

Later-Life Learning (LLL) – Different Considerations for the Emerging Chinese Baby Boomers in Singapore

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Presentation Outline

- . Existing LLL Landscape in Singapore
- . Factors influencing LLL preferences
- . Future LLL landscape in Singapore

Context of Discussion

Singapore – 5million residents (76% Chinese), the only 'natural' resource. High per capita GDP, high literacy rate.

Economy – 99% service industry

Challenges of an ageing population

- Average life span 82 years old.
- By 2030, one in five will be 65 years or older.
- Emerging cohort has different profile and different intellectual demands.

Study Setting

Currently, many later life learning opportunities but almost all in

- Skills, employability training programmes
- Health, hobby, sports, cultural and computer literacy courses

Appeal to emerging cohort of older adults who are 'healthier, better educated and richer?'

. Understanding Gap

- personality, cultural and social factors influencing motivation to engage in later life learning of Singaporean Chinese
- types of learning experiences that older Singaporeans pursue for personal interest.

. Inform policy and program development of traditional and non-traditional learning.

. Promote active later life learning culture in Singapore. Lower ageing-related health costs; Growth in silver industry.

Older Adults and Learning

. Caucasian later life learners

- cognitive interest (intellectual curiosity)
- innate desire to learn
- absence of external incentives
- personal growth and satisfaction
- social contact/relationship
- socio-economic factors such as gender, marital status, economic status, past learning experience

Older Adults and Learning

. Caucasian later life learners perceive learning as:

- social experience
- coping strategy
- way to have fun
- keep updated with the world
- more self-reliant
- stay healthy, protect against cognitive decline
- establish sense of identity and meaning in life

Older Adults and Learning

. Caucasian later life learning experiences:

- formal, informal, non-formal learning
- leisure learning
- incidental learning
- heritage and art (museums)
- public libraries
- everyday life
- religious/psychological process

Older Adults and Learning

. Motivation of Chinese later life learners

- culture of lifelong learning (rooted in Confucian teachings)
- past learning experience
- social support
- living arrangements
- availability and accessibility
- self-efficacy
- personality – openness to experience
- boost self-image and self-confidence

Older Adults and Learning

. Chinese & Later Life Learning

- . Social reasons (vs individualistic)
- . Stress 'effort' as opposed to 'ability'
- . feel 'shame-guilt' or loss of face for lack of desire to learn or poor learning performance
- . later life learning is a very respectable activity

Older Adults and Learning

- . **Meaning of Learning** (rooted in Confucian teachings)
 - . Learning is the noblest of all human pursuits.
 - . Learning is a never-ending pursuit.
 - . Learning without flagging.
 - . Keep learning as long as you live.

Older Adults and Learning

. Singaporean later life learners

- . 52% interested in learning, only 20% take up rate – mostly in skills-related courses.
- . Strongest motivation – keep my mind active;
- . No. 2 motivation – keep up with world
- . Weakest motivation – so I can contribute
- . Transport or accessibility not an issue
- . Sense of belonging
- . Desire to learn and try new things
- . Desire to expand network of friends

Older Adults and Learning

Likely LLL landscape for emerging Baby Boomers in Singapore?