghainese and observe some of the cultural rituals inherent in the region. The research discussions were focused on understanding the challenges older adults in long-term elder homes experiences and the changing role of filial piety values in nursing homes before and during the pandemic in Shanghai. As the report defined that the causal relationship for this topic is complicated, a qualitative interview approach was chosen as a way to try to understand the many intangible physical, mental, and spiritual factors.

### **Method: In-depth Interviews**

The open-ended interviews were conducted in a way which asked administrators and caregivers to recall examples illustrating what they observed in relationship to behaviors observed. Thus, the research did not seek opinions or criticisms, but examples observed which provided a story of family interactions, attitudes, and what seemed to be working well and not as well. All interviewees were recruited through email exchanges and discussions were over WeChat (a Chinese communication app) and phone calls due to the pandemic restrictions.

In terms of the interview guide (see Appendix I), the questions sought examples of various challenges and issues of administering old age homes and how people responded to the challenges of older people in changing culture and the changing role of filial piety values in old age homes during the COVID-19 pandemic. The interview started with sharing examples of nursing home pressures and then gradually moved into the story telling of filial piety's examples. For example, "what are examples of things which are working well or are some of the strengths and weaknesses (examples of things not working as well) of this nursing home in responding to the COVID pressures?" and "can you provide examples of how fulfilling practical obligations was expressed well before COVID?".

At the end of the interview, the interviewees were asked for examples of the potential healthcare and medical needs for the elderly population, their vision for the eldercare health system, and the stories they may wish to share. This interview method design allows nursing

home administrators to discuss observable examples of the environmental challenges and care experience of the elderly population. As such, the interview information has more field validity than would be found through surveys of opinions or satisfactions.

## **Sample**

With the interview method, this study focused on a sample of administrators and nursing staff in Shanghai senior homes. Shanghai has been one of the rapidly aging areas in the country. In the period of the sixth census, the proportion of the population aged 60 and above in Shanghai was 1.8 percentage points higher than that of the whole country. According to the latest data results of the seventh census, the population aged 60 and above was 5,815,462, accounting for 23.4%, of which the population aged 65 and above was 4,049,012, accounting for 16.3%. Compared with the sixth census, the proportion of the population aged 60 and above increased by 8.3 percentage points. The aging problem in Shanghai is prominent in itself; however, according to the results of this latest data, the proportion of the aging population in comparison with the general population in Shanghai is further increasing (NBSC, 2010, NBSC, 2020).

In this study, the researcher selected five representative public sector nursing facilities and interviewed a total of 15 employees, including eight administrators and seven caregivers. These five institutions selected are mainly concentrated in the downtown area of Shanghai, namely Jing'an District, Huangpu District, and Xuhui District, covering three forms of nursing homes in Shanghai, including public, private, and public-built private institutions. The largest nursing home has nearly 500 beds, while the smallest one has 360 beds. Also, 3 of the institutions have a team of operators who were hospital staff and community staff. All the leaders and medical staff the researcher interviewed have more than ten years of medical service and professional experience. With the strength of these 15 selected respondents, they are able to share and represent their thoughts based on the stories of the seniors and young generation they have observed on a daily basis.

## ***Recruitment***

The interview participants were contacted by email and phone and sent a copy of the consent form (Appendix II & III). Potential interviewees were informed of the research objectives, and the ethics norms of anonymity, confidentiality and that their input should be of a voluntary nature. The followed-up emails were sent once they indicated interests or had questions about the original email. After the eldercare institutions agreed to be interviewed, the managers of the nursing homes were asked to sign the consent form.

The interview process was conducted and recorded by the researcher. The interview outline was open-ended and focused on participants' real-life experiences. In the course of this research, the researcher asked numerous questions in probe for examples of experiences.

Nursing homes were chosen and contacted according to their specific locations in Shanghai. Thirty-five nursing homes were invited to participate, while nine nursing homes agreed to participate, and 11 senior homes rejected the research due to the timing and the pandemic issue. In order to be more comprehensive and representative of the project, five nursing homes with the relatively large scale that agreed to the research were selected.

## ***Trustworthiness and Credibility***

In terms of trustworthiness, reliability, and validity, this qualitative research design intends to gain an in-depth understanding of the research topic by collecting a range of participants' perspectives. This hopes to reduce any potential biases from one person's view and offer a wider view of comments that we might expect with a wider audience. Also, to mitigate any potential risks of reliability, the researcher standardized data collection techniques and protocols. For feedback and verification, the researcher provided all interviewees with selective interview transcriptions after the data analysis (Hale & Brown, 2014). This approach was used in an attempt to reduce the risk of biases and provide a better understanding of the research issues, thus improving the credibility and validity of the research results and conclusions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

## ***Ethical Review***

The study was approved by the University of Victoria Research Ethics Board (HREB) in defining ethical considerations related to the privacy of participants interviewed by administrators and caregivers in nursing homes. Ethical considerations include keeping participants anonymous, assuring all information is confidential, and allowing consent documents to be recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. The interview guide (Appendix I), consent form (Appendix III), and recruitment letter (Appendix II) received approval before initiating the qualitative research. The UVic HREB certificate number of approval is 20-0365.

## **Data Analysis**

Based on the in-depth interviews, the data from the interviews was initially reviewed to gain an overall understanding and possible grouping of the data. The data was then grouped into general areas in relation to the question and then read and important concepts or phrases were highlighted. The separate concept was then cut into separate items and sorted into categories or themes. This form of content analysis is an intuitive factor analysis where the researcher arranges the key responses to different questions into common areas. The process of data analysis was divided into four parts as follows:

1. Transcription. The data is summarized in text form by transcribing recordings, on-site notes, and other materials.
2. Sorting and coding. The data was highlighted to identify unique concepts and these were separated into independent pieces of paper. The unique pieces of paper were sorted into common themes or categories. This is a process of simplifying, refining, and preliminary analysis of data.
3. Data presentation. The data was presented in tables illustrating common themes and the number of people offering comments in that theme areas.

The data collection process was completed before the more intensive data analysis involving the coding and identification of categories and themes. As such, coding is the process by which the researcher processes the information layer by layer, marking the transcribed text with code (Cunningham, 2001; O'Leary, 2017).

In review, the content analysis involved several steps. First, the researcher read the material carefully and highlight key terms at the first level, marking each paragraph with the code level. Then, secondary and tertiary coding is carried out based on the first-level coding pattern, and the common concepts and patterns are gradually extracted. The higher the coding level is, the more general and explanatory the things concerned are. It helps the researcher find repeatable rules in the lower-level code to gather the higher-level code and form the conceptual structure diagram. During coding, other important information was recorded, such as notes and summaries of critical information for each case material, among others (Cunningham, 2001; O'Leary, 2017).

The data was presented in different tables so that the researcher could find and compare the relationship between various themes. The process of production of data helped carry out data analysis because the valuable information hidden in the data needs to be mined and sorted out. In this project's finding and discussion sections, the common themes and relevant quotations or samples are presented.

## **Project Limitation**

This research is based on a small, selected group of individuals chosen because of their diversity and background. This process does not involve statistical significance, but draws on the researcher's experience, sensitivity, and insight into the behavior and motivations of the subjects, the impact they may have, etc. (Vasileiou *et al.*, 2018). Responses in a particular setting, the conclusions obtained are difficult to generalize to a broader range of settings, and the objectivity of the conclusions can be limited.

Moreover, due to the time constraints of the study period, the researcher was only able to spend two months conducting interviews. And during the pandemic time, the researcher could only choose to make phone calls or video chats, which limited the observational nature of not being able to go to the nursing homes to experience the setting. The researcher could only learn from the nursing home administrators and caregivers about the perceptions and attitudes of the elderly and children toward filial piety and the nursing home. Also, regarding the institutional closure and staffing issues during the pandemic, the response rate was very low, and more than 50% of the nursing homes declining our interview requests.

## Findings

This project conducted a total of 15 in-depth interviews with selected interviewees, including both selected administrators and caregivers in five nursing homes in Shanghai, China. All conversations were recorded and transcribed into words with each respondent having signed a consent form to allow for discussion and analysis. Each interview took around 60 minutes. This section is divided into five discussions, covering the topics of: 1) reasons for elders staying in the nursing homes, 2) problems faced by the institutions, 3) elders' attitudes towards nursing homes, 4) youth's attitudes towards nursing homes, and 5) expressions of filial piety before and during the pandemic.

### Reasons for Elderly Staying in The Nursing Homes

The administrators were given the opportunities to share their stories with the researcher about why older adults chose to stay in their nursing homes. Table 1 pointed out that, although the level of care provided by nursing homes varies from case to case, there was a demand for nursing homes from all classes of older adults. Even though the economic status and standard of living of the elderly residents were not uniform in our sample, the answers provided by the administrators were insightful. They provided thoughts about the reasons elders chose to stay in a nursing home illustrated in the five categories below:

1. Children's busy schedule
2. Shortage of living space
3. Family disputes
4. House demolition
5. The need for long-term medical care

Children's busy schedule was, in the views of administrators, one of the key reasons that older people were sent to nursing homes. One administrator commented that "his son is a police officer and has been working the night shift. His father always worried about him a lot and stayed up at night. The son was really worried about his dad's health and decided to send him to our nursing home". Caregivers identified a number of reasons for their busy schedules such as being "out of town on the business" or "staying out at night" due to their job demands (with children acting as emergency medicine doctors, police officers, and firemen, etc.)

According to the administrators, house demolition and the essential need for long-term medical care were secondary factors. House demolition happens almost every day in Shanghai (Ling, 2020) as the government sometimes demolishes houses for economic growth. China's urbanization is characterized by demolition and relocation or what has been characterized as bulldozer urbanization. Over the past two decades, unprecedented infrastructure construction and real estate development have expanded Shanghai's urban boundaries (Ling, 2020). By doing so, the GDP rises quickly, and fiscal revenue increases as well. However, this causes some residents to lose their houses. These residents, who are implicated, are paid the appropriate compensation for the demolition. The administrators said that after the older adults received the demolition fee, their children often use the money to subsidize their parents to buy or rent a house. And, while the children might hire nannies for their parents', their continued concern of parents' health often led to decisions to put parents in nursing homes. These administrators also mentioned that a few elderly people chose to

come to nursing homes on their own as they had “money and pension” from the “house demolition”.

Table 1. Reasons for elderly staying in the nursing homes

Children’s Busy Schedule (6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He chose to come to the nursing home on his own. His young people work very hard and have to leave for work very early in the morning. Basically, they come home in the dark, and he’s home alone, with no one cooking and talking to him. But here, he has a lot of friends.</li> <li>• Almost all of her young people are in foreign countries or abroad, and her daughter is the only one who takes care of her. She is old and it is not safe for her to live alone. Now her daughter’s husband is sick and she has to work. She decided to send her mom here.</li> </ul>
Shortage of Living Space (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 98-year-old man has been living in our nursing home for more than a year, and his daughter is in her 60s. This old man’s family is four generations together. Since it is a large family with many people, the size of the house cannot meet the number of people in terms of the number of rooms.</li> <li>• This grandmother’s partner passed away. There were only two rooms in the house, and then her daughter gave birth to a daughter. After her granddaughter grew up, she was afraid that it would affect her granddaughter’s study. The place at home was too small, so she decided to come here...</li> </ul>
Family Disputes (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Her husband died and her son asked her to live with him, but she wouldn’t go! She felt that she had to do something when she lived with him. She didn’t want just to eat and not work. She felt too tired and lived alone all the time. Now that she is older, her son is worried about her and sends her here.</li> <li>• His son usually does not come home to see him, the family seems to have been in conflict because of money matters. I am not sure about the details, anyway, the son is quite busy, and cannot take care of him.</li> </ul>
House Demolition (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One person’s mother is in her eighties and has stayed in our nursing home for several years. She lived with his son for a while because her house was demolished. Then they said they wanted to try our nursing home. And now, she does not want to leave.</li> <li>• She had hypoglycemia and her house was demolished. Then her son bought a new house for her, and although there was a nanny at home, he was still worried about her.</li> </ul>
The Need for Long-term Medical Care (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have elders who have diabetes and need to be careful with their meals. The kids are not very good at cooking and don’t want to order takeout all the time.</li> <li>• We had elderly people in our nursing home who had a cerebral obstruction and were hospitalized for several months. After being discharged from the hospital, he had to be taken care of when he walked or ate.</li> </ul>

In addition to home demolitions, caregivers told the researcher that many seniors in nursing homes needed long-term care, which family members cannot accomplish at their home. Many elderly people in the homes suffer from Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, or cerebral obstruction as well as being incontinent in "wetting the bed". As the nursing homes are equipped with medical facilities and caregivers, the children decided to send their parents to these institutions.

From the interview with the nursing home staff, one decisive factor illustrated in table 1, include the shortage of living space and family disputes. Caregivers indicated that parents and children are prone to conflict; in relevance to this, there was a senior who "complained that there was no one at home to talk to him and later had conflicts with his son-in-law, who was quite grumpy". It can be found that the elderly feel lonely as children are unable to interact with them on a daily basis as caregivers do. Some elderly people argue with their children over money, with the allowance that comes from the demolition of the house being considered as a trigger for the allocation of the money. Also, caregivers described that, in some cases, some older adults live in one house with their family because of the poor condition of their own homes. Since three or four generations are living under the same house, the elders decided to come to the nursing home themselves.

The reasons discussed above are all interconnected. However, it was surprising to hear from the administrators that many of the seniors decided to enter an institution independently rather than being forced to do so by the children or due to other various factors. From the aspect of filial piety, it was seen that most children were worried about the older people's health and sent them to the nursing homes since they had no time or could not take care of their elderly parents. This can be considered as a manifestation of filial piety, specifically these decisions show respect and care about the parent's well-being to fulfill compassionate reverence.

## **Problems Faced by Nursing Homes Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

As the elders live within long-term eldercare institutions, this led to numerous questions whether there are any problems encountered with this new thriving eldercare model or how it would affect traditional ideas of filial piety. The researcher interacted with some of the perceived issues and challenges from the perspective of nursing home caregivers who work within the nursing homes themselves. Table 2 reviews the issues faced by the nursing homes before and during the pandemic. Before COVID, a majority of administrators emphasized the seriousness of staffing issues. "I woke up at 6:30 am and reached the elderly's residence at 7:00 am. I helped them dress and wash up, one after another. After that, I helped the elderly with diabetes to inject insulin, assisted her in taking medication, and did rehabilitation physiotherapy for those who had difficulty in moving around". This is what a caregiver does all morning. She said this was her fifth year of work; five years is a long "working age" compared to her peers in the same profession. Due to the unattractive salary, young people prefer other industries, and even if there are college students to work in elderly institutions, they only do clerical and administrative work.

The administrators indicated that the oldest caregiver in the nursing home was 60 years old, and the youngest was 36 years old, with an average age of about 55 years old. An administrator said that the nursing home caregivers are "either middle-aged workers who

have been in the business for many years or younger people who have just graduated”. The young people who have been engaged as nursing home caregivers account for a minority, and nursing homes are prone to the phenomenon of “age gap” in caregivers. One caregiver expressed that “the elderly care industry is tough, dirty, tired, bitter, and low pay, not to mention that sometimes encounter those eccentric elderly, who are really hard to serve”. One caregiver indicated that she usually cares for around ten elderly people a day, wiping their bodies, changing their clothes and assisting them with feeding, etc. Also, some caregivers commented that numerous things/tasks/jobs/actions (such as) have to be taught by hand repeatedly, which invariably “increases the cost of employing people in our organization”. The “age gap” problem, combined with high expenses, has become a significant problem for the development of senior living facilities.

Table 2. Problems faced by nursing homes before and during COVID-19

***Before COVID***

Staffing Issues (8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are particularly demanding our nursing staff, so it is sometimes difficult to retain people. The risk of problems at night is very high, and it’s also difficult to recognize by our eyes when issues arise because the elderly are asleep. It places high demands on caregivers, who must have sufficient expertise to judge and assess the state of the elderly and thus take different measures for different situations.</li> <li>• We work very hard and are very short of people. I work 12 hours a day, overnight patrol, get up at 5 am, help the elderly wash and dress, walk and chat with them, clean, help them take a bath, and stay busy until 8 pm when they go to bed, and watch them for any abnormalities while they sleep.</li> </ul>
Insufficient total supply (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The total number of elderly people in Shanghai has been rising and the lack of beds is a problem that cannot be solved. The number of people over 65 years old is increasing by around 7 to 8 percent every year. Our bed growth rate, however, is far below...</li> <li>• Like some elderly women and her family, most people still want to place their seniors close to home, given the convenience of transportation. In this way, downtown beds can become highly sought-after.</li> </ul>
Lack of medical equipment (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In our nursing homes, there are still significant differences in medical equipment settings, service content, and service system completeness. Although it is said that we have medical equipment, most of them are not refined to particular groups, resulting in the lack of obvious targeting of medical and nursing service supply and poor integration of medical and nursing resources.</li> <li>• The number of nursing homes with medical functions in Shanghai is still relatively small, and most of them, including us, do not have medical care functions.</li> </ul>

### *Before COVID*

- Institution Closure (5) • We have elders who are generally over 80 years old on average, weaker, and more susceptible to infection. Their cure rate after infection is low.  
• All elderly institutions adopt closure management, suspending family visits, suspending family meal delivery, suspending the services of couriers, takeaway workers, drug delivery workers, etc. into the nursing homes.
- Lack of employees (4) • The low number of the nursing staff was already the problem. During the peak of the pandemic, we suspended hiring new staff. Caregivers were working overtime.  
• I cared for ten elderly people every day, wiping their bodies, changing their clothes, assisting with feeding, etc.
- Significant increase in operating costs (6) • The demand for disinfectant water, protective clothing, and other pandemic prevention materials in nursing homes are more than ten times the usual amount which alone adds to the operating costs.  
• Closed management was implemented during the pandemic, and many staff worked overtime during the Chinese New Year to better care for the elderly in the home, which resulted in higher labor costs.
- Emotional control of the elderly (5) • Even though the elders do not need nucleic acid testing, since many of them do not use smartphones, they are not up to date on the pandemic and inevitably become suspicious and fearful, and the caregivers have to counsel them every day.  
• We started targeted meetings for the pandemic work, regularly checked the health of the elderly every day, and ran to all major pharmacies to equip them with common medicines. We made every effort to ensure the elderly's real needs and ensure balanced nutrition. Due to the shortage of nursing staff, there is some negligence in daily activities.
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In addition to the problem of insufficient nursing staff emphasized by the administrators, the lack of beds and medical equipment are ongoing issues. It was mentioned that the number of beds has increased by six percent over this last year but this falls short of the demand for beds, especially in the downtown area. The “extremely sought-after” nursing homes, which are located in downtown Shanghai, lack beds. Shortage of beds means that elders are placed in other institutions far away. Interviewees also indicated that there was a lack of medical supplies in some nursing homes. In addition, the administrators commented that some of the medical health management equipment is outdated and the functions are not up to date with the current requirements.

At the beginning of 2020, a sudden outbreak of COVID-19 changed numerous people's lives. During the pandemic, the interviewee indicated that the work of eldercare nursing home services was impacted and there was an increase in operating costs and staff found it difficult to respond to elders' emotional stability. In some cases, there was an insufficient number of

employees to respond to the needs of patients. The problems of nursing homes were unique from other institutions, as the elders live in relatively closed living places where the windows cannot be opened for adequate ventilation. Some caregivers described that they “suspended all family visits, meal deliveries, drug delivery workers, etc.” at the peak of the outbreak. All interviewed nursing homes were “fully closed”. The administrators emphasized that in response to the requirements of the civil affairs department, the nursing homes were basically shut down during the epidemic. “In previous years, there was a slight surplus in the operating revenues”. However, this year, as some elderly people were brought home for the holidays before the Chinese New Year, “the high vacancy rate of beds left the nursing home under the pressure of increasing operating costs”. The administrators stated that nearly 30% of the nursing home’s seniors could not return to the facility, causing the nursing home to operate beyond their means. In addition, there was an increased cost of epidemic prevention supplies and human resources. A caregiver indicated that “double-overtime pay for the Chinese New Year escalated labor costs by about 50%” during both the Chinese New Year and pandemic. Necessities were expensive, including food items and health supplies.

With the epidemic prevention and control, the nursing homes administrators indicated their focus on elder emotional management. In order to keep the elderly from being depressed by living in the house for so long, the nursing staff made every effort to customize activities for the elderly and still maintain health standards related to the pandemic. Some caregivers commented that COVID-19 testing is done in nursing homes almost every day. Every time a test is done, there is a great deal of mental stress for the elderly while waiting for the results, and many of them are so highly anxious that they cannot sleep all night.

A few elders became suspicious and fearful of staff because they “do not use smartphones, they are not up to date on the pandemic and the overall health problem”. These elders inevitably required more time and attention for counseling. The staff shortage was exacerbated when some nursing home caregivers took time off to go home before the Chinese New Year and did not return. The administrators said that they “could not recruit during the epidemic’s peak as it was too dangerous”. If someone came to the nursing home with the virus, the entire institution’s elderly population could be infected. They expressed that the situation has been much better nowadays, and numerous volunteers are coming to the institution to help out as the infection rate has dropped significantly. This could be demonstrated that even though administrators tried to manage elders’ emotional stability, the labor shortage became more serious due to the closure of the city.

## **The Elderly’s Attitudes Towards Nursing Homes with The Interplay of Filial Piety**

Administrators indicated that the elderly people receive varying degrees of care, but the attitude toward the institution itself varies from person to person. According to traditional filial piety, it is considered unfilial for an older person with children to be admitted to an institution and have his or her life and diet taken care of by specialized caregivers in the nursing homes rather than by the children. It is also true that this perception still exists in society. So how do these elders who have taken institutionalized care view the concept of filial piety?

Table 3 reviews examples of negative attitudes towards nursing homes by those with a strong attachment to traditional ideas of filial piety. One administrator commented that seniors said

their meals have to be cooked differently every day. They think that they need to be well taken care of if they pay for it. They were only happy when they had their children’s home-cooked dishes. Also, the caregivers said that most nursing homes do not have specialized psychiatrists. Some older adults have psychological disorders and are particularly depressed, especially during the epidemic. Elders were not able to “spend New Year's Eve with their family in person”, and they expressed their willingness to have emotional connections with their children. One caregiver also indicated that an elder who “has hearing impairments always found it lonely to have no one to talk to. The nurses could only spend a little time for talk to them. Those diagnosed with other disorders did not have the special care of their “children to satisfy practical and emotional needs”.

Table 3. The elderly’s attitudes towards nursing homes with the interplay of filial piety

Strong attachment to traditional ideas of filial piety (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This grandmother was very depressed. She couldn’t spend Chinese New Year’s Eve with her daughter... Even though they chatted on the phone, she said she would choose home eldercare afterward.</li> <li>• He said it’s better to be home as he needs more emotional support from the family instead of settling here talking with our caregivers. He would live for two years first and then go home when he was old.</li> <li>• One elder went back home a week after he came to our nursing home. He still couldn't accept this way of aging being cared for by strangers without blood ties and even no parent-child relationship.</li> </ul>
Low attachment to traditional ideas of filial piety (8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is an old man living alone in a room and no one is bothering him, just like his own home, and he can do whatever he wants. The charge is not very expensive, and the average pension can afford it. He also chats with other old people here, so life here is actually quite good. He understood his son’s busy work and didn’t want to disturb him.</li> <li>• She has always said to me that it is good to live here. Even if her son’s family has a house, she does not want to go. She has a roommate who is very close to her now. Every day they do activities together, talk and laugh a lot. Her daughter has been coming to pick her up for the holidays before. She said she was going to stay in the nursing home and was not going to leave.</li> <li>• During the epidemic, our nursing staff wore masks, and many elderly people, who may have been rusty or suffocated by the prospect of having to wear masks every day, cooperated with the medical staff. They said that our behavior made them feel at ease and they were satisfied living in this new home.</li> </ul>

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When the researcher asked whether the elderly prefer home elder care or nursing home within a traditional idea of filial piety, an administrator emphasized that “the higher the acceptance of home eldercare, the less the adaptability clients have to long-term eldercare institution”. this was described as a tradition-minded elder. The caregivers indicated that some elders do not want to settle and have plans to return home immediately after coming to the institution. “He still could not accept this way of aging, of being cared for by strangers who have no blood ties or parent-child relationship”. Filial piety is deep-rooted in this person’s mind. However, the researcher found that this only represents a minority of cases.

There are many elderly people with a lower attachment to traditional ideas of filial piety who have gradually become more accepting of nursing homes. A few administrators commented that some elders treated the nursing home like another home because their children often visited them. The elders understand and consider their children to be filial due to the fact that they are busy at work and cannot take care of their own food, living, and daily chores. “The old people are like young people, they will play Tai Chi and Ping Pong together. They also make time to sunbathe together and read the newspaper. They are always smiling and laughing”. The administrators told the researcher that seniors feel that they are definitely better off at home if they think traditionally, but that they can receive better care and medical attention in a nursing facility than at home.

With the increasing trend of nursing homes, some elders indicated to caregivers that “the charge is actually not very expensive, and the average pension can afford it”. Despite that, the elders are also able to chat with peers here, so “life here is actually quite good”. During the pandemic, caregivers indicated that they kept the seniors apart for sunbathing, reading newspapers, doing small crafts, and some simple activities. Some of the elders kept complimenting their services and expressed the willingness to “stay here forever”. The caregivers also said that although some of the elderly were satisfied with the daily activities and nutritious meals, they would sometimes “complain that the laundry is not very clean and the white clothes were washed in gray”.

## **Young People’s Attitudes towards Nursing Homes with The Interplay of Filial Piety**

The administrators and caregivers offered several comments on the younger generations and the relationship between institutions and filial piety. Table 4 indicates that, compared with the older generation, the administrators said most young people still have a strong attachment to the traditional concept of filial piety and fear that putting their parents in a nursing home is an act of unfilially. Some caregivers emphasized that the young generation actually has a “bad and unsettling time in their hearts”, as the traditional view is that young people take care of the elderly. The researcher was told that children were hesitant to send their parents to a nursing home although many felt they had no choice. When they decided, the administrator said, “you can see that they are torn inside”. Some children were even thinking about quitting their jobs to take care of their family members because of their parents’ poor health status.

It was also interesting that an administrator commented that children are afraid of “being talked about by the next-door neighbors for sending their parent to a nursing home.” They feared that the “neighbors would blame them for sending their parents to a lonely life in a nursing facility.” The administrators expressed that, since filial piety is the core of Confucian ethics, it has become the moral code that has sustained family relationships in Chinese society for thousands of years. The obligation to parents, including respecting, caring, supporting the elderly, and providing for their elders, has become a criterion for defining good and bad children. In addition to fearing the reproach of the neighbors, the caregivers mentioned that the young generations would blame themselves for not meeting the filial piety standards. To help them feel relieved, the caregivers told the researcher that they “keep telling the children not to worry, that our nursing home will stand by their side and take care of their parents”.

Table 4. Young people's attitudes towards nursing homes with the interplay of filial piety

Strong attachment to traditional ideas of filial piety (8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some of the young people admitted to our nursing home come to visit several times a day at first because they are worried that we are not taking good care of them and that they are not happy. After that, the old people kept telling them interesting stories about the nursing home every day, and now they are much more relieved.</li><li>• Growing up in school, young people are taught to take care of the elderly. This person's father had a stroke and needed someone to take care of him 24 hours a day. She had no choice but to take care of him. She was unsettled and afraid that her family would blame her. She was doing it for her dad's good.</li><li>• Because of sending dad to the nursing home, some families did quarrel many times. The concept of filial piety is really deeply rooted.</li></ul>
Low attachment to traditional ideas of filial piety (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Young people directly discuss with their parents and send them here. They say they are not ungrateful; they just don't think backward anymore.</li><li>• Other young people say that it's the 21st century and filial piety has always existed, only the expressions have changed. They said that taking the money from the pension and demolition of the house to rent a room outside or hire a nanny would cost a lot of money and choosing to live in a nursing home is the best.</li><li>• Some of the young people's parents want to live by themselves, and the young people strongly agree that the old way of thinking no longer controls them. They say it's not that they will never see their young people again if they live in a nursing home, they just live in a different place, and the care will be the same.</li></ul>

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The nursing home staff indicated that some children, who had drifted away from the traditional ideas of filial piety, believed that nursing homes are beneficial to both their parents and themselves. They revealed that the younger generation seems to believe that “there is a reason for the government's efforts to develop senior care facilities as they seem to be a way to balance the relationship between the elderly and the young people and protect the elderly in their old age”. Indications are that some children chose to directly “discuss and agree that living in a nursing home was a good thing to do” because they felt that filial piety was present in elderly care institutions. The caregivers also commented that the younger generation's belief of filial piety in the new era still has some of the characteristics of traditional filial piety, although their children's perception had adapted to a realistic view of a modern society. The administrators also indicated that children who had a lower attachment to traditional ideas of filial piety were “coming to visit the elderly, giving them protein powders, vitamins, and needed supplies”. Although they do not have the same recognition of senior care long-term institutions, they feel that they have a duty of practicing what children should do for their parents in fulfilling a practical obligation and compassionate reverence.

## How was Filial Piety Expressed Before and During COVID-19 Pandemic for Elderly?

Administrators and caregivers were asked how the children expressed filial piety before and during the epidemic. Table 5 provides a review of what they observed and illustrates how the younger generation expressed the practices of filial piety. Before the COVID pandemic, it appears that different children took turns to visit, care and bring necessities to their parents who live in the nursing homes. Some administrators emphasized that young people seemed worried about their elderly parents and often came to the nursing home to help them bathe, make them feel at home and “not to feel neglected”. This involved weekly visits to bring food and medicine to their parents, regardless of whether they lived close to the nursing home”. In the view of the administrators, the weekly visits were extremely important for the parents in bringing home-cooked meals and homemade delicacies in providing a “taste of home”. The nursing staff revealed that, in some cases, the parents did not want to eat nursing home meals and looked forward to children “feeding them regularly and joking with them”. Some staff commented that some children did not spend as much time with the parents, but they often sent the necessities to the caregivers so that they did get some feeling of contact with their children. When they are away on business and could not visit, they would call the caregiver to find out how their parents were doing.

It was also interesting to hear from the caregivers that giving pocket money, taking elders home during the holidays, and paying for the nursing home fee were all the children’s expressions of filial piety before the pandemic. They said many children believe that providing “extras” for their parents was a personal way to pay parents back. In some cases, the seniors saved the money, sometimes buying nutritious items for their grandchildren, or spent it on a frugal basis as if they were saving it for the unexpected. In other cases, parents returned the money so that children could go on holiday.

The administrators expressed that nursing homes only provide basic elderly care services and, no matter how good the caregivers are, they cannot meet the emotional needs that parents get from their children, let alone the happiness of sharing the joy of family life. Numerous children bring their parents home for the Chinese New Year and other holidays meeting the important emotional needs of parents. As such, these interviews reveal that children illustrated filial piety in both practical and emotional ways before the pandemic.

Table 5. How was filial piety expressed before and during COVID-19 for elders?

### *Before COVID*

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Visiting and caring<br>(5) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Young people come to visit their parents regularly to not feel neglected. Some young people come three times a day and some come twice a week.</li><li>• One elderly man had four young people in his family, and they took turns coming every week. Sometimes it was fun, and they would hide</li></ul> |
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in the corner to see what the old people were talking about and how they were doing.

Bringing necessities (4)

- Some of the young people regularly come every week to bring food and medicine to the elderly, regardless of whether they live close or not to our nursing home. They are afraid of the meals in the nursing home, which their parents are not used to eating. They say that the taste of home is the best.
- Sometimes the caregivers say that the elderly do not have enough protein or pads, and the young people immediately send these necessities. They come very often and the elderly do not feel abandoned.

Giving pocket money (3)

- One elderly man kept telling me that his daughter had been giving her monthly pocket money to use when she needed it; and save it if she didn't need it. The old man kept smiling and said that to me.
- A grandmother was amused when her granddaughter gave her pocket money and told her to buy her candy.

Taking them home during the holidays (2)

- The elders have been telling the caregivers that being sent to the nursing home does not mean that the young people are not filial. Whenever the young people have working holidays, they will come and pick up the elderly, especially for New Year, Qingming Festival, or Dragon Boat Festival.
- Many young people will take a few days off work before the holidays to pick up the elderly and take them home and out for a break. The elderly may get bored by staying in the nursing home all the time, and occasionally being picked up by their young people is also a sign of their filial piety.

Paying for the nursing home fee (1)

- Most elderly people live in nursing homes paid for by their young people, and a minority of them say they want to pay for it themselves without adding to the burden of their young people. Some families will fight over nursing home fees. Young people want to support the elderly financially which I think is a reflection of the filial piety of the young people.

### ***During COVID***

Online care (6)

- During the epidemic, we arranged for the elderly and family members to interact with each other on WeChat (a Chinese communication app) and greet each other on video without interruption.
- We also took videos and photos of all the seniors having their New Year's Eve dinner together and sent them to their families. The young people expressed their gratitude while they saw the seniors smiling and their original nervousness was relieved.

Writing letters (3)

- Some young people wrote letters about how much they missed the elderly and put a photo of the whole family together. Some of the older adults shed tears after reading the letter.
- The seniors keep all the letters they receive together, and there is a big stack of them. Sometimes they even compete to see who receives the most number of letters.

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During the COVID epidemic, the relationship between parents and children changed because the children were unable to visit their parents as they had done before. All of the personal care switched to online care where children had to use different communication phone apps and greet each other on video without interruption. The administrators commented that even though the nursing home was closed, there seemed to be emotional connections, as “the hearts between the young people and the elderly were not separated”. Before COVID, children could enjoy the Chinese New Year in the presence of their parents as parents would be taken home for the New Year, and even for those who did not go home, there would at least be family members visiting them. However, after the hospital was closed this year during COVID, the administrators indicated that the emotional or psychological discomfort of the elderly increased because they could not see their families. Chinese New Year with the elderly was celebrated through video or telephone connections. The caregivers said elders sent photos or videos in real-time to say what they were eating and doing. The online chats allowed the seniors to experience another particular taste of the New Year. “Some children also told us about their elderly’s favorite New Year’s recipes, and we tried to make them for the seniors”. Such small details also represented love and care for parents. The caregiver expressed that the young people expressed their gratitude while seeing the elders smiling, and their initial nervousness was relieved.

Some administrators told the researcher that many children wrote letters in strengthening the parent-child relationship. “The seniors keep all the letters they received together, and there is a big stack of them”. We conclude from this that filial piety is not framed by a fixed definition, nor should it be defined by the amount of household income shared between the parents and children, but rather by emotional communication and care to maintain the bond between children and the parents.

## **Discussion & Analysis**

This section reviews the findings of this project in relationship to other findings from other studies and provides commentary on the key questions we asked:

1. To what extent does Filial-piety Confucian familism play a role in young and elder generation's attitudes regarding elder health care?
2. What challenges do the nursing homes face before and during the pandemic?
3. How was filial-piety expressed in the nursing home before and during the pandemic?

### **Mutual Relation between Nursing Home and Filial Piety**

#### *Elder's Attitudes*

Based on the interview comments with administrators, elderly who were admitted to institutions received varying degrees of care and their attitudes toward the institution itself varied from person to person. The vast majority of seniors were satisfied, and they accepted the standardized approach to elder care. They acknowledged that living in an institution provides better medical and life care than living at home, and they intended to stay there for the rest of their lives. As mentioned in the literature review, there are many older adults of similar age in the nursing home.

Long-term care institutions provide leisure activities and social services for the elderly that can be provided in a home care situation. Even if children live in the homes of their children, their children are often very busy at work and typically do not have much time to spend with the elderly. Based on the administrators' experience and thoughts, elders find it easier to meet with people of the same generation and communicate on common topics and become close friends by sharing various experiences and memories from the past. In addition, there are usually staff members in the nursing home during the day and night for essential medical equipment in case of emergencies. Life in a nursing home is also very regular, with three nutritious meals a day at scheduled times.

From the interviews with caregivers, it was interesting that most older people no longer relied on the traditional filial culture that was described in the literature review and is slowly switching to the modern view of filial piety. They believe that the relationship between parents and children is one of co-determination where each works together and has joint responsibility. Filial piety is no longer a one-sided relationship where parents should expect unconditional devotion and care from children. The modern view of filial piety which is evolving is one of respect born from the heart, a mutual emotional exchange and understanding, which also possesses equality and democracy between the two generations. This is a realistic perspective as children's busy schedules and life responsibilities are dictating many demands where they cannot take good care of all elder requirements, including food and daily chores. Elders do not see this as a break from filial piety as they do not feel they should insist on traditional views of filial piety and affection when they are in a society where many of their needs can be met in long-term care.

However, administrators stated that there are few seniors who do not accept being in a nursing home and are troubled by the evolving role of filial piety. However, many of these

same people agree that many elements of institutional care are undoubtedly beneficial to them. They have a traditional view that children are nurtured and cared for by their parents and have the right to inherit their parents' private property. At the same time, their children are also required to take responsibility for supporting their parents in older age. In addition, a small number of older people simply do not like institutional care unassociated with any beliefs of filial piety. This small group is dissatisfied and reluctant to stay in an institution because they do not like the services provided, such as their view of the quality and variety of food, and dissatisfaction with the services of life care.

### ***Young Generation's Attitudes***

The administrators indicated that Chinese traditional culture still profoundly influences the elderly today. However, from the interviews, it seems that most young people's concepts of home are more deeply rooted than that of that of their parents. Even if children take the initiative to let their parents live in an institution, it does not mean they recognize and accept their decision and behavior without internal emotional pressure or difficulties. As the concept of filial piety has been instilled in children since childhood, most children are worried about disappointing their parents by putting them in a nursing home and even being blamed by their neighbors. The administrators expressed that many young people fear their parents will inevitably face mental loneliness and desolation, which is more torturous than the lack of material conditions and professional care. In particular, these young people are concerned about the loss of behavioral or verbal abilities of the elderly in their families. They believe that as long as the family can still care for the elderly, they would choose the most traditional aging model of home elder care.

This research shows that a minority of the young generation believed that as the pace of life has increased, and that their parents needs go beyond food, clothing, and warmth. Many children expressed that bringing the elders to a richer and more colorful life is the true meaning of filial piety. They think it is good for the country, the family, and the society to let the elderly live in a group where they can develop relationships with others. They said that nursing homes are a product of modern civilization, giving the elderly more advanced and comprehensive services.

### **Nursing Home Challenges**

#### ***Inadequate Staffing***

Administrators indicated that the shortage of home service workers who meet professional requirements, as an important problem in elder care homes. Added to this were long working hours and work pressures from working with elderly care workers. The service worker industry has generally low salaries compared to other sectors and people are not attracted to it because of the perception of serving the elderly is degrading (Stacey, 2005). Such a perception is a stereotypical view of the profession which might be shaped by a misunderstanding of what goes on in senior care homes rather than what actually exists.

The administrators and caregivers indicated that providing direct service for the elderly involves the largest proportion of nursing staff in care homes. Unfortunately, this group of staff has less experience in specialized care, is older and less educated. At the same time, there are needs for professionals such as doctors, psychological counselors, and nutritionists.

Due to the lack of basic knowledge and skills in rehabilitation care and preventive health care expressed by the staff, it is difficult for elderly caregivers to provide "on-demand services" to satisfy the elderly.

As an emerging profession, the demand for senior caregivers will outstrip the supply of labour that may wish to work in long-term care homes. As a result, there is a need to consider ways to attract more practitioners through improving the perception of the area as well as remuneration provided to caregivers.

### ***Construction Shortage***

Although the nursing service market has been developing rapidly and the number of beds in nursing homes is growing, it is still difficult to adapt to the massive demand of the increasing elderly population and the growth of service demand. In addition, administrators and caregivers indicated that there is a need to design nursing homes that meet the standards and requirements of the construction design.

The administrators expressed that there is a lack of research and practical evidence in meeting the needs of different levels of nursing care services because of the overly one-sided pursuit of comprehensive institutions which serve a variety of needs in a cost-effective way. Such designs restrict the openness of nursing home operations and reduce the ability to offer a more personal care model.

### ***Significant Increase in Operating Costs***

In response to the requirements of the civil affairs department, the administrators and caregivers indicated that the city's nursing homes were shut down during the pandemic. In previous years, they operated with a slight surplus. However, during the pandemic years, many older people could not return to the nursing homes, which led to a shortage of income because of high vacancy rate of beds. As a result, nursing homes were under pressure to increase operating costs. During the pandemic, the demand for disinfectant water, protective clothing, and other pandemic prevention materials was more than ten times the usual amount, which also increased operating costs. Also, many nursing home employees worked overtime during the Spring Festival to take better care of the elderly, which also increased labor costs. Moreover, the difficulty of recruiting staff during the pandemic increased due to the lack of nursing staff deployment in nursing homes. Combined with the double-overtime pay for the Chinese New Year, the human resource cost was increased by more than 50%.

### **Expressions of Filial Piety**

From childhood to adulthood, the culture of filial piety has left its most profound imprint on the Chinese people. In a sense, filial piety describes the character of the national culture of China. The interview with the nursing home administrators and caregivers demonstrated that the new thriving model of elderly care and the long-term eldercare institution, does not mean weakening filial piety. The traditional filial piety, which has lasted for thousands of years, continues to influence people in modern society as part of traditional culture and values. This influence is manifested at the conceptual level, where people's perception of filial piety leaves traces of traditional filial piety. Filial piety is expressed differently depending on each family's situation. It continues to describe how adult children's values and attitudes are

responding to their parents and aims to ensure the continuance of parental well-being, thus guiding children to achieve the unity of material and spiritual support.

According to the filial piety measurement mentioned by Lum *et al.* (2016), it was found that before the pandemic, the expression of filial piety related more to fulfilling a practical obligation and compassionate reverence in the view of the nursing home staff. These were reflected in visiting parents, bringing necessities, giving pocket money, bringing parents home for holidays, etc. However, it was observed that in the pandemic, due to the closure of the nursing home, the children focused more on spiritual support, specifically through phone calls, video communication, letters, etc. It seems that any behavior that cares for parents strengthens contact with them and benefits them can be called a demonstration of filial piety. Also, as mentioned in the literature review, no information was found in this interview about the relationship between filial piety and ensuring family continuity due to the change of time and the change of people's perception of traditional culture.

## Conclusion

Supporting and taking care of the elderly is gaining importance in Chinese society since the population is increasing at an annual rate of 3.2 percent (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007). In China's history, filial piety has been a fundamental part of a family-centered approach for caring for the elderly by younger family members. Family members provide help as well as spiritual comfort and emotional sustenance. In some ways, filial piety is assumed to be a duty that children must perform to promote family harmony and social stability. As the elderly population has grown in China and children are facing other pressures, the traditional family structure has been challenged.

During the last two decades, there has been an increase in the number of long-term care institutions in China responding to the pressures of a larger elder population and the inability of children to care for the parents in the home. Based on the interviews with 15 nursing home administrators and caregivers in five institutions in Shanghai, it was revealed that an increasing number of children choose to send their parents to a nursing home due to their busy schedules, house demolition, and parents' needs for long-term medical care. That is, there is the perception that the pressures faced by children are putting pressure on them to send their parents to long-term care institutions.

Eldercare institutions are still in the stage of development and experimentation as to how to take care of China's elderly population. Administrators indicated that some of the problems they experienced included shortages of professional medical staff and the limited medical services they could provide. The interviewees also indicate that the elderly care homes faced a series of problems in the global COVID19 pandemic, such as high vacancy rate of beds, psychological problems of the elderly, and increased operating costs.

In the interviews, the researcher's summary of the administrator's interviews suggests that most elders have gradually turned their traditional ideas of filial piety into modern ideas. They felt that their clients expressed that filial piety is a two-way partnership between the elderly and the children, born from the heart, mutual emotional exchange, and understanding, equality, and democracy between the two generations. This finding suggests that more elders living in the nursing home have lower attachment with traditional ideas of filial piety than we might expect in a traditional Chinese older culture. In contrast, more children have a solid attachment to traditional filial piety as they mentally struggle with the decision to send their parents to long-term care homes.

The administrator also indicated that expressions of filial piety were different before and during COVID-19. Before the pandemic, the expressions of filial piety fulfilled a practical obligation and compassionate reverence. While due to the institutional closure during the pandemic, filial piety was expressed less practically and more emotionally and could not be described by conventional ways to care for parents.

## Implications

Since the number of informational interviews conducted was based on a non-random small sample of eldercare institutions, the conclusions obtained are difficult to generalize to a broader range of settings. In order to make this work more depth to these conclusions, future

studies could expand the sample size by including more nursing homes in various districts of Shanghai. It would be helpful if researchers could interview the caregivers and administrators in person and visit some of the care homes to gather other information on the unique needs of clients and families. Moreover, future research could seek to discover more on how filial piety plays a role in the nursing home after the COVID-19 pandemic has passed.

The challenges of the aging models can be further analyzed and recognized through exploring public policies and the needs of China's overall society. For example, China's future pension system might need to respond to how filial piety evolves. A comprehensive pension security system based on current filial views could be established where children might play different roles in the older adults' material life, care, and spiritual comfort.

This research offers some ideas to consider in future research relating to finding a role for elderly care homes in society in reducing some of the negative perceptions of these homes, developing a model that meets the needs of elderly and children, and training and developing staff.

The first area for research might seek to understand how to address some of the negative perceptions of the nursing homes and, possibly, change the view that nursing homes do not mean an abandonment of the elderly. Rather, future research might seek to illustrate ways that nursing homes might implement a modern version of filial piety which provides a way that elderly can live in a care home as well as participating with their children in their family homes.

A second area for exploration seek and get input into a template or model for designing nursing homes to recognize the evolving changes and pressures on traditional views of filial piety. As needs of children and elderly in a society have changed, so have their expectation of filial piety and, given these changes, how do we develop elderly institutions to respond to the economic needs of children and society at large. It might provide recommendations for the role of the government in helping to finance the construction and operation of the facilities and ways to continue the involvement of the family and children in care.

A final area of possible investigation is to respond to the concerns raised from administrators about the shortage of trained staff. This might involve identifying needs of qualified care professional and encouraging their training and developing in colleges, vocational and technical colleges, secondary vocational schools, and county vocational education centers.

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# Appendices

## Appendix I: Interview Guide



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*Interview Guide*

### **An Interview Guide for Understanding: “The changing role of filial piety values in old age homes during COVID”**

*Objective of this project.*

The interviews focus on developing a better understanding of the challenges the people in old age home experience and “The changing role of filial piety values in old age homes during COVID-19” in Shanghai.

The questions in the interview guide relate to various challenges and issues of administering old age homes and responding to the challenges of older people in changing culture and “the changing role of filial piety values in old age homes during COVID-19”.

#### ***The Interview Guide.***

*We are seeking to work with your senior’s home in better understanding the challenges you confront and hopefully offer some ideas which you might feel useful in responding to these challenges. Our research is partially based on interviews and data collected from you as well as our review of research in other non-profits.*

**This interview is anonymous and confidential. Your participation is voluntary. You can refuse to answer any questions you are uncomfortable with. Whether you participate or choose not to participate is confidential. Please be assured that all information provided by you will be kept STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. Names will never be associated with any of the comments you make. We are simply interested in the collective responses of a number of people who offer a perspective on this issue.**

*The questions we will ask are quite open-ended and we are also interested in examples of your experiences.*

*Before we begin, do you have any questions of us or of the project?*

***Let's begin.***

### **Pressures or Challenges**

1. What are some of key pressures facing the senior's home in the COVID-19 period/ Could you provide examples of pressures/challenges in various areas generally and then related to Chinese Society?

Probes:

- Examples of general challenges related to managing senior's homes in Shanghai in the pre-COVID era?
- Examples of how your home and the patients of the nursing home generally responded to values of Chinese Society
  - Examples related to Chinese Society
  - Examples related Confucian Values
    - What are key Confucian values you best illustrate? (Benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, faithfulness, forgiveness, loyalty, filial piety, fraternal duty, etc.)
      - Examples
    - What are Confucian values you might better illustrate in the future?
      - Examples

- 1a. What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of this nursing home in responding to the COVID pressures?

Probes. Examples

- 1b. Compared with home elder care, what are some of the strengths and weaknesses of this nursing home in responding to the COVID pressures?

Probes. Examples

- 1c. What are some of key opportunities in responding to these COVID pressures?

Probes. Examples

### **Filial Piety**

Filial piety is generally described as a central belief and cultural outline that adjusts adult children's values and attitudes toward their parents and which are aimed at ensuring the continuance of parental well-being. Therefore, Chinese children tend to express love by

taking care of their parents' needs, as it is a life-long responsibility to perform filial piety in the Chinese culture

Children are expected to sacrifice their own own interests physically, financially, and socially for the benefit of their parents. All types of support for parents are considered legitimate. The entire concept of life is based on reciprocal assistance and interdependence with the family. It is considered a privilege for older parents to be taken care of by adult children.

We are interested in how filial piety has been expressed in senior home before and during COVID in three areas: fulfilling practical obligations, fulfilling compassionate reverence, and ensuring family continuity (Lum, Yan *et al.*, Measuring filial piety in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.... J of Applied Gerontology)

2. Fulfilling practical obligations. This is described as arranging care for parents, provide financing, treatment, funerals, visiting parents, being grateful
  - a. Can you provide examples of how this was expressed well before COVID?
    - i. Other examples. Get more than one example
  - b. Can you provide example of how this might have been expressed better before COVID?
    - i. Other examples. Get more than one example
  - c. Can you provide examples of how this was expressed during COVID?
    - i. Other examples. Get more than one example
3. Compassionate reverence. This is described trying to achieve the parents' best expectations, always being polite, trying to make sure parents unachieved goals are achieved, and always caring about parent's well being
  - a. Can you provide examples of how this was expressed well before COVID?
    - i. Other examples. Get more than one example
  - b. Can you provide example of how this might have been expressed better before COVID?
    - i. Other examples. Get more than one example
  - c. Can you provide examples of how this was expressed during COVID?
    - i. Other examples. Get more than one example
4. Family continuity. This is described as making sure one child is central in carrying out the family lineage, having a child ensure continuity
  - a. Can you provide examples of how this was expressed well before COVID?
    - i. Other examples. Get more than one example
  - b. Can you provide example of how this might have been expressed better before COVID?
    - i. Other examples. Get more than one example
  - c. Can you provide examples of how this was expressed during COVID?
    - i. Other examples. Get more than one example

### **Challenges with Filial Piety**

5. Decline in attitude and values toward filial piety.
  - a. Can you provide examples of how this was expressed before and during COVID?

6. Higher income level and increased preference of choosing institutional care instead of home elder care
  - a. Can you provide examples of how this was expressed before and during COVID?

### Recommendation and Thoughts

7. Responding to the challenges of older people in changing culture and “the changing role of filial piety values in old age homes during COVID”, do you have any recommendations and thoughts to the current elderly treatment of long term care homes in Shanghai/China with the purpose of promoting better social well-being of the aging population in the future?



**University  
of Victoria**

### Chinese Version 中文版本面试指南 “COVID-19 期间养老院孝道价值观 的变迁”

#### 本访谈的目的

访谈的重点在于更好地了解老年人在养老院的体验所面临的挑战，以及在上海“COVID-19 期间养老院孝道价值观的变化”。

访谈指南中的问题涉及到管理养老院、应对文化变迁中老年人的挑战以及“COVID-19 期间养老院孝道价值观的变化”等方面的各种挑战以及细节问题。

#### 采访指南

我们正在寻求与您的养老院合作，以更好地了解贵养老院所面临的挑战，并希望您提供一些有用的应对这些挑战的想法。我们的研究部分是基于采访和从您那里收集的数据，以及我们对其他非营利组织研究的回顾。

这次采访是绝对匿名和保密的。你的参与是自愿的。您可以拒绝回答任何让你不舒服的问题。您是否参与或选择不参与是完全保密的。您所提供的资料我们将会严格保密。名字永远不会和你的所有回答联系在一起。我们感兴趣的只是人们对于这些问题的看法的集体反应。

我们将要问的问题是相当开放的，我们也对有关于您经验的例子感兴趣。

在我们开始之前，你对我们或此次访谈有什么问题吗？

**那就让我们开始吧。**

## 压力和挑战

1. 在 COVID-19 时期，老人之家面临的主要压力是什么？你能举例说明在不同领域的压力/挑战吗？这些压力/挑战通常与中国社会有关。

调查的问题范围：

- 在 COVID-19 之前，管理上海的养老院普遍面临的挑战有哪些？
- 举例说明你的家和疗养院的病人对中国社会价值观的普遍反应
  - 与中国社会有关的例子
  - 相关的儒家价值观实例
- 你最能说明的儒家价值观是什么？例如：仁、义、礼、智、信、恕、忠、孝、悌等。
  - 举例
- 哪些儒家价值观是你将来可能更好地阐释的？
  - 举例

1a. 在应对 COVID 的压力时，这家疗养院有哪些优点和缺点？

- 调查并举例

1b. 与居家养老相比，这家养老院在应对 COVID 压力方面有哪些优势和劣势？

- 调查并举例

1c. 应对 COVID 的压力有哪些关键机会？

- 调查并举例

## 孝道

孝道通常被描述为调整成年子女对父母的价值观和态度的中心信仰和文化大纲，旨在确保父母幸福的延续。因此，中国的孩子更倾向于通过照顾父母的需要来表达爱，因为孝顺在中国文化中是一种终身的责任。

为了父母的利益，孩子们被期望在身体上、经济上和社会上牺牲自己的利益。所有对父母的支持都被认为是合法的。生活的整个概念是建立在与家庭相互帮助和相互依赖的基础上的。年长的父母被成年子女照顾被认为是一种特权。

我们感兴趣的是，在 COVID 之前和之间的养老院中，孝道在三个方面是如何表达的：履行实际义务，履行慈悲的崇敬，以及确保家庭的连续性(Lum, Yan 等人，衡量 21 世纪的孝道...应用老年学 J)

2. **履行实际义务。**这被描述为为父母安排照顾，提供资金，治疗，葬礼，看望父母，感恩。

- 你能举例说明在 COVID 之前，这是如何表达的吗？
  - 其他的例子。获取多个例子
- 你能举例说明在 COVID 之前，如何更好地表达这一点吗？

- 其他的例子。获取多个例子
- 你能举例说明在 COVID 期间，这是如何表达的吗？
  - 其他的例子。获取多个例子

3. **履行慈悲的崇敬。** 这是指努力达到父母的最佳期望，总是彬彬有礼，努力确保父母未达到的目标得到实现，总是关心父母的幸福。

- 你能举例说明在 COVID 之前，这是如何表达的吗？
  - 其他的例子。获取多个例子
- 你能举例说明在 COVID 之前，如何更好地表达这一点吗？
  - 其他的例子。获取多个例子
- 你能举例说明在 COVID 期间，这是如何表达的吗？
  - 其他的例子。获取多个例子

4. **确保家庭的连续性。** 这被描述为确保一个孩子是延续家族血统的核心，有一个孩子可以确保延续。

- 你能举例说明在 COVID 之前，这是如何表达的吗？
  - 其他的例子。获取多个例子
- 你能举例说明在 COVID 之前，如何更好地表达这一点吗？
  - 其他的例子。获取多个例子
- 你能举例说明在 COVID 期间，这是如何表达的吗？
  - 其他的例子。获取多个例子

## 孝道面临的挑战

- 对孝的态度和价值观下降。
  - 你能举例说明在第一波 COVID 之前和之间这是如何表达的吗？
- 收入水平提高，选择机构养老而非家庭养老的偏好增加
  - 你能举例说明在第一波 COVID 之前和之间这是如何表达的吗？

## 建议与想法

- 应对文化变迁中老年人的挑战以及“COVID-19 期间养老院孝道价值观的变化”，您对于当前治疗在上海或乃至中国的老年长期护理机构有什么建议和想法以促进更好的未来老龄化社会福利？

## Appendix II: Recruitment Script



**University  
of Victoria**

### *Recruitment Script*

Dear,

My name is Jiahui Jin. I am in the process of completing my MPA thesis with Dr. Bart Cunningham who is a professor in the School of Public Administration at the University of Victoria which is located in Victoria, BC, Canada.

The goal of this thesis project from a student perspective is to examine how Chinese values of filial piety (xiao) connect with the way that older people are treated nowadays. I will seek to gather information from numerous nursing homes in Shanghai to develop a better understanding of the challenges the people in old age home experience and “the changing role of filial piety values in old age homes during COVID-19” in Shanghai.

This thesis project will use remote methods and will not take place “in person”. This study will involve some short discussions and telephone conversations. It will approximately take 1-2 hours, but I promise to be mindful of your time. Some of this will involve, perhaps, meeting with someone in your organization and telephone calls. I am seeking to work with your senior’s home in better understanding the challenges you confront and hopefully offer some ideas which you might feel useful in responding to these challenges. Our research is partially based on interviews and data collected from you as well as our review of research in other non-profits. After the field study, I also would hope to provide you with a final report which could be useful for your organization in the future.

As a bottom line, we do not want or need anything that a client/non-profit feels is confidential. Having said that, our ethics consent form indicates that we will keep information confidential. We can even change the name of the non-profit in any report and provide a fictitious name in our reports.

I hope I can interest you in this project and promise to be respectful of your time. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,  
Joyce

## Appendix III: Consent Form



**University  
of Victoria**

### *Participant Consent Form*

Name of organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

You are invited to participate in a thesis project conducted by (your name) and that is being supervised by J. Barton Cunningham, PhD.

Bart Cunningham is a Professor in the School of Public Administration at the University of Victoria. You may contact him if you have further questions by e-mail: [bcunning@uvic.ca](mailto:bcunning@uvic.ca)

#### **Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of this project to examine how Chinese values connect with older people's treatments nowadays with the interplay of filial piety (xiao). I will seek to gather information from numerous nursing homes in Shanghai to develop a better understanding of the challenges the people in old age home experience and “the changing role of filial piety values in old age homes during COVID-19” in Shanghai.

#### **Importance of this Research**

Research of this type is important because while students have an opportunity to study the changing role of filial piety values in old age homes during COVID-19 from a theoretical perspective, blending this theory with “real-life” examples enriches the experience for students and exposes them to the realities. You will also have an opportunity to reflect on, and share your experience and knowledge.

#### **Participants Selection**

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a nursing home that is known to me and about which I would like to learn more.

#### **What is involved**

If you consent to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include meeting with me periodically (up to a maximum of five or six times) between January and May 2021. While the initial interview may take up to thirty minutes, the periodic follow-up interviews may take considerably less time. There will be times when I may ask for information that is not publicly available. This information will be held in confidence.

Written notes, observations/ will be taken. You are welcome to review these notes at your convenience. Please be advised that information about you that is gathered for this research study will remain confidential and you and your organization will not appear by name in my report unless you explicitly provide permission for me to do so.

### **Inconvenience**

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including scheduling times to speak with me in the context of my on-going course commitments throughout the academic term.

### **Risks**

There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

### **Benefits**

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include the opportunity to share and reflect on the nature of your organization and the opportunity to share these observations with fellow students.

### **Voluntary Participation**

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data will not be used in the final class project report.

### **Researcher's Relationship with Participants**

The researcher [student] may have a relationship to potential participants as [a supervisor/ employee/ volunteer]. If you are the executive director of a nonprofit organization, and are reporting on your own organization, no third-party signature is required. Otherwise, to help prevent this relationship from influencing your decision to participate, the following steps to prevent coercion have been taken:

### **On-going Consent**

To make sure that you continue to consent to participate in this research, I will review your option to decline to answer any or all questions posed to you throughout the field study period, at no consequence to you.

### **Anonymity**

In terms of protecting your anonymity, your name and organization will only be revealed to my supervisor (class instructor) nor in the thesis project. Fellow students will learn of your activities through the assignment of a code (e.g. nonprofit 1) assigned to your organization unless you initial the consent to be identified option at the end of this form.

### **Confidentiality**

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of any information will be protected by storing the information in a secure computer system at the University of Victoria. Any written notes will be shredded or otherwise deleted at the end of this research project.

### **Dissemination of Results**

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with other students only in secure University of Victoria on-line discussion groups. You will be sent a copy of the final field study report.

### **Disposal of Data**

Data from this study will be disposed of no later than June 1, 2020. Electronic data will be erased and paper copies of notes will be shredded. Course case study reports will be retained for the full duration of any appeal process [six months]. This information will be stored in a secure computer at the University of Victoria.

### **Contacts**

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include Bart Cunningham, student supervisor at [bcunning@uvic.ca](mailto:bcunning@uvic.ca).

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250) 721-8059 [bcunning@uvic.ca](mailto:bcunning@uvic.ca).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researcher, and that you consent to participate in this research project.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

PLEASE SELECT STATEMENT only if you consent:

I consent for our organization to be identified by name / credited in the results of the study:  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Participant to provide initials)

I consent to have my responses attributed to me by name in the results: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Participant to provide initials)

**A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher (student).**