

**A Cross-cultural Perspective on Ageing Well in Australia: A Mixed Methods Approach to  
Successful Ageing and Filial Piety among Anglo-Australians and Chinese Immigrants**

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## **Glossary of Abbreviations**

AA	Anglo-Australians
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ARSMA	Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican-Americans
CA	Chinese-Australians
CSCA	Chinese speaking Chinese-Australians
ESCA	English speaking Chinese-Australians
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
SL-Asia Scale	Suinn-Lew Self-Identity Acculturation Scale
WHO	World Health Organization

## **Thesis Declaration**

**Name:** Joanne Siu Chern Tan SOOSAI

**Program:** Doctor of Philosophy

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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## **Abstract**

Australia's older population has become increasingly diversified in terms of country of origin and ethnicity. The overall aim of the thesis was to critically explore ageing well in an immigrant community by examining the intersection of the Western value system of successful ageing and the Eastern value system of filial piety through the lens of acculturation. In particular, the aim of the present research was to investigate attitudes and beliefs towards ageing and well-being within the context of successful ageing; and the needs and expectations within the context of filial piety among Anglo-Australians and Chinese immigrants. By focusing on the older Chinese community, an under-studied group that is emerging in contemporary Australia, the present research gave a voice to their values and what they perceived as appropriate and relevant as they age away from their country of origin.

Using a mixed methods research design, the first phase comprised of a qualitative research component. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to identify and explore themes gathered through semi-structured interviews with 21 participants, 11 Anglo-Australians and 10 Chinese-Australians, aged 55 to 78 years. The present research also explored the issue of establishing rigour in qualitative research within the context of IPA and noted that the use of inter-rater reliability is questionable because it does not consider researcher subjectivity, context and individual differences; pre-determined themes or coding as limiting; the danger of using quantitative criteria on qualitative research; and the need for sufficient resources and involvement of an independent rater. Instead, and as a proposed alternative, the present research demonstrated that rigour in IPA could be established by quoting raw data, carrying out reflexivity and conducting member checks.

To further investigate cultural differences in aspects of successful ageing and filial responsibilities and expectations, and the role of acculturation, the second quantitative phase collected data using a battery of questionnaires, which were available in English and in Chinese. Participants ( $N = 268$ ) over 55 years of age were recruited mainly from South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales. Successful ageing and filial responsibilities (perceptions about adult children's responsibilities) and filial expectations (older adults' expectations) were surveyed among 152 Anglo-Australians (AA) and 116 Chinese-Australians (CA), including 68 English speaking (ESCA) and 48 Chinese speaking (CSCA) participants.

Results of study one revealed that both groups associated successful ageing with health and personal responsibility. AA regarded growing old gracefully and acceptance as important aspects of successful ageing, whereas CA valued financial security and an active lifestyle. Both groups spoke about their current lack of preparation with respect to future care plans. In terms of 'Future care preferences', themes of 'Ageing in place', 'Openness to formal care' and 'Quality of care' reflect perceptions and attitudes of both the AA and CA groups. Results demonstrated heterogeneity within the CA group and suggest that longer length of residency does not necessarily lead to a decrease in traditional expectations.

Results of study two revealed AA and CA rated 13 and 14, respectively, of the 20 successful ageing attributes as important. Results also revealed that AA and CA differed significantly on four successful ageing attributes: 'Having friends and family who are there for me', 'Being able to make choices', 'Being able to cope' and 'Continuing to learn new things'. For CSCA, heredity was rated as important to successful ageing as compared to their ESCA and AA counterparts. With regards to filial piety, overall CA showed greater endorsement of filial responsibilities: that adult children should show filial piety, that children have been brought up to

it and that they will have to do this for their parents, compared to AA. CA also showed greater endorsement of filial expectations: that older adults expect filial piety, that older adults were brought up this way and that they themselves expect it as they age, compared to AA. Results consistently showed filial duties ‘look after’ and ‘financial assistance’ were significantly higher for CA on all six sets of subscales. Perceptions of filial piety were further explored using nine statements of filial piety. Chi-square analyses showed CA scored higher than AA, and within the CA group, CSCA scored higher on four of the nine statements. It also discussed the role of acculturation on Chinese immigrants.

In summary, when it comes to attitudes towards ageing and well-being, and needs and expectations for support in old age, results of qualitative and quantitative studies indicated Chinese immigrants exhibited a range of complex sentiments. In the context of successful ageing, participants appear to focus on individualistic values and in the context of filial responsibilities and expectations, participants tend to emphasise collectivistic values, although findings also showed mixed orientation in some cases. The present research is an important contribution to the cross-cultural understanding of successful ageing and the value of filial piety of adults ageing in Australia. Future directions could entail further expansion of the present research across a range of other ethnic communities, thereby raising the profile of ethnic communities in the wider society and enhancing culturally appropriate aged care and services in Australia.