

**Older Chinese-Australian and Chinese Community Music
Engagement**

Sicong Li

Master of Education (Music Education) Monash University

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Statement

This project contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any other educational institution and, to the best of the candidate's knowledge or belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of the project.

Signed

Sicong Li

Date:

Ethics approval for this research has been received from Monash University Standing Committee for Ethics in Research on Humans (Project Number: CF11/1320-2011000721).

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List of Abbreviations

AAF – Australia Asia Foundation

ABS – Australian Bureau of Statistics

AIHW – Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

ALGA – Australian Local Government Association

BIPR – Bureau of Immigration and Population Research

CALD – Culturally and Linguistically Diverse

DEST – Department of Education, Science and Training

DIMA – Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs

HKTB – Hong Kong Tourism Board

HREOC – Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission

KCSCC – Kingston Chinese Senior Citizens Club

MOE – Ministry of Education

NRSME – National Review of School Music Education

SERMRC – South Eastern Region Migrant Resource Centre

TOPU – Tangshan Older People University

WHO – World Health Organization

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G: The Song of Older People University

Articles Published During This Research

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Older Chinese-Australian and Chinese Community Music

Engagement

Abstract

This research study will investigate community music engagement by both Chinese-Australians and Chinese older people at two different older people's organizations with the aim of exploring the affects of music engagement on older people. The study seeks to explore cultural differences between Chinese-Australian older people and Chinese older people as they relate to their music engagement. The research contentions were that (1) active music engagement can enhance the quality of the life of older people and (2) music engagement offers particular benefits for maintaining and sharing cultural identity. This research will compare the data of two groups of older people who are either Chinese-Australian or Chinese in China to share their understandings about music engagement later in life. This discussion will be contextualized by a description of the Chinese community in Australia and an introduction to society in mainland China. This study will include an exploration of Chinese society, education and music in China as all participants live in China or lived there before migration.

This phenomenological qualitative research approach allows an investigation of participants' understandings and experiences of community music engagement later in life. Phenomenological research seeks understanding through description of lived

experience using personal history, culture and society, identifying the true nature or 'essence' of human experiences (Husserl, 1969). This research utilized a case study design. The data were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which aims to 'explore in detail how participants are making sense of their personal and social world, and the main currency for an IPA study is the meanings particular experiences, events, states hold for participants' (Smith & Osborn, 2003, p. 53). Four data collection strategies, semi-structured interviews, observations, documents and artifacts, and a researcher journal, were employed in this phenomenological case study.

Active music participation offers a way that music can be used in the lives of older people to sustain well-being and health. This research explores the issues and concerns regarding music engagement, music learning and cultural influences among Chinese-Australian and Chinese older people. By exploring the affects of music in Chinese-Australian older people and Chinese older people's lives, four broad themes were identified from the data: Emotional well-being, connections with the past, shared interests and mental and physical well-being. Each of these themes is explored in the research through the words and experiences of the participants.

Chapter 1

Nature and scope of the study

Introduction

Across the globe the proportion of older people in societies is increasing rapidly. Between 2006 and 2050 the proportion of older people in the global population is predicted to double (World Health Organization [WHO], 2002). The WHO (2002) defined active ageing as ‘the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age’ (p. 12). Anezberger (2002) stated that successful ageing involves maintaining well-being and actively engaging with life. Australia is no different with the proportion of older people in the population increasing, particularly in the current decade. Further Australia has one of the most culturally diverse societies in the world and one in five older citizens have come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD) (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [AIHW], 2002). Older people from CALD backgrounds, like any other person, need support and care in maintaining their physical, emotional, and social wellbeing, but their needs are different and more complex than other older people because of their cultural and linguistic diversity (Warburton, Bartlett & Rao, 2009). Societies are experiencing a growing demand for appropriate programs and services to meet older people’s needs (Gilbert & Beal, 1982), especially for CALD older people.

The 2012 census showed Australian's total population as 22,596,500. Overseas-born Australians comprise approximately 26.5% of the total population (ABS, 2010). Within this group the number of people from Asian countries is increasing, with China being the fourth highest. In 2011 there were 866,200 people with Chinese ancestry in Australia (ABS, 2011). In Australia the Chinese community is the most diverse immigrant group having migrated to Australia from many different countries, predominantly from the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and Vietnam. These people bring with them diverse spoken languages (Mandarin, Cantonese, and others), religions, socio-economic status, and cultural practices (Martin, 1998). Further, women from countries such as China and Vietnam are identified as having particularly high life expectancies (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [AIHW], 2002), suggesting that they will potentially remain active in the community for some time. It should be noted that the label 'Chinese' encompasses a diverse range of communities and individuals, often with little in common beyond ancestral heritage (Queensland Health, 2011).

Learning is a natural process that occurs during all stages of the life cycle and plays a significant role in productive ageing (Ardelt, 2000; Dench & Regan, 2000; Glendenning, 1997; Withnall, 2000). The WHO (2002) pointed out that, 'Education in early life combined with opportunities for lifelong learning can help people to develop the skills and confidence they need to adapt and stay independent as they grow older' (p. 29). Moreover, Cohen *et al.* (2006) argue that involvement in creative activity

among older people is beneficial for well-being and health because it helps to generate a 'sense of control and provides opportunities for 'social engagement' (p. 728). Hays, Bright and Minichiello (2002) stated that isolation and loneliness are common phenomena among older people, and often lead to depression and withdrawal from social contacts. One of the most important ways to maintain optimum ageing is for older people to continue to function at the highest possible level (Christie, 1992). Southcott and Joseph (2010) believed that greater active engagement in performing arts by older people (50+) is positively related to enhancing individual well-being. This study will consider how ageing is differently understood in different cultures, and whether this might change with migration. Moving from one country to another can generate challenges due to different cultural understandings. This research studies two groups of participants – older Chinese people who have migrated to Australia and older Chinese people who have remained in China. In this chapter there will be an overview of older people and music, community music culture and Chinese culture. Finally music and music education in China during the time when the case study participants were young will be discussed.

As half the participants in this research have migrated from China and finally settled in Australia it is important to discuss briefly issues of migration. This is particularly important when there are significant societal cultural differences. The Western nations such as Australia, Canada, United Kingdom and the United States, are seen to have a shared 'core culture (a macroculture)' as well as several 'smaller cultures

(microcultures)' (Elliott, 1989). Cook (2010) highlights that the phenomenon of international migration is a characteristic of contemporary society. Mature immigrants have presumably developed their core cultural ideas, customs, and norms within the distinct political, legal, and educational systems of their heritage culture, as well as through its language, media, and caretaking practices (Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, & Nisbett, 1998). However, the immigrants' new, adopted social systems and environment are, in this case, predominantly Western. As a result, these bicultural immigrants (Sung, 1985) have access to two potentially distinct sets of cultural values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors (Baumeister, Shapiro, & Tice, 1985). Storti (1999) pointed out that cultural awareness and sensitivity are basic survival skills for almost everyone (p. 1). Kanitsaki (2003) agreed that, living and interacting within the new society, migrants would lose some of their cultural ways of life while they acquire new cultural elements from within the host culture/society.

Australia has one of the most culturally diverse societies in the world. 61% of the overseas born Australian population comes from a non-English speaking country in 2012 (ABS, 2010). Although such diversity creates enormous opportunity for growth and development, it also brings culturally and linguistically diverse populations (Kanitsaki, 2003). Ozolins (1993) claimed that languages were seen as the clearest and most evident component of cultural diversity in a country. Clyne and Kipp (2006) highlight that Australia is not only a multicultural country it is also a multilingual one. About 240 languages are used in the homes of Australia residents, 16% of the

population speaks a language other than English in the home; in Melbourne and Sydney, and the percentages are approximately 27% and 29% respectively. Data show that European countries (Italy, Greece, and Germany) remain the top countries of birth for those aged over 65 years in Australia.

Migration from Asian countries is increasing. Chinese people have also migrated to Australia from many different countries. As well as these immigrant groups there are the Australian born Chinese and those of mixed race. Chinese people are very diverse in their country of origins, their spoken language, religion, socio-economic status and cultural practice and the Chinese community is the most diverse immigrant group in Australia according to country of origin (Martin, 1998). In Australia the two main Mandarin and Cantonese Chinese dialects have seen a steady increase in speakers over the ten-year period. In 2001, the proportions of older speakers of Cantonese and Mandarin are 15.5% and 9.7% separately (Clyne & Kipp, 2006). However, Mak and Chan (1995) pointed out that there are few studies focused on the adaptation and family life of elderly Chinese-Australians. This research hopes to redress this omission to some degree.

Culturally and linguistically diverse older people

Older people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds have their own characteristics. The study of Warburton and McLaughlin (2007) highlighted the important role played by those CALD backgrounds in maintaining and promoting

their culture, as well as providing social support to the young, and many of these older individuals provide support to their communities. It needs to be recognized that culture can be a source of strength for many people as they age, and culture also provides a foundation for positive ageing. There is evidence suggesting that bilingual older migrants revert to their first language and may prefer to be with those who come from a similar cultural background (Rowland, 1999; Warburton, Bartlett & Rao, 2009). The promotion of tolerance and appreciation of culture in a community is deemed important. Warburton, Bartlett and Rao (2009) suggest that this is supported by ‘developing the teaching of diverse languages in schools, encouraging the expression of students’ culture of origin, and integration of aging [*sic*] and CALD streams into tertiary courses rather than as electives’ (p. 179). However, Warburton, Bartlett and Rao (2009) point out that diversity between older people from CALD backgrounds and the other older people is not only evidenced in the language spoken and the culture of the community, but is also in other aspects, such as diversity of understanding and diversity of experiences.

Language is a significant challenge for older people from CALD backgrounds. At the 2006 census, one in three Australians aged 65 and over were from diverse linguistic and cultural background. The 2006 census recorded around 840,000 Australians aged 65 and over who were born overseas. By 2009, 1,036,448 Australian residents aged 65 years and over were overseas-born, 22.5% (653,800) of people aged 65 or more years will be from countries where English is not the main language (ABS, 2009).

Older people from CALD background also have problems of social isolation (Warburton, Bartlett & Rao, 2009). This can result from migration processes, lack of information, and problem accessing services. It is clear that social isolation is a significant problem among older people particularly; it has a negative effect on their health and psychosocial wellbeing, affecting quality of life (Bajekal *et al.* 2004).

Theoretical understanding: Phenomenology

This research explores music engagement by Chinese-Australian older people and Chinese older people. This study aims to explore life-worlds of participants and investigates the affects of music engagement on older people. To do this, the researcher has underpinned this study with a phenomenological understanding. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) state that phenomenology is a philosophical approach to the study of experience. The founding principle of phenomenological inquiry is that ‘experience should be examined in the way that it occurs, and in its own terms’ (p. 12). Phenomenology is a philosophy that was initiated by Edmund Husserl at the beginning of the twentieth century. He believed that phenomenology involves the examination of human experience (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003). Østergaard, Dahlin and Hugo (2008) concluded that phenomenology provides a shift of focus from a mere cognitive understanding *of* the world to perceiving and acting *in* the world. The discipline of phenomenology is ‘the study of structures of experience, or consciousness’ (Smith, 2008). This understanding will underpin this research study.

Giorgi (1997) identified several features of phenomenology including that it refers to the lived experiences that belong to an individual and that a precise meaning is given to the word 'experience' (p. 236). It is the life world of the participant and the lived experiences of the participant within this world that interests the phenomenologist. Most important is the perspective of the individual and how they make meaning of their own experiences. The researcher's job is to record and interpret the personal lived experiences of the research subject (Radnor, 2001). As will be discussed in chapter 3, this research will employ Interpretative Phenomenological Approach (IPA) which comes from a hermeneutic phenomenology to explore the older Chinese and Chinese-Australian community music engagement. Hermeneutics is an important part of intellectual history and offers important theoretical insights for IPA (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Hermeneutics allows the researcher to explore and hopefully understand in detail the life-worlds of Chinese older people and Chinese-Australian older people and their music engagement. The phenomenological research method can help the researcher to understand the experiences of older CALD people and their musical engagement. Further there will be an exploration of the impact of cultural differences on life-world and music learning amongst Chinese older people and Chinese-Australian older people.

Older people and music

Older people commonly engage with the arts (Cohen, 2006). There are many ways in which older people engage in community and the arts. Amongst these music is quite

common (Southcott & Joseph, 2010). Music can be understood as a transformer and metaphor in people's lives that makes a significant contribution to the quality of life (Hays & Minichiello, 2005a). As will be discussed in chapter 2, musical engagement can involve cognitive, physical and emotional responses (Bright, 1995). Music learning is an integral component in learning and provides excellent opportunities for older people to play an active role in maintaining well-being and enjoyment of life. By learning from interactions with others, members learn from people who have a different approach to music and performance (Hargreaves, Lieberman, Fullan, & Hopkins, 1998). However, music serves various functions in a person's life depending on life needs and circumstances (Hays, Bright, & Minichiello, 2002).

Older people show a strong desire to create meaning in life, and to deal with their lives around maintaining an active lifestyle and building cognitive skills (Prickett, 1998; Cohen, 2006), and music as the most social of all the arts (Sloboda, 1989) can facilitate these goals in older people. Music is also an important factor for older people to enjoy a positive quality of life and provides adults opportunities to be creative (Myers, 1995; Koopman, 2007). Hays and Minichiello (2005b) found that music provides older adults with the ability to construct meaning in their lives. And the meaning was directly related to their emotional needs. People generally use music in different ways depending on the time, mood and purpose (Jourdain, 1997). There is no doubt that participation in musical activities contributes to older people's quality of life (Kendig, 1996). Some older people prefer to organize their own music learning

whereas other older people prefer to have a teacher and structured learning. However, for many music educators who have been trained in methods designed to teach music to children or young people, older people's music learning is frequently misunderstood, and current studies which focus on the general older population and their engagement with music are limited. In this study the participants in one group preferred to work by themselves, the other group sought a teacher in a community organization. This may be because of the different cultures in which they live.

Music making in the community

Societies are experiencing a growing demand for appropriate programs to meet older people's needs (Gilbert & Beal, 1982), Greaves and Farbus (2006) identified that active rather than passive social engagement was more likely to have a positive impact on health and the quality of life. This engagement is often through local communities and specialized groups that can support and enrich friendships, empower participants, and facilitate active social networking. Cohen (2006) points out that positive health outcomes can be observed when 'older people experience a sense of control... [and] are in situations with meaningful social engagement with others' (p. 11). Positive engagement with the arts can offer such a sense of control and empowerment, which can have benefits in cognitive and physical areas but possibly the most important is the social engagement that can be engendered. Community is often described as a geographical boundary of a group of people who have similar interests, purposes or values (Falk & Harrison, 1998). Communities can

embrace diversity, creative expression and help people to become more able to deal with social challenges (Arts Victoria, 2007). In recent years, the term 'community music' has spread quickly all over the world, and community music organizations such as choirs and instrumental ensembles are an integral part of the social and cultural frame of many communities (Veblen & Olsson, 2002). Community music practices offer great opportunities for participants to become proficient in all kinds of musical thinking and acting (Veblen, 2004; Koopman, 2007).

Community music is pervasive and a basic part of cultures worldwide. It involves active participation in music making of all kinds, which includes performing, improvising, and creating (Veblen & Olsson, 2002). Musical networks provide people with the feelings of being accepted, valued, needed and belonging (Hays & Minichiello, 2005b). As in this study, community music learning can be formal or informal. Much of community music learning is informal. Learning activities in community music are characterized by direct experience and use flexible teaching, learning, and facilitation modes such as oral, notational, holistic, experiential and analytic (Veblen & Olsson, 2002; Koopman, 2007). At the same time, groups and individuals also give back to communities. Warburton, Bartlett and Rao (2009) highlight that there are many groups and individuals who provide extensive support within their own communities. Certainly community leadership, advocacy, and mentoring are an integral part of community cohesion and development.

Research questions and limitations of the study

For this study, I decided to undertake case study research to explore the issues and concerns regarding music engagement by Chinese older people in China and Chinese-Australian older people in Australia. The research contentions are (1) active music engagement can enhance the quality of life of older people and (2) music engagement offers particular benefits for maintaining and sharing cultural identity. In order to better understand the affects of music participation for older people, several questions can be asked: How do older people engage with music in community? Does musical engagement assist in the development of older people's physical and mental health? What similarities and differences arise between music engagements by older people from different cultures? What are the support mechanisms for successful music engagement by Chinese-Australian and Chinese older people? These are the main research issues of this study. To contextualize these questions the community music which plays an important role in older people's activities will be considered as well as relevant research literature in the study. Being a Chinese student, a music educator and a researcher, I am interested in exploring the effects of music learning on older Chinese and Chinese-Australian.

It is intended that this research is not focused on music therapy, although research about music therapy with older adults has increased substantially in recent years (Prickett, 1998). For example, Maranto's (1993) study found that music can be successfully used in medicine because it brings physiological, psychological, and

cognitive responses, and cause physiological and psychological entrainment especially for dementia and Alzheimer disease in older patients. Furthermore, this research will choose only two groups of older people who are Chinese and Chinese-Australian to compare the music learning and cultural influences among Chinese older people between China and Australia. This case study research will be conducted in two different communities and deep data will be sought.

Culture and Chinese culture

Spencer-Oatey (2002) defined culture as ‘a set of attitudes, beliefs, behavioral conventions and basic assumptions and values that are shared by a group of people, and that influences each member’s behavior and each member’s interpretation of the ‘meaning’ of other people’s behavior’ (p. 4). Ting-Toomey (1999) defined culture as ‘a complex frame of reference that consists of patterns or traditions, beliefs, values, norms, and meanings that are shared in varying degrees by interacting members of a community’ (p. 10). Ting-Toomey (1999) concluded three points worth noting from the definition of culture:

Firstly, culture refers to a diverse pool of knowledge, shared realities, and clustered norms that constitute the learned systems of meanings in a particular society. Secondly, these learned systems of meanings are shared and transmitted through daily interactions among members of the cultural group and from one generation to the next. Thirdly, culture facilitates the capacity of members to survive and adapt to their external environment (p. 9).

Every culture carries a series of key beliefs, notions and concepts, which are defined as the cultural values that people share in a particular culture. Cultural values penetrate all other dimensions of culture and have power over them. Hofstede (1991) recognized the dominance of cultural values over behaviors, and claims that cultural values inform and sustain particular norms of interaction and interpretation, which are reflected in the communicative behaviors of individuals. Cultural values have cognitive, affective, and behavioral components (Mooij, 2004; Chang, 2010), in the sense that cultural values affect the way people think, feel and behave. Culture as a tool could facilitate knowledge construction through these different forms of culture. Culture, thus, ‘is not something that people have, it is something that people do’ (Elliott, 1989, p. 149).

For older people, attitudes and behaviors relevant for ageing health are greatly influenced by traditions and values derived from their cultural backgrounds. And their effective learning should be situated in a culture of needs and practices (Perkins, 1995). Cope and Smith (1997) stated that music is a cultural activity that is clearly located in the wider context. Elliott (1989) also pointed out that all forms of music making and music listening are embedded in specific contexts: relevant social networks of musically significant people, productions, and beliefs. This study will focus on Chinese culture as it is enacted both in China and in Australia, by older people. Chinese culture, like the other cultures in the world, is rich in history and content. The participants in both locations were all born in Mainland China and have

thus been immersed in Chinese language and culture. For this reason it is important to provide an overview of the cultural understandings and history of China as it pertains to the participants in this study. Martin (1998) concluded five main features of Chinese culture: Confucianism, Social structure, Social groups, the Chinese family and Clan or lineage. However, only two features will be discussed as particularly relevant to this study – Confucianism and organization of society.

- **Confucianism**

Confucianism is a Chinese ethical and philosophical system developed from the teachings of the Chinese philosopher Confucius (551-478 BC). In the philosophical and cultural history of China, Confucianism has endured as the basic social and political value system for over one thousand years. Chinese society has long been influenced by Confucian principles of harmony and hierarchy (Ho & Law, 2004). Chu and Carew (1990) commented that:

A key to the development of sensitivity and appreciation by others who assist the Chinese, is an understanding of Confucianism, the dominant philosophy which has made a major contribution in the shaping of the Chinese people (p. 3).

The fundamental principles of Confucianism originated in the late Chou era (1122-256 BC.). Confucius developed an integrated framework based on concepts related to the nature of humanity, the ideal individual and the ideal society. This framework he believed would lead to universal peace and harmony (Ho & Law, 2004). Hofstede and Bond (1988) indicated that the teachings of Confucius are comprised of

three key principles: the hierarchical relationship among people, the family as a basic unit, and the emphasis on education. The core of Confucianism is humanism: the belief that human beings are teachable, improvable and perfectible through personal and communal endeavour especially including self-cultivation and self-creation. Yum (1988) stated that in studying human nature and motivation, Confucianism sets forth four principles from which right conduct arises: '*jen* (humanism), *i* (faithfulness), *li* (propriety), and *chih* (wisdom or a liberal education).' (p. 377). Confucius' teaching focused on human activities and his overriding concern was to establish a moral social order (Wong, 2001). Keeping spiritual beings at a distance, and giving full attention to human activities became a distinctive characteristic of Chinese culture (Kung & Ching 1989). The China state strongly supports the Confucian respect. For example, Kuan and Lau (2002) point out that the Education Law of China spells out the importance of both Chinese socialism and 'excellent' Chinese cultures and traditions as parallel educational objects (p. 302).

- **Organization of Chinese society**

The emphasis of Confucianism on social relationships in China's long history is conducive to cooperation, warm, relaxed human relations, consideration of others, and group harmony (Yum, 1988). The family is the most important unit in Chinese society. Traditional Chinese society has a collectivist orientation that endorses the family, not the individual, as the major unit. And Chinese culture considers 'family' the prototype of all social organizations. Furthermore, concepts such as loyalty, obedience in the

family are transferred to social organizations (MacFarquhar, 1980). Martin (1998) argued that the Chinese family was the ‘main source of security, economic sustenance, education, recreation and social contact’ (p. 4). The Chinese family is central to Chinese cultural identity and serves an important protective function. In the Chinese family unit every phase of the life cycle is assumed to be of central importance in providing the necessary resources for personal growth and the definition of social expectations and responsibilities (Lee, 1982). The tradition is attributed to Confucian doctrines that the family was the principal group to which a person belonged. Two characteristics of traditional family values were highlighted by Mak and Chan (1995). The first one is respect and filial piety. The traditional Chinese value of respecting seniors is derived from Confucian principles, which define authority within the family according to the seniority of the member. The second traditional characteristic is harmony, which serves to stabilize family structure and functioning within the family.

Music and music education in China

Ho (2003) argued that modern Chinese music education has kept abreast of social changes by orienting itself in accordance with the social agents of the state. At the same time, China’s music education also reflects the shifting emphases of different sociopolitical climates during the last few decades. Music and music education in China will be discussed in detail in chapter 7 which will focus on music education during the time when the older participants in this study attended school. In order to understand the changing characters of music and music education in China, three

different periods will be discussed that are linked to the life spans of the participants in this study, all of whom were born in mainland China and who would have spent their young, formative years immersed in the musical culture of that time.

- **Music and music education during 1966-1976**

Since the Chinese Communist Party came to power, Chinese society and its education system was transformed after the fashion of Soviet socialism (Chen & Reid, 2002). Music and the other arts were required to support the state, according to Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideology. Students and party members from diverse areas of music were sent to the Moscow Conservatory of Music and other musical institutions in Eastern European countries for further studies (Mao, 1991). China's music education during 1966-1976 (Cultural Revolution) with respect to the institution of an Eastern European model, musical styles and meaning were socially constructed to integrate the idea of revolutionary ideas into musical expression (Ho & Law, 2004). The Cultural Revolution banned non-revolutionary music from the West, and non-revolutionary or non-patriotic music from pre-1949 China. Great quantities of revolutionary songs emerged quantities such as 'The East Is Red', 'Golden Sun in Beijing', and 'I Love Beijing Tiananmen'. During this period, Chinese composers and musicians strove to encourage enthusiasm for revolutionary ideology. However, music was in fact highly western in its technique, harmonic construction and structure (Kraus, 1989).

- **Music and music education from the end of 1970s to the 1990s**

The 1978 open-door policy resulted in a musical exchange between China and the West, both traditional Chinese and Western classical music were developed during this period (Bakken, 2003). Ho and Law (2004) stated that China's music and music education were influenced by 'performances of Western music, the employment of Western avant-garde compositional techniques, and national and international musical exchange' (p. 155). Many musicians from Europe, the USA and other countries were invited to China to teach music or give performances. Music and music education also aimed to invigorate a love of socialism and patriotism, the songs such as 'I Love You China', 'The 15th Moon' and 'Today Is Your Birthday, China' all carry messages of patriotism and nationalism (Ho & Law, 2004). Many of these songs are still very popular today.

- **Music and music education from the late 1990s to the present**

As a result of opening up economic expansion and relaxing the political climate, Chinese society has shifted dramatically from an insular to a global perspective, and is becoming more complex and differentiated in the course of modernization (Stockman, 2000). During this time, popular music has enabled Chinese popular artists to make contacts between different cultures. At the same time, China has also been exposed to the popular music of other Asian cultures such as those of Hong Kong and Taiwan (Hamm, 1991). However, the central State only welcomes popular music with revolutionary ideas to promote its political ideology of unity, nationalism and other

official values, such as the official pop songs: ‘The Great Wall Is Long’, ‘I Belong to China’, and ‘Good Person, Good Heart’ (Baranovitch, 2003). However, in the new century, China has become ascendant in the global economy, resulting in the incorporation of multiculturalism into the music curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2001). Although this study is focusing on older people in community groups, these educational ideas are pervasive and underpin all group practices.

Chinese community of Australia

International migration is a characteristic of contemporary society (Cook, 2010). There have been waves of Chinese emigration for centuries (Ma, 2003) and their destinations have included Australia since its foundation. In the ABS (2006), 669,890 Australian residents identified themselves as having Chinese ancestry, either alone or with another ancestry. At this time, 206,591 Australians declared they were born in China (includes Hong Kong, Republic of China and Taiwan). In the early nineteenth century there were small groups of Chinese migrants but in the 1850s the first significant numbers were attracted to Australia by the discovery of gold. From that time there was a decline in numbers of Chinese born people in Australia but following the dismantling of restrictive immigration regimes in the early 1970s, numbers again increased (Queensland Health, 2011; Mercer 2005). Early Chinese immigrants to Australia established Chinatowns in several major cities, such as Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne. At the same time, many ethnic Chinese from Hong Kong, Mainland China, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia (Malaysia, Singapore, and Vietnam) have

immigrated to Australia. After the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests, many Chinese students were granted permanent settlement in Australia. Those students later invited their families to join them. In 2005-2006 China was the third major source of permanent migrants to Australia behind the United Kingdom and New Zealand, and between 2000-2001 and 2005-2006, the number of skilled migrants coming to Australia from China more than tripled, from 3,800 to 12,500 people. In 2006, Sydney was home to over half (53%) of the Chinese population. Melbourne had approximately one-quarter of the Chinese born population (26%). And the other Australian capitals combined had about 21% of the Chinese populations (ABS, 2006). Chinese language newspapers are published in Australia, radios channels broadcast in Cantonese and Mandarin. The Chinese community plays a significant role in Australian multiculturalism.

However, Tippett *et al.* (1994) stated that elderly migrants in Australia ‘suffer the highest levels of psychological distress and the poorest self-assessed health in comparison with other elderly in Australia’ (p. 30). English proficiency was always an issue for Chinese settlers and limited their interaction with the wider English speaking society (Wu, 2003), particularly older Chinese from Mainland China who had limited access to English language instruction when they were young. Most of the Chinese migrants arriving in Australia come from countries such as Hong Kong, Malaysia and Vietnam (Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs [DIMA], 2001). Several factors contributed to this rise in China-born immigration including the

introduction of the Australian-Chinese Family Reunion Agreement that allowed new Australian residents to sponsor entry of other family members (DIMA, 2001). The migration of elderly Chinese to Australia is likely to increase as ‘the majority of current economically active Chinese intend to retire in Australia and older Chinese are expected to migrate to Australia for family reunion’ (Guo, 2005: i). Anezberger (2002) stated that migration could be considered a life transition which, particularly for older people, is likely to create voids that make the ‘availability of community resources that promote active engagement with life...particularly important’ (p. 620). Changes to the numbers of older Chinese migrants and their varying cultural experiences present a range of challenges to governments, and community organizations to support individuals’ well being. Over the past few years, a number of difficulties experienced by elderly Chinese have been identified. These include challenges by language, family, health, isolation and inadequate information (Martin, 1998). Elderly Chinese immigrants retain many of the traditional Chinese values. For example, Chinese immigrants in Australia have tried to maintain their culture and language by speaking Chinese at home, and frequenting or living in Chinatown where there are Chinese restaurants and bookshops, and supporting Chinese newspapers, television and radio programs (Chan, 1988).

Chapter outline

Chapter 1

This chapter has introduced the research issues, followed by discussion of theoretical understanding that includes phenomenology. This chapter also focused on issues regarding older people and music, and community music. This chapter provided an introduction to culture and Chinese culture particularly. Finally, there will be a discussion of music and music education in China during the time when the case study participants were young.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 will focus on research concerning the relationship of music engagement and older people. This chapter introduces the benefits of music engagement for older people, which include personal growth, listening to music, physical benefits, mental knowing and emotional affects. And the role of community music will be addressed in this chapter.

Chapter 3

This chapter will explore the design of methodology, research process, rationale, selection of participants, tools and techniques for data collection to conduct the study. This chapter will also discuss the tools used to analyze data along with the expected processes of evaluating research findings such as triangulation. Moreover, the analysis strategy used in these case studies – Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

– will be discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 4

To contextualize this research, this chapter will present a history of Chinese immigration to Australia, followed by a discussion of Chinese family values in Australia and the cultural background of Chinese-Australians. And this research will focus on issues and concerns regarding music engagement by Chinese-Australian older people, the music culture of Chinese-Australians will be considered, framed in a brief discussion of Australian's community music.

Chapter 5 and chapter 6

Chapter 5 will report on one particular community singing group, Kingston Chinese Senior Citizens Club (KCSCC) in Victoria. This community provides a window into complex cultural identity, with the members celebrating both their Chinese heritage and their Australian citizenship. This chapter will introduce the purpose of the KCSCC, auspicing body, funding, meeting and schedule of KCSCC, and activities. This chapter reports on interview data collected from organizer and members of the Kingston Chinese Senior Citizens Club. Chapter 6 present the analysis of the data, this chapter will explore five themes: Emotional Well-being, Connections with the Past, Shared Interests, Mental Well-being, and Physical Well-being. The data is illustrated by direct quotations from the participants and their views are contextualized by the student researcher's observations.

Chapter 7

This chapter will present the cultural background of the Chinese, followed by a discussion of Chinese culture values, language usage, and education of China especially for older Chinese people. This chapter also provides a description of community and community learning in China. Furthermore, this chapter mentions issues and concerns regarding music engagement by Chinese older people.

Chapter 8 and chapter 9

Chapter 8 will present older people in Hebei Province, China, followed by a discussion of the city of Tangshan. This chapter focuses on issues of Tangshan Older People University (TOPU), which includes the purpose of TOPU, auspicing body, founding, meeting schedules, activities, and introduces five different faculties. This chapter will argue that Chinese older people are active learners in the organization such as the TOPU. Chapter 9 will introduce the interviews of the TOPU singing class followed by the discussions of the data, five significant themes have been explored in this chapter: Emotional Well-being, Physical Well-being, Mental Well-being, Choosing Music, and Shared Interest. And each of these themes has been analyzed under subheadings.

Chapter 10

This chapter will be a comparison between the data from the Chinese-Australian group and the Chinese group to explore similarities and differences. Based on the discussions of the two groups' data in the preceding chapters, five themes will be reconsidered in chapter 10: Emotional Well-being, Physical Well-being, Mental Well-being, Choosing Music, and Shared Interest. Each of these themes has been analyzed under subheadings: Emotional Well-being includes Enjoyment, Sense of confidence, Sense of purpose, Catharsis, Overcoming loneliness and Isolation, and Nostalgia. Physical Well-being includes Attitude to illness and Maintaining health. Mental Well-being includes Maintaining memory, Learning new things, Doing research and Meaningful practice. Choosing Music covers Chinese songs, Russian songs, and Western music. Shared interests contains Family support and Celebrating culture.

Chapter 11

This concluding chapter will discuss the themes raised by the findings in this study. The themes include positive engagement in community singing groups by older Chinese-Australians and older Chinese. Older people use music in many different ways and that music for them can be a way of maintaining cognitive and emotional health. The third theme offers an exploration of the participants' understanding of the cultural significance of their music engagement. Concluding statements will identify important factors to emerge from the research and suggest areas requiring further

consideration.

The researcher

In this research process it is necessary to introduce myself as this influences all these issues that are conceived of and explored through the lenses of my own experiences. I was born in China that has a long traditional cultural history. I received Chinese education at school (1990-2002) and then I had formal music education at Tianjin Conservatory of Music in China (2002-2006), majoring in Performance of Orchestral Instruments – violoncello. During this period, my formal music education gave me more exposure to music and I had the chance to be in contact with many ideas and styles of Western music and traditional Chinese music. From 2009 to 2010, I studied as an international student at Monash University in Australia, majoring in Music Education. During these years, I have been teaching ‘cello and music theory in Tangshan Older People University in China for one year. And I have held a part time job to teach younger ‘cello students at two different private music schools in Melbourne. Through my education and working experiences, I found that although music plays a significant role in the lives of younger music students, and so many studies focus on the affects of music on young people, music also brings many benefits for older people as well as young people and the impacts of music for older people are more complicated. That is the reason I decided to focus my research on the affects of music learning on Chinese older people and Chinese-Australian older

people. My study and working experiences shape my understanding, views, thinking about music learning for older people, enriching my learning and knowledge. The knowledge I have acquired throughout the years and my personal experience will be used to focus this study that investigates effective music learning for older people.

Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the research issue and the phenomenological approach that will be adopted. This chapter also focused on issues regarding older people and music, and community music. This chapter provided an introduction to culture and Chinese culture particularly. Two broad themes were identified under sub-headings: Confucianism and Organization of Chinese society. This research will explore music education during the time when the older participants in this study attended school therefore, three periods of music and music education in China were discussed in this chapter. Then the Chinese community of Australia was considered in this chapter. Lastly, there was an introduction of the researcher as this influences all aspects of this research. The next chapter will bring the review of relevant research literature in detail the relationship of music engagement and older people.

Chapter 2

The Literature Review

Introduction

This review of relevant, substantive research literature will look in detail at the relationship of music learning and older people. This chapter will introduce successful ageing in later life, older adults' education, followed by discussion of lifelong learning and motivation for older learners. The significance of the background of older people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds also will be discussed. Music learning can influence older people in a number of ways, which include Cognitive well-being, Physical well-being and Emotional well-being. As part of this there will be a discussion of the influence of past experiences and family links. Finally, the role of community music will be considered, organized under five sub-headings: Right to make music, Different modes of learning, Cultural authenticity, Teaching in community music, Reasons to take part in community music and Forming relationships / socializing.

Successful ageing in later life

The concept of successful ageing has received much attention in gerontological and psychological literature for a few decades (Fisher & Specht, 1999). Fisher (1995) defined successful ageing as a developmental process:

People who are ageing successfully are still involved in addressing current problems of identity and development, and do so in light of anticipated future situations as implicated in the basis of past experience. Put another way, successful agers continue to grow and learn as they use past experience to cope with the present and set goals for future development (p. 240).

Rowe and Kahn (1998) claimed that there are three factors for successful ageing: optimal physical and cognitive functioning; absence of disability and disease; and engagement with life. Fisher and Specht (1999) also pointed out that successful ageing involves an ability to cope with present circumstances by drawing on past experience and maintaining a positive sense of future. Furthermore, they also found that ageing successfully requires that one cultivate a perspective of life as an opportunity for personal growth and development, a chance to meet the challenges of life and find meaning in that effort. Baltes and Baltes (1990) stated that successful ageing as a process involving selection, optimization, and compensation through which the individual prioritizes, augments resources and adapts. Rowe and Kahn (1998) further distinguished between “usual ageing” or what older people normally experience, and “successful ageing”, where the individual avoids functional loss or enhances functional capabilities. Ryff (1989) identified six criteria for successful ageing, which included positive interactions with others, a sense of purpose, autonomy, self-acceptance, personal growth, and environmental fit.

Older adults’ education

Wiesmann and Hannich (2008) state that there is a positive relationship between

education and health in older adults, and education is a significant predictor of subjective well-being in older adults. It has been observed that transformational learning, which promotes thinking, self-expression and actions, facilitates positive and in-depth changes in older learners' quality of life (Bennetts, 2003). Therefore, it is suggested that whether the education is formal or informal, those who have received more education and achieved higher qualifications tend to enjoy a better quality of life, have more positive health outcomes, and show greater self-confidence and self-efficacy than their counterparts (Kubzansky, Kawachi & Sparrow, 1999). Meeks and Murrell (2001) also stated that education can be an enduring resource for older adults in achieving successful ageing. People who had a lower educational achievement tended to have a poorer quality of life as well as poor perceived health and health outcomes (Lasheras, Patterson, Casado & Fernández, 2001). The World Health Organization [WHO] (2002) has stated that, 'Education and learning are assumed to be important factors in facilitating participation and allowing older adults to enjoy a positive quality of life as they grow older' (p. 16). Boulton-Lewis, Buys and Lovie-Kitchin (2006) argued that the most important aspects of active ageing are the individual's health and attitude to learning. They also found that most participants, women in particular, wanted to keep learning, and were interested in learning new things including new technology, new activities, and new interests. To be a beginner in a group environment can be a positive experience for older people (Keenan, 1995; Wristen, 2006).

Learning a new skill can make older people feel that they are part of life, still developing and active, and able to make new social contacts through learning (Olseng & Burley, 1987). Older adults are motivated by meaningful challenges, which can arise from life experiences, and adults' experiences provide significant resources for subsequent learning (Coffman, 2002 b). In Duay and Bryan's (2006) study, they found that senior adults focused on maintaining mental alertness as well as physical health. Therefore, Southcott (2009) states that learning is a social and educational experience for older adults. In her study, the members of Happy Wanderers have demonstrated considerable commitment to their own ongoing education and maintenance of their cognitive abilities. They are confident in their ability. Moreover, Coffman and Adamek (1999) agreed that the satisfaction arising from the mastery of playing new repertoire in the company of others can develop self-confidence.

Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning is about the education of adults, which comprises formal and informal education (Leung, Cheung & Liu, 2011). Beatty and Wolf (1996) stated that 'each older adult is unique, possessing a unique story and set of capacities to meet life's challenges' (pp. 19-20). The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (1996) highlighted that lifelong learning is best understood as a process of individual learning and development across the life span. It is an inclusive concept that refers not only to education in formal settings, but also to life-wide learning in informal settings. Lifelong education is reported to have various positive outcomes for

adult learners and the society such as better health outcomes, social change, reduction of poverty, and domestic violence. Schemmann (2002) stated that lifelong learning offers chances for self-improvement and fulfillment for all citizens of a community. Lifelong education becomes an objective need for both economic and societal development, as well as for personal development to adapt to significant societal changes. Moore and Campbell (2009) state that ‘older people do not view older age as being the end of a lifelong journey but rather a time of new beginnings’ (p. 224). Music activities contribute to the development of participation in lifelong learning (Small, 1996). Myers (1995) argues for a view of music education that embraces ‘lifespan engagement’ which invites people to begin or extend their musical growth at any age or stage.

Motivation for older learners

Motivation and confidence are important to learning at any age, especially for older people (Boulton-Lewis, Buys & Lovie-Kitchin, 2006). Boulton-Lewis (1997) also stated that if given sufficient motivation, older learners can achieve the learning goals. Music provided older people with ways of being interested and motivated in life (Hays & Minichiello, 2005a). For example, Blood and Zatorre (2001) claimed that older people got pleasure from hearing the sound of the music they played themselves, which was an important reason for learning musical instruments. Coffman (2002) stated that there are three reasons for participating in music experiences:

- (1) personal motivations, such as self-expression, recreation, self-improvement, and use of leisure time;
- (2) musical motivations,

such as professed love of music, performing for one's self and others, and learning more about music; and (3) social motivations, such as meeting new people, being with friends, and having sense of belonging (p. 5).

People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background

Population projections indicate that people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities are ageing faster than those born in Australia, and the situation of older people of CALD backgrounds has become a major issue in Australia due to the changing demography of the older population (AIHW, 2002). Migration requires geographical, social, economic and cultural changes during adjustment to the host culture in the new country. Acculturation encompasses the changes that one experiences from interaction with other cultures (Berry & Kim, 1988). Older people of CALD background have particular issues in addition to the challenges of ageing, therefore, they need support and care in maintaining their physical, emotional, and social well-being, but their needs are more complex than other older people because of their cultural and linguistic diversity (Warburton, Bartlett & Rao, 2009).

Lewis *et al.* (1997) explored the issues of language in accessing and using services. Their participants came from four different linguistic groups. Inadequate English language was identified as the key barrier to participating in exercise programs beneficial for social, mental, physical wellbeing and accessing and using services. Warburton, Bartlett and Rao (2009) also state that appropriate and adequate communication is a key challenge for older people, and language skill has an

important impact on the capacity of older people from CALD backgrounds to access and use healthcare services at an early stage when ill. Because of the communication barrier, patients from CALD backgrounds appear to underutilize mental health services (Ziguras, 1997). Similarly, dementia patients from CALD backgrounds often present at a later stage of the disease and with an increased proportion of psychiatric disorders (Hassett & George, 2002). Abbott *et al.* (2000) found that older people of Chinese speaking background have been reported to have very limited participation in physical activity or other preventive health care because of personal, social, environmental and cultural factors. Therefore, more appropriate programs and services are needed to meet their needs, many of which are offered by local government and community groups.

Older learners compared to younger learners

Some theorists have delineated what is particular to older adult learners. Hanson (1996) pointed out that simply believing that adults are different from children as learners because they are adults is not sufficient grounds on which to construct a separate theory. Coffman (2009) compared the process of teaching musical instruments between adults and youth learners. He found that there are many common points between the two groups, which include the skills, teachers' expectation, reminders for corrections to rhythm, dynamics, articulations and technique, and encouragement. However, Roulston (2010) points out that the child learner and the adult learner differ in learning experiences. For young people, learning experiences

are ‘frequently new and undertaken for the first time, adding to an increasing body of experience upon which to draw, adult learners have a life-time of experience that informs their learning’ (p. 344). Merriam *et al.*, (2007) state that the field of psychology has also identified different life stages faced by younger learners and older learners. For younger learners, these include the ‘development of trust, autonomy, initiative, industry and identity’. For older learners, ‘developmental life stages identified by researchers include intimacy, generativity and integrity (pp. 423-426). Many studies suggested that compared to younger learners, older adults need more time and effort to encode and select information, sustain attention, and divide attention between tasks (Boulton-Lewis, 1997; Cavanaugh, 1997; Charness, 1991; Boulton-Lewis, Buys & Lovie-Kitchin, 2006). However, although younger learners learned faster, older learners were more easily led to expressive playing. But adults more easily grasped the concepts of fitnesses, ebb and flow (Coffman, 2009). Furthermore, the effort of learning is the other difference between older learners and younger learners. Compared to younger learners, older adults practice hard, and gain an understanding of how hard work will lead to success. Moreover, adults are more reflective about their learning, they ask more questions, have longer attention spans, are more cognizant of improvement and are more patient with the process (Brookfield, 1986; Coffman, 2009). Many studies found that compared to younger learners, adults have to satisfy a strong need for achievement, enjoyment and self-confidence when they learn instruments such as piano and electronic keyboard (Brookfield, 1986; Coffman, 2009; Taylor & Hallam, 2008).

Music and well-being

Cohen (2006) points out that the significance of art activities in particular is that ‘they foster sustained involvement because of their beauty and productivity. They keep the participants involved week after week, compounding positive effects being achieved’ (p. 4). Music impacts on people’s lives both directly and indirectly and is part of life. Much of the literature on music for the older age range focuses on the contribution of music to well-being. Mills and Brown (2004) described well-being as that ‘which builds on a social and environmental responsibility, social equity, economic viability and cultural development’ (p. 4). Pickles (2003) researched a sample of music groups with a mean age of sixty-eight years and stated that ‘music faces two ways: outwards to society, since it originated as a form of communication and continues so: and inwards, because it is part of our Selves’ (p. 423). Pascoe *et al.* (2005) highlighted the social, emotional, physical and cognitive benefits that are derived through engagement with music and concluded that music has the power to ‘exalt the human spirit, transform the human experience and bring joy, beauty, and satisfaction to people’s lives’ (p. 8). Music as a part of our collective everyday living elicits cognitive, physical and emotional responses (Bright, 1995). Tame (1984) stated:

Whenever we are within audible range of music, its influence is playing upon us constantly, such as speeding or slowing, regularizing or irregularizing our heart-beat, relaxing or jarring the nerves, affecting the blood pressure, the digestion and the rate of respiration. Its effect upon the emotions and desires of [people] is believed to be vast, and the extent of its influence over even the purely intellectual, mental processes is only beginning to be

suspected by researchers (p. 14).

Well-being for older people meant continuing to remain physically, cognitively and socially active for as long as possible (Hays, 2005). Therefore, music can be used by people for different purposes, including supporting and enhancing a sense of personal well-being (Hays & Minichiello, 2005b; Rohwer & Coffman, 2006). Southcott and Joseph (2010) agreed that greater active engagement in performing arts by older people (50+) is positively related to enhanced individual and community well-being. However, Mulligan, Scanlon and Welch (2008) point out that ‘the evidence for the benefits of participating in community arts and cultural activities remains unconvincing and attempts to define the health and well-being benefits of the arts have borne little fruit’ (p. 49). Music can serve various functions in older peoples’ lives depending on life needs and circumstances (Hays, Bright & Minichiello, 2002). For example, Wristen’s study (2006) found that the love of music is an important reason for the older participants to take up the piano. Further taking part in piano master classes in front of an audience can provide an opportunity for older adults to reflect on their musical progress (Taylor, 2001). Three different aspects will be discussed in this part, which include mental well-being, physical well-being, and emotional well-being.

- **Cognitive well-being**

Wristen (2006) found that learning for personal growth is one of the important reasons for older people to learn music. When a person is playing an instrument, listening to music, or composing music, all of their cognitive processes are engaged. Veblen and Olsson (2002) believed that participants' personal growth is as important as their musical growth. However, most beginning older adults who are aware of their musical strengths and weaknesses will choose certain skills to develop as their goals for personal growth and well-being (Baltes, 1993; Carstensen & Freund, 1994). Hays and Minichiello (2005b) state that learning to play an instrument provides older people with a sense of well-being and contributes meaning in life. Music contributed to daily psychological health and informants cited examples of how music can provide them with hope for everyday living.

Listening to music can be a means of discovering new works and satisfy intellectual curiosity. Music listening can also mean creating and expanding our internal space where we can retreat from the norms and reality of the world (Bunt, 1996; Hays & Minichiello, 2005c). Music listening was a common and highly valued leisure activity for older adults. Music listening has a positive effect when it is connected to the individual taste of the elderly (Flowers & Murphy, 2001; LeBlanc, Sims, Siivola and Obert, 1996). This was true in different musical genres including popular music (Gilbert & Beal, 1982), and Jazz and Rock (LeBlanc *et al.*, 1996). Laukka (2007) points out that the participants used a variety of listening strategies related to basic

psychological needs, such as pleasure, mood regulation and relaxation.

- **Physical well-being**

Music has affects for all persons, whether ill or healthy, disadvantaged or not (Bright, 1995). As a form of creative and social activities, music has a range of physical health benefits (Carr, 2006; Greaves & Farbus, 2006; Hays, 2005; Hiscock, 2007). Hiscock (2007) states that an obvious way to increase physical activity is to move to music, ‘either deliberately, through dance, or to use it as a background motivation for activities such as exercise classes or walking’ (p. 8). The health benefits of musical engagement extend across the lifespan (Cohen, Bailey & Nilsson, 2002), with research documenting developmental and quality of life outcomes in senior adulthood (Hays & Minichiello, 2005b). Music theorists Clift and Hancox (2001) argued that ‘music may justly claim to have the greatest significance in relation to health and healing. And the idea that music can have significant health benefits has deep historical roots in Western culture and is endorsed too within many non-Western cultural traditions’ (p. 249). Sidell (1995) found that many participants felt music was the key to keeping good health. For example, Cohen *et al.* (2006) identified that sustained singing in groups has potential health benefits for older people. Lally (2009) also argues that through the Sweet Tonic¹ program, participants felt the benefits of weekly singing, physical stretching, and breathing and vocal exercises. According to

¹ Sweet Tonic – Music for life’ program is a singing-based participatory arts initiative based in the southwest of Sydney, Australia (Lally, 2009).

Bamford and Clift (2007) singing has 'distinct physiological benefits, which include: physical relaxation, improved breathing and posture, facial and other musculature activity, shared activity, cultural, social, emotional and spiritual associations, and benefits for the heart, immune system and other physical functions' (p. 6). Furthermore, Darrow, Johnson and Ollenberger (1994) highlighted that 'singing together in a choir or a small group has positive effects on the life of elderly people. They develop a more positive opinion of themselves and judge themselves to be more fit and lively' (p. 130). Furthermore, Southcott and Joseph (2010) agree that singing in a community choir can enhance physical well-being. The pleasure and satisfaction from the mastery of playing new repertoire in the company of others can minimize the negative effects of physical ageing (Coffman 2002; Hays & Minichiello 2005a). Playing an instrument also promotes physical activity in varying degrees. Hiscock (2007) highlights that learning a musical instrument has been shown to promote physiological and physical changes which promote health.

- **Emotional well-being**

Emotional well-being concerns self-esteem, emotions and spiritually. Many older people become aware of their spiritual needs when they have to cope with the changed physical, emotional or social environment in their life. Therefore, spirituality might be described as the web of relationships that provides coherence and meaning in people's lives (Rumbold, 2003; Hays & Minichiello, 2005c). In the words of Storr (1992), 'for those who love music, it remains as a fixed point of reference in an

unpredictable world by being a source of reconciliation, exhilaration and hope' (p. 188). Sloboda and O'Neill (2001) suggested that music can be a medium through which people are able to express emotional states that are closely associated with self. They point out that 'music provides numerous ways in which musical materials and practices can be used as a means of self-interpretation, self-presentation, and for the expression of emotional states associated with the self' (p. 423). This need to express the self does not decrease with age. In Hays and Minichiello's (2005c) study, many participants indicated that they were more spiritually aware when they listened to music. It was music that put them in touch with a personal sense of spirituality. They suggest that music has the potential to provide older people with excellent experiences and ways to validate and review their lives. Scarantino (1987), for example, pointed out that music used in activities such as yoga, meditation and Tai Chi, not surprisingly enables people to probe more deeply into their spiritual selves.

Music has also been shown to provide people with ways of discovering and interpreting their identity (DeNora, 1999; Hay & Minichiello, 2005b). Tennant (1997) highlighted that acquiring instrumental skills is one way in which music learning can interact with personal and musical identity throughout adulthood, adult identity formation being characterized by personal change. Taylor and Hallam (2008) state that 'adult musical identity can be expressed, constructed and sustained when lifelong musical experience, expectations and understanding actively feed into musical participation and learning and are enhanced by it' (p. 301). The study of Taylor (2010)

indicates that all the participants experienced a positive reinforcement of their musical identity as mature amateur pianists as well as acquiring new musical skills. They could construct their musical identity as they anticipated and prepared for the master class, took part in it, reflected on it and continued to learn afterwards. DeNora (1999) argued that people can obtain a sense of self in music because musical materials provide terms and symbols for the elaboration of self-identity. Olson (2005) agreed that music, to older people, has the potential for “teaching” adults in fostering self-identity.

On an individual level, people actively use music as a resource to achieve a variety of ends, especially in the area of emotion regulation (Coffman, 2002; Hays, 2005; Hays & Minichiello, 2005c; Hillman, 2002; Juslin & Sloboda, 2001). Music can trigger endorphins in the human body that help the mind create sound images, allowing people to escape into a painless world sheltered by their imaginations (Hays & Minichiello, 2005b; Ortiz, 1997). The ability to regulate emotions may improve with increasing age that indicates that using music for mood regulation could be an effective strategy for older people, and love of music is a major source of enjoyment (Taylor & Hallam, 2008). Music made older people feel more positive, contented and peaceful. It also helps withdrawn people, who may be lacking interest and self-expression, to become animated (Hays & Minichiello, 2005a; Hays, Bright & Minichiello, 2002; Southcott, 2009). In Hays and Minichiello’s (2005b) study, the participants agreed that music helped them to make sense of feelings and emotions

that they experienced. Jourdain (1997) suggested that when people bring their own life experiences into the context of the listening experience, it is music that idealizes the emotions whether they are negative or positive. As a result music reflects a person's emotional life. Studies have found that music helps people feel accepted, valued and needed (Kahn 2001), that it aids life-long learning (Harju 1998; Small 1996). Older people can gain a sense of purpose through helping others (Southcott, 2009; Duay & Bryan, 2006). Greaves and Farbus (2006) identified that group support can enrich friendship and encourage 'active social network building' (p. 135). In community music activities, older people feel that they can make life meaningful by helping others (Duay & Bryan, 2006) and that they are useful (Southcott, 2009).

Influence of past experiences

Burnside and Haight (1994) pointed out that healthy ageing is that reminiscence and life review are important steps in finding peace of mind, coming to terms with unresolved conflicts from the past, and allowing people to see their lives as having had meaning. Hays, Bright and Minichiello (2002) argued that music can evoke memories of the emotional context of past events and times, and aid people to explore issues from a different perspective and emotions. Southcott (2009) agrees that music is popular among older people because of its powerful associations with their memory and forging connections to past experiences. For example, in Hay and Minichiello's (2005b) study, the music of participants' youth and courting had some of the strongest memories. The participants described that when they listened to particular pieces of

music, they vividly recalled events and experiences in life. Adults are influenced by their prior experiences. Their life experiences can help them to assess learning strategies or to play expressively (Brookfield, 1986; Coffman, 2009). The evidence indicated that early music learning experiences do affect later music preferences and activity choices (Bowles, 1991). For older people, music is a way of feeling connected to their past, and also feeling valued and needed (Christie, 1992). Adults motivate themselves to learn music by setting up short-term and long-term goals that alter as they are influenced by their musical and social environment throughout their lives (Hallam, 2005).

Family links

Duay and Bryan (2006) identified that music learning can maintain close family relationships. The study by Taylor and Hallam (2008) indicates that half of their participants learned to play an instrument directly or indirectly because of their family. It is easy to communicate and have enjoyment together if people do something together. Therefore, music provides an opportunity to get together within the family (Olseng & Burley, 1987). Fukuyama (1995) suggested that strong family ties are found in Asian societies such as Taiwan, Hong Kong and the People's Republic of China. In these Asian societies, the family is the fundamental unit of society of society (Park & Chesla, 2007). Especially in China that is a country with a strong tradition of extended family. And family life has always been extremely important to Chinese culture. Although dramatic changes in Chinese society have occurred in

recent years, traditional family forms have been remarkably resilient. The family is of central importance in Confucius' framework in which the foundation of a moral in society was the natural love and obligations between members of the family. One of the important relationships within the family was between parent and child (Chu & Carew, 1990). Thus, the tradition is attributed to Confucian doctrines that emphasize children's filial obligation to their parents. Parents expect to live with their children and to depend on them for old age support (Chen & Short, 2008).

Community music

The word 'community' is complex. Barz (2006) highlights that communities are never simple gatherings of people, they are gatherings of people involved in social action, in processes that allow performance to function in the definition of self (selves) within society(-ies). Barz (2006) defines a community as:

A group of people that gathers for a reason: whether to remember and recall, to share, or to create new experiences. Communities are often fluid social structures that allow people of similar or dissimilar backgrounds to cooperate on shared objectives. A community gathers to re-enact ceremonies, stories, rituals, and memories through performance, and it typically functions as a direct connection between one's cultural past and present (p. 25).

Community music is pervasive and a basic part of cultures worldwide. It involves active participation in music making of all kinds, which includes performing, improvising, and creating. Koopman (2007) highlights that one of the strengths of

community music is that it can reach out to people who for social, cultural or financial reasons are least likely to develop their musical potential. Egan (1989) suggested:

The Community Music School believes that music can be used as a tool to aid in one's social development by serving as a beautiful and significant unifying factor in family life. By bringing together people from different ethnic, economic and intellectual groups to share a common experience, music can promote an understanding and appreciation for the spiritual values of all people (p. 91).

Olseng and Burley (1987) highlighted that community music is characterized by the following principles: decentralization, accessibility, equal opportunity, and active participation in music-making. Music activity creates a safe environment for people to get to know each other and develop friendship. Community music activities are aimed at personal growth. It is believed that by providing opportunities for creativity and self-expression, they help people to develop their artistic abilities and identity. Self-esteem and self-confidence are seen as significant outcomes of community music (Koopman, 2007). Moreover, Koopman also states that community music is aimed at the well-being of people. Community music helps people to share experiences and to understand each other. Community music organizations such as choirs and instrumental ensembles are an integral part of the social and cultural fabric of many communities (Veblen & Olsson, 2002). Within a community, an important aspect of community music is listening and creating music together, in a large group of people who do not necessarily know each other, music activities can work well in bringing people together as a community or group. Taylor (2010) found that musical play

within the community as an outcome of older adults' learning was clear evidence of the centrality of musical leisure activity in the participants' lives. Community music organizations are an integral part of the social and cultural fabric of many communities (Veblen & Olsson, 2002). Silverman (2011) points out that two of the main aims of community music are life-long learning in/through music; and music making in/for the well-being of the community.

Music has historically connected individuals in persecuted social and religious groups, giving strength and hope where it could be found nowhere else (Olson, 2005). Community music making has existed for many years in different countries. Community music schools are popular in the world, for example, community music schools in Scandinavia increased rapidly after World War II, and most Scandinavian communities supported their own music schools through public donation in the early 1980s (Veblen & Olsson, 2002). In the United Kingdom, the term 'Community Music' dates back to the 1960s and 1970s. Veblen and Olsson (2002) concluded that 'community music in the United Kingdom is based on intentions such as "access," "participation," and "partnership," with an ambition to focus on disadvantaged group in British society' (p. 740). The term 'Community Music' has been used in music education in North America for much of the 20th century (Veblen & Olsson, 2002). Leglar and Smith (1996) categorized three main community music group types in the United States: (1) community music schools which consist of both individual, isolated

freestanding academies and members of the National Guild of Community Schools².

(2) Community performance organizations that include orchestras, bands, choirs, and many other nonprofit groups. (3) Ethnic/preservation groups which include multiple immigrant communities.

Although community music is widely acknowledged as having an important role in the world, there is no generally agreed upon definition (Veblen, 2004; Koopman, 2007). Thomas and Blanchard (2009) argue that the word ‘community’ refers to a small group of people who voluntarily choose to rely on each other and to be relied upon over an extended period of time. Berman (1990) defined community as ‘a group of people who acknowledge their interconnectedness, have a sense of their common purpose, respect their differences, share in group decision making as well as in the responsibility for the actions of the group, and support each other’s growth’ (cited in Wood & Judikis, 2002, p. 10). Similarly, according to Dickinson (2002), all communities are bound to centre around a common interest and a strong, shared purpose, which unite the members to achieve collectively something that would be unachievable by an individual member. Communities that ‘embrace diversity, creative expression and cultural activity are richer, stronger and more able to deal with social challenges’ (Arts Victoria, 2007). Rapport and Overing (2000) concluded three characteristics of community: (1) common interests between people; (2) a common ecology and locality; or (3) a common social system or structure. Trienekens (2004)

² ‘The National Guild of Community Schools of the arts is the service organization in the United States for a diverse constituency of non-profit, non-degree institutions which provide high quality instruction in the performing and visual arts to all persons, regardless of age, race, religion, aptitude of ability’ (Herman, 2000, p. 18).

defined community arts that' it constitutes a specific mode of arts employing a method which is both group oriented and demand oriented. It works with 'new' disciplines in deprived neighborhoods to reach those who do not find their way to traditional cultural facilities, to discover their artistic talents, and to improve their artistic capabilities' (p. 19). Cole (1999) highlighted that the aim of community music is developing a more accessible and participatory approach to music and emphasized the interaction between people. Community music has the advantage of stimulating people to engage in music making, development of active musical knowing and musical abilities, all of these relative to individual goals of participants. Community music activities provide happiness and confidence to people (Veblen & Olsson, 2002; Koopman, 2007). From these opinions, three themes can be identified as fundamental philosophies of community music.

- **Right to make music**

Veblen and Olsson (2002) stated that community music concerns people making music, and community music activities and programs often are based on the premise that people have the right to make music. Knox (2004) agreed that doing music is the basic human right of all people, including persons with disabilities. Community musical activities can be adapted to all kinds of groups in our society (Veblen & Olsson, 2002). Koopman (2007) also highlights that community music practices focus on specific groups and their needs, frequently social intervention, and the needs of disadvantaged groups (Veblen & Olsson, 2002).

- **Different modes of learning**

Community music offers a broader way of looking at how music is used in a variety of settings. Veblen and Olsson (2002) stated that a fundamental quality of community music making is a flexibility of process and structure. It provides different modes of learning to music learners that include informal (such as learning as play in a group) and formal (such as classes and schools). Much of community music learning occurs through the medium of music in a variety of formal and informal community settings across the world. Learning activities are characterized by experiences and using different modes of learning as play in groups (Koopman, 2007; Veblen & Olsson, 2002). For example, a study by Bruhn (2002) indicated that older people often sing in amateur choirs in the southern part of Germany. For music educators, the term community music implies opportunities for participation and education through using flexible teaching methods and musical experiences (Veblen & Olsson, 2002).

- **Cultural authenticity**

Within the cultural field there is a consensus that participation in arts activities plays a significant role in the development of the individual and society (Hillman, 2002). Brown and Volgsten (2006) believe that cultures have musical traditions, and music has served and continues to serve a wide variety of cultural and social functions. Music can express the cultural life of a geographical community, re-created community, and imagined community (Veblen & Olsson, 2002). One of the most

important functions of culture is the group inclusion function that satisfies one's needs for membership, affiliation and belonging. Thus, culture provides a comfort zone in which people experience in-group inclusion (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Hillman (2002) found that the benefits of participatory singing include access to a cultural and social activity. And participants' positive responses are attributed to the effects of the CTS³ program, which is designed to introduce participants to a range of cultural experiences through collaborations with professional and amateur music-makers. Olson (2005) states that music making has been known to have the power to unite groups, strengthen cohesion among people within a community, and articulate ethnic identity. Moreover, one of the important aspects of community music is preserving cultural continuity within communities and fostering intercultural acceptance and understanding. Community music respects the origins and cultural property of a given community and acknowledgment of both individual and group ownership of musics (Veblen & Olsson, 2002).

- **Teaching in community music**

Scheffler (1967) defined that 'teaching may be characterized as an activity aimed at the achievement of learning, and practiced in such manner as to respect the student's intellectual integrity and capacity for independent judgment' (p. 120). Teaching can take many different forms (Hirst, 1973). However, research about the outcomes of music education through the behaviors and opinions of older adults has not been

³ The Call That Sing (CTS) was set up by Sue Hillman in 1989, which was a yearling program designed to encourage participation in Glasgow's celebrations for its reign as European Capital of Culture 1990.

largely explored (Flowers & Murphy, 2001). It is clear that programs for older people should be appropriate to meet the educational and social needs of likely participants (Gilbert & Beal, 1982). Objectively, no elderly beginner will be able to achieve sufficient levels for professional performance (Myers, 1992). Achilles (1992) also found that most older beginners concentrate more on the process of learning than on its aim. Therefore, Bruhn (2002) suggested that in lessons with elderly people, teachers have to mediate a personal view of music, which encourages older people to enjoy making music. At the same time, it is important that music teachers should design active learning opportunities and challenge their older students. To plan effective music education programs for older people, educators not only need to consider their general abilities and skills, but also determine preferences for selected musical experiences and activities (Gilbert & Beal, 1982).

Teaching in community music is characterized by multiple learner/teacher relationships and processes (Veblen & Olsson, 2002). Educators play a significant role in their community. Kim (2001) found that adult piano beginners need more emotional support and guidance from their teacher. Olson (2005) believed that educators could develop stronger connections to the community through music making.

- **Reasons for taking part in community music**

Community music organizations such as choirs and instrumental ensembles are an

integral part of the social and cultural fabric of many communities (Veblen & Olsson, 2002). People show a common musical purpose to participate in community music activities (Slobin, 1993). Mullen (2002) argued that music learning is not central to the aims of community music. It is only one of a series of reasons for being involved in community music. Music engagement can contribute to the development of a sense of place and belonging (Duffy, 2005), and help people participate actively in social activities (Davis, 1999). The history of adult education is embedded in community movements that were committed to acquisition of new knowledge, development of new skills, and empowerment of individuals and communities (Olsson, 2005). Self-confidence and happiness are a function of community music (Elliott, 1995; Veblen & Olsson, 2002). Although community music learning is a collective activity, participants often do different things, and take various roles. Therefore, music learning in community music is both collective and distributed (Koopman, 2007).

- **Forming relationships / socializing**

Bandura (1997) found that older people identified a willingness to cooperate with others as part of a team and suggested that they can gain enjoyment from the product of their collaboration. Coffman (2002) agreed that a desire for socialization is a strong motivation for older musicians to join ensembles. For older people, learning can be as much about socializing as it is about learning (Duay & Bryan, 2006; Johnson, 2004). Chené (1994) concluded that the social aspect or 'being with other' was an important reason why older people enroll in community-based programs. Active engagement

with music in old age provides many ongoing benefits to older people, including maintaining or building socialization (Carr, 2006; Coffman & Adamek, 1999; Gibbons, 1984; Prickett, 1998; Southcott, 2009). Veblen (2004) also stated that one of the central characteristics of community music is community development and social cohesion. For many older people, music had provided important opportunities for socializing and continued to be a way of meeting and interacting with others (Blacking, 1995; Hay & Minichiello, 2005c). For example, in Lally's (2009) study, participants described that they enjoyed socializing with others during the breaks. Importantly, these positive social outcomes were not limited to areas in the participants' lives that are directly related to the workshop program. It can facilitate friendship by providing people with opportunities to interact and share their life experiences with others (Blacking, 1995; Bright, 1995; Cozier, 1997; Greaves & Farbus, 2006; Koopman, 2007; Southcott, 2009). For example, the study of Hay and Minichiello (2005b) indicates that playing an instrument is a way of expressing one's self to others and was often used by older people to convey feelings and emotions to others. Older people prefer to centre their lives around maintaining or building social contact with others (Prickett, 1998). Music activities help older people to form relationship with others and to provide opportunity for working together (Blacking, 1995; Bright, 1997; Coffman, 2002; Davis, 1999; Koopman, 2007; Southcott, 2009; Hay & Minichiello, 2005a). A music group in retirement may be interpreted as a replacement for the workplace as a source of making new friends and offering a feeling of attachment to a group that is important to a person's well-being (Ernst &

Emmons, 1992). Bright (1997) mentioned that maintaining self-esteem is one of the advantages of community music activities for older people.

Conclusion

This chapter explored current research on successful ageing in later life, older adults' education, followed by discussion of lifelong learning and motivation for older learners. This chapter also considered the background of older people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. Moreover, this chapter focused on issues regarding music and well-being. Three themes were identified under sub-headings: Cognitive well-being, Physical well-being and Emotional well-being. As part of this chapter, the influence of past experiences and family links have been mentioned. Lastly, the role of community music has been discussed under five sub-headings: Right to make music, Different modes of learning, Cultural authenticity, Teaching in community music, Reasons to take part in community music and Forming relationships / socializing. The next chapter will discuss the chosen research methodology and focus on the research process.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

Introduction

This research will explore music engagement by a group of Chinese-Australian older people and Chinese older people. To explore the nuances of understanding and feelings a phenomenological qualitative research approach was deemed most appropriate. A case study was undertaken because this allows an investigation to retain the characteristics of participants' understandings and experiences, within their societal context (Punch, 1998). Data were gathered *via* focus group and individual semi-structured interviews. This study mainly focuses on four questions: 'What are the affects of music engagement on older people? Does musical engagement assist in the development of older people's physical and mental health? How do older people engage in music in community? What similarities and differences arise between music engagements by older people from different cultures?'

This chapter will discuss the chosen research methodology selected and focus on the research process. Specifically case study research design, rationale, selection of participants, tools and techniques of data collection will be explored. The strategy used in the two case studies – Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) – will be used to analyze the qualitative data. Following this a discussion of validity, dependability and generalisability of findings will be included along with the ethical

considerations of the study.

Research Design – Qualitative research

Wiersma and Jurs (2005) state that research methodology can be explained as the development of research design – a plan or strategy for conducting the research. The terms qualitative and quantitative are often used in two distinct discourses in the literature. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) described the difference between qualitative and quantitative as ‘distinctions about the nature of knowledge: how one understands the world and the ultimate purpose of the research. On another level of discourse, the terms refer to research methods – how data are collected and analyzed – and the types of generalizations and representations derived from the data’ (p. 12). Quantitative research ‘focuses on the deductive component of the scientific method because the focus is generally on hypothesis testing and theory testing’ (Johnson & Christensen, 2004, p. 30). The aim and function is to understand the meaning of human action by describing the inherent or essential characteristics of social objects or human experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). However, ‘qualitative research relies more on the inductive component of the scientific method and it is often exploratory’ (p. 30). Callaghan (2002) explained that ‘qualitative data are a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and of well-contextualized process and that makes qualitative research appropriate for many music education investigations’ (p. 41). Simply put, qualitative research describes phenomena in words while quantitative research describes phenomena in numbers.

Qualitative research aims to compare the perceptions or meanings the individual has created from an experience of a phenomenon (Yin, 2003). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) point out that ‘qualitative research designs emphasize gathering data on naturally occurring phenomena’ (p. 23), the strength of qualitative research is to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. Thus this can be identified as the most appropriate method to inquire about the experiences of participants. Mark *et al.* (2005) highlight that qualitative research ‘provides information about the “human” side of an issue – that is, the often contradictory behaviors, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals’ (p. 2). However, ‘qualitative research relies more on the inductive component of the scientific method and it is often exploratory’ (p. 30).

This case study will consider Chinese older people and Chinese-Australian older people’s community music engagement. Within older people’s community music engagement, adopting a qualitative research methodology would accept that the model of older people’s music engagement of the subject involves different interpretations of experiencing the phenomena known as music activities. One of the main objectives of this research is to investigate the affects of music engagement on older people and participants’ understanding and experiences of music engagement. Therefore, qualitative research is the most appropriate method to use in this research. Furthermore, qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of a

particular population (Mark *et al.*, 2005). This means that through qualitative research it is possible to explore the cultural differences about the music learning between Chinese-Australian older people and Chinese older people and the cultural influences on older people's music engagement.

Giorgi (1997) stated that all qualitative methods have to go through a minimum of five basic steps: 'collection of verbal data, reading of the data; breaking of the data into some kind of parts; organization and expression of the data from a disciplinary perspective; and synthesis or summary of the data for purposes of communication to the scholarly community' (p. 245). In qualitative study, researchers use a variety of empirical materials such as case study, personal experiences, life stories, interviews, observations, documents and artifacts such as photographs, musical instruments, costumes and so forth (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Merriam (1988) pointed out that this approach adopts a phenomenological research paradigm, in which research 'focused on discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base' (p. 3). In qualitative research, the researcher needs to collect the data, ask questions and observe participants' behaviors and try to understand the participants from their viewpoint (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). The method of collecting the research will be discussed below.

Phenomenology

O'Toole (2006) points out that 'most of the research paradigms come from a relativist or constructivist philosophical orientation that is expressed in a fairly modern tradition known as phenomenology' (p. 28). Husserl (1969) explained that phenomenological research seeks understanding through description of lived experience using the lenses of history, culture and society, identifying the true nature or 'essence' of the human experiences. The value of phenomenological philosophy is that it provides a way to examine and comprehend lived experience (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Smith (2008) defines phenomenology as a study of 'phenomena': appearances of things, or things as they appear in our experience, or the ways we experience things, thus the meanings things have in our experience. Phenomenology has had an impact on qualitative research approaches not only because of its rigorous descriptive approach but also as it provides a method for accessing the difficult phenomena of human experience (Giorgi, 1997). The development of phenomenology formulated by Merleau-Ponty (1962) has influenced both anthropology and ethnology: on the one hand as an emphasis on 'action before cognition', on the other hand through the focus on cultural analysis; seeing the 'meaning of action' and 'experienced meaning' as constituted by the cultural context. A phenomenological approach attempts to understand the meaning of events to ordinary people in particular situations. Assumptions about what their informants mean or how they interpret their experiences are not made by the phenomenological researcher (Bogdan & Bilken, 2003).

Phenomenological research, 'aims to remain as faithful as possible to the phenomenon and to the context in which it appears in the world' (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003, p. 26). Østergaard, Dahlin and Hugo (2008) also point out that phenomenology emphasizes human experience and experiential acting in the world, expressed in our lived experience. Johnson and Christensen (2004) stated 'the key element of a phenomenological research study is that the researcher attempts to understand how people experience a phenomenon from the person's own perspectives' (p. 46). Smith (2008) claims that 'phenomenology studies conscious experience as experienced from the subjective or first person point of view'. And 'the field of philosophy is then to be distinguished from, and related to, the other main fields of philosophy: ontology (the study of being or what is), epistemology (the study of knowledge), logic (the study of valid reasoning), and ethics (the study of right and wrong action)' (p. 28). The research questions that drive this research explore music engagements by older people and can best be approached from a phenomenological position. In this, the researcher's goal is to enter the inner world of each participant to understand their perspectives and experiences (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). The most common form of phenomenological enquiry is a case study.

Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) point out that hermeneutics is the theory of interpretation. 'Hermeneutics represented an attempt to provide surer foundations for the interpretation of biblical texts. Then it developed as a philosophical underpinning for the interpretation of an increasingly wider range of texts' (p. 21). Schleiermacher

was one of the first to provide a systematic understanding of hermeneutics as a generic form. He stated that interpretation involved the 'grammatical' which is concerned with exact and objective textual meaning and the 'psychological' which refers to the individuality of the author or speaker (Schleiermacher, 1998). Moran (2000) stated that:

Phenomenology is seeking after a meaning which is perhaps hidden by the entity's mode of appearing. In that case the proper model for seeking meaning is the interpretation of a text. The things themselves always present themselves in a manner which is at the same time self-concealing (p. 229).

Heidegger (1962) pointed out that hermeneutics enters our story as a much older and entirely separate body of thought from phenomenology, but that the two strands meet, in the work of hermeneutic phenomenologists. Through the perspectives and experiences of participants and how they make meaning of their music activities in this research, phenomenology links with hermeneutics allowing the researcher to seek the core of participants' experience, then engage in phenomenological examination, description and reflection upon the phenomenon.

Case study

Case studies have been used in sociological enquiry for decades. Yin (2003) stressed that a case study is an empirical inquiry that: 'investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident' (p. 13). The United States General Accounting Office (1990) provided another useful definition of case study methods,

which is ‘a case study is a method for learning about a complex instance, based on the comprehensive understanding of that instance obtained by extensive descriptions and analysis of that instance taken as a whole and in its context’ (p. 14). Data in the case study method are collected by multiple means and may consist of qualitative research techniques such as interview, document analysis, various modes of observation, including ethnographical and anthropological strategies as well as the use of quantitative data. Case studies enable a researcher to study contemporary phenomena in a real-life setting, where boundaries between context and phenomenon tend to be blurred (Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994). Case study research generally answers one or more questions which begin with ‘how’ or ‘why’. The questions are targeted to a limited number of events or conditions and their interrelationships (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010). Stake (1995) stated that the purpose of a case study is not to represent ‘the world, but to represent the case’ (p. 426). Case studies are complex because they generally involve multiple sources of data, may include multiple cases within a study, and produce large amounts of data for analysis.

Case study researchers such as Simons (1980) and Yin (1994) concluded that there are six steps that should be used in a case study research: Determine and define the research questions; select the cases and determine data gathering and analysis techniques; prepare to collect the data; collect data in the field; evaluate and analyze the data and prepare the report. Researchers from many disciplines use the case study method to build upon theory, to produce new theory, to explain a situation, to explore

or to describe an object or phenomenon (Cresewell, 2008; Wiersma & Jur, 2005). Case study method is applicable to real-life, contemporary, human situations and is accessible through published written reports.

Rationale and dimensions of case study

A case study, as Yin (1994) pointed out, focuses on ‘establishing the how and why of a complex human situation’ (p. 16). A case study tends to focus on one or a few issues that are essential in understanding the issue being examined. The focus of the research was to explore the issues and concerns regarding music engagement by Chinese-Australian older people and Chinese older people. The nature of the research problems suggested that the focus be on both Chinese older people and Chinese-Australian older people who are the members of music communities and that the understandings and perceptions of the older people should be considered. Thus, it was decided that it would not be appropriate to consider a large sample as would usually be considered in a quantitative approach. A case study allows an investigation to retain the characteristics of participants’ viewpoint and experiences. Punch (1998) stated that the case study aims to understand the case using deep-angle lens with recognition of its context.

There are two main characteristics which help determine whether a case study research design is suitable. Firstly, the research was specifically focused on understanding the older people’s perceptions and thoughts about music engagement,

which means the interviewing and observation are appropriate methods for data collection and analysis. Yin (1994) stated that case study research can be used to address exploratory, descriptive and explanatory research questions. Secondly, the research required the use of an inductive strategy with the aim to build theories rather than a deductive strategy. Stake (2000) described that a qualitative case study investigates 'both the process of learning about the case and the product of our learning' (p. 436). This study could be expanded to several cases depending on the number of participants involved in different music activities. In a case study, a researcher provides a detailed account of one or more cases (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). This study explored the affects of music engagement of older Chinese people and older Chinese-Australian people in different cases. In order to collected deep data, only singing activity was considered in this research.

Participant selection and the frame of the study

Van Manen (1997) stated that participant selection in phenomenological research has seeks participants who have relevant experiences to that of the focus of the study. As mentioned before the main objective of this study is to investigate Chinese older people and Chinese-Australian older people's community music engagement. The participants of community music groups are aged 55+ who are all involved in music activities. In this research, gender was not considered a determining factor in choosing participants.

Furthermore, considering the need to look from different perspectives at the phenomenon, the researcher will also select participants who are organizers or teachers of community music groups. In order to compare the cultural differences about music learning between Chinese older people and Chinese-Australian older people, at least two different music communities will be identified. Two case studies were undertaken in this research to explore issues and concerns regarding music engagement by Chinese-Australian older people in Australia and Chinese older people in China, following approval from the Human Research Ethics committee at the Monash University, which will be discussed at the end of this chapter (see Appendix A). Permission was gained from the organization; the participants were sent an explanatory statement and consent form inviting them to participate in the research process. The research occurred at a public place such as a community school where there first aid personnel were available. When the permission was granted from those authorities a letter to request permission to conduct research, permission to observe work shops and the consent forms together with information for participants (members of community music groups, organizers and teachers) were sent out. The researcher conducted the interviews by herself. O'Toole (2006) argues that it is a very significant decision to decide who does the interviews. It may either validate or seriously corrupt the data. The student researcher did not conduct the community music groups and was not known to any of the potential participants. The interviews took place after the delivery of the lessons. Therefore the involvement of the researcher in the process of conducting interviews did not affect the validation of the

data. Further, the researcher being bilingual (Chinese/English) enabled effective and deep interviews.

To summarize, the frame of the study is to undertake case studies of members of two community music groups who are involved in music engagement. Semi-structured interview, observation, documents and artifacts, researcher journals and triangulation are the main methods of data collection in this research.

Tools and techniques of data collection

The following tools and techniques will be used to collect information and feed back from members of community music groups, organizers and teachers.

• Interviews

Interviews are commonly chosen as a means to collect data in qualitative research. O'Toole (2006) suggests that 'one of the commonest forms of data collection from participants is the interview' (p. 111). Punch (1998) also stated that the interview is one of the most important sources of case study information as it 'is a good way of accessing people's perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality' (p. 174). Merriam (1998) highlighted: 'interviews allow the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic' (p. 74). Yin (2003) also described the advantages of an interview: it focuses directly on the research topic and provides causal inferences.

Smith and Osborn (2003) state that a pre-designed set of questions should be used for the interviews. Yin (2003) listed three basic interview types:

- Open-ended nature interview, in which the researcher can ask key respondents about the facts of a matter as well as their opinions about events;
- Focused interview, in which a respondent is interviewed for a short period of time. In such cases, the interviews may still remain open-ended and assume a conversational manner, but you are more likely to be following a certain set of questions derived from the case study protocol;
- Structured interview, along the lines of a formal survey. Such a survey could be designed as part of a case study and produce quantitative data as part of the case study evidence (p. 90).

Open-ended nature interview were adopted in this research. Knobel and Lankshear (1999) pointed out that ‘open-ended questions can be data themselves or can be used to collect a range of data’ (p. 92). The research participants can provide the most directly authentic data, particularly about their behaviors, feelings, attitudes and thoughts through an open-ended nature interview (O’Toole, 2006). The open-ended interviews allow the researcher to ask the respondents for insights into certain occurrences and may use such propositions as the basis for further inquiry (Yin, 2003). The questions are designed for members of community music groups, for example: Do you think this music activity influences your quality of life (physical, emotional and mental)? Please describe your reasons for joining this music activity? The questions employed in this study are presented with the ethics approval documents (see appendices B, C and D). Through these open-ended questions, the participants

not only provided their opinions about the affects of music engagement but also can suggest sources of corroboratory evidences.

- **Observation**

A good case study need not be limited to a single source of evidence, but will include a variety of sources. Gerring (2007) suggests that observation is an approach to observing directly the behavior and the social and physical environment of the individuals being studied. And it avoid the potential inaccuracy and bias of data generated by research participants. While the interviews are taking place, particular observations of the research participants by the researcher are also valuable components of data. It is important to look for not only what is said, but also what is not being said (Kvale, 1996). Yin (2003) pointed out that observational evidence is significant in providing additional information about the topic being studied. And the observations can range from formal to casual data collection activities; observational protocols can be developed as part of the case study protocol.

In order to explore the affects of music engagement for participants who took part in the community music groups, direct observations were chosen as one important approach for gathering data in this study. Once ethical permission has been gained and with permission from the organizations, workshops/rehearsals and concerts were observed (without any interruption to the flow of the workshop/rehearsal) by the researcher to understand and collect information about them. In this study,

observation allowed the researcher to observe directly the participants' behavior during the rehearsals or workshops, and add new dimensions for understanding the phenomenon being studied. These observational evidences play an important role in providing additional information about the issues and concerns regarding music engagement by Chinese-Australian older people and Chinese older people.

- **Documents and artifacts**

Documentary data may be collected in conjunction with observations; it provides different methods and data type in a project (Punch, 1998). A case study investigator needs to collect and analyze documentary evidence surrounding the phenomenon under consideration. This type of information can take many forms and should be the object of explicit data collection plans (Yin, 2003). The most important use of documents is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources. Many documents relevant to a case study were collected during the course of study. Yin (2003) listed five varieties of documents:

- Letters, memoranda, and other communiqués;
- Agendas, announcements and minutes of meetings, and other written reports of events;
- Administrative documents – proposals, progress reports, and other internal records;
- Formal studies or evaluations of the same 'site' under study;
- Newspaper clippings and other articles appearing in the mass media or in community newsletters (p. 85).

In this study, the documents are very important to the data collection. The researcher

arranged access to examine the files of organizations being studied, including a review of documents that may be useful for data collection. Furthermore, in order to identify the objectives, documents such as articles and communities' newsletters were used by the researcher.

Artifacts, such as pictures or anything that relates to Chinese older people and Chinese-Australian older people's community music engagement were collected and analyzed by the researcher. For example, photographs of Kingston Chinese Senior Citizens Club (KCSCC) performing in the 2009 Chinese New Year Celebration, the Tangshan Older People University (TOPU) singing group performing in 2011 at the celebration of twenty years establishment, and the example of numbered musical notation. Yin (2003) stated that the use of artifacts offers particular insight into cultural features and technical operations. Such artifacts may be collected or observed as part of a field visit and have been used extensively in anthropological research. Considering that the phenomenon under investigation is older people's community music engagement, it is expected that artifacts such as pictures of older people's community rehearsal and performance may be used in this research.

- **Researcher journal**

Another useful source of observational data is the researcher's reflective journal that assisted in the process of reflection and interpretation. Alderidge (1998) stated that 'it is culturally acceptable as a way of setting down thoughts and recording what has

happened’ (p. 121). Knobel and Lankshear (1999) explained that a researcher journal ‘is used to record hunches, feelings, assumptions’, and such journals can be used as ‘a part of reflective and verification process of field approaches’ (p. 93). Researcher journals were chosen by the researcher as a method for collection of participants’ music engagement process in written form, because the researcher needed to collect data from different aspects, such as participants’ attitude about the music activities and what happened during the lesson or rehearsal. Reflective journals allow the researcher to collect additional evidences about the research topics. As a result of analyzing data it was possible to find in-depth understandings and these findings were used for generalization purposes. At the same time, these findings were important and assisted with developing strategies to improve community music groups’ programs and could inform the provision of music activities for older people.

- **Triangulation**

Burns (1995) defined triangulation as ‘the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behavior’ (p. 272). Wiersma and Jurs (2009) state that triangulation ‘assesses the sufficiency of the data according to the convergence of multiple data sources or multiple data-collection procedures’ (p. 287). Yin (2003) explained that triangulation is a process by which the accuracy and dependability of collected data may be determined. A major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence. The use of multiple sources of evidence in case studies allows an investigator to address a

broader range of attitudinal and behavioral issues. Creswell (2008) points out that researchers could improve their inquiries 'by collecting and converging (or integrating) different kinds of data bearing on the same phenomenon' (p. 553). Creswell also highlights that 'this improvement in inquiries would come from blending the strengths of one type of method and neutralizing the weaknesses of other' (p. 553). Wiersma and Jurs (2009) state that triangulation 'assesses the sufficiency of the data according to the convergence of multiple data sources or multiple data collection procedures' (p. 287).

The methods that are intended for use in this research involve the use of semi-structured interviews, reflective journals, observation, along with document and artefact collection. The use of multiple sources of evidence in this study allows the researcher to investigate a broader range of issues regarding music engagement by Chinese-Australian older people and Chinese older people. Wiersma and Jurs (2005) state that triangulation as a part of data collection cuts across two or more techniques or sources. One particular study is examined from many different angles. The data in this thesis were the varying responses, perceptions and experiences each participant would articulate regarding composition through the different methods of data collection.

The Analysis Method

Once collected, data needs to be analyzed. As this research is a phenomenological

case study, Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was selected as the analysis method.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) state that Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is ‘concerned with the detailed examination of human lived experience. It aims to conduct this examination in a way which as far as possible enables that experience to be expressed in its own terms, rather than according to predefined category systems’ (p. 32). Smith and Osborn (2003) added that IPA aims to ‘explore in detail how participants are making sense of their personal and social world, and the main currency for an IPA study is the meanings particular experiences, events, states hold for participants’ (p. 53). IPA focuses on individual experiences. It is a suitable approach when the researcher is trying to find out how individuals reflect on particular situations in their life, how they are trying to make sense of their personal and social world (Smith & Osborn, 2003). In this phenomenological approach participants are trying to make sense of their world. The researcher is trying to make sense of the participants’ perspectives. IPA is therefore intellectually connected to hermeneutics and theories of interpretation (Smith, Harré & Langenhove, 1995). IPA allows participants to recount events and feelings from their own perspectives. Moreover, it acknowledges the researcher’s interpretation. IPA not only requires the researcher to understand the view of the participants, but also accepts the researcher’s own thoughts and conceptions. Finally, IPA also provides a clear guideline that

engages the researcher in an in-depth analysis of the participant's social and personal world (Smith, 2003). The researchers identify emergent themes that are then ordered according to connections and hierarchical relationships (Willig, 2001). Direct quotations are interpolated into the text to present the voice of the participants.

Stages of IPA

Journals, semi-structured interview and personal accounts are the best way to collect data for IPA analysis. Especially semi-structured interviews which are the way most IPA studies have been conducted. In this research, the most appropriate method chosen for data collection were semi-structured interview, reflective journals, and documents. Once the semi-structured interview and reflective journals had been completed, the step-by-step process of IPA could be adopted in this research. Three stages are recommended (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

- **Looking for themes**

The semi-structured interviews allow the researcher and participant to engage in a dialogue whereby initial questions are asked, hopefully to provide a wealth of data to be analyzed. The interviews are transcribed and the text is placed in a large column. Two columns are added on the right side of the transcript. The closest is used to note what is interesting or significant about what the participant said. To do this transcripts are read a number of times, because with every reading the researcher obtains new insights. The next column is used to document 'emerging theme titles' (Smith &

Osborn 2003, p. 68). In this process, the research needs to focus in-depth on participants' expressions which are 'high level enough to allow theoretical connections within and across cases' (Smith & Osborn 2003, p. 68). In this stage, the same process is undertaken with the researcher's reflective journals. In this process, the researcher identifies illuminating quotations to clarify and expand on the themes considered.

- **Connecting themes**

Smith and Osborn (2003) stated that this stage requires more analytical ordering and connections need to be made between themes which are emerging. After repeatedly rechecking the interview transcripts the next stage is to produce a table of themes. It is important that the clusters of themes capture the participants' experiences or view. Each theme and subordinate theme relates to this particular topic. During this process, the researcher has discretion regarding which theme or themes closely relate to the summary. At the same time, some themes may be dropped, such as those that provide not very rich evidence or do not add to the overall direction of the research.

- **Continuing the analysis with other cases**

At the last stage, a more comprehensive list of themes was then constructed on the summary of themes from each case. The themes were clustered into related groups from across the case studies of community music groups in China and Australia. There are two methods to integrate themes found within the interview transcripts and

produce this master list in themes. The first one is to use the master-list of themes created by the first interview and use that again in the analysis with the second interview. However, it seems unfair to find data in other transcripts in this way. Therefore, the researcher used the other method which is to begin the process again with the second interview transcript repeating the states of IPA again and produced a different master list of themes.

By grouping the data and themes in this manner, it provided an overview of the themes and allowed larger themes to emerge. Finally, the three stages of analysis were completed for each case study and a list of master themes which were correlated across the case studies of community music groups in China and Australia was generated.

Validity and generalizability

Case studies may emphasize detailed contextual analysis of a limited member of conditions and their relationships. Gibbert and Ruigrok (2010) concluded four criteria for case study research:

- **Construct Validity:** refers to the extent to which a study investigates what it claims to investigate, that is, to the extent to which a procedure leads to an accurate observation of reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994);
- **Internal Validity:** is also called “logical validity” and refers to the presence of causal relationships between variables and results;
- **External Validity or generalizability:** is grounded in the intuitive

belief that theories must be shown to account for phenomena not only in the setting in which they are studied but also in other settings;

- Reliability: refers to the absence of random error, enabling subsequent researchers to arrive at the same insights if they conducted the study along the same steps again (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

Golafshani (2003) stated that validity in qualitative research has been defined in many different ways as the concept is often complex, cannot be simply described, and is questionable in terms of being applicable in qualitative research. Due to the nature of qualitative research, it is essential to ascertain validity of the research regardless of the design and the subject. Research that contains validity means that it is valid – it is based on fact or evidence and can be justified.

There are two categories of validity: internal and external validity (Yin, 2003). Wiersma (2000) stated that ‘internal validity is the extent to which results can be interpreted accurately, and external validity is the extent to which results can be generalized to populations, situations, and conditions’ (p. 5). Wiersma and Jurs (2005) point out that internal validity depends on the logical analysis of the results, when a researcher develops the explanation of the investigated phenomenon, ‘verifying results and conclusions from two or more sources or perspectives enhances internal validity’ (p. 215). In this study internal validity was undertaken by comparing the various data and understandings of older people’s music engagement, which provided different lenses on the phenomenon. Different tools as sources of data collection in this study boosted internal validity. The participants who are members of community

music groups were chosen between the age range of 50 and 80. All the research participants have been involved in music engagement and the majority of them are experiencing musical rehearsals and performances. Yin (1994) stated that external validity could be achieved from theoretical relationships and as a result generalizations could be made. Considering the different community music engagements and experiences between Chinese older people and Chinese-Australian older people, achievement of external validity and generalisability can be identified as an issue. However, testing the findings in other settings requires follow-up procedures and more research which will be considered in the discussion chapter.

Mertens (2005) states that generalisability is considered as an aspect which clearly separates a qualitative research approach from a quantitative research approach. Firestone (1993) concluded that there are two perspectives of generalizability: Case – translation and Analytic generalization. Mertens (2005) states that the researcher needs to provide the deep description that allows the reader to make the judgment about the applicability of the research to another setting. In this study it is possible to assume that the writer is responsible for convincing a reader about the successfulness of generalizing findings. Firestone (1993) stated that analytic generalization is based on the researcher's generalizing from a particular set of results to a broader theory.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the design of methodology, research process, rationale, selection of participants, tools and techniques of data collection to conduct the study.

It also discussed the tools used to analyze data along with the expected processes of evaluating research findings such as triangulation. The chosen analytic approach – Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) – was also discussed. Finally, aspects expected to be considered such as validity and generalizability of finding were considered.

Chapter 4

Background of Chinese-Australians

Introduction

Australia has a remarkable immigration history. No other country of settler immigration has such a large and diverse migrant population as Australia (Collins, 1991). Immigration has created a diverse, multicultural Australian society. The Chinese-Australian population is one of the major communities in Australia and its population is concentrated in large cities, such as Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. In 2001, there were 142,720 China-born persons settled in Australia (ABS, 2001). Five years later, according to the 2006 census, there were 702,603 people with Chinese ancestry in Australia (ABS, 2006). Chinese settlement in Australia has a long history and has been an important part of Australian society, since the discovery of gold in Australia in 1851. Tan (2003) stated that although the historical presence of Chinese in Australia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century has been documented, it is only in recent years that researchers have begun to learn more about the Chinese-Australians and their descendants' lives in contemporary Australia. Following immigration, individuals often struggle to adapt to their new country of residence while maintaining personally significant aspects of their ethnic culture, such as traditional values and culture (Costigan & Dokis, 2006). Further, research still needs to be done in this area.

To contextualize this research, this chapter will present a history of Chinese immigration to Australia, followed by a discussion of Chinese family values in Australia and the cultural background of Chinese-Australians. And this research will focus on issues and concerns regarding music engagement by Chinese-Australian older people; the music culture of Chinese-Australians will be considered, framed in a brief discussion of Australian's community music.

History of Chinese immigration to Australia

• Earliest arrivals and indentured labor: 1788 to 1853

It is believed that Asians were the first visitors to call on Australian shores in the 18th century, establishing contact with Australian's Aboriginal people (Collins & Reid, 1994). Choo (1994) described that in later years, the Koepangers (Timorese), Malays, Manilamen (Filipinos), Japanese and Chinese came to northern ports, including in the Kimberley region of North West Australia (p. 12). From the beginning of the colony of New South Wales, links with China were established. In the 1840s, the increasing demand for labor led to larger numbers of Chinese men arriving as indentured laborers, to work as shepherds and irrigation experts for private landowners and the Australian Agricultural Company. Between 1848 and 1853, more than 3,000 Chinese workers on contracts arrived via the Port of Sydney for employment in the New South Wales (NSW) countryside (Arthur, 2005). Some Chinese workers returned home, but some remained and spent the rest of their lives in NSW.

• **From goldseekers to artisans: 1853 to 1901**

Chinese and other Asians featured prominently in the immigration waves accompanying and following the Gold Rush in NSW in the mid nineteenth century (Collins & Reid, 1994). Large numbers of Chinese people were working on the Victorian goldfields and the other smaller NSW fields between 1853 and 1877. This also occurred in the far north of Australia, for example, in Queensland at the Palmer River. So that by 1877 there were 20,000 Chinese gold miners (Choi, 1975). After the Queensland rush finished, a significant number of Chinese people came to NSW, particularly Sydney. Mining was a risky endeavour, so after the end of the gold rush Chinese people began trying to find other ways of earning a living. By the 1890s Chinese people were represented in a wide variety of occupations such as interpreters, cooks, market gardeners, storekeepers and cabinet-makers (Arthur, 2005).

• **White Australia policy: 1901 to 1960s**

In 1901 the Australian colonies joined together as a Federation to form the new Australian nation which had a racist immigration policy built on entrenched anti-Asian and anti-Aboriginal attitudes and practices (Collins & Reid, 1994). By the time of Australian Federation, there were around 29,000 ethnic Chinese in Australia. Most of these ethnic Chinese were men (Charles, 1987). Yarwood (1968) explained that the ‘white Australia policy’ was introduced with an unusual degree of unanimity across the spectrum of politics and among all classes (p. 73). Collins and Reid (1994) stated that ‘the “White Australia policy” was the bedrock of the new Australian nation

at Federation in 1901, blocking entry for Chinese and other “coloured” people to Australia until the 1960s’ (p. 3). Between 1901 and 1936 the comparatively few new migrants were often sponsored by Australian-born Chinese people. The number of ‘full-Chinese’ fell from just under 30,000 in 1901 to 9,000 Chinese in 1947 (Choi, 1975). During World War II there was considerable anti-Japanese feeling in Australia but the numbers of Chinese people did not fall greatly. During this time Australian-born Chinese people began to predominate over Chinese-born people for the first time. After 1949, the Chinese population in Australia increased rapidly when refugees began to arrive as the result of Japan’s war in China. In the post-war period (1949 to 1973), assimilation became the dominant policy and this led to some extension of rights with gradual changes to citizenship laws (Arthur, 2005).

- **Re-migration: 1970s to the present**

The Whitlam Labor Government (1972-1975) formally abolished the white Australia policy and replaced it with an immigration policy which led to an influx of Chinese immigrations (Collins & Reid, 1994). Since the demise of the white Australia immigration policy in 1972, Australia has received Asian-born refugees, and actively encouraged Asian business migration as well as promoted Australia’s education sector to Asian students. Most of the Chinese settlers in Australia arrived post-1973, mainly settling in the urban areas of NSW, Victorian and Queensland (Mak & Chan, 1995). Arthur (2005) also points out that there were new arrivals from the Chinese diaspora and for the first time this included significant numbers from non-Cantonese speaking

parts of China. The first of such arrivals were ethnic Chinese refugees from Vietnam during the 1970s, followed by an increasing number of elderly parents who migrated to join their adult children during the 1980s as part of the Australian-Chinese Family Reunion Agreement.

After 1989 and the Tiananmen Square protests, the then Prime Minister Bob Hawke, granted Chinese students permanent settlement in Australia. Since then, immigrants from mainland China and Taiwan have arrived in increasing numbers (Arthur, 2005). Collins and Reid (1994) pointed out that there were more migrants coming from Asia including many ethnic Chinese, than from any other region in the 1990s. By 1991 there were 687,850 Asian-born Australians, who comprised 4.3% of the total Australian population. Of this number, 199,288 were born in northeast Asia, such as China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission [HREOC], 1993). Between 2005 and 2006, China was the third major source of permanent migrants to Australia behind the United Kingdom and New Zealand.

Chinese family values in Australia

- **Chinese family structure in Australia**

The family represents a primary group system to be found in all cultures but different ethnic groups show variations in the way they organize family relations (Smolicz, Secombe & Hudson, 2001; Shek, 2006). The traditional Chinese family is an extended, multigenerational family with large numbers of children. China largely

operated as male-centered society, in which the family name is passed down through the male line. However, Chinese family structures in Australia are diverse. The structure and size of Chinese families in Australia tend to reflect contemporary urban Chinese societies, which favor small nuclear families (Duan-Mu, 1994; Mak & Chan, 1995). Mak and Chan (1995) also stated that some Chinese families in Australia have elderly grandparents and parents living under the same roof. It is uncommon for adult siblings to share the same house with offspring. However, the Chinese continue to emphasize the values of family and to maintain close family links. There is a strong bond between parents, children and other family members (Chinese Culture Profile, 2006). Since 1979, in order to control the population, the Chinese government had a family planning policy which allows a family just one child. However, recent settlers from China are freed from family planning, and some have chosen to have more than one child in Australia. During the 1990s, there were some single-parents in Australian-Chinese communities, coinciding with Australia's economic recession. For example, Chinese families who are from Hong Kong and Taiwan where one or both parents continues to work in Hong Kong or Taiwan, where thriving economics have generated attractive business opportunities and employment prospects (Mak, 1991).

- **Development of Chinese family values**

Mak and Chan (1995) pointed out that all the core Chinese family values serve to ensure the family's stability and cohesion. Traditional Chinese society has a collectivist orientation that endorses the family, not the individual, as the major unit

of society (Lee, 1982). Traditional Chinese cultural values such as those espoused by Confucian, Buddhist, and Taoist thoughts influence Chinese families (Shek, 2006). Traditionally, there was strong emphasis on filial piety (Mak & Chan, 1995; Shek, 2006). For example, family members in different generations should live together; children were expected to take care of their ageing parents; children are taught to respect and defer to their parents, grandparents and women are expected to defer to their husbands. In addition, gender role differentiation was very significant in the traditional Chinese culture and family values, and children were socialized to identify with traditional gender roles (Shek, 2006) in which men should take care of things outside the family while women take care of those inside (Mak & Chan, 1995).

The political system in China influences contemporary families. With the establishment of the socialist and Maoist regime since 1949, the role of the family has distinctly changed (Shek, 2006). For example, the rights of children and women after 1949 were given greater attention as compared to pre-1949. With the gradual opening up of the country since the 1970s, China has increased contacts with foreign countries, and implemented economic reforms. Shek (2006) points out that there are three new emerging influences that have shaped Chinese families:

- Traditional Chinese family values have gradually been replaced by Western family values. For example, socialization practices have changed to be more children centered, with parents being lenient and relaxed. In addition, gender roles have changed in Chinese marital relationships;

- With the intensification of economic reforms, Chinese families have been more susceptible to the influences of economic changes, such as a higher level of quality of living and family life;
- The globalization in recent years has effected Chinese families (p. 277).

- **Chinese families in Australia**

Immigration has an enormous influence on the family. The current Chinese population in Australia originates from a variety of countries and socioeconomic backgrounds. The Chinese population includes those born in China, Taiwan and Hong Kong, as well as many of those born in other Asian countries such as Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam. However, most of them share similar traditional values, such as family values (Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002). Rosenthal and Feldman (1990) claimed that ‘the family is important both as an embodiment of collectivist cultural values within a hierarchical structure and as a critical agent for the transmission of these values to children’ (p. 497). People may practice Confucian principles within the family. For example, the importance of the family unit is the most significant one, which prioritizes the family rather than the individual. Most problems among family members are handled within the family and controlled by the extended family (Zhan, 2002). According to principles of filial piety, parents are expected to take good care of their children when the children are young, and in return, adult children are expected to be responsible for their ageing parents’ well-being. Immigrant families typically consist of both foreign-born parents and children who continue to retain many of the cultural values of their original culture. As the length of residence increases, the

second-generation will acquire their ethnic heritage through their parents and relatives in a familial context (Kwak & Berry, 2001). This family value can be contrasted with that of the Western family, in which individual growth and development is valued and children are encouraged to become physically and psychologically separated from their parents (Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986). Recently, some of the traditional Chinese family values such as filial piety, patriarchal authority and emphasis on harmony within the family are being eroded in the face of Australian values of independence and assertiveness (Mak & Chan, 1995).

Culture background of Chinese-Australians

Joseph and Southcott (2007) claim that ‘as the concept of culture is complex and linked to language and social practices, it also includes beliefs, values and attitudes behaviors and customs’ (p. 31). Cultural diversity is ‘the common heritage of humanity’ which indicates otherness and the inherent plurality within societies (Joseph & Southcott, 2007). Kee (1992) concluded that prior to the 1960s, Chinese settlement in Australia was mostly in rural areas. By 1993 the Chinese population of Australia was predominantly urban with 92% of Chinese people living in the metropolitan areas of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland (p. 41). The Chinese community is the most diverse immigrant group in Australia because of the country of origin. Although Chinese culture is ‘dynamic and ever-changing’, Chinese immigrant families in Australia have been found to retain something of their original cultural beliefs (Mak & Chan, 1995; Martin, 1998).

- **Chinese cultural characteristics**

Hofstede (1991) pointed out that Chinese cultural values have several main dimensions that include individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, and uncertainty avoidance. Huang (1988) contended that Chinese culture and values have been remarkably consistent over its long history, mainly because of the fact that its education system has been dominated by Confucianism. The Chinese cultural values are largely formed and created from interpersonal relationships and social orientations (Mok & DeFranco, 2000). The fundamental Confucian assumption is that the stability of society is based on unequal relationships between people (Bond, 1986). Respect for authority is the other main characteristic of Chinese cultural value. The early root of the Chinese respect for authority is in Confucius' five cardinal relations, between sovereign and minister, father and son, husband and wife, old and young, and between friends. The Chinese have to act according to the norms prescribed for each instance of interpersonal relations (Moise, 1995). The Chinese today still show a strong respect for authority. For instance, it is very rare to hear Chinese people address their parents, teachers by their first names (Kenna & Lacy, 1994).

- **Religion**

Martin (1998) stated that about half of the Chinese migrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and China have no stated religion. In the 2006 Census, among persons born in Mainland China, the religious breakdown was as follows: 57.8% declared no

religion or atheism, 17.6% declared Buddhism, 15.1% declared Christianity, 0.6% declared other religions. However, religion still plays a significant role for many Chinese. Significant numbers from Singapore, Vietnam and Hong Kong follow Catholicism. Chinese people who speak Mandarin and Cantonese may practice Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism a mixture of these belief systems or Christianity (South Eastern Region Migrant Resource Centre [SERMRC], 2009). Wong (2001) pointed out that the philosophical approaches of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism have similar features:

All three emphasize the consciousness of mind. All stress subjectivity and subject freedom. All believe that reality and manifestation, or substance and function, are one. All focus on life, in sharp contrast to traditions of abstract reflection (p. 311).

Confucianism which was already discussed in chapter 1 is the basis around which the cultural aspects of Chinese life are organised. However, it is practiced more as a philosophy than a religion (Chinese Culture Profile, 2006). While Confucianism is no longer a dominant ideology for Chinese society, Confucian ideas have had a major impact on the development of Chinese society. Many aspects of the present China also resemble the hierarchical order of Confucianism (Zhang, 2002), and this may influence Chinese-Australian people.

- **Culture values of Chinese-Australians**

Paterno (2001) stated that customs and behaviors can be easily acquired but that changing values and attitudes need a deeper awareness. It means that individuals do

not fit easily into discrete cultural groups – the location of cultural identity is complex and constantly evolving. When a family moves to a new country for the purpose of long-term settlement, its members live in two cultures: their ethnic-heritage culture prior to migration, and the new culture of the society in which they currently reside (Kwak & Berry, 2001). Australia is a complex, developed society with a mixture of different groups, therefore its culture spans different social groups. And Chinese immigrants generally retain many of their original cultural beliefs in Australia. Dunn and Ip (2008) state that most Chinese-Australian participants felt that it was important to continue practicing their own cultural heritage. These Chinese families share a heritage of traditional Chinese values handed down through the generations (Chu & Carew, 1990). However, many parents find it difficult to insist that their offspring maintain the Chinese culture and language in Australia (Mak & Chan, 1995).

Languages spoken at home by Chinese-Australians

Cultural groups differ in the extent to which they emphasize their native tongues as core values. If a stress is placed on their language as the principal carrier of their culture it may be seen as a defence mechanism against assimilation (Smolicz, Lee, Murugaian & Secombe, 1990). Smolicz *et al.* also stated that the language is more than the medium of communication and self-expression but a symbol of ethnic identity and a defining value which acts as a prerequisite for ‘authentic’ group membership (p. 231).

The linguistic context of Australia has become very different from that experienced by those born overseas in Asia (Clyne, 1982). Based on the 2006 ABS Census, 144,784 Victorians spoke Chinese at home. They came from more than 100 different countries, including China, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Taiwan, Singapore, East Timor, Cambodia and Indonesia (ABS, 2006). Smolicz *et al.* (1990) argued that the Chinese participants commented on the fact that Australia appeared to them as a monolingual society, where English was the sole language of the dominant majority. However, the Chinese constituted the largest non-English speaking community in Australia, many Chinese-Australians showed a positive attitude toward their ethnic language (Smolicz *et al.*, 1990; Khoo, 2003). For example, in the study of Dunn and Ip (2008), language retention among offspring was seen as important to most Chinese-Australian respondents.

All Chinese languages use the same written characters for words of the same meaning, but are pronounced differently for different Chinese dialects. There are two ways of writing in Chinese, old Traditional and new Simplified. And most printed materials in Australia use traditional Chinese characters (ABS, 2006). SERMRC (2009) makes several points about the language spoken at home by Chinese-Australians from different geographic locations:

- for migrants from mainland China: the official language is Mandarin; other major dialects are Cantonese, Hakka, Teochew and Wu. The language spoken by the Chinese mainly depends on which part of China they originally came from. Simplified Chinese characters are

often used by mainland Chinese immigrants. English proficiency is generally low, particularly among China born older people;

- for migrants from Hong Kong: English and Mandarin are the official languages of Hong Kong. However, most people in Hong Kong speak Cantonese since it is the main language used in education and government administration, as well as in daily social communication. Traditional Chinese characters are widely used in Hong Kong;
- for migrants from Malaysia: Malaysian-born Chinese speak a variety of Chinese dialects and languages including Mandarin, Cantonese, Hakka, Teochew and Bahasa Malaysia. Simplified Chinese is commonly used in Malaysia;
- for migrants from Singapore: English is the main language of Singapore, followed by Mandarin and Cantonese. Singapore is the first foreign country to officially adopt Chinese Simplified characters in official publications;
- for migrants from Vietnam: a large proportion of Vietnamese Chinese speak Cantonese as their mother tongue (p. 2).

Chinese immigrants in Australia have tried to maintain their language by speaking Chinese at home, sending their children to Chinese weekend schools, supporting Chinese newspapers, television and radio programs. Although the effort is made to maintain language, the use of Chinese at home decreases with the second and third generations (Mak & Chan, 1995).

Community music in Australia

Southcott and Joseph (2010) state that ‘the arts are identified as a powerful catalyst in building strong communities that have the potential for connection caring and social development’ (p. 18). Music education is a powerful medium to foster intercultural engagement by a community in a multicultural, multifaith, multiracial and multilinguistic society promoting understanding of difference and diversity (Joseph &

Southcott, 2007). Bohlman (1988) stated that musical performance functions as a site for the exchange of knowledge and for the projection of a community's definition to both self and other. Breen (1994) identified seven purposes for community music in Australia: utilitarian, industrial, oppositional, pluralist, normative, consensus and welfare. Over the past 20 years, a conscious community music movement has grown in Australia since 1978, the Music Board of the Australia Council and state arts funding bodies began funding for community music coordinators. The Community Arts Network (CAN) provided advisory services, networking information, training, a professional journal, and four websites for community music workers (Veblen & Olsson, 2002). Recent research in Australia has been toward providing community music models, Harrison (1996) claimed that:

Our music comes from so many different places and consists of so many different styles which continually cross the lines of amateur and professional practice. The issues, for people working in community music, are the context and the principles of community development, as much as the styles and forms of the music itself (p. 40).

Chinese Music Communities in Australia

Since their establishment in Australia, Chinese music communities have provided social outlets through concerts, Cantonese opera, and film nights. Wang (1997) concluded that there were two main reasons for the establishment of these music communities, and first of all, because of the restrictive White Australia Policy during

this period, many Chinese-Australians could not bring their families to Australia. Therefore, the establishment of these music communities came about as an avenue for these people to enrich their lives. Secondly, many Chinese who came to Australia were sponsored by Chinese businessmen to work as labourers. So many of them had no education and still could not speak English. Moreover, under the White Australia Policy, opportunities were limited, which resulted in the majority of these people staying within the confines of the Chinese Communities, which similarly limited their social activities within the Chinese society.

There were many Chinese music communities established in the early 1980s. There were the direct result of the increase in migration from Asia. With the Chinese Government opening its doors to the West, a wider array of talented artists made their way to Australia making possible the establishment of different music communities, such as The Chao Feng Chinese Orchestra and The Australian Chinese Music Ensemble (Wang, 1997). However, during the 1980s and 1990s, the activities of these Chinese music communities were not confined within the Chinese communities; they have involved both the Chinese and general communities within Australia and their performances have been more directed to the general community, acting as a medium through which Western people have been able to experience Chinese culture.

Furthermore, many organizations were established in the 1990s to foster cultural understanding and Asian arts and music in Australia, such as Australia Asia

Foundation (AAF) and the Chinese Community Social Services Centre Inc. (CCSSCI). Many of them are non-profit organizations providing the services for the Chinese-Australia communities. The purpose of these foundations is to support the creation and presentation of cultural works by Australian artists. And these foundations also maintain an active role in the development of Australian knowledge of Asian arts and music to promote cultural understanding between Asians and Australians through the arts and music (Australia Asia Foundation [AAF], 2009).

Older Chinese-Australians' music engagement

In 2001 the Australian census reported Chinese ancestry as the seventh most common ancestry, which made up 3.4% of Australian's total population (ABS, 2006). It is expected that by 2016 there will be a substantial 66% increase in the size of the overseas-born group within the Australian community, almost three times the rate of growth for people of the same age who were Australian-born (Lawson, Barbaro & Goulding, 2003). In 2002, the older Chinese population was expected to become one of the top five largest groups of overseas-born Australians (Bryant, 2002). Therefore, people from Asian cultural backgrounds will represent a large part of the older population, and meeting the ageing needs of diverse population is a big challenge (Andrews, 2001).

Nowadays, global societies are faced with an ageing population and there is an increasing interest in active ageing (Southcott, 2009). Australia has seen a growth in

both the quantity and quality of musical programs and experiences held in communities in recent years. And these programs and experiences are often grouped under the term ‘community music’. Although many older Chinese-Australian adults over the age of 50 may continue to learn music in choirs, orchestras, community groups and workshops, little research has explored older Chinese-Australians’ music engagements and what this experience means to them.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the background of Chinese-Australians, which includes the history of Chinese immigration to Australia; Chinese family values in Australia and culture background of Chinese-Australians; the music culture of Chinese-Australians; and older Chinese-Australians’ music engagements in Australia. The next chapter will provide an in detail description of one Chinese community, the Kingston Chinese Senior Citizens Club, in Victoria, as a lens through which to explore Chinese-Australian older people’s community music engagement and other related issues.

Chapter 5

The research context: Australia

Introduction

In Victoria there are many Chinese communities that are composed of mainly older people who have migrated to Australia. This chapter reports on one particular community singing group, Kingston Chinese Senior Citizens Club in Victoria whose members have all migrated to Australia, many as refugees. This community provides a window into complex cultural identity, with the members celebrating both their Chinese heritage and their Australian citizenship. This chapter reports on interview data collected from the organizer and members of the Kingston Chinese Senior Citizens Club. The conversations focused on how such membership can develop older people's well-being, encourage a sense of community, and support the maintenance of cultural identity amongst older people in Victoria, Australia.

City of Kingston

The City of Kingston was created in 1994 as a result of the initiative of the State Government to reorganize local government boundaries. The City of Kingston is located in the middle and outer southern suburbs of Melbourne, covering an area between 15 and 34 kilometers south-east of Melbourne including a number of beachside areas. The City includes the suburbs of Aspendale, Aspendale Gardens, Bonbeach, Braeside, Carrum, Chelsea, Chelsea Heights, Cheltenham, Clarina,

Clayton South, Dingley Village, Edithvale, Heatherton, Highett, Mentone, Moorabbin, Moorabbin Airport, Mordialloc, Oakleigh South (part), Parkdale, Patterson Lakes and Waterways (City of Kingston community profile, 2011).

According to the 2006 Census, the City of Kingston grew from approximately 129,000 people in 2001 to 135,000 in 2006. That is growing by about 1,000 per year (ABS, 2006). Analysis of the age structure of the City of Kingston in 2006 shows that there was a larger proportion of people in the older age groups. Overall, 20.2% (approximately 26,000) were aged 60 years and over, compared with 17.0% for the Melbourne average.



Figure 5.1 Map of City of Kingston

The 2006 Census indicates that 28.4% of the population of City of Kingston was born overseas, and 20.3% were from a non-English speaking background in 2006. Overall Kingston has a high proportion of people born in Australia. However, in the northern suburbs of Clayton South, Clarinda and Oakleigh, there are large Greek, Chinese, Vietnamese and Cambodian communities. Although the dominant non-English speaking country of birth of Kingston was Greece, where 2.3% of the population, or 3,044 people, were born, China was the second largest birthplace country of the population (+296 persons) in this area between 2001 and 2006 (ABS, 2006). According to 2006 census, 72.1% of persons spoke English only, and 23.1% spoke another language and English not well or not at all in the City of Kingston. The largest changes in the spoken languages of the population in the City of Kingston between 2001 and 2006 were for those speaking Mandarin (1,552 persons) and Cantonese (1,689 persons).

Kingston Chinese Senior Citizens Club (KCSCC)

Purpose

The City of Kingston is one of the most multi-cultural areas in Melbourne. There are many people who come from different countries living. The Kingston Chinese Senior Citizens Club (KCSCC) is a community-based organization which was established in 2007 to support Chinese older people living in the area. It is a non-profit making group and providing traditional social activities to those elderly Chinese citizens living in there. The KCSCC was formed following the enthusiasm of community

member Anna Wang who is Malaysian-Chinese. She has been in Australia for 18 years. She noted the increasing Chinese population in Kingston. She said that:

I live in the area for more than ten years. I found that Chinese population is increasing in the area in recent years. The first reason is lots of migrants coming from China in the past a few years. The other reason is that many Asia students coming to study in Australia, such as Hong Kong, Mainland China, Singapore, Malaysia and Taiwan. Some of them settled in Australia when they graduated, then their parents migrated to Australia to join in them. In Kingston, the Chinese population is growing very fast, because the area is not very far from Monash University, so many Chinese people buy a house in this area. I think the Chinese population is the second largest following Italian in this community.

Although the Chinese population is increasing rapidly, there were no Chinese community programs in this area. After Anna Wang retired she noticed that there was no organization that provides activities for Chinese older people in the City of Kingston. She describes her reasons:

I was retired four years ago. I found there were many Chinese older people living in the area. But there is no Chinese ethnic community in Kingston. You know, most of Chinese older people have a language barrier. It is hard to them to communicate with others. Moreover, these older people's children need to work. They have not enough time to take care of them, so they feel bored at home. That is why I had an idea to establish a community which makes a space available to let Chinese older people do activities. I talked to the neighbors who are Chinese and asked them about having interest in, or not, joining in the community group. And then we pasted some advertisements in the area, such as community library, shopping centre and the other public places to let more Chinese older people know our group. So there were more Chinese people who came to join in our group.

The one main goal of KCSCC is to benefit members. Anna said:

I think all the activities we arrange just make sure to bring benefits to our members. Especially the aspect of physical, because we let these older people get off from their home, have a place to go, it is very good for the health. Let them forget the illness and loneliness.

Anna also mentioned the other two purposes, the first one is social inclusion: ‘we want to provide a good environment to let more Chinese people or Chinese older people to get them in.’ The second one is equality, ‘we also need to provide equal opportunities for Chinese older people to take part in activities. That is why we apply services to them.’

Yao is the leader of a dancing group and singing group. She came from Laos and has been in Australia for 18 years. She is also a main organizer in KCSCC. She agreed that:

The main reason to establish this organization is providing a place for the older people. Otherwise, these older people have no places to go. This organization provides a good opportunity to let our members to know more people and do some positive things.

Organization

- **Auspicing body**

The Australian Local Government Association [ALGA] (2004) stated that Australia’s population is ageing. The result of falling fertility, increasing life expectancy and the effect of the ‘baby boomer’ generation moving through older age groups, has

contributed to an increase in the number and proportion of people aged over 65 years. The number of people aged over 65 years will increase from the current 2.5 million to around 7.2 million by 2051 (ABS, 2006). The Australian National Policy Office (2008) points out that currently older people constitute 15% of the Australian population. To build social policy for the needs of older people, it is fundamental to assert that older people are citizens with the same rights and responsibilities as any group in society. Older people, just like all people, are entitled to those services which are relevant to their physical, social, mental and spiritual needs and which contribute to their quality of life and general wellbeing. Although the current Australian Government has introduced a number of social inclusion initiatives such as the Social Inclusion and an Australian Social Inclusion Board which aim to enable all Australians to participate fully in Australian life, older people are absent from current agendas on social inclusion (National Policy Office, 2008). In order to encourage the social inclusion of older people in Australian, the federal government considers changing and supporting community initiatives as efficacious.

The Victorian Government, together with Health Services, has a clear responsibility for meeting the health care needs of the increasing number of older people in Victoria. A policy for Health Services in Victoria (2003) stated that an increased opportunity for community-based care is the important reason for older people staying in hospital for shorter periods. Many older people need ongoing community support services. Therefore, the interface between Health Services and ongoing community support

providers is an important one. The Health Service, together with ongoing community support providers, can manage many of the activities that can develop older people's quality of life. This provides better outcomes and continuity of care for older people.

ALGA (2004) highlighted that older people are a significant and growing part of local communities. This trend presents both daunting challenges and real opportunities for local government. Local government has begun to respond to the opportunities and challenges of population ageing in a diverse and multi-faceted way. Local government, in partnership with the Australian Government, considers itself to be well positioned to have a positive and crucial impact on the growing older population through its intimate knowledge of the local community and its ability to identify the diversity of older people. Further, local government is involved in the provision of infrastructure and facilitation of developments which ensure the physical health and economic environment of the local community is conducive to the overall wellbeing of older people (ALGA, 2004). In order to build the capacity of local government to plan for an ageing population, the ALGA has developed the *Australian Local Government Population Ageing Action Plan 2004-2008*. The plan provides a flexible and dynamic framework that builds awareness, encourages action, fosters partnerships and improves access to information. The KCSCC is established under the *Australian Local Government Population Ageing Action Plan 2004-2008*.

The KCSCC is supported by government at three levels – the federal government, the

state government and the local government of the City of Kingston. Anna describes that it is a program which develops older people's welfare. She explains the reasons why the auspicing body supports the development of this welfare:

In order to encourage older people to stay at home instead of being in hospital or nursing home, the federal government and state government introduce this idea to local governments. Local governments get funding from federal and state government to develop some services for older people, for example, let older people get out from home and make something positive. If they can join in some group like this and have a happy life, they just forget the illnesses.

It seems that the federal government and state government introduced the idea to local governments. When these local governments get funding, they use the money to provide services for older people. Anna said:

The local Government City of Kingston is the biggest supporter for our group. Why the local government doing this? Because this is program and they need to introduce the program to different communities. And the governments at three levels are connecting. For instance, I know there is the project is called positive ageing, I am not sure whether this project is local government project or state government project. But every local government get the funding to develop older people's welfare, to let them live positively. Therefore, the funding must focus on the particularly area. If the program works, older people staying in hospital for shorter periods and the federal government can reduce the Medicare bills.

- **Funding**

The KCSCC receives funding from the local government of the City of Kingston to survive. Specifically the organization applied for funding to the City of Kingston

council to rent the venue which is the property of City of Kingston council. And the central community health service supported this organization completely to help them rent the venue. Anna said:

We are a non-profit organization and provide the social services for elderly people, so the City of Kingston council rent the place to us almost free. We need pay \$85 per week for first two years. And then we just need pay \$144 per year. Therefore, we collect membership fee from our community members to running the community that is how we survived. Our community members need to pay \$15 per year as membership fee.

But Anna mentions that funding is one of the biggest challenge for the organization, ‘we need get the supporting from government departments, let them know we are providing services for people and get more funding to develop our group’.

Meetings and Schedule

All members of KCSCC are over the age of 50, and there are a greater number of women than men, half of the members are refugees who came from different countries, such as Malaysia, Laos, Vietnam, and mainland China. The KCSCC is one of the most successful Chinese communities in the South Eastern Region in Victoria. The KCSCC arranges the activities for the members once a week on Fridays, between 10:30 am and 2:00 pm. Anna said: ‘there are many other ethnic communities in this area, but these different communities just operate separately, and we never work together’. However, Anna mentions that many Chinese communities in different areas in Melbourne work together sometimes to celebrate some important festivals. And it

is very common for many of the members to join in two or three different Chinese community groups at the same time.

The KCSCC is a non-profit organization, all the staff in the organization are volunteers. The KSCSS is maintained by the enthusiasm of community members such as Anna Wang and Tony Pau. Initially there were seven members, today there are more than one hundred, mostly Chinese. Anna states that:

At the very beginning we just had few members and staff worked with me together. Now I think we have more than one hundred members in this organization. We have no full-time or part-time staff in this community. The main organizers in our group are all volunteers. We have about twenty staff to running this community now. For example, some people special in Kitchen, then they take over the Kitchen, and some people is good at music, like Yao, they just take responsibly to our singing group or dancing group.

Activities

• Services

The KCSCC provides a lunch service to the members. It is one of the successful ventures of the KCSCC. Every member pays three dollars for lunch. Anna is very proud and explains:

Providing lunch is our special service, I am pretty sure the other Chinese communities cannot do this. We provide the lunch to our members, they all very happy with that. If there is celebration, the other communities join us. We can provide lunch for about 200 people, it is no problem.

There is socialising among members in this community. For instance, a birthday celebration is an opportunity for members. The last Friday in every month, the KCSCC has a birthday party. Every member makes dessert and brings them to KCSCC. The staff of KCSCC prepare a birthday cake for members whose birthdays are in this month. After lunch, all members and staff celebrate together. They sing 'Happy Birthday' and eat the birthday cake. The researcher found that most of the members enjoy the service.

- **Big workshop classes – English and Tai Chi**

The community organizes different activities for members. These activities are very popular among them. The community members have regular classes to learn English and Tai Chi⁴ which is very popular amongst Chinese people especially older people. Tai Chi is a Chinese martial art that is primarily practiced for its health benefits, including a means for dealing with tension and stress. Among the martial arts, there are two basic types: the hard martial arts and the soft martial arts. Tai Chi is the latter and emphasizes complete relaxation, and is essentially a form of meditation, or what has been called 'meditation in motion.' Unlike the hard martial arts, Tai Chi is characterized by precise soft, slow, flowing movements that emphasize force, rather than brute strength (Cheng, 1981). In the 20th century, it has developed a worldwide following among people with little or no interest in martial training, for its benefit to

⁴ Tai Chi was developed by a Taoist monk by the name of Chang Sangfeng in the 13th century. Subsequently Tai Chi came to be associated with different schools in China. A man by the name of Yang, subsequently studied with the Chen family and later modified the Chen style, thus developing the Yang style of Tai Chi Chuan. The Yang style is the most common traditional style of Tai Chi Chuan practiced today (Jou, 1991).

health and health maintenance (Wile, 1995). With purely a health emphasis, Tai Chi classes have become popular in hospitals, clinics, and community and senior centres in the last twenty years or so, as baby boomers age as low-stress training for seniors became better known (Yip, 2002).

The teachers of the KCSCC are volunteers. They come to KCSCC to attend the lesson once a week. Yao introduces that:

We have organized many different activities for our members, such as English speaking class, and Tai Chi class. Every Friday between 9:30 am and 10:30 am we have the English class, and then from 10:30 am to 11:30 am is the Tai Chi class. We invite teachers to here to take the lessons. The members who have interesting can join in. These two classes are free to our community members.

Although music often accompanies the Tai Chi class, this is not the focus of the activity. Anna explains the reasons why she arranges the English classes for members.

She said that:

English is a challenge for most of Chinese-Australian older people. Many of Chinese older people in our community have language barrier, they cannot speak English. It is a big problem when they communicate with other people. Many of members want to learn English, but there are no regular classes for older people in this area. So we decided to arrange the workshop for our members. Now, we invite an English teacher to come here to take lessons every Friday. The English class is very popular among the members.

Anna's understanding validates the decision in this research to understand the data

collection in Mandarin Chinese. Anna states that Tai Chi class is a very good way to improve older people's physical health. Tai Chi class is one of the most popular courses in this community. The KCSCC has arranged a Tai Chi class for about three years. Approximately half the members join in the class. The KCSCC also arranged some performance opportunities for members during the past two years, where members could demonstrate Tai Chi to other community members.

- **Music activities – singing group and dancing group**

Unlike the English and Tai Chi classes, the singing group and dancing group have no regular class and teacher. The members of the singing group and dancing group just practice by themselves. There are eight members in the singing group. They sing melody without harmony. Yao explained that previously they have had a piano accompaniment provided by a volunteer. They use numbered musical notation and learn songs by memory. The numbered musical notation is a musical notation system widely used among the Chinese people. Most Chinese traditional music scores and popular song books are published in numbered musical notation. It is also known as 'Ziffersystem', 'numeric notation' or 'numerical notation' (Klassen *et al.*, 1959). Klassen *et al.* (1959) explained that numbers 1 to 7 represent the musical notes (more accurately the scale degrees). When the notes are read aloud or sung, they are called 'do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si' in a movable do approach. They always correspond to the diatonic major scale. For example, in the key of C, their relationship with the notes and the solfège is shown below:

Note:	C	D	E	F	G	A	B
Solfège:	do	re	mi	fa	so	la	si
Notation:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

In G:

Note:	G	A	B	C	D	E	F#
solfège:	do	re	mi	fa	so	la	si
Notation:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Dots above or below a musical note raise or lower it to other octaves. Where there is more than one dot above or below the number, the dots are vertically stacked. The notation uses a movable Do (1) system. The key signature defines the pitch of '1'. So '1=D' which means 'D major'. Minor Keys are based on the natural minor or the Aeolian mode, and the key signature defines the pitch of '6'. So '6=D' means 'D minor'. The same accidentals in the standard notation are used, and as in common practice, an accidental is placed before the notes '1 2 3 4 5 6 7' to raise or lower the pitch. The plain number represents a quarter note (crotchet). Each underline halves the note length: One represents an eighth note (quaver), two represent a sixteenth note (semiquaver), and so on. Dashes after a note lengthen it, each dash by the length of a quarter note. A dot after the plain or underlined note increases its length by half, and two dots by three quarters. The number '0' represents the musical rest (Klassen *et al.*, 1959).

The picture below is the example of numbered musical notation, which is one of the singing group's rehearsal songs. This song was popular in the 1980s.

1=F $\frac{3}{4}$ 大海啊，故乡 王立平曲

$\underline{1\ 2\ 1\ \underline{7}\ \underline{6}} \mid \underline{5\ 3\ 3} - \vee \mid \underline{3\ 4\ 3\ \cdot\ \underline{2}\ 1} \mid \underline{6\ 2\ 2} - \vee \mid$
 小时候妈：对我讲 大海就是我故乡

$\underline{7\ 1\ \underline{7}\ \underline{6}\ \underline{5}} \mid \underline{5\ 2\ 2} - \vee \mid \underline{4\ \underline{3}\ \underline{1}\ \underline{6}} \mid 1 - - \parallel : \underline{5\ 6\ 5\ 3} \mid$
 海边 出生 海里航 长 大海啊

$\underline{5\ 6\ 5} - \vee \mid \underline{6\ 5\ 4\ 1\ \underline{6}\ 5} \mid 5 - - \vee \mid \underline{3\ 4\ 3\ \cdot\ \underline{2}\ 1} \mid \underline{6\ 2\ 2} - \vee \mid$
 大海 是我生活的地方 海风吹 海浪涌

$\underline{4\ 5\ 4\ 3\ \underline{1}\ \underline{6}} \mid 1 - - \parallel : \underline{5\ 6\ 5\ 3} \mid \underline{5\ 6\ 5} - \vee \mid \underline{6\ 5\ 4\ 1\ \underline{6}\ 5} \mid$
 随我漂泊四方 大海啊大海 就像妈：-

$1\ 5 - - \vee \mid \underline{3\ 4\ 3\ \cdot\ \underline{2}\ 1} \mid \underline{6\ 2\ 2} - \vee \mid \underline{4\ 5\ 4\ 3\ 1\ 6} \mid 1 - - \parallel :$
 样 走遍天涯 海南 总在我的身旁

(尾声)

$3\ 3\ \cdot\ 1 \mid \underline{5\ 6\ 5} - \mid 5 - - \vee \mid 1\ 1\ \cdot\ \underline{6} \mid \underline{3\ 2\ 3} \ 2 - \mid 2 - - \vee \mid$
 大海啊大海 大海啊故乡

$\underline{7\ \underline{7}\ \underline{6}\ \underline{7}} \mid \underline{6\ 5\ 6} - \vee \mid \underline{5\ 5\ 4} - - \mid 6 - - 5 \mid \underline{5} - - - \mid$
 我的故乡 我的故乡

Glen Eira 华人老年俱乐部

Figure 5.2 The example of numbered musical notation

A member of the group Yao said that:

Sing or dancing is a hobby for enjoyment for us. All of us enjoy the singing. We discuss together the songs which are sung by us. We rehearse on every Friday between 11:00 am and 12:00 am. And we have no accompaniment at present.

Dancing is similar to singing activity in this community. Yao said the members of the dancing group mainly perform Line dancing. Line dancing has become popular since the mid 1990s when the Chinese government set up regulations prescribing sports dancing. More than 30 million Chinese regularly perform what the government calls sports dancing, including the waltz, line dancing and the rumba (China Daily, 2011). The popularity of line dancing which is attributed to a desire to have fun, nostalgia for the past and a desire for good health amongst elderly people. Chinese line dancing comes from Yangge, where is a form of Chinese folk dance originating in the Song Dynasty. It is very popular in northern China and one of the most representatives forms of folk arts. Yangge dancers perform a quirky combination of line dancing and ancient Chinese step patterns – all to what can be considered a cacophonous beat of drums and cymbals (Huang, 2005). Unlike Yangge, the background music of more widespread Line dancing adopts Chinese or Western popular music with a quick tempo. People gather in neighborhood parks, vacant lots or public squares in the morning or evening dance to together in a line. Sometimes dancers use props like a dancing fan for Line dancing.

It seems that Line dancing is also very popular in Chinese communities in Melbourne. Yao said the main reason they take up dance is for exercise and fun. She told the researcher, ‘If you are happy, you won’t get sick. Dancing gives me energy’. Yao mentions that there are many Line dancing workshops in the South Eastern Region in Melbourne. As a dancing group leader Yao goes to the Springvale town hall to take

the dancing lessons twice a week. And then shares the dancing steps with the other members. But Yao said that the rehearsal times are much less than those for the singing group. The members just rehearse before celebrations or festivals. Yao said:

For our dancing group we do the teamwork, for example, before every performance, I arrange the dancing steps, and the other people just arrange the programs' order. Someone choose background music for us. I also take dancing lessons on Monday and Wednesday from 12:30 am – to 2:00 pm. and then I remembered the dancing steps and share with the other members to do the rehearsal.

Again, music is not the real focus of the dancing as the routines appear to be carried out to a wide range of pieces – what matters is the tempo and the length of the work.

- **Performances**

The KCSCC has arranged performance opportunities for community members. Anna said:

We arrange some performances for our members. In order to celebration some festivals, such as Chinese festivals, the Spring Festival, and the Dragon Boat Festival. We just had the Dragon Boat Festival celebration last month. The community arranges some programs such as singing, the Tai Chi performance, and dancing program. Moreover, we also try to arrange our members to take part in the other communities' performances.

The Spring Festival and Dragon Boat Festival are two important Chinese festivals in China. The Spring Festival falls on the 1st day of the 1st lunar month. It originated in

the Shang Dynasty (c. 1600 BC – c. 1100 BC) from the people's sacrifice to gods and ancestors at the end of an old year and the beginning of a new year (China Internet Information Center, 2011). The Spring Festival is the most important festival for the Chinese people and is when all family members get together. Nowadays, Chinese New Year is celebrated with Chinese people in different countries. In countries such as Australia, many ethnic Chinese hold large celebrations for Chinese New Year. The picture below is the members of KCSCC performing in the 2009 Chinese New Year Celebration.



Figure 5.3 KCSCC singing group performing in the 2009 Chinese New Year Celebration

The Dragon Boat Festival known as Tuen Ng Festival, commemorates the death of a popular Chinese national hero, Qu Yan, who drowned himself in the Mi Lo River over 2, 000 years ago to protest against the corrupt rulers (Hong Kong Tourism Board [HKTb], 2011). HKTb also points out that the highlight of the festival is the

fierce-looking dragon boats racing in a lively, vibrant spectacle. Teams race the elaborately decorated dragon boats to the beat of heavy drums. The Special boats, which measure more than ten metres, have ornately carved and painted 'dragon' heads and tails, and each carries a crew of around twenty paddlers. Today, festival activities recall this legendary event. People eat rice-and-meat dumplings wrapped in bamboo leaves. The Dragon Boat Festival is very popular among overseas Chinese people.

Yao mentions that they not only perform in Chinese Festivals, but also perform in general community festivals, such as International Working Women's Day, which is marked on March 8 every year. It is a major day of global celebration of women, the focus of the celebration ranges from general celebration of respect, appreciation and love towards women to a celebration of women's economic, political and social achievements (International Women's Day, 2011). Anna concludes that the members enjoy doing the performances. They can know more people through taking part in the other communities' performances. And these performance opportunities can make their life more positive. Moreover, many of the older people in the community had no chance to do the rehearsals or performances. They were busy with their family and their jobs when they were young. Now, they have more time to arrange their life, the KCSCC provides this opportunity for them.

Conclusion

This chapter has reported on one particular community singing group, Kingston Chinese Senior Citizen Club (KCSCC) in Victoria, Australia. This chapter has introduced the purpose of the KCSCC, auspicing body, funding, meeting and schedule of KCSCC, and activities. This chapter has reported on interview data collected from the organizer and members of the KCSCC.

Chapter 6

Case study one – Kingston Chinese Senior Citizens Club

Introduce to the interviewees

The founder of the KCSCC and eight members of the Singing Group participated. All interviewees will be identified only by their initial, for example HS, ML and BL. The interviewees were between aged 59 and 85 years. Gender was not considered a determining factor in choosing participants in this research, although all participants are women. All participants were born in Mainland China and speak Mandarin. Three of them can speak Cantonese. However, they came from different countries, including mainland China, Hong Kong, America, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Laos, reflecting the cultural and geographic variation encompassed by the term ‘Chinese’. Most of the interviewees migrated to Australia more than ten years ago. Two participants migrated to Australia quite recently only two years ago. Most of the participants cannot speak English or only do so with a low English proficiency level. Two participant’s English level is average. The table below indicates the interviewees’ information:

Name	HS	ML	BL	LB	MZ	CW	YY	HX
Age	73	73	59	74	79	85	72	66
Gender	Female							

Language	Mandarin	Mandarin	Mandarin	Mandarin Cantonese	Mandarin	Mandarin Cantonese	Mandarin	Mandarin Cantonese
Country of Birth	Mainland China	Mainland China	Mainland China	Mainland China	Mainland China	Mainland China	Mainland China	Mainland China
Years in Australia	2	2	22	31	18	10	15	30
Other countries lived in	USA	Mainland China	Malaysia	Vietnam	Mainland China	Hong Kong USA Vietnam	Mainland China	Laos
Reason for immigration	Join family	Join family	refugee	refugee	Join family	Join family	Join family	refugee
English level	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Low	Low

Figure 6.1: Table of KCSCC participants' background

KCSCC singing group

In 2008, the singing group was formed at a weekly meeting of the larger KCSCC. One of the founding members, HS, suggested establishing a singing group and rehearsing weekly. YY, a member of the singing group, recalled that ‘I found there were some members like singing when I joined in this community. We sometimes sung some old songs together. One day, HS suggested that we form a singing group and find some nice songs to rehearse every week. That was a great idea, all of us agreed with her.’ Initially there were only three members. Today there are more than ten. All members are over the age of 55, and are all women. A half of the members migrated Australia as refugees, they came from different countries. HX, the leader of singing and dancing group, introduced that the group:

Our members have similar experiences. Many people come from Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and Timor. Some our community

members come from different countries [points to another group in the hall] do you see those four people? Actually, they are come from four different countries, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Cambodia and Vietnam.

Most of the members of the singing group have had no formal musical training. Some of them had a few lessons at some point in their life but nothing they consider significant. However, they all love singing. The singing group rehearses every Friday between 10:30 am and 12:00 am. HS, the founder of the group, arranges the programs every week. Every member has a music folder or notebook which includes the repertoire. Most of the songs they sing are old Chinese songs. HX explained that ‘our members are influenced by Chinese culture so they prefer old Chinese songs’. They sing five or six songs every week. At the time of the interviews, the group sang unaccompanied. HX said ‘we had a piano accompaniment before but all the community members share the same room. Our rehearsal disturbed the others so we stopped the accompaniment’. But HS mentioned that they sometimes use some audio or video material in the rehearsal such as DVD and MP3. The singing group has taken part in some community events or celebrations. These have included the Spring Festival, the Dragon Boat Festival and International Working Women’s Day. The participant ML said ‘we perform in some festivals and celebrations. If it is an important festivals, we perform to an audience of more than one hundred and fifty’. Currently the group has a repertoire of about one hundred songs. HS said that ‘we choose some songs which our members know. Every member has a note book or folder which includes many songs we usually sing’. The group likes to add new songs from time to time. This will be discussed below.

Themes

During the discussions and in the analysis of the data, a number of significant themes emerged concerning membership of KCSCC Singing Group. Five broad themes have been selected: Emotional Well-being, Connections with the Past, Shared Interests, Mental Well-being, and Physical Well-being. The data are illustrated by direct quotations from the participants and their views are contextualized by the student researcher's observations. There appeared to be little disagreement between Sing Group members. The only example was when a member would leave the group for a short time during a rehearsal while a song was being sung that they had no interest in singing. Such absences were only temporary.

Emotional Well-being

Emotional well-being was perhaps the most significant aspect which was pointed out by all participants of KCSCC singing group. This is a theme that occurs several times in the interviews. Five aspects are reported in this theme, they are: Enjoyment, Sense of confidence, Sense of purpose, Emotional release, Overcoming loneliness, and Isolation and nostalgia.

• Enjoyment

Each member has their own story of how they came to join this community singing

Group but all interviewees commented that they joined for enjoyment. Simply, singing gives them pleasure and the meeting has become a focus of the week. HS, the founder of the group, lived in the United States for nineteen years before to Australia. She explained that loving music was the biggest reason for her to form the singing group after she migrated to Australia. She explained the primary reason to join the singing group was that ‘all the singing group members like singing. We have the same hobby that is why we get together and enjoy it. When we were young, we liked to listen to music and singing. But we were busy for work. We need to take care of the kids and family. We almost forget how important of music to us. When we get older and after we retired we are aware that we can sing!’ BL, the youngest member in this group, asserted that enjoyment is very important for older people to do something. She said that:

I loved singing when I was young, but I had no chance to learn music. Now I join in this group, I feel pleasure when I sing the songs with other people. I am learning Cantonese opera. I think for older people, like me, learning music or singing is just for fun. Music is a hobby for enjoyment. You know there are many people join in the dancing group, but I have no interesting in dancing. I know myself. If you have no interest, it is so hard to do it.

The other participant, MZ has a similar experience. Singing is a hobby for her, and she chooses to join in this singing group for fun. She said that:

I think interest is very important, if you have an interest in something, you will love it. And interest can let you keep going to do one thing. For me, I like singing and dancing very much when I

was young. My family was very poor during that time, so I had no opportunities to learn music. Since I joined in this community, I found there were some people who have the same hobby just like me, so we get together, choose some songs to sing, just for fun. I realized I have the chance to sing. We can do something that we had no chance to do when we were young. Now, I like singing, because singing can make me happy.

The participant LB came from Vietnam, and she was a dancing teacher when she was in Vietnam. She explains that the main reason she joined the group is also because of interest. She described, 'I liked to sing and hum and bought a Karaoke machine. Occasionally she would wake in the middle of the night and sit in the parlor by herself singing. She recalled that:

I liked singing and dancing when I was a child, and I joined in the school singing and dancing group. I had been a dancing teacher for many years in Vietnam, but I am not a professional dancer, I just taught children in Chinese community. I have been here thirty years. There were not many Chinese people in Australia thirty years ago. There was nothing to do for Chinese people during that time. Although I like music, I had no chance to listen to music or singing. After the 1980s, the situation is much better, there are more Chinese people in Australia, and you can find some Chinese groups or communities to join in. Now, I have chance to singing with people who have similar experiences to me. I knew the people who have the same hobby just like me in the community. So I feel great pleasure.

The participant ML came from mainland China, she has been Australia for only two years. She joined after watching a rehearsal and 'I think singing for me just for fun. I like singing with the other people. When I was in China, I really enjoyed sing with my friends on weekends. And I really enjoyed that. That is why I decided to join in this

singing group'. She explained that the reason she loves singing is because of her wonderful singing experiences:

I learnt lots of revolution songs when I was working in mainland China, there were different music activities in my work place. I just sing these revolution songs with my friends. I found singing itself brings benefits above other group actives. That is why I decided to join this singing group.

The participant CW is the other foundation member of the group. She is the oldest one in the singing group. She has been in Australia for more than ten years. She lived in different countries before she settled in Australia. She said, 'it is complicated to introduce myself, I born in mainland China, Guangdong Province, I migrated to Vietnam with my family when I was a child. Then I worked in Beijing and Hong Kong for many years. After retirement I migrated to America for few years. In 1995, I decided to settle in Australia to join family'. CW explained that the reason she likes music is because of her school experience when she was in Vietnam. She recalled that:

I grew up in Vietnam, many Chinese people migrated to Vietnam as refugees because of Japan's war in China, and many of them were talented. For example, I remember there was a music teacher who taught us music at my primary school and secondary school. She was a musician. She taught us how to make the voice beautiful, and played a piano accompaniment for us. So at that time music lesson was one of my favorite lessons. I think that is the reason I like music in my later life. Interest is very important for me. Because I love music, I love singing, I feel happy when I singing with other people.

The group member YY attended this group three years ago. She had seen an advertisement and attended with her friends. She said that 'there's music going on in my head all the time. I just love music and I just loving singing'. HX, the current

leader and organizer of the group, believed that music had been strong in her life and she recalled that, ‘throughout my life there’s music. I love dancing and singing. They give me pleasure. You don’t have to be a good dancer or singer to love music. Everyone has right to love music’. Every member has their own story of how to take part in the singing group. All the participants highlight that loving music is the biggest reason to join the group, and singing makes them feel good. HS concluded that ‘we share the happiness with other people and singing makes us younger’.

• **Sense of confidence**

Four of the participants felt that rehearsals and performances gave them a sense of confidence. ML asserted that such communal singing ‘gives me energy!’ She loving singing and knew many songs but never sang herself because her son had told her to ‘stop, mum, you can’t sing, it is too noisy’, which made her very self-conscious. She explained, ‘I am not confident about my voice before I join this group and I am pretty embarrassed to sing alone, but I like singing with the other people. Now I feel more confident when I sing to the audience. Now I sing myself and I hum aloud at home, and I don’t mind what my children say, because I just sing for myself but not for them’. CW agreed with ML, she said, ‘I am not confident to sing to my family. Sometimes, I sing to myself at home, but if someone is at home, I never sing’. However, the researcher found CW very confident when she sings in the group, she always sings in a loud voice in the rehearsals. She explained that, ‘when I join this group, the other members encouraged me to sing. They told me my voice very

beautiful. I found I was good at singing. I can sing! After that, I felt more confident to sing’.

YY highlighted that performances make her more confident. ‘May be I am not a good singer, but I want to sing and I can do it!’ She said, ‘we perform in some festivals and celebrations. And we rehearsed before every performance. We sing the melody with music accompaniment. Sometimes, we perform to the other Chinese communities’ people. I think performances make me feel more confident’. YY explained that it does not matter to make mistakes, because all of them are older people and, ‘we just enjoy the life’. The participant HX agreed that she felt confident by performing, she recalled, ‘I like to perform to the other people, an audience that enjoyed of one of our performance, they always told us: we like your singing. Can you sing more? We were very happy and confident to here that. And this feedback gave us more confidence to sing’. However, LB explained that the performances make her nervous:

I am shy when I sing to strangers. I like to sing to myself, and I can sing very well, one day, I went to my friend’s home. There was a Karaoke machine which can give you score. I sung a national song of Taiwan. You know, I got 100! My friends just got 70 or 80. But I felt so nervous in the performance. The other reason is I am much taller than other people. I do not feel comfortable when I stand on the stage with other people.

• **Sense of purpose**

By performing to others, older people can gain a sense of purpose, and the feeling that they are useful. Three of the participants mentioned that singing makes their life positive. MZ stated that joining the singing group makes her life more positive, ‘we

need to do some valuable things, singing allows me to enjoy a positive life, and I feel that singing can make my life meaningful'. YY's sense of purpose is reinforced by the small miracles that she recognizes:

I had a stroke few years ago, and I lay in bed for nearly two years. When I got better I spent nearly one year learning to walk again. I was really sick during that time. I thought I couldn't do anything and just waited to die. I never recognized that I could do something valuable. One day, a Chinese choir performed at the hospital, I remembered very clearly, all the members of this choir were older people, and many much older than me. But I realized that all the members were very happy. I recognized that I can do the same thing too, just like them. So when I get better, I decided to join the singing group. Now we perform to the other people, and they like our performing. I feel I can do something, because the other people need us. We can bring the happiness to people. Because I can do something positive, so I have no time to think my illness. Since I join this group, I have never gone back to the hospital or the nursing home.

The members appreciate positive feedback. They are pleased when audiences thank them and wish them well. They perceive a connection between themselves and the audience. HX explained that 'we feel that we are helping others and that makes life meaningful'.

Hays and Minichiello (2005a) found that participants recognized that music made them feel more positive, contented and peaceful. They state that,

Many spoke of being moved to tears and listening to music for the sheer joy and beauty of the experience. Music had the capacity to calm, excite, thrill, entertain, and provide beauty in people's lives

that often was not easily accessible through other ways (p. 446).

Coffman (2002) also found socialization to be a significant aspect for older people in community music. All the aspects identified within this theme have been noted in studies of other community music groups in Victoria, particularly those groups formed initially for extra musical purposes such as giving back to the community (Southcott, 2009) and maintaining cultural heritage (Southcott & Joseph, 2009).

• **Catharsis**

The KSCSS singing group found that music provided cathartic opportunities for emotions to be expressed. They believed that music makes them relaxed. LB said, 'Sometimes I can't sleep, so I wake up and practice myself. My husband sings with me together sometimes. I feel relaxed after practice. And get a good sleep'. MZ mentioned that listening music brings many benefits for her, including emotion development. She stated 'When I feel sad, I just listen to music, and I can forget the problems temporarily. When I listen to some peaceful music, I feel relaxed'. She mentioned that she receives sense of relaxation through singing, 'When we sing together, I feel relaxed. I think I can express myself through singing'. HX said that 'music activities bring us the emotional well-being, singing makes us full of spirit and energy. The spirit needs are very important to older people'. ML concludes with:

Whatever you happy or sad, singing is good for the emotion. For me, I like singing when I am happy and sad. Singing is able to express emotional states. If I'm upset about something, when I get to rehearsal and sing I feel much better. I forgot the troubles, and the problems seem to go away. If I'm happy, singing can give me more

pleasure. Singing has a capacity to let me express my moods and makes me have a sense of peace and relaxation.

The KCSCC singing group has recognized the power of music to enhance or change mood. They found that music made them feel more positive and relaxed. This accords with other researchers who found that music could be soothing, relaxing, and uplifting (Flowers & Murphy, 2001) and make people feel more positive, contented, and peaceful (Hays & Minichiello, 2005a).

• **Overcome loneliness and isolation**

The members of the singing group understand membership as far more than just singing. Being in a group with shared understandings may assist members overcome feelings of loneliness and isolation. The weekly meeting becomes a social gathering as much as a rehearsal. Coming together as a group engendered positive and transformative experiences. When asked why they join the group, participants responded that forming relationships with others was a strong motivation for their membership. MZ mentioned that over the three years she has known many people in the community, ‘at first, I just want to know more people. The big problem for older Chinese people is making new friends. I just try to find my social life in Australia’.

The participant HS explained,

I want to meet people. I don’t just want to stay at home. I didn’t know anyone and felt very lonely before joining this group. All my friends are in America. My son’s friend introduced me to this community and I have made many friends in this community. We are just like a family. We share experiences and help each other. If

one of us has a problem, we share it. I was a doctor before. I always give some medical advices to our members. I am so happy that I can help other people.

ML also stated that the reason she joining this community is overcoming loneliness. She said 'I migrated to join my children. I don't want to live in Australia, because all of my friends and relatives are in China. At the beginning, I didn't know anyone and couldn't find someone to talk to. I felt so lonely. So my son's friend introduced me to join this community'. CW described an interesting story to the researcher, she said:

I joined the community three years ago. When I introduced myself to the other members, I found a very interesting thing, there are two members were my schoolmates! We graduated from the same school in Vietnam. It is amazing! You know, we didn't know each other in Vietnam. They are much younger than me. But I knew them in this community. Now, as far as I know in the community, there are five people graduated from the same school including me! We are close friends now.

YY felt that attending rehearsals gave her a strong sense of satisfaction as she enjoyed 'chatting with each other, sharing life, we've been together for few years'. She explained the reason:

The group offers more than the music. It is not good for older people just staying at home. There is nothing to do except watching TV. It is very easy to be sick, because if you feel bored, you will think I am not comfortable, or what are my problems. But if you have opportunity to do something like the music activities, you have no time to think about your illnesses. You can know more people and talk to them. So it is very meaningful for me.

BL and LB had the same opinions about this, they knew each other through joining

this community and became good friends. The group makes them feel less isolated and gives them a greater sense of community. BL recalled:

I have three daughters, they have married. And I live alone. My daughters have their own families. I don't want to live with them. I joined in this community because my husband died three years ago. I was so sad and didn't want to go out during that time. My daughters were so worried about me, they saw the handbook of this community, and brought me to here to join this community. They hoped I would know more people and could talk to the other people, and forget the sadness. Actually, it has worked. It's a healing effect being part of this group. I think this community helps me a lot. I receiving so much in here, I knew lots friends and share my life with others. Now, I almost come here every week.

LB agreed with BL, 'me too. My husband and I live alone. We don't want to disturb our children's life. But we also need social life. The group offers the opportunity for us. Now, my husband and I come to here every week'. LB stated that 'many of the members of the community are refugees and lost everything, just like me. Although we came from different countries, we have the same life experiences'. LB also recognized that the members are like a family in their care for each other. That can make her life meaningful. 'I think I have the sense of community, you know sharing your lives with others'. HX, the leader of the singing group and dancing group, enjoys the community life. She said:

I join in three different Chinese communities. I am pretty busy. I found the activities are similar in these three communities. But I can know more people. That is good for me. Moreover, I don't want to stay at home, because my children are very busy. So I also need arrange my life. It is good for me to join in these communities. I go to different places instead of staying at home. I feel my life is positive.

Anna concluded that the goal of the organization is providing an opportunity for Chinese older people to get together and know each other and encourage older people do some positive things. Over the four years, friendships have developed and connections have been made. The members really are family. Coffman (2002) stated that socialization is a significant aspect for older people in a music community. All members offered that membership of the singing group is beyond the music activities. And they get a sense of community.

• **Nostalgia**

This singing group, with its shared histories, offered the participants a profound sense of nostalgia. They publicly acknowledge that ‘we have similar life experiences, and everybody has gone through some sort of tough time in our lives, it’s been for each one of us’. The researcher observed that the songs which were sung by the members always became a chatting topic:

From 11am, the singing group members started their rehearsal. All these songs they sing today are old Chinese songs. I think these songs may popular during the 1950s and 1960s. One of songs they choose to sing is called *The Wandering Songstress* which is a theme song from the movie *Street Angel* (1937 film), sung Zhou Xuan. It was also a theme song in the same war-era context. It is a beautiful song and love song. I found all the singing group members knew this song. At the beginning, they just look at the lyrics and sing it. They very much enjoyed singing. The members spent about twenty minutes singing this song. And they also asked me if I like this song or not, and all of them know this song and film, and they also memorized many images in this films and the singer. They told me because the movie that the song comes from is very popular during the 1950s in China, therefore, this song is a very popular song, and

most of older Chinese people know this song (Researcher Observation, 24.06.2011).

According to the researcher's observation, the members spend lots of time remembering old things during the rehearsal. It seems that the participants use these old songs to share their nostalgia. MZ explained that 'when I sing the old songs with our members, we always have the topic to discuss, such as the old movie, the singer and the images. I think it is a good way to remember old things with other people'. ML said that 'we have the similar life experiences and all of us like the same period songs. That's why we always have a topic to chat about'. ML explained that 'I recognized that memory becomes an important part in my life. Getting together with your own people, share your stories. It is an enjoyment'. CW believes that singing brings her beautiful memories, which she can share with the other members. She said that:

There were idols we admire when we were young. I liked the popular songs many years ago. I collected my favorite singer's photos and the records. Just like my grandchildren like the Rock music. May be my children and grandchildren can't understand these songs I liked. But these songs are evidences to prove I had been young. I can find the same topic in the group. Every time, we sing the songs can make me remember many wonderful things. I found that some songs I learned sixty years ago, I can remember every word every clear.

HX also points out that the members like to sing old Chinese songs, because older people remember many old songs which were very popular when they were young. She said 'for me, I can remember many songs melody and words I learned many

years ago. There are some theme songs from the movies. I can remember the movies' name'. HX described a story which happened in a rehearsal:

One time, in a rehearsal, we sang an old Chinese song called *Stories of a Small Town* which was popular during the 1980s. All our members knew this song and can sing it. One of our members said 'I love this song, the singer was my idol. When the singer died, I was so sad and bought all the records of the singer'. Then our members stop the rehearsal and chatting about the singer. I remembered on that day, we spent about 15 minutes singing, but we spent about one hour to talk about the singer. At the ending of the rehearsal, we decided sing the song again, there were three people who were not our group members join us and we sang it together.

HS concludes that in the singing group, all the members enjoy sharing their life experiences with others. She said that 'to me that means a lot. We enjoy the life. We have rich experiences which can share with other members. That's wonderful'.

Physical

The participants believe that singing and dancing in a group can also enhance physical well-being. Five of the participants also join the dancing group in KCSCC. YY said that, 'singing makes you feel pleasure. You may be ill... and singing makes you forget the illness. That's well-being'. YY described past experiences when 'I feel that coming to singing group will make me better sooner than staying at home thinking about how unwell I am'. ML asserted that:

Both Singing and dancing are good for health. You can forget the troubles when you are singing or dancing. Singing is good for breath. I feel younger when I singing. I also like dancing. When I was in

China, I could spend about two hours dancing. And in here I also join in the dancing group. We need to find a way to keep our health. I think music is a good one.

LB also agreed that ‘I think it (music) is good for my health. Dancing and singing are different. Singing lets me feel younger. It’s good for my emotional well-being. But dancing is good way to keep physical health. I like both of them’. When asked about the benefits of music, HX explained that:

For me, I have no time to think about illness. I am pretty busy. I join three Chinese communities. I also have the Line Dancing lessons now. We follow the background music to do some steps. I think dancing is a good way to keep healthy. For older people, it’s hard to find some way to take exercise. Walking may be a good way to enhance physical well-being. But some older people can’t keep at it. Unlike walking, we dance together. The members are interested and we can follow the song’s rhythm. It’s more interesting than walking. Now, I can dance for two hours without rest.

It seems that the participants believe that singing is good for emotional well-being and dancing is good for physical well-being. MZ felt empowered by the music activities as ‘you create your own sense of well-being, nobody can help you including your children. I think singing makes me happy and relaxed, dancing enhances my physical well-being. So I do them both’.

Mental well-being

The participants highlighted that singing assists in maintenance and renewal of their cognitive abilities, which can be understood as Learning new things and Maintaining

memory.

• Learning new things

When asked about advice for the singing group, some participants wished to learn more things. HS said she wants to add some new songs to the repertoire, ‘we can’t sing the same songs all the time and we need to learn more new songs’. The members can develop autonomous learning strategies that suit themselves. HS explained that ‘I hope we can learn something new. I am interested to learn more things, such as I’m taking piano lesson now. If you love something, it’s never hard for you’. She very much enjoys playing piano. She said that:

I have learned it [playing piano] about one year. I take private lesson with my son’s friend who is pianist. And my son takes the lesson too. But I think I am better than him, because he has not enough time to practice. You know I really wanted to learn piano when I was young, but I had no opportunity to learn. When I got older, my son bought a piano for me. Now I can play some easy songs.

The members in the group want to take regular lessons ‘If we have a teacher or director would be much better’. HS explained that ‘I hope someone can teach us more new things including English songs and music theory. Because we are living in a multicultural country, we want to accept multicultural music.’ She gave an example ‘my sister is a singing teacher in a Beijing older people singing group. She told me, there are more than one hundred members in her group. Most members enjoy the lessons very much’. ML mentioned that she wanted to learn more things. She said

that:

I think the singing teacher or workshop would be better for us. We can learn something new. And know how can sing better. I am interested in music theory. I think the music theory can help us know the songs better. Most of us just know a little music theory, such as the time signature, number notation. If we can have singing lessons, that should be much better.

By joining the singing group, participants can develop the learning purpose. HX mentioned that she has an interest in new songs. She explained that 'I always want to learn new songs including some Australian folk songs. I think older people also can learn something. You can do anything you want to do at any age'. CW said 'I'm 85 years old. You know, it's too hard for me to learn something new. I spend two or three days to remember a new song, and I forgot it soon'. She also wants to continue learning. She explained that 'I try my best to learn, I spend longer time to learn these things, but I never give up. If we rehearse a new song which I never heard before, I listen to the other members sing it, and then I hum it with them. I enjoy the learning processes'. The researcher observed the members learning the song in the second observation:

The second song they choose is called *In Spring*. It is also a very old Chinese song. And this song is a lively song, the speed is very fast. So when they sing it, three of members said the speed it too fast and they had no confidence to sing it. Although they know this song, they cannot sing it. I overheard HS encourage everyone 'don't worry. I know this song is pretty fast but we will sing it just for fun. Just try it' (Researcher Observation, 24.06.2011).

HS told the researcher 'I hope our members can sing something new. It's doesn't matter whether we can sing very well or not'. However, the researcher found that some of members had no interest in learning new songs,

Today is the third time to do the observation. I arrived there at 10:30am. The singing group members started the rehearsal at 11:00 am. Eight people joined in today's rehearsal. During the rehearsal, two members of this singing group just left and about five or six minutes later they came back again. It looked that they did not know how to sing the song which was sung by the other members. Or maybe they have no interest about in the song. They just left after a few minutes. But when these people sing a song which is very popular, all the members come back and join in them again, and sometimes, the other people who are not in this singing group join them together. When they sang a folk song of Xinjiang district, I overheard BL say: 'I don't know how to sing it'. She just listened to the other people sing, and followed with them from the second time. When they finished that song, CW said: 'me too, I never heard this song before, but I just try to listen to the others singing and I found the melody is pretty easy to remember, so I could follow them'. BL said: 'when we sing the song which I never heard it, I just no interest in it and just want to leave a little while, when they sing someone I know I just come back and continue to sing it'. HS said 'Don't worry, just practice, and you will know how to sing it' (Researcher Observation, 08.07.2011).

BL explained that 'if they sing a song which I can sing and I like it. I just feel confident and just join them and sing it, but if they sing a song which I never heard before, sometimes I just sit there and wait for them finish the song and sometimes I feel pretty bored and leave after a few minutes'. YY mentioned that she had no interest in learning new songs or taking regular lesson. She explained that 'I don't want to learn anything. I think for older people, we do these music activities just for fun. So the music teacher or regular lessons are not very important for us. We just find

a way to let us feeling freedom’.

- **Maintaining memory**

The group performs their extensive repertoire from memory. Two participants believe that singing in a group is good for memory. CW highlighted that singing in a group can maintain memory. The researcher found CW is very proud of her memory. The researcher recorded that in the first observation,

The members forget to bring the repertoire today. HS and CW are memorizing the words of an old Chinese popular song which was very popular during the 1950s and 1960s in mainland China, called *Four Season Song*. CW is singing this song and trying to memorize all the lyrics of this song, HS is helping her to take the note. Although CW is the oldest member in the group, I found she remembered all the words very clear. She said she learnt this song about sixty years ago, but she still remembers these words. Sometimes, they are not sure about one or two words, and they just stop, and repeat this sentence again (Researcher Observation, 17.06.2011).

CW explained that ‘older people like to listen to or sing some old songs. Sometimes I found some old songs’ words in library, but I found some words are totally different. But I am pretty sure I was right. So I prefer to remember the words myself’. The researcher found that members sing some songs by memory. They believed that memory can be ‘practiced’. YY explained ‘that singing is good way to practice your memory and makes my brain work... HS helps us choose some songs. Some of them are very popular when we were young. We know these songs’ melody and can sing them by memory’. CW said that ‘maybe I very easily forget the new song which I just

learnt two days ago. I just try to memorize these new songs. I think this is a good way to let me memorize something’.

• **Doing research**

The singing group is motivated in members’ ability to do research to meet the needs of their audiences or themselves. By helping other members collect songs, HS did lots of research through the internet. She said that, ‘we discussed together at the ending of the rehearsal every Friday, every member gives some songs names, then we select five of six songs. I find these songs’ lyrics through the internet and bring the photocopies to them’. She continues:

At the beginning, we sang some songs by memory. But I found it was a big problem. We couldn’t remember the words very clearly. Sometimes our members argued about that. Some songs we really want to sing, but we didn’t know the lyrics. One day, I just thought, I can search these songs through the internet. My grandson taught me how to use computer. I searched songs which we can sing from internet. For the songs we already know the melody, I just wrote the words and bring the photocopies to our members. For the new songs, I download the number notation and learn them. I found it’s a good way to add new songs to the repertoire. Now doing research is one of my jobs!

Searching new songs to add to repertoire became the members’ habit. YY described her story:

Since I join the singing group, I’d wake up in the middle of the night and think yes, that’s a good song. We can rehearsal that next week. I’ve got a notebook along the side of the bed, I’d write it down and next day I go to the library to find it. If I can’t find it I will tell our members let them help me search it. Some of members have the

same experiences like me.

HS states that there are about one hundred songs in their repertoire now. The singing group made her learn how to use a computer to search information. 'Every time I see our members using these lyrics, I feel very proud'.

Cultural identity

Singing in the group connects the members to their Chinese heritage by the performance of songs in their original language. The singing group upholds their past, enabling the maintenance of their cultural heritage. HX stated that she has been in Australia for about thirty years, but singing in the group 'brings me memories and there are still some ties with the old lifestyle'. Most of the participants highlighted that they have English language problems. They stated that language is the other important reason to join the community. Three aspects were emerged in the theme which includes level of English, Mandarin versus Cantonese and performance for Chinese festivals.

• Level of English

Anna, the organizer of states that the main reason to establish the community is because of the language barrier of Chinese older people. She pointed out that most of the members in the community show a low English level. She said that 'It is a big problem when they communicate with other people. So it's difficult to find a social life for them'. When asked about the reason to join the community, ML said 'I'm

different with the other members. I came here two years ago. For me, the language is a big problem. I can't speak English. It's too hard to communicate with other people. But in the community, we speak Chinese. That's why I join this community'. BL recalled her story that:

I came from Malaysia. I am overseas Chinese. Lots of Chinese people in Malaysia speak mandarin. So my Mandarin and Cantonese are very good. You know, many Malaysian schools use English in schools, so I know many people in Malaysia could speak English pretty good. But there were also many Chinese people, like me, graduated from Chinese schools in Malaysia, we also learnt English in school, but not very much. That is why my level of English is low. Moreover, my family was poor when I was a child. I left school when I finished primary school.

MZ explained that she choose to join the community also because of the language barrier,

I live in Kingston, there are lots of Chinese people live in this area, but there is no Chinese community in this area. Before this community was established, I had joined other different communities, but I had no interest, because there were no Chinese people in those communities. It was hard for me to communicate with other local people. About four years ago, one of my friends invited me to join in this community. All the members can speak Chinese in the community. We have the similar experience. Now I almost come here every week.

HX concluded that the members perceive themselves to be both Chinese and Australian. But the low English level makes them feel that it is difficult to communicate with other people. They enjoy living in Australia but being in such a group offers them the 'maintenance of cultural heritage'.

Mandarin and Cantonese

The members came from different countries. Their cultural backgrounds are different. Although most of them communicate with Mandarin, many of the members prefer speaking Cantonese in the community. The researcher found that most of the singing group members came from Mainland China and speak Mandarin. And all the songs they choose are Mandarin songs. Most of the participants pointed out that language is a problem even in the community. HS explained that:

I think one of the biggest problems is the language in the community. Although most of us can communicate with Mandarin, there are some members who prefer speaking Cantonese. And these people like Cantonese opera or Cantonese songs, but we don't like this kind of music. It is difficult to understand. I found that in this community, people who have same experience or come from same country like to get together. Like our singing group, most of us are come from Mainland China. We have the same experience, and similar education. So we have the same topic to talk. Like the other members who come from the other countries, it is not very easy to communicate with them. For example, in our singing group, most of us came from mainland China, and like the mainland China popular songs or old songs. But most of people come from Malaysia or Hong Kong like Cantonese songs.

However, HS stated that she does not mind these differences. This is good chance for them to get together and do some activities. BL also pointed that language is a problem in the singing group. She said:

Although I can speak Mandarin very well, I prefer to speak Cantonese. I like Hong Kong popular songs and Cantonese songs. Now I'm learning Cantonese opera. But in the group, we never sing Cantonese songs, because most of members of the group came from

mainland China, they can't speak Cantonese.

When asked about the problems of this singing group, ML highlighted that language influences their choice of music. She said:

I think the other problem is many people speak Cantonese so they just choose some Cantonese songs to sing, for the people who only speak Mandarin is too hard to understand, and we don't like these Cantonese songs. So when there is performance, the people who speak Mandarin like us, always choose Mandarin songs and the people who speak Cantonese songs like singing Cantonese songs. But sometimes, if the song very popular between us, we can sing it together. I think that is a problem, lots of older people in this community speak Cantonese, the music and the accompaniment they used also Cantonese music. You know the Cantonese music is totally different, including the language use and melody.

However, the participant HX stated that the language is not a problem in the community. She said:

I don't think language is a problem in our community. Although many of members can't speak Cantonese, we can communicate with Mandarin. For choosing the songs, there also no problems, just depends on the members. They can choose which kind of songs they like. If they like both, they can sing both kinds of songs in the performance.

Clearly the members have different opinions about the language they prefer to sing but overall they appear to enjoy singing the songs.

Choosing music

Veblen and Olsson (2002) stated that music can express the cultural life of a

geographical community, re-created community, and imagined community. Choosing music respects the origins and cultural background of members. According to the researcher's observation, most of members in the group prefer Chinese music, although some of the participants point out that they like Western music.

• **Western music and Chinese music**

The interviewees were asked in very general terms what they thought about western music. There was no attempt to define this as popular or art music, rather it was hoped the responses would indicate understandings of this very broad. Four of the participants stated that they were influenced by Western music and like listening Western music but this did not translate into a desire to perform it. HX states that she prefers to listen to Western music but for singing, she prefers Chinese songs. She explained that:

Our dancing group always chooses some Western music as the background music. I think the Western music melodies are very nice and suited to dance. Our dancing group members like these songs. When you listen to the Western music, you can't stop yourself dancing. If the music is nice and happy, we can select it. But singing is different. Our singing group members prefer choosing Chinese songs. The members speak Mandarin or Cantonese, so most of them like Chinese songs. Because the language barrier and culture different, although we like listen to some English songs, we don't want to sing them.

HS said 'I love Western music. Unlike Chinese music, I listen to Western music pretty much'. She explained that:

I had lived in America about nineteen years and Western music there influenced me a great deal. I bought lots of CDs of classical music and listened to them a lot. I found some theme songs of English movies are also very nice, such as *Auld Lang Syne*, *Edelweiss* and the theme song of *Titanic*. I sing some pretty slow English songs sometimes. I also like Western music because I am learning piano and most of the pieces I have played are classical. I find them very beautiful.

CW states that she can accept Western music or songs. She recalled that:

I think Western music and Chinese music are totally different. I like Western music because of one book called *300 Famous Songs in the World*. I remember when I was a child. I found a book in my home. There was one song called *One Day when We were Young*, I learnt it myself. I can remember the lyric clearly until now.

The participant YY explained that she like English songs because these songs can help her understanding of some words. She said ‘I can’t speak English, but I think singing some English songs can help me understanding some English words’. LB said that she was influenced by Western culture including the music, but not very much. She explained that:

I have been here for thirty years. You know Australia is a multicultural country. Maybe we didn’t notice that, the Western culture influenced us pretty much, such as some habits, diet. And my grandchildren even can’t speak Chinese. But I think the Western music does not influence us very much, especially for the older Chinese people. Maybe our children and grandchildren accept the Western music more than Chinese music. Older people like me, also prefer listen to or sing Chinese songs. But I know some English songs such as *Edelweiss*, and *Silent Night*. I listen to some English songs sometimes. But I never sing them.

ML who has only been in Australia for two years does not think that she has 'been influenced by Western music. Most of the music I know or sang is Chinese music when I was in China. And it's a little hard for me to accept Western music. But if I have the chance to learn it, I might try it'. MZ said 'I don't like classical music and Western music, because I can't understand them. It's hard for older people to accept new things'. Four participants agreed that they were influenced by Western music in the singing group. But these four participants state they just like to listen to Western music. However, some of them mention that they want to learn some Western music or songs. HS said 'I hope we can learn some Western songs, because we are living in a multicultural country, so we hope can accept multicultural music'. Overall, the members of the singing group prefer Chinese songs but are prepared to try English language songs.

• **Influenced by Russian music**

All the members state that they are influenced by Russian music. Four of the participants mention they had learnt Russian when they were young and were very influenced by Russian music. ML said 'when I was young, I learnt and sang many Russian songs. I think many of older Chinese people have the same experience as me'. CW and LB mentioned that they learnt Russian instead of English when they were in primary and secondary school. LB said 'I like Russian songs. Because when I was young, I learnt these Russian songs in school but we sang these songs' melodies using Chinese words'. CW explained that:

Russian songs were very popular in China many years ago when we were young, there were no English lesson in the schools, and we learnt Russian. I could sing some of these songs in Russian when I was little kid. Now, we sing lots of Russian songs using Chinese. Chinese people who are above fifty years old were greatly influenced by Russian music. I still remember some famous Russian songs such as *Strawberry Flower Blossom*, and *Moscow Nights*.

YY states that she like singing or listening to Russian songs. The singing group sometimes chooses some Russian songs to rehearse. ‘Some of Russian songs are very popular when we were young. In our singing group, we sometimes rehearse some Russian songs. All our members like the Russian songs’ YY said. HS concluded that ‘I think Chinese people like our age like singing or listening Russian songs, because we were influenced by Russian culture or music when we were young’. She explained that ‘China had a good relationship with Russia during the 1950s and 1960s, so the Chinese government encouraged people to accept Russian culture including music culture’.

Song selection

This Singing Group, with its shared histories, provides an outlet for a profound sense of nostalgia. Most of the group’s repertoire consists of Chinese songs that were popular four or five decades ago. Most of the participants came to Australia directly from Mainland China or had lived there for some time before migrating to another country. ML pointed out that they rehearse revolution songs and patriotic songs a lot because they played an important role in their lives. She explained that ‘I prefer

singing Chinese old songs, such as revolutionary songs and popular songs from the 60s to 80s. I know young people don't like these songs but they were so popular when we were young that I still remember them very clearly'. Jin (2010) states that songs for the masses became popular since the 1950s, such as 'The Long March', and operas like 'Red Guards on Honghu Lake' and 'Sister Jiangjie' made an important impact on the masses. HS states that selecting 'patriotic songs are empowering. Many participants were young at the time of the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 when propagandist and nationalistic songs became very popular (Jin, 2010). HS pointed out that selecting 'patriotic songs is empowering. For example 'Ode to the Motherland' is my favorite song. We always sing this song at important Chinese festivals'⁵.

However, BL states that she is much younger than the other members. And some of the songs rehearsed by the members are too old for her. She said:

I like many kinds of songs, such as popular songs from the 70s and 80s, particularly from Taiwan and Hong Kong with words in Cantonese. But I don't know some songs of mainland China, like the revolution songs or patriotism songs. Because I was in Malaysia for many years, I don't know some songs from Mainland China – I never heard these patriotic songs before and don't know how to sing them. Songs from the 30s and 40s are too old for me.

BL and LB did not grow up in mainland China. LB agreed with BL, she explained that:

⁵ *Ode to the Motherland (Gechang Zuguo)* is a very famous patriotic song by Wang Xin (1918-2007) composed in the early days of the People's Republic of China (1949-1951). With words that address the Five-Star Red Flags, the song is often used as the marching melody of flag raising ceremonies in China (Lu, 2011).

I came from Vietnam. Many of songs they [the members of singing group] rehearsed I don't know how to sing, and some of them too old. So sometimes I have no interest. If the songs I know or can sing it, I join in the rehearsal. I like some popular songs during the 1980s or 1990s. But the sing group members sing these songs not very much. Thus, I practice myself. Not like BL. She takes lessons to learn Cantonese opera. But I don't like the Cantonese opera.

BL and LB point out that they listened to these popular songs very much when they were in Malaysia and Vietnam. BL recalled that:

We listened to Chinese songs or Cantonese songs in Malaysia or Vietnam. For example, songs of Hong Kong and Taiwan during the 1980s and 1990s are very popular among overseas Chinese. Some popular songs were very known by Chinese people in Malaysia and Vietnam. These popular songs in Malaysia also are sung in both Mandarin and Cantonese.

LB explained that unlike Malaysia, although they listened to these popular songs, these songs were sung in the Vietnamese language. She continues:

Few years ago, my husband and I went back to Vietnam, we listened to some people sing a very popular Chinese song using Vietnamese [language] in a park. I think many young people like using Vietnamese to sing Chinese popular songs. Last year we went back Vietnam again, some young children let us to teach them some Chinese songs using Mandarin. And I know in Vietnam, many Chinese songs were translated to Vietnamese. But I prefer Chinese. Because when you sing them using Vietnamese, it was sound not very good, it sounds a little strange.

Music style preference

The participants state that they like to listen to or to sing some calm and peaceful

songs. HX said 'I like listen to some slow songs. I think the peaceful songs are suited to older people'. YY agreed that 'I like to listen to some very nice English songs at home. I found they are very nice. Although I can't sing these English songs, they make me feel relaxed'. All participants highlighted they do not like quick rhythm songs. HS explained that:

I like classical music very much. For songs, I like some slow rhythm Chinese old songs. But I don't like rock music or hip-hop. I know many young people like this music style. My grandsons love them very much. But I can't accept the rock music. They are too noisy!

CW states that 'slow rhythm music is good for older people. Our members like singing some older Chinese popular songs, these songs' melodies are very beautiful'. Three of the participants point out that they can accept slow rhythm Western popular songs. They said 'a good song makes people comfortable. We don't mind where the song comes from. We just enjoy it'. HS concludes that 'a good song is always popular for many years. Any age people can enjoy it!'

Shared interests

All the members of the group shared interests and activities. All were in close contact with their children who were resident in Australia, some residing with them. Various tensions were evident between the musical preferences of younger generations and the participants. The group members also performed in Chinese festivals, singing Chinese songs for members and other similar community groups. These performances

were well-received and offered validation to the members. The following discussion will first address Family influences and then Celebrating culture.

- **Family influence**

When asked about the family influence, participants state that family support is significant for them. HS said that her family members influenced her a lot. She explained that,

I think my family influenced me a lot. Both my parents love music. We always listened to music when I was a little child. I think that's why I love music in my later life. And my younger sister was an actor before. She loved singing and dancing when she was a kid. Now she is a voice teacher in an older people singing group in Beijing. Unlike my younger sister, I am little introverted. But I also like singing.

YY mentioned that her daughter influenced her to listen to music. She said 'my daughter likes English songs. She listens to English songs very much at home. I found some of them very nice. Although I can't sing them, I listen to them very much'. MZ highlights that her family also influences her a lot. She said:

My grandson plays piano. He was born in Australia and prefers Western classical music which he plays a lot. Although my grandson doesn't like Chinese style music, he likes classical music very much and plays it a lot. Although I do not know this music, I listen to it a great deal. My son-in-law knows many Chinese songs and sometimes he plays a piano accompaniment for me when I sing. Sometimes, if I remember a song I just tell my son-in-law, let him find this music or play it for me. Sometimes, we sing together.

There appears to be some tension between the musical tastes of the generations. CW

also said 'my daughter knows some Chinese songs. When I sing by myself at home, she sometimes sings with me. Sometimes, she gives me some advice. But my grandsons can't accept the Chinese style music'. HS said her son knows Chinese songs quite well as he corrects her, 'mum, you make a mistake, you should sing like this'.

However, when asked about practicing at home, most of the participants mention that they practice at home infrequently and never sing to their family members. HX states that she practices at home sometimes, but never in front of her family. She explained that 'I live alone, sometimes I have nothing to do, and I just sing myself just for fun'.

HS said that:

I practice myself at home sometimes. But I never sing to my family, because my grandchildren and my daughter-in-law can't speak Chinese. But my son knows Chinese music. He can sing many Chinese songs. Sometimes he gives me some advice when I sing and we sing together.

The children of HS, YY CW and HX have all married people who are not fluent speakers of Chinese. ML explains that 'I have no chance to sing the songs to my family. My son and daughter know the Chinese songs pretty much, but they are so busy'. YY states that she never practices at home. She explained that 'I think singing by myself very boring. I listen to music a lot at home. But never sing them When I sing with other members, I feel much better'. CW continues 'my children or grandchildren don't like these old Chinese songs. So I never sing to them'.

• Celebrating culture

Reimer (1993) stated that music ‘includes our understanding of its particular cultural setting’ (p. 25). The participants believe that performance of songs in their original language in Chinese festivals can maintain their cultural heritage. ML stated that ‘there are some similar communities in the south-eastern region in Victoria. And these communities sometimes have performances to celebrate the festivals such as the Spring Festivals’. The members state that the Spring Festival is the most important celebration in a year. It is traditional to have a big performance to celebrate the Spring Festival. The members of the singing group rehearse for a long time preparing it. MZ said that:

Our community is one of the biggest communities in this region. Sometimes, there are celebrations of festivals. We always invite the other communities’ members to perform at here. If the performance is for important festivals, such as the Spring Festival, there are more than one hundred and fifty people. Each community selects one or two programs to perform.

The members state that Chinese festivals are part of their culture. They felt that singing in Chinese festivals connects them to their Chinese heritage. Thus, performances for Chinese festivals are important activities in the group. HS explained that they choose songs according to the different festivals. She said ‘for example, if we celebrate the Spring Festival, we need to choose some happy and lively music. So

we always choose some songs about the Spring Festival'. HS stated that 'maybe my children and grandchildren have no idea about Chinese festivals, but these Chinese festivals are important to me, because these performances for Chinese festivals let me know there are still some ties with my culture heritage and my old lifestyle'. Thus the festival performances are both for the group and for the community. Due to the language barriers, these efforts appear mostly to reach other similar groups and immediate families of the participants.

Conclusion

Older culturally and linguistically diverse Australians who have limited English language skills are rarely interviewed about their understandings of active engagement in community music. Attempting to interview CALD older people in a language other than their first, will at best garner only a small part of their experiences and understandings. The potential problems of social isolation amongst older people such as the participants are compounded by age and language. This makes community groups that cater for CALD older people in their first languages important if not vital. Further, it is important to recognize the diversity within even such a small group as this. The members have come together because they all speak Mandarin Chinese but this does not imply homogeneity. In this small sample alone, participants have come to Australia from Mainland China, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Laos, and the USA. 'Chinese' is not a homogeneous term.

During the interviews, a number of significant themes emerged concerning membership of the Singing Group. The opinions of the interviewees demonstrate that music is seen as helpful in the Emotional Well-being, Physical, and Cognitive domains. As identified in this study, life history is influential in determining positive music engagement amongst older migrants and refugees. Flowers and Murphy (2001) point out that music is ubiquitous in the lives of older adults and can provide ‘a source of activity, comfort, and stimulation’ (p. 31).

The members of the Singing Group have migrated to Australia later in life but still represent different generations with different music listening histories. The music they choose to perform together is, at times, a compromise. Some songs selected evoke country of birth, other selections represent the music that was popular when the participants were younger. Singing in the group connects the members to their Chinese heritage by the performance of songs in their original language. Despite the considerable cultural and generational variation between the members they have formed a Singing Group as part of their solution to social isolation and have found companionship. The interviewees also state that family support is important for them. Although not always prepared to sing with family members, some participants do try to make music with their children and grandchildren.

The participants have moved locations and negotiated community that is enacted in part *via* the Singing Group. It appears that most of the members in the group have an

understanding of self as Chinese-Australian. The singing group has found for themselves a sense of well-being, formed strong relationships that are maintained despite changing life situations and gained musical experiences and confidence. This Chapter has identified important issues in the provision of positive, active music engagement for older CALD people. For these older Chinese-Australians who find English a barrier to social inclusion, The Singing Group has become a place of sharing, remembering, and validation.

Chapter 7

Chinese society, education and music

Introduction

To contextualize this research, this chapter will present the cultural background of the Chinese, followed by a discussion of Chinese cultural values, language usage, and education of China especially for older Chinese people. Furthermore, this chapter will focus on issues and concerns regarding music engagement by Chinese older people. ‘China’ today generally refers to the People’s Republic of China, the state that was established in 1949 after the victory of the Chinese Communist Party (Mitter, 2008). China, located in East Asia, covers approximately 9.6 million square kilometers. It is the world’s second-largest country by land area (Countries of the World Ordered by Land Area, 2010). The People’s Republic of China has administrative control over 22 provinces. China also has five autonomous regions; four municipalities; and two Special Administrative Regions, which enjoy a degree of political autonomy. These 22 provinces, five autonomous regions and four municipalities can be collectively referred to as ‘mainland China’ (Law, 2005). China is the world’s most populous country, with over 1.3 billion citizens in 2010, which accounts for approximately 21% of the human population. Of the 56 ethnic groups living in China, the Han Chinese ethnic group accounts for 92% of the total population. The rest consists of 55 ethnic minority groups, including the Bai, Bouyei, Dong, Hui, Miao, Manchu, Mongolian, Tibetan, Tu, Tujia, Uygur, Yao and Zhuang peoples, who are found in comparatively

remote areas. This offers some isolation where groups can maintain their own rich traditions and customs whilst remaining a part of Chinese culture (Law & Ho, 2011). Huang (1988) contended that Chinese culture and values have been remarkably consistent over its long history, mainly because of the fact that its education system has always been dominated by the teachings of Confucius. China's unique culture and tradition have long been the subject of international discussion (Law & Ho, 2009).

The proportion of older people in China is increasing rapidly. In 2008, the number of older people aged 65 and above in China reached more than 109.56 million, or 8% of the total population, with an annual growth rate of around 3% (China Statistical Bureau, 2009). By the end of 2010, the proportion of mainland Chinese people aged 60 or older grew to 13.26% (Population Census, 2011). In China, as elsewhere older people show a strong desire to create meaning in life, and to deal with their lives around maintaining an active lifestyle and building cognitive skills (Prickett, 1998; Cohen, 2006), and music, as the most social of all the arts (Sloboda, 1989), can facilitate these goals in older people. Lifelong education as a modern notion was introduced to China at the end of the 1970s and it is very popular among older adults in modern China (Cheng, Jin & Gu, 1999; Zhang, 2008).

Chinese cultural values

The main feature of China's state culture is its identification of social harmony with authority (Ho & Law, 2004). Traditional Chinese culture was based on Confucianism

and Taoism, both advocating the union of human beings with nature. Chinese people are brought up with the philosophy of avoiding conflict with the environment and being harmonious with nature. The main feature of China's culture is its identification of social harmony with authority, possibly due to the influence of Confucian principles of harmony and hierarchy (Ting-Toomey, 1994). Jia (1997) identified five aspects of the values that imbue Chinese culture in the areas of human nature, interpersonal relationships, human and environment, pursuit of change, and time view. First, influenced by Confucianism, Chinese people believe that humans are fundamentally virtuous or virtue-oriented. Second, Chinese believe that people should be in a harmonious relationship with nature thus nature and people should be unified into one. Third, in terms of interpersonal relationships, Chinese people seek harmony and altruism. Fourth, Chinese tend to pursue development under stabilized circumstances. Fifth, the past is valued and ancestors are respected. You (1994) divided Chinese cultural values into five categories Man-to-nature orientation; Man-to-himself orientation; Relational Orientation; Time orientation and Personal-activity orientation. Although You's useful summary is focused on marketing-related cultural values, his discussion closely relates cultural values to Chinese people's attitudes and behaviors. Of these, relational orientation (Respect for authority, Interdependence and Group-orientation) and Personal-activity orientation (Harmony with others) are the most relevant for this discussion:

- Respect for authority

Mak and Chan (1995) highlighted that the traditional Chinese value of respecting seniors is derived from Confucian principles. Respect for older people has long been a value most treasured in Chinese societies where, traditionally, older people enjoy prestigious positions and are sought for their advice on important matters (Tsai & Lopez, 1997). The Chinese have a strong respect for their elders and their superiors, and they trust authority figures to the extent that opinions from the authorities are rarely questioned or disputed. For instance, the family is the most important unit in Chinese society. Traditional Chinese society has a collectivist orientation that endorses the family, not the individual, as the major unit. The traditional Chinese value of respecting seniors is derived from Confucian principles, which define authority within the family according to the seniority of the member (Martin, 1998). However, Chiu and Yu (2001) pointed out that respect for authority has been diminishing, especially since China began its modernization in 1978.

- Interdependence and group-orientation

The Chinese emphasize interdependence in relationships with others. Interdependence is the base of a sustainable relationship, in which all parties contribute help, as well as receive benefits. Interdependence builds mutual trust through the exchanging of favours. Interdependent relationships always involve reciprocity, both materially and affectively. Chinese people are collectivistic in the sense that a Chinese individual often views his or her own existence primarily as a member of a group. Their personal

interests are bound to the group's interests. The definition of the word 'group' varies across contexts, ranging from a kinship group, to a working team, to citizens of a province, all the way up to a nation.

- Harmony with others

Chinese society has long been influenced by Confucian principles of harmony and hierarchy (Ho & Law, 2004). Chen (2003) emphasized that the Chinese have a tendency to establish a harmonious relationship as the final state of communication. Reducing and avoiding conflict are both important means to reaching interpersonal harmony. Confucianism does not suppress disagreement to accomplish harmony. Confucianism stresses integration and harmony. According to Confucius's idea, a well-balanced individual, well-ordered family, well-governed state, and happy and harmonious relations could be reached by the moral cultivation of human beings (Zhang, 2008). Confucianism is so important in Chinese culture that it may be considered a form of religion.

Language usage

China officially recognizes 56 distinct ethnic groups, the largest of which are Han, who constituted 91.51% of the total population in 2010. Ethnic minorities constituted 8.49% or 113.8 million of China's population in 2010 (Population Census Office, 2011). There are several major linguistic groups within the Chinese language itself. Louie (2008) states that Chinese comprises hundreds of mutually unintelligible

dialects. Languages and dialects include other Mandarin dialects, Wu (Shanghainese), Yue (Cantonese), Minbei (Fuzhou), Minnan (Hokkien or Taiwanese, Teochiu), Xiang, Gan and Hakka, as well as languages of the minorities. The seven major mutually unintelligible Chinese dialects, are considered by to be different languages of the Chinese language family, and by some others to be dialects of the Chinese language. Each of these *dialects* has many *sub-dialects*. Mandarin is the official national language of China. It refers to the majority dialect family of China; its pronunciation and grammar are associated with the speech of Beijing and the surrounding countryside, regions which for centuries have enjoyed political and cultural significance (He, 2006). Over 70% of the Han ethnic groups are native speakers of the Mandarin group of dialects spoken in northern and southwestern China. The rest, concentrated in south and southeast China, speak one of the six other major Chinese dialects. Mandarin is the language of instruction in all schools and is used for formal and official purposes in mainland China. Simplified Chinese characters have become the official standardized written script used to write the Chinese language within mainland China (Languages, 2005).

Religion in China

China is a country of great religious diversity and freedom of religious belief. It has over 100 million followers of various faiths, more than 100,000 sites for religious activities, about 300,000 religious personnel and over 3,000 religious associations (China File, 2006). In recent years, the Chinese government has opened up to religion,

especially traditional religions such as Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism because the Government also continued to emphasize the role of religion in building a 'Harmonious Society', which was a positive development with regard to the Government's respect for religious freedom (U.S. Department of State, 2007). Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism have deeply influenced one another. Chinese people who speak Mandarin and Cantonese may practice Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism or a mixture of these belief systems or Christianity (South Eastern Region Migrant Resource Centre, 2009). These religions also share some similar values, with all three embracing a humanist philosophy emphasizing moral behavior and striving for human perfection. In time, most Chinese people identified to some extent with all three traditions simultaneously (Markham & Ruparell, 2001). Taoism and Buddhism are the largest religions in China. However, the biggest part of the population, ranging between 60% and 70%, is mostly agnostic or non-religious (China File, 2006). The number of people practicing Chinese folk religion is estimated to be just under four hundred million (Li, 2010).

- **Confucianism**

Confucianism is the cornerstone of traditional Chinese culture. Chu and Carew (1990) pointed out that Confucianism is the dominant philosophy which has made a major contribution in the shaping of the Chinese people. Confucianism is a complete ideological system created by Confucius, based on the traditional culture of the Xia, Shang and Zhou Dynasties. Confucianism has dominated a feudal society that in

essence has lasted 2000 years, and its influence over the social structure is pervasive. In the philosophical and cultural history of China, Confucianism has endured as the basic social and political value system for over one thousand years (Ho & Law, 2004). Confucianism which was discussed in chapter 1 is the basis around which the cultural aspects of Chinese life is organized. However, it is practiced more as a philosophy than a religion (Chinese Culture Profile, 2006). Traditional Chinese values are primarily built on Confucian theories. However, other philosophies and religions also partially contributed to the formation of the overall Chinese value system (Yang, 1994).

- **Taoism**

Louie (2008) defines Taoism is ‘fundamentally a religion of *qi*, the vital breath from which nature, the gods and humans evolve. The source and order of this vital substance is the Tao, the ultimate power of life in the universe’ (p. 179). Taoism refers to a philosophical or religions tradition in which the basic concept is to establish harmony with the Tao, which is the mechanism of everything that exists. Since the fifth century, Taoism’s beliefs and practices have been written down in hundreds of scripture texts believed to have been divinely revealed. These texts are concerned throughout with moral discipline and orderly ritual and organization (Louie, 2008). Nowadays, Taoist philosophy is deeply rooted in contemporary China, and is an unavoidable part of modern Chinese life (Li, 2010). Taoism, born in China in the 6th century BCE, is traditionally traced to the composition of the *Tao Te Ching*

attributed to the sage Laozi, a person who subsequently came to be venerated by Taoists as *Daode Tianjun* in the Three Pure Ones. Taoist thought focuses on health, longevity, immortality, *wu wei* (non-action) and spontaneity. These traditions have influenced East Asia for over two thousand years and some have spread internationally (Miller, 2003). Taoism flourishes best in regions populated by Chinese people: mainland China, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, and various Chinese diaspora communities (International Religious Freedom Report, 2006). However, the number of Taoists is difficult to estimate, due to a variety of factors including defining Taoism.

- **Buddhism**

Buddhism was introduced to China from India by the first century AD, during the Eastern Han Dynasty (206 BC-220 AD), traditionally in the 1st century, growing increasingly popular to become the most influential religion in China after the fourth century. Buddhism became very popular among Chinese of all walks of life, admired by commoners, and sponsored by emperors in certain dynasties. It is estimated that by the 9th century Buddhist institutions had become the most powerful of China, surpassing the Taoist ones and challenging the authority of the government (China File, 2006). After its introduction, Mahayana Buddhism, the most prominent branch of Buddhism in China, played an important role in shaping Chinese civilization. Chinese civilization, as well, exerted a profound impact on the way Buddhism was transformed in China. Buddhism has played an enormous role in shaping the mindset

of the Chinese people, affecting their aesthetics, politics, literature and philosophy (Dumoulin, Heisig & Knitter, 2005). Today the most popular form of Buddhism in China is a mix of the Pure Land and Chán schools. However, it is difficult to estimate accurately the number of Buddhists because many Chinese Mahayanists identify themselves simultaneously as Taoist and Buddhist (China Daily, 2007).

Chinese music culture

Musical works reflect the cultures and subcultures from which they originate and musical values can be understood in terms of the human contexts and human experience that bring them forth. Music also reflects people's thoughts and their sense of beauty and art, representing different cultures around the world (Ho, 2010). Chinese music has been made since the dawn of Chinese civilization with documents and artifacts providing evidence of a well-developed musical culture as early as the Zhou Dynasty (1122 BC-256 BC). For thousands of years, Chinese folk songs, operas, narrative music, and instrumental music revealed and expressed the suffering, joy, and human nature of a people (Lau, 2005). Music was considered to be one of the four fundamental societal functions, together with morals, law and politics in traditional Chinese society. Confucius developed a humanistic and functional approach to music, a view that considered music as a means of governance and self-cultivation. Confucius denounced the use of music as entertainment, reasoning that music was a manifestation of virtue inherent in the universe itself (Lau, 2005). Confucius recognized the importance of arts education for the development of sentiments, and

thought that poetry and music should be not only be beautiful in form but also in their content.

The rationale of Chinese music education maintained that moral education was a way of encouraging people to follow virtuous ways of living (Kim, 2006). Confucius thought that the cultivation of reason depended on the appreciation of the proper kind of music. Music education could regulate the government so as to achieve universal harmony. The basic teaching of Confucianism was focused on the significance of constructing the moral education of the individual, so that the state could be governed by moral virtue (Lawrence, 2000). A complex ethical value understanding has thus been attributed to music in China for a long time, alongside a contested relationship between moral education and character formation through music education (Ho, 2010). Chinese music continues a rich traditional heritage in one aspect, while emerging into a more contemporary form at the same time (Jin, 2010). The ways in which moral education shapes the social and cultural dynamic are well rehearsed in modern China (Lee & Ho, 2005; Qi & Tang, 2004). Musical and moral aspects are inseparable from a complex pattern of social, political and historical processes in a wider socio-political context in modern China. Music materials attempt to incorporate a strong sense of kinship, love for motherland or homeland, and the desire to pursue social stability and individual values in music education. Socialist morality is still encouraged through the formal channels of the national curriculum, and through various social and musical activities (Ho, 2010).

Education in China

Wheaton (1980) highlighted that education develops effective habits, behaviors, values, and attitudes such as dependability, judgment, motivation, effort, trust, and confidence. In particular, the process of learning creates confidence in the ability to solve problems. Education instills the habit of meeting problems with attention, thought, action, and perseverance. Apart from the value of the skills learned in school, the process of learning builds the confidence, motivation, and self-assurance needed to attempt to solve problems. Thus, education increases effort, which like ability is a fundamental component of problem solving. Mirowsky and Ross (2003a) also pointed out that education helps people to negotiate with each other, compromise, respond flexibly and openly to others' opinions without resorting to violence, effectively solve interpersonal problems, and generally develop skills that aid in social interaction. The well educated have larger and more diverse social networks and more supportive relationships than do the poorly educated (Lin, Ye, & Ensel, 1999; Turner, Wheaton, & Lloyd, 1995).

The Chinese government has been carrying out education reforms based on the principle that education should be geared to the needs of modernization. China has made great progress in education in the five past decades. Nine years of compulsory education (from primary school to junior middle school) has been implemented nationwide since 1985. Higher education, occupational and polytechnic education,

diversified adult education and ethics education have been developed rapidly (Population Census Office, 2001). China's citizens were better educated at the end of the 1990s than at the beginning of compulsory education. Up to the end of 2000, China had successfully realized its 'two basic' educational objectives set in 1992, diffusing nine-year compulsory education and eliminating illiteracy among the young and middle-aged. Growth of the population with secondary and higher education was particularly rapid. In 2010, 250 million Chinese receive three levels of school education which include elementary, junior and senior high school education. Elementary school enrolment has reached 98.9%, and the gross enrolment rate in junior high schools reached 94.1% (Population Census Office, 2011). Compulsory, vocational and higher education are emphasized in China's education system. In 2010, China's National Plan for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020) promulgates eight education areas to construct a modernized lifelong learning framework: preschool education, compulsory education, senior middle school education, vocational education, higher education, continuing education, education for ethnic minorities, and special education. This discussion will focus on the education that would have been prevalent at the time when the research participants would have attended school and possibly tertiary institutions.

Older adults' education in China

Chou and Chi (1999) found that receiving more education was a determinant of a higher level of life satisfaction in Chinese older people. Walker (2006) points out that

active participation in social or voluntary activities has been suggested as a foundation for good quality of life in old age. Older adults who actively participate in lifelong education achieve a higher level of quality of life (Meeks & Murrell, 2001). Expressed directly, the higher the education those older adults attain, the better their quality of life. Therefore, education contributes lifelong benefits for healthy ageing. However, Ross and Zhang (2008) state that older Chinese have very low levels of education. In the United States, education levels mostly range from 10th grade through a college degree, whereas among older Chinese they mostly vary from no formal education in elementary school education.

A system of adult education was established in the 1950s, but that was to complement the formal education system as an instrument to implement state manpower planning. In the first years of the socialist republic after 1949, China closely followed the Russian system of education. Such an adult education system extends throughout the different levels of education: literacy programs, primary and secondary schooling, higher education, teacher training and cadre upgrading. Lifelong education as a modern notion was introduced to China only at the end of the 1970s immediately after the Cultural Revolution, and from that time it has been very popular among older adults in modern China (Cheng, Jin & Gu, 1999; Zhang, 2008). During the 1980s, more than 1200 independent adult colleges and over 5,000 adult technical secondary schools existed throughout mainland China, with as many as 3.51 million on-campus students (Finance Planning Bureau of State Education Commission, 1989). At this

time, China was in its initial stage of industrialization. The rapid emergence of enterprises that focused on export and materials-processing production led to the demand for a massive number of both junior and skilled workers, as well as junior and middle-level technical and management personnel. Since the mid-1980s, post-university continuing engineering education has been considered the main task of continuing education in official documents (Tan, 2008). Since the 1990s, the main targets of continuing education were then changed to accommodate the educational needs of middle-level skilled personnel and professional technical personnel.

Music education China

As all participants in China group received music education as part of their schooling it is important to offer information that contextualizes their experiences. Musical works reflect the cultures and subcultures from which they originate and musical values can be understood in terms of the human contexts and human experience that bring them forth. Therefore, music is equally important in accomplishing the general goals of education in the functioning of a society (Ho & Law, 2004). Lau (2005) states that:

The development of music and music education in modern China through the entire twentieth century was predominantly governed by the development of the nation in that same period. The political, social, and psychological changes that occurred in Chinese society at large within that particular period deeply influenced the development of music and music education (p. 33).

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, music education in

mainland China has developed and some significant achievements have been made. Lau (2008) states that China's music education has long been regarded as cultural-political propaganda designed to reinforce political ideology and governmental desires to imprint the new social order and values. Music education today integrates music, the arts, dance, and drama, and links these arts with the emotions, culture, science, and life in general (Cai, 2003; Wang, 2003). Modern Chinese music education has kept abreast of social changes by orienting itself in accordance with the social agents of the state. Law and Ho (2011) argue that the imperial and contemporary Chinese governments promoted social harmony in music education as a means of state governance to consolidate their political leadership and maintain social stability. China's music education can be thought of as transmitting the values and accumulated knowledge of a society that has experienced tensions between the individual and collectivism in the transmission of both musical and non-musical knowledge. Both through the use of recognized folk melodies and by having text for songs with approved ideas and topics. At the same time, China's music education also reflects the shifting emphases of different socio-political climates during the last few decades (Law & Ho, 2009). This part will focus on music education during the twentieth-century when the older participants in this study were attending educational institutions.

- **Music and music education during 1911-1949**

By the year 1911, the corrupt Qing government was overthrown in a revolt led by Sun

Yat-Sen. The new Republic of China was born. Cai Yuenpei, a scholar who was the principal of Beijing University, was assigned to be director of education of the new country. During Cai's administration, the government declared new policies for education, including those geared toward music education (Lau, 2005). Regarding music education in the schools during that time, Wu (1999) stated that:

The main goal of singing is for cultivation of the sense of beauty and good personality in children through singing of simple and smooth songs. Monophonic music should be used in lower elementary schools. Building upon this foundation, progressing gradually, the higher elementary schools should teach in a discreet manner polyphonic music (pp. 17-18).

Lau (2005) points out that the mention of monophonic and polyphonic music indicates that Westernized music was already in use in the school system during 1911 to 1949. And foreign music literature had already been imported into the education system at that time. Li (2001) stated that from the 1920s to the 1940s, teacher training institutes, music schools, and conservatories in China all adapted Western systems of music teaching and used Western music curricula. Therefore, it was only natural that these Chinese music teachers, who had been trained almost exclusively with Western music, would teach their young students music of the Western culture. The main feature of music education in China at this time was a new genre of school music literature, the 'Songs of the Study Halls'. These were well-know Western melodies, imported from Europe, the United States, and Japan, sung with Chinese lyrics (Lau, 2005).

Between the 1930s and 1940s, the growth of nationalism was strengthened by military activities including the 8-year war against Japan (1937-1945), and the 4-year Civil War (1945-1949) (Ho, 2003). Chairman Mao's talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art in 1942 and other relevant instructions point the direction for China's socialist literature and art: to serve the workers, peasants and soldiers (Chai, 1975). Kwok (1987) highlighted that anti-war and patriotic songs with Western diatonic melodies were adopted as teaching materials in the 1930s and 1940s. Wong (1984) concluded that by 1936 the composer Xian Xinghai had written 300 patriotic songs, and from 1939 he began to write large-scale patriotic works, such as the celebrated 'Yellow River Cantata' (Huanghe Dehechang) for mixed chorus and an orchestra, combining Chinese and Western instruments. Besides Xian Xinghai, other patriotic/communist composers, such as Huang Zi (1904-1938), Tan Xiaolin (1911-1948), Ma Sicong (1912-1987) and Nie Er (1912-1935) all made use of tunes in national styles and produced large numbers of songs to motivate the masses to resist the Japanese invasion, and to achieve national liberation (Chen, 2005; Liu, 2009). In the 1930s and 1940s, the Ministry of Education issued music syllabuses for primary and secondary education, published Chinese and English versions of the 'Collections of Anti-War Songs', and trained pupils to sing these songs (Ho, 2003). In 1940, the Military Department established a program of military music and presented courses on vocal and instrumental music to 15-18 year-old students during their 3-year military training (Liu, 2009).

• Music and music education during 1949-1976

After the Chinese Communist Party came to power in 1949, it set about reforming music and the performing arts to suit the needs of the new socialist China, as well as preparing to use these arts for political purposes (Louie, 2008). Chairman Mao put forward the policy for literature and art of ‘making the past serve the present and foreign things serve China’ (Chai, 1975). Chinese society and its education system were transformed after the fashion of Soviet socialism (Chen & Reid, 2002). In music, the main focus was in the popular arts, including *xiqu*⁶, folk music and *quyi*⁷, because one of the main points of the Chinese Communist Party’s doctrine was that the arts should both reach the masses and influence them in the direction of socialism (Louie, 2008). At the same time, music and the other arts were required in China in the 1950s and 1960s, according to Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideology. Students and party members from diverse areas of music were sent to the Moscow Conservatory of Music and other musical institutions in Eastern European countries for further studies (Mao, 1991). China’s music education during 1966-1976 (Cultural Revolution) instituted an Eastern European model. In this musical styles and meaning were socially constructed to integrate the idea of revolutionary ideas into musical expression (Ho & Law, 2004; Law & Ho, 2011). The Cultural Revolution banned

⁶ *Xiqu* (Chinese opera) is a popular form of drama and musical theatre in China with roots going back as far as the third century CE. There are numerous regional branches of Chinese opera, of which the Beijing opera (*Jingju*) is one of the most notable (Riley, 1997).

⁷ *Quyi* refers to such traditional art forms as ballad singing, story telling, comic dialogues, clapper talks and cross talks. This is one of the art category that gained momentum since the New Culture Movement. With the exception of the Cultural Revolution period, a great number of stories written for this art are preserved. *Quyi* is a Chinese performance art consisted of narrative storytelling using staged monologues and dialogues. It is mostly a spoken performance, and is generally not a full-fledged theatrical play (Boerdahl, 1996).

non-revolutionary music from the West, and non-revolutionary or non-patriotic music from pre-1949 China. The *xiqu* was restricted to a very small number of “model dramas” (*yanban xi*) which refers to a group of modern *jingji* that contain newly composed music and highly politicized plots (Lau, 2008). *Yanbanxi* was endorsed by the government and became the only music that was allowed to be performed during the Cultural Revolution. All the models were specifically designed to emphasize the class struggle, express people’s gratitude toward the party, promote national unity among the national minorities, the leading positive characters being revolutionary heroes, and praise the work of workers, peasants, and soldiers (Louie, 2008; Lau, 2008). Great quantities of revolutionary songs emerged such as ‘The East Is Red’, ‘Golden Sun in Beijing’, and ‘I Love Beijing Tiananmen’. During this period, Chinese composers and musicians strove to encourage enthusiasm for revolutionary ideology. However, music was in fact highly western in its technique, harmonic and structure (Kraus, 1989).

- **Music and music education from the end of 1970s to the 1990s**

The Cultural Revolution was probably the most restructured period for the arts in Chinese history. However, with Mao’s death in 1976 and the negation of the Cultural Revolution in 1978, there was rapid change in music and the performing arts. Since the opening of China in 1978, there has been considerable relaxation of state ideological and political controls in many areas of life and culture (Louie, 2008). The open-door policy resulted in a musical exchange between China and the West; both

traditional Chinese and Western classical music were developed during this period (Bakken, 2003). Ho and Law (2004) stated that China's music and music education were influenced by 'performances of Western music, the employment of Western avant-garde compositional techniques, and national and international musical exchange' (p. 155). Many musicians from Europe, the USA and other countries were invited to China to teach music or give performances. Though Western musical learning was encouraged, the state used music education to aid the development of a national and patriotic education (Ho & Law, 2004). Music and music education also aimed to invigorate a love of socialism and patriotism and songs such as 'I Love You China', 'The 15th Moon' and 'Today Is Your Birthday, China' all carry messages of patriotism and nationalism (Ho & Law, 2004). Many of such songs are still very popular now.

Lifelong learning in China

This research focuses on music engagement by older people which resonates with current interest in researching life histories (Goodson & Sikes, 2010). The concepts and practice of lifelong learning in China date from Confucius's ideas of education established 2500 years ago. According to Confucius, men from all classes, regardless of their economic status and ethnic origin, should have access to education. It was the earliest idea that emphasized equal opportunity in education, which is one of the major ideas, indeed a major objective, in lifelong education today (Zhang, 2008). China's lifelong education system emphasizes people's all-round development and

the nurturing of people's quality. The objectives of lifelong education are to provide lifelong learning opportunities for all, and to enhance the quality of life.

In the first 20 years of the socialist republic after 1949, adult education was confined to the preparation or upgrading of manpower as required by the national manpower plan. A large number of people were then given a second opportunity after they had left the formal education system, but not at their own choice. In the first years of the open economy after 1979, there was an explosion of the need for continuous education, which is a reflection of the flexible labour market. Most adults continue to study academically with extrinsic motivation to gain certification, or vocationally to increase horizontal or vertical job mobility, and very few indeed hold any intrinsic motivation to learn (Zhang, 2010). It is only in the past few years that adults have begun to participate in education as a matter of leisure and as a way of realizing a meaningful life (Cheng, Jin & Gu, 1999). The 2002 Report of the 16th National Congress of the Communist Party of China had stated an aim 'to establish a lifelong education system and a learning society in which everyone will pursue lifelong education so as to attain one's all-round development' (Jiang, 2002). The Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (2004) states that to build learning systems for the needs of older people, it is a basic goal to assert that older people have the same rights in society.

To address the demand for building a lifelong learning city and lifelong education

system, China's Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020) addressed the establishment of a 'flyover' in lifelong learning. This is to enhance the longitudinal and latitudinal articulation of various kinds and levels of education, to provide multiple education choices and opportunities, and to satisfy personalized learning and development. At the same time, the Chinese government stated that the lifelong learning system is to be initially formed by 2020 (Young, Zhang & Zhang, 2011). The objectives of lifelong education are to provide lifelong learning opportunities for all, and to enhance the quality of life. Nowadays, lifelong learning in Chinese regions is very popular among older adults. There were more than 17,000 universities or university departments specifically catering for older adults in 2006. However, because of limited places for older adults, 13,000 more universities are needed to cater for 1.14 million older adults (Zhang & Hu, 2002). The provision of community education will be discussed later in this chapter.

Community in China

Since the opening of China in 1978, the loosening of central control and opening of China to international trade generated opportunities for initiative and innovation, which in turn opened possibilities for local participation (Hughes & Yuan, 2005). In China, the term community has been ambiguous during the past decades. In 1986, the Ministry of Civil Affairs offered an official definition of community in urban areas, which equated community with a street. Community in China is now defined by geographic neighborhoods (Xu, Gao, & Yan, 2005), and it was the central

government's means of maintaining control over communities while relinquishing some of its costly and cumbersome social welfare responsibilities (Xu, 2007). The importance of community has risen steadily mainly because of China's social-economic reforms initiated in the late 1980s.

In pre-reform China, social services for urban residents were provided predominately through people's affiliation with state owned factories and other work units. Along with employment, most urban residents had enjoyed the security of lifelong jobs, housing, education, and medical and retirement benefits. The central government provided the traditional social safety net through a centralized network, and this was the main vehicle for providing services in China (Guan & Chow, 2003/2004). Since the 1990s, the central government of China has increasingly recognized the value of the community. Community development and local autonomy are replacing old top-down models of central planning and administration. Responsibility for services including unemployment, retirement, elder care, and health care was delegated to local neighborhoods via top-down governmental incentives and policies (Leung & Wong, 1999). Urban neighborhood committees have been taking on new roles in community service, local culture, public security, health care and other aspects of local community life. Lei (2001) highlighted that programs run by well-established, trusted community groups were more successful than government-sponsored programs were.

- **Community learning in China**

Topolsky (1997) argued that ‘a community is one in which all levels, individually and collectively, are continually increasing their capacity to produce the results they really care about’ (p. 3). Various researchers classify a community as a learning organization (Moore & Brooks, 1996), as a group of pro-active people (Topolsky, 1997). Luyi and Zhifang (2010) found that in China, community music could benefit senior citizens and provide opportunities for social engagement, cultural education and the development of aesthetic awareness. Xu (2007) agreed that older people participated most often in community service programs. Community learning provides a secure social network, which is an important ingredient of positive ageing. Therefore, community education should be developed to create a positive social environment for the ageing population (Chong, Ng, Woo & Kwan, 2006).

Community education has emerged in the developed cities since the 1990s in China. In 1999 the Ministry of Education (MOE) advocated community education in *Towards the 21st Century Education Invigoration Plan* and held a community education conference. After that, 28 districts were established as the national experimental districts of community education. By 2006, this number had increased to 81, covering almost all provinces. In December 2004, the Division of Vocational and Adult Education of the MOE officially confirmed that the function of community education was to accelerate the construction of a lifelong education system, and

promote the building of a learning and harmonious society. By setting up community schools and making good use of existing educational and cultural resources such as schools, community libraries and museums, local governments have provided abundant learning curricula, including cultural, arts and crafts, vocational, healthcare, housekeeping, legal, environmental education and so on, aiming at improving the quality of life for inhabitants and promoting development of the community (Lai, 2005). In addition, constructing learning organizations in communities such as learning enterprises and learning schools is a feature of building learning communities (Ye, 2005). Chang (2010) states that ‘China is in the process of implementing a learning society through the establishment of learning cities, learning organizations, and learning communities where the function of learning plays an important role in these social units’ (p. 705).

- **Community music in China**

In later life, leisure activities constitute a major part of daily life and assume the roles of providing cognitive stimulation, social engagement and physical exercise. Newman, Curtis and Stephens (2003) pointed out that art projects have become an important part of community development strategies. Trienekens (2004) defined community arts as follows:

Community arts constitute a specific mode of arts employing a method which is both group oriented and demand oriented. It works with ‘new’ disciplines in deprived neighborhoods to reach those who do not find their way to traditional cultural facilities, to

discover their artistic talents, and to improve their artistic capabilities (p. 19).

Music, in terms of its messages, income-generation, and social processes, is one of the areas where the opportunities and pressures of globalization have begun to be experienced and manipulated within contemporary China (Law & Ho, 2009). Similarly, Ruisen (2010) noted the power of music to form cohesive bonds in society and enrich the life of participants in China where the ageing population is the largest in the world. Although the central government of China has increasingly recognized the value of community since the 1980s, and community education has emerged in the developed cities since the 1990s in China, there are few studies about community music education especially older people music engagement in community.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the background of Chinese society and included the history of Chinese people; Chinese values, language usage, religion, music culture, and education which included lifelong learning and older adults' education. This chapter also focused on issues and concerns regarding music education during the twentieth-century when the older participants in this study were influenced by different music practices. This chapter has provided an introduction to community and community learning in China. However, there are few studies that focus on community music and older people community engagement in China. The next chapter will provide a detailed description of one learning organization of older people in China, as a lens through which to explore Chinese older people's

community music engagement.

Chapter 8

The research context: Tangshan, China

Introduction

This chapter will introduce older people in Hebei Province, China, followed by a discussion of the city of Tangshan where this research is situated. Then, this chapter focuses on issues of one specific institution, Tangshan Older People University (TOPU), which includes its purpose; auspicing body; founding; meeting and schedule; activities, and five different faculties. This chapter will argue that Chinese older people are active music learners in organizations such as TOPU.

Older people in Hebei Province, China

As a result of trends in both fertility and longevity, the elderly section of China's population has been increasing. By 2050, the number of people aged 60 and 80 will reach 440 million and 101 million, respectively (China Statistical Bureau, 2009). The National Bureau of Statistics of China (2010) points out that older people aged 65 and over constitute 8.5% of the Chinese population.

Hebei Province is in northern Huabei Plain, to the north of the lower reaches of the Huanghe River and to the west of the Bohai Sea with a coastline about 500km long. The entire province is 190,000 square kilometers. Hebei Province administers 11 prefecture-level cities. These are subdivided into 22 county-level cities, 108 counties,

6 autonomous counties and 36 districts (The People's Government of Hebei Province, 2009).



Figure 8.1: Hebei Province in Mainland China

Hebei Province is inhabited by 71.85 million people of Han, Hui, Mongolian and Korean nationalities. The aged population has increased rapidly in Hebei Province in the last few decades. In 2000, the number of older people aged 65 and above reached 4.5785 million, comprising 6.86% of the total population, with an annual growth rate of around 3%. By the end of 2010, the proportion of older people in Hebei Province aged 60 or older grew to 9.34 million, comprising 13% of the total population (The People's Government of Hebei Province, 2009).

This chapter focuses on one particular city of Hebei Province, Tangshan and its Tangshan Older People University whose members are more than 50 years old and

who have all retired. The reason for selecting Hebei Province to represent all China is that Hebei Province has big aged population in China and the number of older people has increased rapidly. Further, Hebei Province is near the capital city Beijing, and it is influenced directly by the latest older people's learning policy. This organization provides a window into the complex lifelong learning of Chinese older people and their music engagement in mainland China. This chapter reports interview data collected from the organizer of the Tangshan Older People University. The organizer, Cun Li, is a 45 years old staff member of TOPU. He has worked at TOPU for more than ten years. The conversations focused on how such an organization can develop older people's well-being, encourage a cultural and spiritual life, and support services amongst older people in Tangshan city, Hebei Province.

The City of Tangshan

Tangshan is a largely industrial prefecture-level city⁸ in Hebei Province. Tangshan is located in the eastern part of Hebei Province, covering an area of 130 kilometers east-west and 150 kilometers south-north of Hebei Province. Tangshan is located in the central section of the Bohai Sea (Yellow Sea) region, facing the Bohai Sea to the south (see Figure 2). The prefecture-level city of Tangshan administers fourteen county-level divisions including six districts (Lubei, Lunan, Guye, Kaiping, Fengrun and Fengnan); 6 counties (Luan, Luannan, Laoting, Qianxi, Yutian and Tanghan) and two county-level cities which are Zunhua city and Qian'an city (City of Tangshan

⁸ A prefecture-level city is an administrative division of the People's Republic of China that ranks administratively below a province and above a county.

profile, 2012).

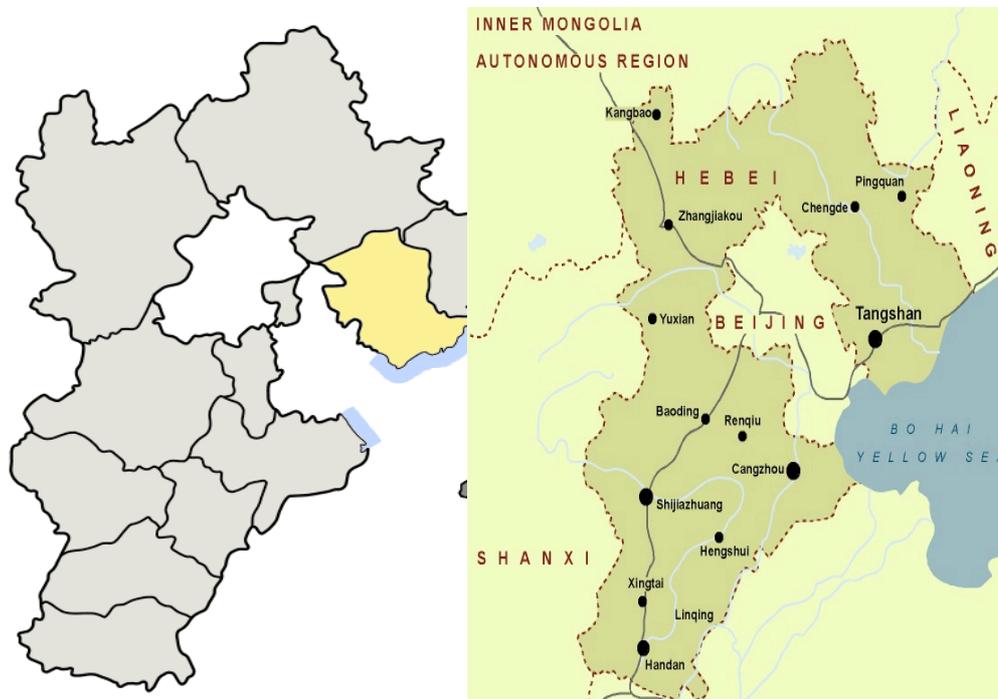


Figure 8.2: Map of Hebei Province and Tangshan city

Tangshan has become known for the 1976 Tangshan earthquake which measured 7.8 on the Richter scale and killed at least 255,000 residents. The city has since been rebuilt. According to the 2010 Census, the population of Tangshan was 7.35 million people. The largest ethnic group is Han who constitute 96.38% of the total population in Tangshan which is close to the national average. The spoken language of the population in Tangshan is Mandarin Chinese. The number of older people aged 60 and above in Tangshan reached 0.92 million, comprising 13% of the total population (City of Tangshan profile, 2012).

Tangshan Older People University (TOPU)

Purpose

Tangshan Older People University (TOPU) is a government-based organization which was established in September 1991 to support retired people living in Tangshan. TOPU is non-profit making group which provides a wide range of lifelong learning opportunities in its long-standing continuing education system for people over 50 years of age to learn, participate, and perform in a range of activities. TOPU was formed as part of the older people's education policy of local government. The original purpose of TOPU was to provide services for retired cadres⁹ and develop their cultural life and well-being. The interviewed organizer Cun Li explained the original purpose of TOPU:

At the very beginning, the purpose of TOPU was just providing service for retired cadres in city of Tangshan. This organization was established in 1991, during that time the local government had no experience about older people's learning and education, and the organization just supported the retired cadres. The staffs organized two activities which were calligraphy and drawing for the members in first few years. The main purpose was to provide an environment for these older people to get together. There were just around twenty members to join us at the very beginning.

Cun Li states that very few people accepted the idea of older people's learning in the 1990s in China. Lifelong learning is a big challenge for the staff of the TOPU. He describes that:

⁹ In 1987 the party and government cadre (*ganbu*) system, the rough equivalent of the civil service system in China. The term cadre refers to a public official holding a responsible or managerial position, usually full-time, in party and government (Worden, Savada & Dolan, 1987).

At the very beginning, TOPU was not popular. Very few people knew about this organization. We needed to advertise in local newspapers and using videos to let more people know us. Because the TOPU is under the control of the local government, we decided to spread our organization from just the retired cadres. Before the new term started, we gave advance notice to the different government departments. You know there are many retired people in these government departments. We encouraged these retired people to join us.

The older population was increasing rapidly in Tangshan, but there was no organization that could provide activities for older people in the area. The local government recognized the importance of older people's education that could provide a positive life for older people and make sure that they have the opportunity to learn what interests them. Cun Li explained that TOPU widened its purpose to provide services for older people since 1996. The aim is to develop older people's well-being, and encourage a cultural and spiritual life. He described:

Over the past two decades, TOPU not only provides services for retired cadres, we also organize activities for all the older people who want to join us. Now, the main purpose of this organization is to provide an environment to enhance the quality of life for older people in the city of Tangshan and let them enjoy our courses. All the activities we arrange offer benefits to our members. They have a place to be and have something to do here which is good for their health. More and more people know about TOPU. Our old members introduce their friends to us, and for the last six years, we don't need to advertise any more. Especially 2010 and 2011, we just needed to print out the general regulations of enrollment. Our members passed these general regulations to their family members and friends. Now, the organization is very popular in Tangshan city. Last year, the local media of Heibei Province contacted us to introduce our

organization and teaching experiences. For example, the Tangshan broadcasting station and television station did a special program for us.

Cun Li mentions that the organization went through a hard time in the first few years. The organization had no experience and there were no similar older people organizations in the city of Tangshan. Initially there were only a few older people taking part in TOPU. Now, it has become the biggest older people's organization in the city of Tangshan, with more than 5400 members.

Organization

• Auspicing body

The Hebei Province Government, together with Veteran Bureau of Hebei Province, have assumed responsibility for meeting the health care needs of the growing number of older people in Hebei Province. By 2015, the number of people aged 60 or older will reach 10.80 million, comprising 15% of the population. Older people are a significant and growing part of society (The People's Government of Hebei Province, 2009). In order to build the capacity of the Hebei Province Government to plan for an ageing population, the Hebei Government has developed the *Twelfth Five Years Population Ageing Action Plan 2011-2015*. This plan provides goals, missions and framework for implementation between 2011 and 2015. The main goal of meeting the health care needs of older people is 'old-age care, health services, older people's learning, accomplishment and enjoyment'. As a significant aspect of the services for

older people, the Older People's Universities and similar organizations provide services and activities which are relevant to older people's physical, social, mental and spiritual needs and contribute to their general wellbeing (Older People's Office of Hebei Province, 2012).

TOPU is supported by government at three levels – The Central People's Government of China, Hebei Province Government and local government of Tangshan. Cun Li suggests that TOPU is under the control of the Veteran's Bureau of Tangshan which is one of the departments of local government. He explains that:

There are eleven prefecture-level cities in Hebei Province. Every prefecture-level city has an older people's university which is organized by local government. The TOPU is under the control of the Veteran's Bureau of Tangshan which is one of the departments of local government. TOPU has become a large organization through more than twenty years' development. For now, TOPU is one of the most successful Older People's Universities in Hebei Province.

• **Funding**

TOPU is funded directly by the local government of Tangshan. The full-time staff at TOPU are employed by local government who oversee the staffing arrangements. In 2005, in order to develop the quality of older people's education, the local government provided special funding to TOPU to develop the environment and teaching conditions. In the same year, the local government built a new teaching

building in the city area as a venue for the main activities. The new building covers around 10,000 square meters and has sixteen classrooms. Cun Li explained that:

Because we are a non-profit organization and we provide the social activities for elderly people, the local government supports us completely. We applied from the funding for financial department of local government. We get about RMB 1.6 million each year. We use the money to hire teachers, pay the bills such as electricity bills, water bills, arrange performances and the staff salaries.

Moreover, Cun Li mentions that TOPU also collects tuition fees from members. He explained the purpose is to provide a better environment and ensure good teaching and management. He said:

We collect tuition fees from members to run the organization. Considering the members' income, the tuition fee is very cheap for them. Every member just need pay RMB 200 for one subject per year. Because of equipment spending, the price of computer lesson and keyboard lesson are a little bit more expensive which are RMB 300 and 260 respectively. Because the local government is our biggest supporter, we just use the tuition fees to provide a better environment for members. Secondly, we collect tuition fees to manage the teaching. I know some similar organizations provide free lessons for their members in Tangshan. However, some people didn't take the lessons after they enrolled. For our organization, the teaching conditions can just provide services for around 5000 members, but there are many more people who want to join us. So we collect tuition fees to make sure of the quality of service and teaching management.

Meeting Schedules

All members of TOPU are retired and over the age of fifty. TOPU arranges the

activities from Monday to Friday each week. In order to provide more choices for members, TOPU arranges one subject at different times from 9: 30 am to 11: 30 am and from 2: 30 pm to 4:30 pm respectively. Cun Li said ‘there are many similar organizations in Tangshan, but these different organizations just operate independently’. TOPU has many performance groups, with lots of performances organized by our members’. He describes that:

There are sixteen districts and counties in Tangshan, as far as I know, fourteen of them have similar organizations that provide services to older people, such as Lubei District, Lunan District and Kaiping District. And these counties’ older people educational systems have developed in these few years.

However, he said ‘these organizations work together sometimes to celebrate some important festivals, such as celebrating the 60th National Day, when we organized a big performance which included fourteen older people organizations’. He also mentions that it is very common for many of the members to join in two or three different organizations at the same time. Some of the members of TOPU are core members in other districts’ or communities’ organizations.

Concerning the relationship between TOPU and these similar organizations in Tangshan, Cun Li explains that TOPU plays two different roles at the same time, which is as a service organization and as the Older People’s Education Department of Tangshan. He said:

As an older people organization we just work together with the other organizations. We arrange the activities and services for older people. As the Older People Education Department of Tangshan city, the TOPU is a higher level organization than the other fourteen older people's organizations. TOPU plays an exemplary role for the districts and counties older people's universities and older people's schools. We pass on our experiences to the other organizations and invite the other organizations to visit our activities, and we exchange experiences with them. At the same time, we also are a big supporter for some organizations, for example, we renewed some equipment last year, such as computers and keyboards, and we donated this old equipment to the districts and counties' older people schools to help them develop the quality older people's education. In the last few years, these districts and counties' older people organizations have rapidly developed, for instance, the Older People University of Kailuan district has built a main campus and seven branch campuses and has more than 2,000 members.

There are six full-time staff at TOPU. In order to make sure that the programs are running, they also hire some part-time staff. Cun Li explains that:

At the very beginning we just had few members and staff. During that time the teaching conditions were not good, we just borrowed three rooms from local governments as a venue. And there were two full-time staff and few part-time staff in the 1990s. Now, we have six full-time staff, and sixteen part-time staff. We also rehired some retired staff to arrange TOPU. We employ fifty-five part-time teachers to teach fifteen different subjects which includes 148 classes. We have around 5400 members at the moment. I think we have the largest number of members in Hebei Province.

Activities

There are five faculties in TOPU which are Calligraphy and Drawing, Computing,

General Studies, Music, and Dancing. In all TOPU now organizes fifteen subjects for members. The aim of teaching is to provide more choices for members to let them enjoy these activities. Cun Li said that there were just five subjects and nine classes in 1991, however, by the end of 2011, the number of subjects and classes had increased to 15 and 148 respectively. The chart below shows the increasing number of subjects and classes in TOPU from 1991 to 2011.

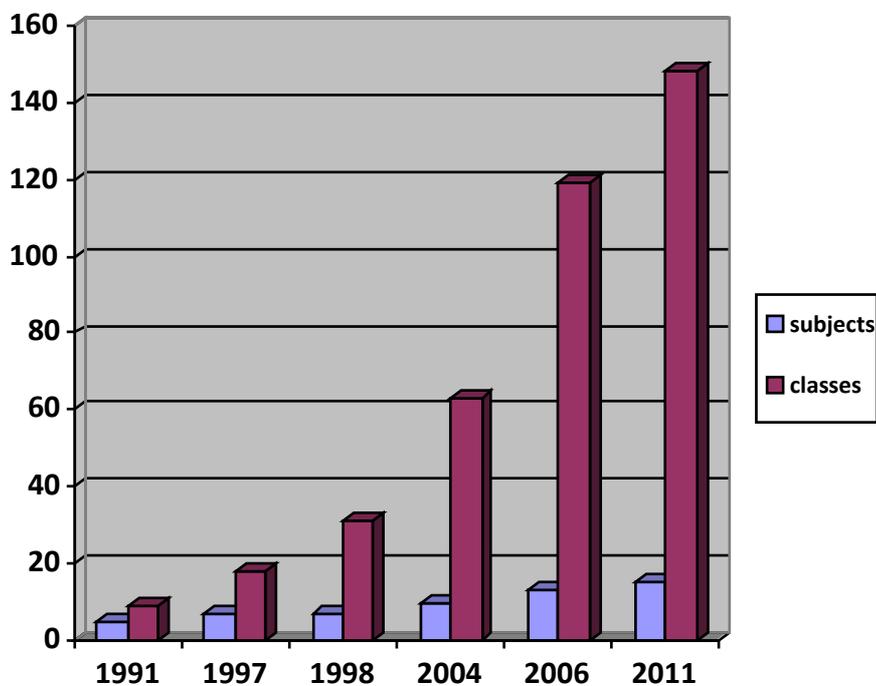


Figure 8.3 Subjects and classes of TOPU from 1991-2011

Because the number of classes developed rapidly since 2006, TOPU has a new policy since 2011 that every member of TOPU can enroll at most in three subjects at the same time, Cun Li explains the reason that:

Before 2011, there was no limit on the number of subjects for our

members. I know some members took five or six courses at the same time. Because of the increasing numbers of members, we wanted to provide services for more people. So we had a new policy since 2011 that is each member can enroll in only three subjects at most per year. The new policy just makes sure that more people have the chance to join us.

Cun Li states that the current range of subjects is very popular among the members and that they are trying to provide more. Since 2005, TOPU has offered some new courses such as a computer course, a music instrument playing course and an English course. Cun Li mentions that they arrange the class number according to the enrolment members. The computer course and keyboard course have grown rapidly in the past three years. The different Faculties will be described.

• **Faculty of Calligraphy and Drawing**

Chinese calligraphy or Shufa, the ancient Chinese art of writing Chinese characters, originated at least 4,000 years ago. Calligraphy is not only a practical technique for writing Chinese characters, but also a unique Oriental art of expression and a branch of learning and discipline as well (Han, Chou & Wu, 2008). Guo (1995) highlighted that as a branch of learning, Chinese calligraphy is rich in content which includes the evolution of writing styles, development and rules of technique, history of calligraphy, calligraphers and their inheritance in art, and evaluation of calligraphy as a work of art. There are different written scripts for the Chinese language: zhenshu (regular script), caoshu (cursive script), lishu (official script) and zhuan-shu (seal character script) (Chen, 2003). The three epochs of script style are: seal character script, official script and regular script. The earliest recorded form of writing, the seal character

period ran for more than 2000 years from the end of primitive society to the Qin Dynasty (221-206 B.C). The characters look like a length of knotted rope (Guo, 1995). The regular script or Kaishu came into use in China at the end of the Han Dynasty and is still used in China today after more than 1700 years. Kaishu was initiated by Wang Cizhong towards the end of the Han Dynasty¹⁰. Chinese traditional painting dates back to the Neolithic Age about 6,000 years ago. Chinese traditional painting is highly regarded for its theory, expression, and techniques¹¹.

The Faculty of Calligraphy and Drawing is the oldest and one of the most important faculties of TOPU. TOPU has arranged the calligraphy and drawing activities for members for more than twenty years. There are two main activities which are Calligraphy and traditional Chinese painting in this faculty. Calligraphy includes the four scripts. The Chinese traditional painting also includes four subjects which are freehand flowers and birds, meticulous flowers and birds, the landscapes, and characters. Cun Li states that the:

¹⁰ In the Wei-Jin period Zhong You (151-230) and Wang Xizhi (303-363) initiated a new way of writing that allowed kaishu and lishu to separate and form two systems. Lishu is attributed to Cheng Miao, who lived in the state of Qin. The script was used by clerks working in prisons, hence the Chinese term lishu (servitude script). By the Han Dynasty it was promoted as a writing style. Lishu underwent a development of over four hundred years. By the latter part of the Southern and Northern Dynasties the script had rid itself of any remaining influence of lishu, attaining complete maturity (Chen, 2003).

¹¹ According to painting techniques, Chinese painting can be divided into two styles: xieyi style and gongbi style (Sullivan, 1999). Xieyi, or freehand, is marked by exaggerated forms and freehand brushwork. Freehand style generalizes shapes and displays rich brushwork and ink technique. Gongbi, or meticulous, is characterized by close attention to detail and fine brushwork. It requires great care and grace; the strict composition has fine elaboration. The effect is highly decorative. Landscapes, the characters and flowers and birds are the three preferred topics of the Chinese painters (Barnhart *et al.*, 1997).

Faculty of Calligraphy and Drawing is a big faculty in this organization. Now, we have six calligraphy and ten drawing teachers in that faculty. We arranged thirty-three classes for members in 2012. But we found that since 2006, the number of Calligraphy and Drawing faculty has been reduced. For example, last year we arranged thirty-seven classes for members. But in 2012, we reduced the class number to thirty-three. I think the big reason is that the members need to take a lot of time to practice, and it is difficult when you reach a higher level.

Activities	Courses	Class number
Calligraphy	Zhenshu (regular script)	4
	Caoshu (cursive script)	2
	Lishu (official script)	2
	Zhuan-shu (seal character script)	4
Chinese traditional painting	Freehand flowers and birds	8
	Meticulous flowers and birds	3
	Landscapes	7
	Characters	3

Figure 8.4: Faculty of Calligraphy and Drawing courses in 2012

The Faculty of Calligraphy and Drawing is popular amongst the members, many of whom have won the older people's calligraphy and painting contests in Hebei Province. Some of their works are published in the local newspapers and journals.

• **Faculty of Computing**

The Faculty of Computing was established in 2005 and is one of the most popular faculties in TOPU. Cun Li said that:

Lots of older people have never touched the computer when they were young. After retiring, they wanted to learn some basic computer knowledge. So we provide the opportunity for them. Now, the computer lessons are really popular for our members. In order to let more members have a chance to take the lessons, we bought fifty new computers last year.

In 2012 there are now twenty-seven computer classes that teach basic computer knowledge, Chinese inputting, computer network infrastructure, and Corel Video Studio. Cun Li said there are more than 600 people enrolled in the computer courses in 2012 and it is expected that these classes will continue to expand.

• Faculty of General Studies

The Faculty of General Studies includes five main subjects which are literature, photography, English, massage and traditional Chinese crafts. There are eighteen classes in this faculty in 2012.

Activities	Courses	Course number
Literature	Prose writing	1
	Poetry writing	1
Photography	Photography basic class	2
	Training class	2
	Computer-generated photography	1
English	English basic course	1
	Speaking class	2
	Intensive English course	3
Massage	Health Maintenance class	1
	Acupuncture Points massage	2
Handworks	Handworks basic course	1
	Traditional Chinese handworks	1

Figure 8.5: Faculty of General Studies courses in 2012

Cun Li states that the Faculty of General Studies was established in response to the members' feedback. These activities are very popular. The number of people who have enrolled in the English course has developed rapidly in the past few years. He gives two reasons for this:

Firstly, many of our members' children are overseas. Communication is a big problem when they go to overseas. So we arrange the English workshop for our members. The other reason is that most of our members had no chance to learn English when they were young. After retiring, they have more time to do something they like.

This recognition of the need for older Chinese people to learn some English in case they travel overseas resonates with the experiences of older Chinese in Australia.

• Faculty of Dancing

There are five main activities in the Faculty of Dancing which are social dancing, sports dance, older people's model course, rhythmic exercises and folk dancing. In total TOPU arranges twenty-one dancing classes for its members. Cun Li states that dancing activities are very good for improving older people's health, especially physical health.

Activities	Courses	Course number
Social dancing	Social dancing basic course	5
	Intensive social dancing course	
Sports dance	Latin dance course	5
	Modern dance course	

	Tai Chi	
Model course		1
Rhythmic exercises		5
Folk dancing	Folk dancing basic course	5
	Intensive folk dancing course	

Figure 8.6: Faculty of Dancing courses in 2012

TOPU has arranged dancing activities for more than ten years and the dancing group of TOPU won the National Older People’s Dancing Contests and Hebei Province Older People Dancing Contests. Cun Li said:

Our dancing group was established in 2006, the average age of this group is 55 years old. And the oldest member is 75. Our dancing group got the fourth prize in the *Beijing Chinese Older People Dancing Contest* in 2006, and the first prize of *Golden Stone Beach National Dancing Contest* in 2007.

The group is very busy: in 2011 they gave sixty performances in a range of venues. Cun Li mentions that some members also are dancing group leaders in different communities in Tangshan. They take the regular dancing lessons at TOPU, and then share the dancing steps with other people in other communities. That is considered to be a good way to improve older people’s health in Tangshan.

• **Faculty of Music**

The faculty of Music is another big faculty in TOPU and includes four main activities and fifty-five classes. Cun Li explains that:

The Faculty of Music is the biggest faculty in our organization. In 2012, there are more than 2000 members enrolled in our music courses. Many of members told me the reason they choose to attend music courses is for health and cognitive benefits.

Activities	Courses	Course number
Singing	Singing basic course	17
	Intensive singing course	
	Singing developing course	
	Singing master course	
Beijing Opera ¹²	Basic course	2
	Developing course	
Chinese national music instrument	Erhu ¹³ course	13
	Cucurbit flute ¹⁴	
Keyboard	Keyboard basic course	23
	Intensive singing course	
	Keyboard developing course	
	Keyboard master course	

Figure 8.7 Faculty of Music courses in 2012

Cun Li states that singing and dancing have been the most popular lessons in TOPU for the last five years. Most of the members who have joined these classes attend the lessons every week. Many of them want to learn more instruments. He said:

We organize different music courses for our members, such as keyboard, Chinese instruments courses such as erhu and Cucurbit flute, dancing, and singing. Actually, our members want to attend more music activities, such as piano, but we cannot provide these courses for them at the moment.

¹² Beijing opera or Peking opera is a form of traditional Chinese theatre which combines music, vocal performance, mime, dance and acrobatics. It arose in the late 18th century and became fully developed and recognized by the mid-19th century. Major performance troupes are based in Beijing and Tianjin in the north (Goldstein, 2007, p. 3).

¹³ The erhu is a two-stringed bowed musical instrument held in the lap and played with a bow, more specifically a spike fiddle, which may also be called a 'south fiddle'. It is used as a solo instrument as well as in small ensembles and large orchestras (Jones, 1995).

¹⁴ The cucurbit flute or hulusi is a free reed wind instrument from China. It is held vertically and has three bamboo pipes which pass through a gourd wind chest; the center pipe has finger holes and the outer two are typically drone pipes (Cultural China, 2009).

Cun Li describes how the music teachers work at TOPU, 'we have a meeting before the new term starts. We discuss with our music teachers about the teaching timetable and content. We also collect the feedback from our members'. Cun Li explains that singing courses are the most successful activities in this organization. At present there are seventeen singing classes and five singing teachers in this organization. Each class has a large number of members which is around fifty-five. He also points out that the members consider singing as an enjoyable hobby. Some of the members have taken singing lessons at TOPU for more than ten years.

The members who have enrolled in the singing course have a two-hour regular lesson every week. They sing melody with harmony. The singing teacher plays a piano accompaniment for them during the lesson. All the singing classes use numbered musical notation and the songs are learnt by reading music. One of the singing teachers BF explains that:

Because most Chinese song books are published in numbered musical notation and this is the musical notation system widely used among the Chinese people, we use numbered musical notation in lessons.

• **Performances**

Performance is an important part of TOPU's teaching schedule. TOPU has arranged lots of performance opportunities for members especially for members of the Faculty of Music. Cun Li said:

Every year we arrange some performances for our members. We have a final report-back performance at every end of year. The members have the opportunity to show what they have learned in one year. I think that this is a good opportunity for our members to enjoy our activities. We also celebrate important festivals, such as the Chinese New Year and National Day.

The picture below shows the members of the singing group performing in 2011 at the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of TOPU.



Figure 8.8 The singing group performing in 2011 at the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of TOPU

Cun Li states that the members also organize performances by themselves. The performance groups are very busy. They perform in nursing homes, aged care facilities, day centres, hostels and factories. Some of the performance groups are very

popular with the older people of Tangshan. Cun Li mentions that TOPU also performs with other similar organizations. He explains that:

As a big older people's organization, we have many performance groups. We perform separately. But for some important festivals or performances organized by the local government, we work together.

Cun Li concludes that most of the members enjoying performing and they feel that they can bring happiness to more people. The members think that the performance opportunities can make their life more positive.

Conclusion

Cun Li states that the number of older people is rapidly increasing and that TOPU has a big future. He believes that, as more people know this organization, they will recognize the importance of older people's education. He summarizes the development and goals of TOPU:

First of all, we received support from local government. In order to ensure the quality of the programs, the local government has supported us completely, For example, they built the new avenue for us and arranged the staff for TOPU. During the past few years, the local government has a special funding to us to develop our environment and teaching conditions.

Cun Li continues that the 'aim of TOPU is to always put our members' benefit at the first. The goal is to enhance older people's cultural quality and enrich their later life'.

To support these goals TOPU has developed effective and well taught classes that are evaluated every year. To extend their work TOPU ‘exchange experiences with other older people’s organizations and learn the good practices from them’. Cun Li explained why TOPU is such a vibrant organization for older people: ‘increasingly it’s the older people, the passion, the joy that they have, the fun that they have, the sort of human connections, the willingness to share’. When talked about the challenge of TOPU, Cun Li states that the challenge of accommodating older people in society is becoming important in China as lifelong learning will play a significant role in China. He said ‘we have some problems to running this organization, and the biggest one is that we cannot supply services for more people’. He said that:

The teaching conditions of TOPU just can provide services for around 5000 members, but there are many more people who want to join us. In order to ensure the quality of service and teaching, we accept members according their order of enrolment. We give preference to our old members. We have many old members, and many of them have taken lessons for more than ten years at TOPU. They said that ‘TOPU is just like our second home, we come here every year’. We have no space for the new members. It is not fair for the other people who are interested in joining. As far as I know, some older people wait for two or three years to enrol in our courses. Moreover, we have not enough spaces to arrange the activities. The numbers have increased from about 3500 in 2008 to 5400 in 2011. Although we have sixteen classrooms, in these past two years, we have noticed that we can’t provide more spaces for the new members.

Cun Li concludes that TOPU develops older people’s well-being, encourages a cultural and spiritual life, and supports services amongst older people. He believes that TOPU has a big future in which more and more people will know about the

organization. He also believes that lifelong learning will play a significant role among Chinese elderly people. The singing teacher Yang wrote the ‘The Song of Older People University’. The words state:

We had struggles and ideals,
We had contributions and brilliant period,
Now, we have learning chance again,
Focusing on the future and creative,
Focusing on our life and development,
We are together,
We are happy and we sing the song together.

TOPU has an important role to play in the community in Tangshan. This chapter has introduced the research site in China. The next chapter will present the data collected.

Chapter 9

Case study two – Tangshan Older People University

Introduction

This chapter will introduce data from interviews undertaken at the singing courses of Tangshan Older People University (TOPU). Two singing teachers and thirteen members of a singing class participated. The researcher chose one of the seventeen singing classes to interview. The researcher found that all these singing classes of TOPU are very similar, and this was confirmed by the organizer. Therefore, the researcher decided to select one class to interview. Most of the members have been in this class for three to four years so all have a good understanding of what is involved. All interviewees will be identified only by their initial, for example FC, XZ and LZ. The interviewees were between the age of 54 and 78 years. Five of the participants are men. However, gender was not considered to be a determining factor in this research. Most of the participants were born in the city of Tangshan and all of them speak Mandarin. The table below indicates interviewees' information about the singing class:

Name	FC	XZ	LZ	YS	XX	SZ	YL	XR	JJ	CJ	WF	ZQ	YJ
Age	60	55	67	71	55	59	57	54	58	60	67	78	57
Gender	Female	Male	Male	Male	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Male	Male	Female	Female
Years attending singing course	3	3	4	2	0.5	4	6	0.5	4	1	3	20	7

Figure 9.1 Table of TOPU participants' background

This chapter will introduce the interviews of the TOPU singing class followed by the discussions of the data. Five significant themes have been explored in this chapter: Emotional Well-being, Physical Well-being, Mental Well-being, Choosing Music, and Shared Interest. And each of these themes has been analysed under subheadings.

Tangshan Older peoples University (TOPU) singing courses

In 1999, the singing courses were formed at a yearly meeting of the larger TOPU. Some staff suggested establishing singing courses and offering weekly lessons. Cun Li, the organizer of Tangshan Older Peoples University (TOPU), recalled that ‘we wanted to provide more positive activities for our members. We collected feedback from our old members. And we found that many of them mentioned that they like singing’. TOPU organized singing activity and hired voice teachers to take the singing lessons. The singing courses are popular among the members as demonstrated by the large numbers who take part. Today there are more than 1500 enrolled in the singing courses at TOPU. Yang, a voice teacher of TOPU, introduced the group:

I have worked here for more than ten years. The singing lesson is really popular among the members. I take three classes for now, each class has around fifty-five people. And in my class, the attendance reaches around fifty every week. Our members come from different working places. But they come here for the same reason that is enjoying music.

All members are aged 50+, and there are more women than men in each singing class.

Most of the members have had no formal musical training. Some of them had a few lessons at some point in their life but nothing significant. Yang explains that the members enjoy their singing lessons and told her that ‘we expect to take the singing lesson every week’. She said that through the training at TOPU, most of them make strong progress. The members have two hours of regular lessons once a week. In 2012, TOPU holds seventeen singing classes for members and there are five part-time voice teachers in total. The Faculty of Music arranges the same teaching program for each singing class. However, according to the opinions of members and teachers’ experiences, these singing classes’ repertoire and teaching content are different. Yang explained that ‘I encourage our members to learn what they enjoy. Most of the songs we sing are chosen by the members. Before we learn a new song, I always ask their opinions, they suggest a song list, and then I choose which one to teach. I found that most of them prefer Chinese songs such as patriotic songs and revolution songs’. Examples of such songs are ‘My Motherland’¹⁵ and ‘I love you, China’¹⁶. This confirms that older Chinese people prefer the music that was popular when they were young (Li & Southcott, 2012). The other voice teacher Zhang states that:

I organize a big workshop for members. I choose songs depending on the participants’ interest. I found that many people are interest in

¹⁵ My Motherland is a song written for the Chinese movie Battle on Shangganling Mountain (1956). The lyrics were written by Qiao Yu. Music was composed by Liu Chi. Both of them are well-known for a number of songs since 1950s. It remains a popular and famous patriotic song in mainland China and the signature song for the famous operatic soprano Guo Lanying.

¹⁶ I Love You, China is a song composed for a soprano by Zheng Qiufeng to the lyrics of Qu Cong for the film Overseas Compatriots (1979). The voice of the song that appeared in the film is that of Ye Peiyang.

music theory. So every lesson, we spend around half an hour learning music theory. For instance, when we learn a new song, we analyze the time signature, key signature and things like that. Now, most of the members in my class can sight read music.

Zhang explains her teaching, ‘normally, our teaching content is similar, each voice teacher organizes a regular lesson for members, we use three or four weeks to teach a new song which includes the related theory, sight reading and singing in harmony’. The voice teachers play the piano accompaniment during the lesson. Yang mentions that they sometimes use audio or video material in the rehearsal such as DVD and MP3. The Faculty of Music has a meeting at the end of every year at which all the voice teachers get together and discuss the teaching results. The staff collect the class members’ feedback and teachers make a teaching plan for the next year according to this feedback.

Every class has taken part in a final performance at TOPU at the end of each year. When asked the reasons for the report-back performance, Cun Li explains that it is a tradition at TOPU and ‘it is a good opportunity to let our members demonstrate what they learned in one year’. For some important festivals or celebrations, such as the Spring Festival and National Day, all the members get together to perform. LY, the current conductor of the selected singing class, explained what she gains from being in the singing class, ‘I receive so much in the group, I learn to sing and I can use it in my life... I am a conductor in the class. I organize a singing group in my community. All the things I do give me a sense of successful. If I don’t learn singing, I can’t do

anything'. XR added that:

Singing gives me intense pleasure. Music contributes to my well-being. Without it, I don't know what I would do. So the more songs I learn I love, the better I feel. I think it helps me to think well and functioning well.

The data gathered from the members about their attendance at singing lessons was sorted into themes.

Themes

In general, music was central in helping participants maintain a sense of well-being and health. Many participants felt that music was the key to well-being and good health. The participants saw music as providing choice in life whether it was through listening, singing, or participating in music activities. The singing teacher Yang said 'as human beings, we are made up of body, mind and spirit, and music infuses our whole being. I believe music can help your general well-being'. During the discussions and in the analysis of the data, a number of significant themes emerged concerning membership of the TOPU singing class. The five main themes that have been selected as most significant were: Emotional Well-being, Physical Well-being, Mental Well-being, Choosing Music, and Share Interest. The data is illustrated by direct quotations from the participants and their views are contextualized by the researcher's observations.

Emotional well-being

Emotional well-being was perhaps the most significant aspect which was identified

repeatedly by all participants. All interviewees understand that they receive many personal benefits through joining the music activities in TOPU. Four specific aspects are reported in this theme, they are: Enjoyment, Sense of confidence, Sense of purpose, Overcoming loneliness and isolation.

• **Enjoyment**

Bright (1997) stated that one of the primary roles of music is used as a facilitator for people to enjoy shared interest and activities. 'Enjoyment', 'enjoy', 'enjoyable' were the most frequently used words in the interviews and this impact was also immediately evident during the observation of the singing class. The voice teacher Yang said, 'older adults came to join TOPU for various reasons. Some felt they lost the opportunity when younger. Most of my students at TOPU are retired, have time on their hands, and saw learning music as another hobby to acquire. They see learning music and singing as beneficial and a way to relax'. Yang states that the goal of teaching is enjoyment. Most of interviewees explained that they joined the singing class for enjoyment. Singing gives them pleasure and has become an important part of their later life. The voice teacher Zhang explained that singing for fun was an important reason for joining in singing classes in TOPU. He said 'They enjoy the singing course, and our singing course brings them happiness'. ZQ the oldest interview participant said that, 'I joined the TOPU twenty years ago and wonder where the time has gone. Time flies then you're having fun. To me, it is really worthwhile and there is a great sense of enjoyment if you really commit yourself to it'.

FC, who has been attending the singing course for three years, explained the primary reason for joining the singing class was that ‘we don’t mind whether we sing well or not, we are singing for fun. People who choose singing just because they like singing... So that’s basically why I join’! FC recalled how she came to join the TOPU singing classes:

The TOPU is popular in the city of Tangshan. It provides a place for older people to join in different activities. Three years ago, I saw some older people rehearsing in a garden, they looked so happy. One of them told me they took the singing lesson at TOPU. I thought it was great idea to do something.

FC asserted that enjoyment is an impetus for doing something. She said that:

I was a middle school teacher. Now, I take three subjects in TOPU, Keyboard lesson, computer lesson and singing lesson. The biggest reason I choose singing is enjoyment. I was pretty busy before I retired. I love music, but had no time to learn singing. After I retired, I felt that it was pity that I had no chance to learn music when I was young. I wished to learn singing, so I joined the TOPU to enrol in the singing lesson.

YL explained that loving music was the reason for her to learn singing. She said, ‘One of my friends introduced me to the course at TOPU. I am pretty interested in singing, so I decided to join the class. All the members enjoy the singing lesson, we feel so happy. Now singing is the new career in my life’. The other participant YJ said, ‘I liked music when I was a child. But I lost the opportunity when younger as my

parents could not afford the luxury of music classes. I want to interpret my dream. That is why I joined in this organization to learn music'. WF also joined the singing lesson also for interest. He recalled that:

When I was young, I took music lessons at school, and I liked singing and I performed at school a lot. But after I graduated from school, I had no opportunity to sing for more than forty years. I almost forgot how much I loved singing. Three years ago, I knew the TOPU could provide opportunities for older people to learn. I enrolled in the singing course without hesitation. I enjoy what I am learning.

Improved wellbeing and mental health was expressed in terms of feeling better, counteracting a depressed mood and helping to forget one's problems. The participant XR gave her story of how she came to join this organization. She said:

I liked singing when I was young. I joined in the singing group at my work place. However, I never sang again since my son died in a car accident. I felt so sad and quit my job, I just stayed at home. I was afraid that other people talked about my son. Last year, my older sister enrolled me in the singing course. She thought I should find something to do. She said 'you need to do something, otherwise you will be sick'. At the first, I refused to take part in the singing lesson. My sister forced me to come here to listen to one lesson. After the lesson finished, I felt so much regret. I should have come here earlier. I like the singing lesson so much. I think singing gives me a new life. I live pretty far from here, I need to spend nearly one hour to come here to take a lesson. But I am so happy. Now I practice every morning. When I sing, I forget all my troubles and just enjoy the music.

Participant XZ retired five years ago. Different to participant FC, XZ had not tried before but after enrolling in the singing course, he considers singing as the most important hobby in his life. He said that:

I have attended the singing lesson for more than three years. After I retired, I wanted to do something to enrich my later life. But I was not sure what I should do. As far as I know, many members choose singing because they liked singing when they were young. I never sang before, just listened to music sometimes. Three years ago, I came here with my friends who wanted to enrol in the course at TOPU. I saw a singing group rehearsal. I could see that all of the participants are very happy when they sing. Their singing touched me. I thought maybe I could try it. So I joined the singing class. You feel brighter for it, your spirits are lightened. And you just feel better when you sing. Through three years' learning, I find that singing is a happy thing. You can forget all your troubles when you sing. It enriches my mind and life.

Participant LZ has had a similar experience. Singing has become his hobby since he enrolled in the singing course at TOPU. He said that:

I saw a performance about four years ago. I found that there was a group of older people singing, and they sang really well. They told me they took singing lesson at TOPU. At first, I just wanted to try to see if I can sing or not. So I enrolled in the singing lessons. After joining in the workshop, I found the hobby in my later life.

Participant SZ has a similar story to that of XZ and LZ; she recalled that:

I didn't want to enroll in the singing lesson in the beginning. I never sang any song before. And I never thought singing would become a part of my life. Four years ago, I wanted to learn keyboard. I came

to here to enroll in the keyboard lesson. I saw one singing group rehearsal. I felt that these members were really happy. They infected me with their laughter. I thought I needed to do something that makes me happy. I changed my mind and decided to try learning singing. This year is my fourth year learning singing. Now, taking the singing lessons is part of my life. It is also my habit. If I miss one lesson, I feel so uncomfortable, just like I have lost something.

LY, the current conductor of the singing class, believes that loving music makes her throw herself into the music activity. She said that, 'the role of conductor is important in a singing group, it is challenge for me. But I found it is interesting, I bought the music books, and VCDs to learn by myself. Sometimes, I watch the music programs and practice a lot at home. There's music going on in my head all the time. My husband said that I have become infatuated with singing and conducting'. Every member has their own story of how they join in the singing activity. It seems that loving music is a significant reason for joining in the singing class, although three of them stated that they liked singing only after they enrolled in the singing course and if they had not been encouraged by relatives or friends they might not have discovered their love of singing. Most of the participants agreed that singing offers enjoyment in their later life.

• **Sense of confidence**

Eight of the participants stated that the singing lesson and being part of performances gave them a sense of confidence. When asked what they gain from being in the singing class, the participant FC offered 'a sense of confidence, I can sing! I am so proud of that. When I go to a Karaoke hall my friends said that my voice is beautiful'.

Participant YJ recognizes the confidence is important in older people's lives 'Singing gives me a sense of confidence... that is really important to me, I am more confident than before'. The participant XZ describes his story:

I could only sing three songs before I took the singing lesson. They are '*The East is Red*', '*The International*' and '*Sailing the seas depends on the helmsman*'. All these three songs are revolutionary songs. People of my age must learn them during that time. I never knew singing could bring so much to me. Now I can sing more than one hundred songs. I feel confident!

The participant YL said that:

I didn't like singing. I chose to learn singing because of my closest friend JJ. She likes singing so much. So I just learnt singing for her. You know, I thought that I couldn't sing, because I was always out of tune. I tried to sing to my husband, but he said 'stop! You can't sing'. I didn't try to sing again after that. But now, I have learned singing for nearly four years. Although many members in my class sing much better than me, I have improved. Sometimes, I sing to my husband and he says, 'your voice is beautiful, if you have a concert, I will buy a ticket'. I know it is a joke, but his words make me feel confident!

Three participants highlighted that performances make them more confident. ZQ, the oldest participant in the interview, explained that, 'I enjoy the performances. We can show the results of our learning through the performances. I feel really well'. ZQ organized a performing singing group in her singing class that she has started and she describes that:

Our purpose is sharing music and our happiness with other people.

There are about thirty members in our group and they are all volunteers. We perform in nursing homes, aged groups, and hospitals. We bring our music to other people. Sometimes, we sing some old songs to the older people. They are touched by these songs, and cannot resist singing with us. During that moment, I feel so confident.

For XX, singing solos gives an opportunity for growth and a sense of confidence:

The times that I have had a chance to sing a solo I can't tell you what it has meant for me in my own growth. I think singing a solo will boost confidence. I'm getting more confidence now.

The participant CJ agreed that she felt confident performing; she said, 'I like performances, I also joining in the other singing groups to perform. I think that I am pretty popular among these singing groups. They always invite me to join their performances. I feel happy and confident when I do something valuable'. JJ also stated that performances make her more confident. 'Maybe we need to rehearse a lot before every performance, and I feel a little tired sometimes, but I enjoy the process. I feel relaxed and excited after every performance. Singing with the other people, I feel so proud, because we show ourselves to the other people. To let more people know older people can sing!'

- **Sense of purpose**

The participants feel that by helping others, they are making life meaningful. As mentioned, many participants feel that performing to others is part of their group purpose. Several participants mentioned that singing makes their life positive. The

participants' sense of purpose is reinforced by performances, 'we are doing positive things that can make our life meaningful. We have chance to show off ourselves, at the same time we bring the music and happiness to audience'. FC recognized that 'you can feel that connection between performers and audience, the feeling is so good'. JJ recalled a performance they did in the nursing home:

We have such wonderful experiences, like one time we performed in a nursing home. All the members were revolutionary soldiers. That time we selected some revolutionary songs to sing. They [the audience] were so excited. They seemed to be singing all our songs. Although some words were not clear, the melody was there. That performance left me with a deep impression. After the performance we received positive feedback. An audience member told me 'there are many performing groups that come here, but your performance is different to us, because you know what we need. You sing the aspirations of us.

The participants were pleased when audience members wrote to thank them. XZ said that 'singing allows me to enjoy a meaningful life. I can help other people through sing. I feel so happy when I listen to positive feedback. It's beautiful'. Kahn (2001) found that music helps people feel valued and needed. Older people can gain a sense of purpose through helping others (Southcott, 2009).

• **Catharsis**

Music was more than entertainment for many of the participants. For all the participants, music provided a sense of beauty that connected them with feelings of spirituality. FC explained that, 'It is way of thinking. Music is an integral part of my

existence, for that reason, it is very important for me... I see music as part of one's soul. Loving music is a lifestyle'. Five participants mentioned that music provided cathartic opportunities for emotions to be expressed and music occupies much of their daily lives; be it listening, singing or being engaged in performances. FC said that:

I have a bad temper. I use music to relax myself. Singing is a pleasurable thing for me. I forget all my troubles when I sing. Now, listening to music is one of my habits. I have found that music can give me a sense of peace. Music brings me such benefits.

YS also mentioned that older people need emotional relaxation. Music was considered a good way to do this. YS explained that, 'people don't mind where the song comes from, everyone likes good songs. Whatever kind of music you choose, just do it, you will love it'. He also said that 'music is just not two hours' lesson for me. It's meant to be more than just that. It gives that extra level of spirituality and intellectual pleasure that no other art form can give'. Participant YJ described how music provided relaxation for her, 'singing helps me to control my mind. I faced many troubles last year, I couldn't sleep during the nights, and I always listened to music when I felt sad. And it works'. Through music, participant XX was made more aware of her emotions and was able to explore these to greater depths. Music helped her to make sense of her feelings and emotions. 'Music explains emotions. All this breaks down in music'. She states that:

Music is amazing. Different music can bring us different feelings. For example, we had a singing lesson last year the teacher let us

listen to different countries' music. I found they are so different. But all of these songs are so beautiful. Just like every song tells you a story. That lesson touched me and gave me an unforgettable impression. After that I have collected music from different countries and listened to it. These songs make me full of spirit.

The participants have recognized the power of music to bring them many benefits for them, including emotional and spiritual development. CJ described that 'If I fall into a depression, which I sometimes do, and I'll sing along with music...I find that works, it really does. I really couldn't be without music. I find music is the most important thing for me'. The benefits of music are long established; it can be recreational, social, emotional, therapeutic and spiritual (Hays, Bright & Minichiello, 2002).

- **Overcome loneliness and isolation**

The opportunity to interact with others through the singing lesson was thought to offer a greater benefit than either singing alone or merely participating in a social activity. The participants recognized that membership offers more than singing. While some participants came principally for the social aspect, others placed greater value on the singing with like-minded people. The singing activity was seen to have a calming and an equalizing effect. Most of the participants highlighted that being in a singing class with shared understandings assists members overcome feelings of loneliness and isolation. The singing teacher Yang explained that, 'I think the biggest learning purpose for older people is finding a social life. They learn singing for fun, coming together as a class to share experiences'. ZQ the oldest participant has joined in TOPU more than twenty years. She stated that TOPU is an 'older people's paradise'.

She understands that TOPU offers far more than just learning. She described her experiences that:

I have joined the TOPU for twenty years. I retired when I was 57 years old, then I came to here to enroll in the courses. The TOPU is an important part of my life. I learn four different courses at present, including English, Singing, keyboard and photography. I learn so much here, I opened a photo shop a few years ago. And I passed the 5th grade of keyboard examination last year. The TOPU plays a significant role in my life. It is an older people's paradise. I believe that older people are valuable members of the community. I received the most achievement award for a student of the TOPU last year. I feel a sense of being successful.

The participants identified that overcoming loneliness and isolation was a strong motivation for them to join in a singing class. YL, the leader of the singing class, states that, 'we have big class and I enjoy doing this job. I feel very happy to help other people. All the members are friends in our class. Taking the singing lesson is a necessary part in my life'. XZ said:

You could end up being very lonely. I mean as you get older, you can't do what you did before, so when you go up there [TOPU], you are chatting and singing, and it makes a difference. It enables me to talk to, meet people I haven't met before. And I think that's important as you get older, not to isolate yourself and just rely on those who you've known for years. It's good to meet new people. It [singing] is an important activity in my life. I know more people at TOPU. Otherwise, I would feel lonely.

WF has similar reasons to XZ for being a member. He explains that 'I chose the singing group because I liked the environment here. Just like the words of the *Song of*

Older People University, I think this song expresses our older people's voice, there is one sentence touched me 'We are together. We are happy and we sing the song together'. XX described the reason why she joins in TOPU:

Actually, I just retired two months ago. I worked in a public security station before retiring. I think older people need to find something to do. Whatever you do, just don't stay at home. It's very easy to feel lonely and get lost after retiring. I needed to do something to enrich my later life. That is why I joined the singing class at TOPU. I also introduced some of my friends who enrolled in the singing lesson. I think I made a good decision.

SZ stated the reason why she joining in TOPU was to overcome loneliness, 'I think singing enriches my life. After I retired, I stayed at home and always thought I was ill. I couldn't find someone to talk to'. The singing activity also makes YL feel less isolated and gives her a greater a sense of satisfaction. YL recalled:

I think I am young through learning singing. Singing offers more than just singing for me. I retired three years ago, I felt so bored, and I could find nothing to do. At that time, I felt that I am really old, although I was just 55 years old. I became depressed. One of my friends encouraged me to join in the singing class. I have experienced that to do something positive is the best way to overcome of loneliness and isolation. I feel the day hasn't been complete unless I do a little bit of practice each day. Music gives you something to live for now.

The singing teacher Yang recalled two powerful example for coming together as a group that showed positive and transformative experiences.

Last year, two members of our class told me that their parents had died. They felt so sad. Our singing activities and performances helped them a lot. They said ‘the TOPU provide us a place to communicate with others, and forget our sadness’. I also know there is couple, they are more than 90 years old, and they have learned singing at TOPU for more than ten years. They just enjoy the singing activity. And they sang a solo in the report back performance last year. They were so happy. They said ‘singing brings lots to us, when we sing with other friends. We feel we are a team’. In our class, we share the sadness and happiness. The members always say ‘someone can share the sadness with you it is halved. When someone shares happiness with you it is doubled.

CJ felt that attending singing class gave him a strong sense of satisfaction as he enjoyed ‘sharing life...I made many new friends through joining the singing group. That is very important for me. In the singing class, we have the same habits and interests. We chat with each other ...we are like family. We help each other. We create the environment together’. XR mentioned that singing activity brought her a social life, ‘I feel I am a part of our team. That is really important to me. You know, every week, after the class, I can’t control myself singing ... whether the singing is good or not is not really important for me. I like the environment in our class. I have many friends here. I feel satisfied if I can help other people’.

Physical well-being

Physical improvement was not a major focus of participants, but singing was felt to improve respiratory function, facilitate body movement, and made it possible to help forget pains and illnesses. The singing teacher Yang believed singing can provide physical benefits for older people. She said, ‘in the rehearsals, members stand to sing

and sometimes they need to add some movements. All these things can maintain their physical health'. The participants recognized that singing improves their physical well-being, which can be understood under the headings Attitude to illness and Maintaining lung function.

•Attitude to illness

By engaging in singing activities, participants were distracted from their medical conditions and felt uplifted physically. Several participants believe that making music together develops their physical well-being which focused on their attitude to illness. FC mentioned that singing brings health benefits for her; she asserted, 'before I retired, I always felt tired and took some medicine. Singing helps me feel healthy. I practice about half an hour every day. When I sing, I forget my illnesses'. YJ felt that singing activity gives her a positive attitude. YJ recounted her story about taking singing lessons at TOPU:

I got pneumonia and had a big operation ten years ago, so I retired early. I knew I needed to find something to do and not think about my illness. I decided to learn music. I learned an important thing through learning music that is how to enjoy my life. One of my friends got pneumonia too; he died four years ago. I think singing activity helps me a lot. It lets me forget my disease. I can feel that I am more sanguine than before. I can face up to all my troubles manfully.

ZQ agreed that music was good for her health and perceived a difference between singing and playing piano. She thought that practicing and learning gave her 'no time

to think about the illnesses'. She states that:

Singing helps me a lot. Before I learned singing, I always felt dizzy. I found I was much better after I had learned singing for about six months. I don't know why. I just feel much better. I have attended the singing lesson for nearly twenty years. I think singing can maintain my health. I do a physical examination every year. The doctor is surprised, he said 'you are healthy, and you look young'. I think music develops my quality of life.

WF explained that: 'I think music is either an extension of yourself or complements how you feel. I've had a couple of illnesses. Suddenly I realized that music could give me a lot more that would help me in my recovery'. SZ also thought that singing activity makes her 'busy', so that she has 'no time to think about my diseases. Now I need to do lots things, practicing, memorize the words, sight-reading'.

- **Maintain lung function**

Four of the participants specifically identified singing activity as good for maintaining their lung function. CJ explained, 'I think singing also can bring health benefits for me. I have learned how to control my breath through singing. I think the deep breathing helps me a lot. And that singing can help me maintain my lung function. Singing is a good activity for me'. WF agreed that, 'singing helps older people to develop lung function. We need to breathe deeply so singing is good exercise for us'. YJ agreed and added that maintaining good lung function was especially important 'for those who more than 80 years old. Just like a massage for the lungs. Singing gives me the opportunity to do an exercise for my lungs'. YL also stated that 'I think

singing is quite important for me because I have emphysema, so I have breathing difficulties... I like coming here, I feel physically more confident and it expands my lungs'.

Mental well-being

Participants believed that singing can develop their mental well-being. Most participants identified that singing assists in maintaining and renewing their cognitive abilities, which can be understood as Maintaining memory and Learning new things.

• Maintaining memory

The participants perform their repertoire from memory. The singing teacher Zhang encourages the members to memorize the repertoire they learn. He explained that this is good way to practice memorizing. Two participants specifically identified singing as good for maintaining their memory. FC stated, 'I always forget the new song. I learn a new song last week. I forgot the melody when I arrived home. Many of my friends in the class are like me, but we work hard. I keep practicing by myself. Singing is good way to practice my memory'. The researcher found that the participants try to memorize the song they learn during the lesson. The researcher recorded that in the first observation,

Today, the members sang the song called *China, Forge Ahead* which is a new song for most of members. XZ told me this is the third week they learnt this song. Most of members try to sing without looking at the sheet music. Sometimes, a few members are

not sure about one or two words, they glance at the lyrics and keep going. The teacher Zhang tells the members ‘when we sing without looking the music sheet, we can enjoy the melody’ (Research Observation, 16.02.2012).

XZ explained that ‘we like to listen to or sing some old songs, because most old songs are easy for us. We know these songs’ melody and can sing them from memory. But learning some new songs can practice our memory’ FC concluded that ‘maybe I spend a few weeks to learn a new song. But when I memorize the song, I feel really good’.

• Learning new things

China is in the process of implementing a learning society through the establishment of learning cities, learning organizations, and learning communities where the function of learning plays an important role in these social units (Chang, 2010). The singing teacher Zhang introduced the characteristic of Chinese older people’s learning; he said:

I was a high school music teacher before. The Chinese government established a regular education system in 1989. Music became a regular lesson in Primary schools and high schools after this time. Young people have learned music and some music theory in school. However, because of the Cultural Revolution and the government policy, older people especially those who graduated before the 1980s had no opportunities to learn music. But older people have more life experiences. They have the same feelings for music as young people. When they sing, I can feel that every one really enjoys singing.

Learning is assumed to be an important factor in allowing older adults to enjoy a

positive quality of life as they grow older (WHO, 2002). Music can provide a challenge for older people to try something new or to increase their technical skills. When asked about advice for the singing group, some participants wished to learn more things. JJ explained ‘older people also need to learn new things. Lifelong learning enhances the quality of life’. Many members appreciate the opportunity to continue learning, and value a variety of learning experiences. YS added ‘I think the TOPU provides a place for older people to learn some new things. The reason this organization is called the ‘university’, it is an education organization and we can learn something here. I know some older people just come here for fun. For me, TOPU is not only the older people club, it is a teaching organization. I hope I can learn something here. The courses of TOPU provide lifelong learning opportunities for us and enhance the quality of life’. In YS’s case, the learning experience of the singing lessons is part of lifelong learning. He explained the reason he joined the singing class,

I graduated from the Qinghua University. I was an engineer in a factory. I had no opportunity to learn music when I was young. I wished to understand some basic music knowledge. I think music is an important part of our life. To be a professional singer is not my aim. I just hope I can know some basic knowledge through learning singing, such as music theory, the characteristics of different countries’ music. Singing well or not is not important for most members of the singing group, understanding some music knowledge is our main goal. For example, I know what are the major, harmonic and melodic scales. The music knowledge can help me to enjoy the songs. There are many singing classes in TOPU, so, before I enrolled in one of them, I listened to the teacher talk about the music theory. I am interested in it. So I decided to learn singing. I think our singing class is a very rich experience actually and a

process of learning. It is important to always be aware that you are forever learning and that you don't stop. For me, life is a complete learning program right through.

XX has similar opinions with YS; she recalled her experiences that:

I like singing. I joined in the singing group in my workplace before I retired. I just remembered the melodies and sang them. But I never learned music regularly and didn't understand any music theory. I felt it's difficult for me to learn new songs. So I decided to take the singing class at TOPU. There are four singing teachers at TOPU. I listened to their lessons before I enrolled. I found this class is the most suitable for me, because I can learn music knowledge in this class. The teacher always introduces some basic music theory to us. I found that it is so interesting. Since take the lessons at TOPU I feel a sense of confidence. I also join another singing group of Tangshan that was established one year ago. It is a professional singing group of older people in Tangshan. You need to do an audition to join in it. It's pretty difficult to get in. You need have ability to do sight-reading. I did it very well during the interview. The things I have learned help me a lot.

The researcher observed the participants learning a new song in the second observation:

I arrived at TOPU at 1:30 pm. The lesson started at 2:00 pm and around fifty members joined in today's lesson. The teacher Zhang said, 'today we will learn a new song called *Kiss You, Homeland*. Before that, we will review the music theory we learned last week. We learned the melodic minor scale. Who can tell me what is the characteristic of melodic minor scale?' The researcher noticed that many of members answered the questions immediately. Some members just check their notebooks. Then, Zhang spent about thirty minutes analyzing the time signature and the key signature of the new song. The researcher found most of the members took the work really seriously. During the rest of the time, some members told the researcher, 'sometimes, the music theory is very hard to us. We

need to review it many times at home. Once you understand it, we use it to learn songs, the feeling is so good'. After a break, Zhang let the member YS do the sight-reading. Zhang said, 'good job, don't be shy. Just sing aloud'. The researcher noticed that for the two hours class was quite lively. It seemed that all members enjoy the singing class (Researcher Observation, 23.02.2012).

The researcher found that the members chose to take regular lessons at a formal institution to motivate themselves to practice and improve their skills, which suggests that the members wanted to meet the expectations of a teacher. YS spoke to the researcher:

Usually the singing lesson comes on Thursdays, that motivates me, because if I don't have that, it's like, if you don't get your homework done before the teacher sees it you're in trouble, and you think: I must have something to show them if the teacher asks me to sing.

Few members expressed no interest in learning new things. JJ explained that, 'I join the TOPU just for fun, leaning is not important for me. I don't want it to give me pressure to learn I just want to enjoy my life'. ZQ agreed adding that she did 'not want to learn new things. I like the environment of TOPU. Learning is not my aim to join singing lessons'. Possibly a different singing class at TOPU would suit these few members better.

• **Meaningful practice**

Participants were motivated to practice for different reasons. However, practicing at home was important to many of the participants, giving meaning in terms of providing

something purposeful that contributed to the structure of their lives, even if they did not practice every day. ZQ, the oldest participant pointed out that she practiced for pleasure and relaxation. She said ‘I have played piano for many years, now I take singing lesson. I never regard it as practice...I don’t think I’m going to practice, I just think I’m going to do some music and enjoy it...my day doesn’t feel good unless I have practiced’. XX used her practicing to recharge herself during the day ‘if I’m doing some housework and I’m feeling a bit tired, singing for a few minutes will just make me relax. I think practicing is a good thing. After practice I always feel recharged’. Participants YS, LZ and FC used practicing as a fundamental part of their life. FC explained that ‘practicing is very important in every single day. It’s become one of my habits. If I miss one day practicing, I feel uncomfortable’. Several participants also use practicing as self-improvement. Participant SZ explained, ‘I have learned to sing for about four years... I think I have made big progress. I practiced every single day, sometimes twice a day. I feel a sense of satisfaction if the teacher said ‘well done, good job’.

Choosing music

The selection of music repertoire is a common focus for members’ discussions. All members shared similar experiences. Patriotic and Russian songs influence their preferences a lot. Different tastes influenced how interviewees understood Western music. Participants wanted to share the traditional cultures *via* performances. These issues will be discussed under the headings Chinese songs, Russian songs, Western

music, and Celebrating culture.

- **Chinese songs**

When asked about choosing music, participants state that they prefer Chinese songs. The teacher Zhang said that, 'I teach seven songs each term that include five Chinese songs and two other countries' songs. I found many of members prefer Chinese songs especially revolutionary songs from the 1930s and 1940s which is a reflection of their age and life experience. They have sung all these old songs since they were quite young, at school and then it's continued. I think it's a joyous thing to sing these old Chinese songs'. The other teacher Yang also states that because of their cultural background, older people learn Chinese songs faster than they learn the other countries' songs. She explains that, 'most of them never took regular music lesson when they were young. Old Chinese songs are easier for them. They can remember the melody and words of many old songs'. The researcher found that much of the class repertoire consists of Chinese songs that were popular four or five decades ago. Bowles (1991) found that older people are influenced by their prior experiences and early music learning experiences do affect later music preferences and activity choices. All participants have the same cultural background; ZQ explained that 'we are influenced by Chinese culture. Our members prefer Chinese songs because they played an important role in our lives'. YJ said that 'I love Chinese old songs, especially revolutionary songs between the 1940s and 1960s. They are empowering. I know these melodies and can recall them easily'. Agreeing, YS said 'these Chinese songs are really important for our older people. Just like the popular songs for young

people. Most of us have similar experiences. In the class, every time we sing the songs, I feel excited. I can remember many wonderful things’.

Several participants mentioned that they have an interest in new patriotic songs written after the 1990s. XR, the youngest participant, found some songs unfamiliar, ‘I think older people also need to learn some new songs. There are many new songs are really nice. I like listening to these songs and sometimes I practice by myself’. SZ agreed, ‘although most of Chinese songs we rehearse are old Chinese songs, there are many of new songs we need to learn. Maybe we learn a new song pretty slowly, but we should try’. The teacher Yang concludes that ‘I choose two or three new Chinese songs written after the 1990s to teach the members every term. According to the feedback, I have found that many of members like to learn these new songs’.

• **Russian songs**

The interviewees were influenced by Russian music. The singing teacher Zhang said, ‘I also choose two other countries’ songs for the members every term. I found most of members prefer Russian songs, because most of members were influenced by Russian music when they were young. And I got a positive feedback from them. They like to learn Russian songs’. YL and XR mentioned that ‘when we were young, we learnt and sang many Russian songs. But we sang the melodies using Chinese words’. XZ added, ‘I like singing or listening to some Russian songs. Chinese older people were greatly influenced by Russian music. Russian songs are very famous among Chinese

people, such as *Moscow Nights* and *Katyusha*'. CJ added, 'When I was young, the government encouraged people to accept Russian culture including music, such as some Russian songs from the movies. I can remember the movies' name. During that time, learning Russian songs are expected for young people'. YJ states that 'in our class, we rehearse one or two Russian songs each term. We all like the Russian songs'. When asked about choosing songs to sing, few participants state that they prefer choosing Chinese songs. YS explained that 'I like listening to Russian songs, but if they let me choose, I prefer sing Chinese songs. I know people who are more than fifty years old were greatly influenced by Russian music. That is why I like listening to Russian music. Because of cultural background, I also prefer sing Chinese songs'.

- **Western music**

The interviewees were asked in very general terms what they thought about Western music. As in the previous discussion of the Chinese-Australian group, there was no attempt to define this as popular or art music, rather it was hoped that the responses would indicate understandings of this very broad term. The researcher found that the members sang the melodies of Western songs using Chinese words. The two singing teachers stated that they hope that the members can experience different music. The singing teacher Zhang explained that many songs' melodies during the 1920s and 1930s came from Western countries and those young students in the 1920s and 1930s used the Western system of music including melodies. So now many older people in China can sing some old songs with well-know Western melodies that came from

Europe and Japan, sung with Chinese lyrics. Zhang added ‘I hope the members can learn these Western songs slowly, I use videos to let them listening to the melodies, and introduce the cultural background for them. I found they also like these different countries’ songs’. YS is more interested in Western music. She said ‘I want to understand different styles of music, I listen to Western music a lot’ as:

In our singing group, I suggested to the teacher that we need to learn more different countries’ songs. We should not just sing Chinese songs or Russian songs. Music is the way to let me know this country’s culture. I found it is interesting. I have learned some Western countries’ songs, such as an Austrian song *Longing for Spring*, an Italian song *Nina*, and an English song *Greensleeves*. These different songs contribute to our quality of life. But I don’t like popular music. I can’t accept popular music.

XX also likes to listen to ‘some nice Western songs at home. Although I can’t sing these songs, but I enjoy the melodies, they make me feel relaxed’. Participants agreed that they preferred to listen to slow, peaceful music. These might be from any country. LZ added, ‘I like to listen to them but not sing them. I enjoy any good songs, wherever the song comes from’. XR, a member of the singing class for only six months, said that she was only influenced by Western music a little. She said ‘I never sang Western songs before. But if have the chance to learn it, I will try it’.

Shared interests

All the members of the class shared interests and activities. Their positive attitudes described above suggests that they will continue to feel positively about their shared

music making and that this would contribute to their ongoing quality of life. All of the members were in close contact with their children and perform a lot for the community, sometimes with other organizations. Sharing their music with others both domestically and in the wider community was well-received and offers validation to the members. The following discussion will first address Family influences and then Performances.

- **Family supporting**

All the interviewed participants were living with their spouse or adult offspring. They have positive memories of sharing their music with their spouse or with their children. Most of the participants agreed that family support is important. Six participants stated that their partner supports them a lot and that they sing to their family members frequently. XZ said ‘my wife supports my learning to singing. She said learning is a good thing. I can find something to do after I retired. I also can have more new friends at here. I always sing to my wife when I learn a new song. She is good listener, and gives me suggestions sometimes’. FC added:

My husband supports me a lot. Before I learnt to sing, I felt so boring, and couldn’t find something to do. My husband supports my desire to do something. So I enrolled in the singing lesson at TOPU. After learning sing, I feel so good. He is happy to see me enjoying the music activities. My husband said ‘singing is suiting you. You look very well since you take the singing lesson. And I will enroll in the singing lesson with you after I retire’.

XX and XR have the similar experience. They stated that their husbands also support

them. XX said 'I always sing to my husband. Although I have just learned to sing for a few months, I think I have made big progress. My husband feels proud of me. And he helps me do housework when I practice'. WF also said that 'It's important because it is part of my life, and it is also part of my wife's life. It is very nice to have that in common. We listen to music and take the singing lesson together. Both of us like singing very much. Sometimes, we practice together at home. And we always sing to our children when we learn a new song'. SZ recalled her story:

I have learnt singing for three years. At the beginning, my husband didn't believe me that I could learn it. He said 'you can't keep on it, I know you. You can't do anything for more than six months'. Now I have been learning singing for more than three years. The first time I sang the song which I learned at TOPU to my husband, he was so surprised. He never thought I can sing quite well. Last year, he enrolled in the singing course and takes the lesson with me. And he loves singing now.

The remainder of comments related to the next generation. CJ mentioned that his granddaughter encourages him to sing. He describes that:

At the very beginning, I felt embarrassed to sing to my family members. But one day, I sang to my eight years old granddaughter. She said 'grandpa, your voice is like a professional singer!' after that I have confidence to sing. My granddaughter is also in the singing group at her school, she said that it was because of me that she has become interested in singing.

JJ mentioned that the singing lesson makes her try to accept her daughter's musical taste. She said that:

My daughter likes popular music. Before I learnt singing, I hated popular music, and it was too noisy for me! But since I have joined in the singing group, I can accept popular music, although I never sing it. For now, I can listen to some slow popular music with my daughter. I found some popular songs pretty nice. My daughter is very happy. She supports me a lot. She watches our performances, and gives me some good suggestions.

• Celebrating culture

The participants believe that performances offer opportunities to share their interests with others. ZQ explained that, ‘the TOPU is the one of the biggest older people organizations in Tangshan city. We want to bring happiness to other people. At the same time, we enjoy the performances. We can share our interests through performances’. XR expressed it: ‘I enjoy singing. Making music with other people is a good pastime’. XX expressed these aspects as follows:

You get to be able to share things. The things we share bind us together, sharing common interests and performances: a love of music in its different forms and a sharing of common values, perhaps.

The participant YL recalled an interesting experience:

We have lots of interesting stories. For example, some people saw our rehearsal at a park and told us ‘Oh, we saw you on TV. You are singing here. You look much better than you do on TV’. Our activities were also reported in the newspaper. My husband always said ‘you are popular now, just like a star’. I get a very spiritual and satisfying feeling from taking part. I like to sing and I like to go along and sing with other.

LY, the conductor of the singing class, described their performances:

Our singing group has volunteer performances. These performances mainly serve the local communities. For example, we performed for the taxi drivers. We also performed in factories. Each time we selected and rehearsed a program with a theme based on these non-profit activities. For example, last time we focused on the theme of teachers, and performed the Dedication of Love song in the local schools. Besides, our performances encourage people to help protect the environment. We also performed for the local citizens. We educated people to raise their awareness about the importance of protecting the environment.

Responses and experiences from these performances help the members to improve their quality of performance and help them to create even more engaging performances the next time. These reciprocal interactions benefit both the members and local community citizens.

The members consider Chinese festivals an important part of their culture and singing in these events connects them to their Chinese heritage. The group selects songs in keeping with the spirit of the different festivals. The singing teacher Yang explained ‘we sing songs related to the different festivals. For instance, if we celebrate the National day and the founding of the Communist Party of China, we definitely choose patriotic songs to perform, the songs like *Today is Your Birthday, China; China, Forge Ahead* and *Kiss You, Homeland*. If we celebrate Army Day (the founding to the Chinese People’s Liberation Army) we choose revolutionary songs to perform, YJ stated that ‘these festivals are important to Chinese people. They are our cultural

heritage'. Cun Li, the organizer of TOPU, stated that performances for Chinese festivals are important activities in TOPU. YS described that they:

Disseminate the traditional Chinese culture to a broad receiving public. We are getting older and older and will die one day. But we hope our next generation can inherit traditional Chinese culture. Because of the fast-paced rhythm of modern life, fewer and fewer people pay attention to these old Chinese songs. We choose these old songs to perform so that people don't forget Chinese culture.

Conclusion

The results reveal that older people use music in many different ways and that music for them can be a way of measuring and maintaining a sense of well-being. During the interviews, a number of significant themes emerged concerning membership of the TOPU singing class. Five broad themes were identified from the data and most were further categorized under sub-headings: Emotional Well-being (Enjoyment, Building confidence, Sense of purpose, Catharsis, and Overcoming loneliness and isolation), Physical Well-being (Attitude to illness, and controlling breath), Mental Well-being (Maintaining memory and Learning new things), Choosing Music (Chinese songs, Russian songs, Western music, and Celebrating culture) and Shared Interests (Family influence and Performance). All these themes represent the complexity of participant understandings. The participants' narratives of the meaning of music provide them with the ability to construct meaning in their lives. The meaning was directly related to their experiences and emotional needs. For the participants, well-being meant continuing to remain physically, cognitively and socially active for as long as possible.

The data shows that music activity can contribute significantly to participants achieving feelings of positive ageing and well-being. Stanley (2006) defined that the facets of well-being are a complex concept due to individual differences such as personality, life situation and social context. All the participants consider that music activity is very important in their lives and sense of self. Duay and Bryan (2006) point out that the 'importance of maintaining close family relationships, socializing with friends and acquaintances, and helping others through volunteer work or community activism' (pp. 427-428). In the singing class relationships are maintained despite changes in life situations.

The music the singing teachers select for the classes depends on members' discussions. Some songs selected evoke country of birth, other selections represent the music that was popular after the 1990s. However, the researcher found that most of the songs chosen for performance are patriotic songs. Singing in the class connects the members to their Chinese cultural background by the performance of such songs. The singing course at TOPU is part of their solution to social isolation and has offered companionship to the members. The participants also state that family support is important for them; they sing with family members and some participants have influenced their partner to join the singing activity at TOPU. Brown and Volgsten (2006) assert that cultures have musical traditions, and music continues to serve a wide variety of cultural and social functions. It appears that most of the members in the class prefer Chinese songs, although some of participants like listening to Western

music or singing Western songs for learning purposes. Music provides activity, purpose and focus for the participants, Further it offers an opportunity for the maintenance of cognitive function such as memory and singing offers some physical benefits. All interviewees state that the singing courses bring them a sense of well-being and have resulted in them forming strong relationships that are maintained despite changing life situations, and in the process they have gained valuable musical experience and a sense of lifelong learning through music.

Chapter 10

Discussion

Introduction

The aim of the two case studies undertaken in this research was to explore the issues and concerns regarding music engagement by Chinese-Australian older people in Australia and Chinese older people in China, and explore the affects and understanding of music participation for the participants. In this comparison of the music learning and cultural influences among Chinese older people in Australia and in China, two older people's organizations were selected: the Kingston Chinese Senior Citizens Club (KCSCC) in Victoria, Australia and the Tangshan Older People's University (TOPU) in Hebei Province, China. The data reveal that in the different locations older people use music engagement in different ways, however some similarities were identified. Overall music engagement is perceived as beneficial and a way of maintaining a sense of well-being. Analysis of the data gathered from the two different groups reveals a number of significant themes concerning group membership.

In this chapter there will be a comparison between the data from the Chinese-Australian group and the Chinese group to explore similarities and differences. Based on the discussions of the two groups' data in the preceding chapters, five themes will be reconsidered in this chapter: Emotional Well-being,

Physical Well-being, Mental Well-being, Choosing Music, and Shared Interest. Each of these themes has been analyzed under subheadings: Emotional Well-being includes Enjoyment, Sense of confidence, Sense of purpose, Catharsis, Overcome loneliness and Isolation, and Nostalgia. Physical Well-being includes Attitude to illness and Maintaining health. Mental Well-being includes Maintaining memory, Learning new things, Doing research and Meaningful practice. Choosing Music covers Chinese songs, Russian songs, and Western music. Shared interests contains Family support and Celebrating culture.

Emotional Well-being

Nussbaum (2001) suggested that music has deep connections to people's emotional lives. The data collected in this present study indicates that emotional well-being is one of the most significant aspects which was identified repeatedly by all participants in both groups. All interviewees stated that music offers a whole range of personal benefits for them and they receive so much through joining the music activities. Both groups of interviewees stated that music makes them feel more hopeful, relaxed, and peaceful. Four specific aspects are explored in this theme: Enjoyment, Sense of confidence, Sense of purpose, Overcoming loneliness and isolation and Nostalgia.

• Enjoyment

Personal interests are the strongest attraction for older learners who select activities, (Eisen, 1998). Within this category, enjoyment is probably the strongest attraction for

both Chinese-Australian older people and Chinese older people who choose to engage in singing. All interviewees of the KCSCC singing group explained that the simple reason they joined this singing group is for enjoyment. For Chinese-Australian older people singing gives them pleasure and the meeting has become a focus of the week. Most of the participants of the KCSCC singing group highlighted that although they have been interested in music, they had little or no chance to learn music when they were young. As they got older and after retiring, they saw singing as a potential hobby for their later life. The participants asserted that it is very important for older people to do something they enjoy. Their stories about joining the KCSCC singing group described coming from different countries before migrating to Australia. Although every member has their own story of how they came to take part in the singing group, they all joined because they loved music.

‘Enjoyment’, ‘enjoy’, ‘enjoyable’ also were the most frequently used words in the interviews of the TOPU singing class in China. Most of interviewees explained that singing gives them pleasure and has become an important part of their later life. The Chinese participants gave their stories of how they came to join this organization, many doing so on retirement. Similar to the Chinese-Australian participants, loving music is the most important reason for participants in China to enroll in singing lessons. In the interviews of members of the TOPU singing class, several participants reported that prior music experience influenced them to choose a music activity after they retired. One of the voice teachers, Yang summarized that older adults came to

join the TOPU class for various reasons and a number had asserted that they had lost the opportunity when younger. Most of Yang's students at the TOPU have time on their hands, and saw learning music as another hobby to acquire. They see learning music and singing as beneficial actions and a way of being happy. Researchers confirm that loving music is a major source of enjoyment for older people (Taylor & Hallam, 2008; Li & Southcott, 2012). Further Lally (2009) found that enjoyment appears to be the most significant benefit for older people who join community music activities. From the data, enjoyment is important for all participants of both groups but is probably more so for the members of the KCSCC. There are two possible reasons for this. Firstly, Chinese-Australian older people have a low English proficiency level and this results in communication problems. Joining a Chinese speaking community group with music engagement seems a good way for them to find a hobby and/or social life. The other reason is their cultural identity. The members of the KCSCC were born in China and shared the same cultural heritage. All of them are very much influenced by Chinese music, and music engagement has struck a sympathetic chord with them.

- **Sense of confidence**

The process of learning music can help individuals to develop skills and knowledge that increases self-confidence (Johnson, 2004). The two groups' interviewees stated that singing activity and being part of performances gave them a sense of confidence. Participants of the KCSCC singing group believe that the weekly rehearsal brings

them a sense of confidence and they feel more confident since joining in the singing group. The participants described that they were not confident about their voice before they joined the singing group and they were embarrassed to sing in front of other people. However, the researcher found that most of them appeared confident when they sing together. Different to the KCSCC singing group, the participants of TOPU asserted that the singing lessons made them more confident partly because they were able to learn new skills. When asked what they gain from being in the singing class, most of the participants highlighted that a 'sense of confidence and singing gave them an opportunity for growth'. They asserted that a sense of confidence is important for their music learning and they believed that they are good at it. Although the two groups have different performing experiences, both groups' interviewees highlighted that they felt confident performing, especially when they received positive feedback from audiences. The participants in both groups used singing activity for developing their own sense of confidence. Only a few participants mentioned that performances make them nervous.

- **Sense of purpose**

Kahn (2001) stated that music helps people to feel accepted, valued and needed. Having a sense of purpose is another significant aspect which emerged in the data collected from both groups. All the interviewees felt that by helping others, they are making life meaningful as 'singing allows us to enjoy a positive life, and feel that singing can make the life meaningful'. Many participants felt that performing to

others is part of their group purpose especially amongst the members of the TOPU singing class. Some of them mentioned that singing makes their life more valuable. However, both groups' participants stated that their sense of purpose is reinforced by performances. Performing music can provide an opportunity for self expression, a deep sense of personal satisfaction and fulfillment (Olseng & Burley, 1987; Koopman, 2007). The group members of KCSCC state that they were pleased when audiences thanked them. The TOPU singing class had similar experiences to the KCSCC singing group, both stating that performances allow them to enjoy a meaningful life in which they can help other people through singing. Hays and Minichiello (2005a) found that music activities can make older people feel more positive and make life meaningful. Many members of TOPU explained that singing increasingly occupied much of their retirement lives. This included either being involved in singing activities or performing to others. Most members of TOPU asserted that music engagement enriches their later lives and offered purpose after retirement. They believed that older people also have 'a big value' to do something, and singing activities can bring a sense of purpose. Membership of a music group in retirement may be interpreted as a replacement for the workplace as a source of feeling of attachment to a group that is important to a person's well-being (Ernst & Emmons, 1992). For these participants of TOPU, music engagement seems to provide a clear example of finding their sense of purpose.

- **Catharsis**

Both groups' members considered music is a good way to explore their emotions. The KSCSS singing group members found that music provided cathartic opportunities for the expression of emotions. Li and Southcott (2012) state that life history is influential in determining positive music engagement amongst older Australian-Chinese. They believed that music activities bring them a sense of emotional well-being. This is supported by researchers who have found that music has an exceptional capacity to express people's moods and mental states and achieves a sense of peace and relaxation (Flowers & Murphy, 2001; Hays & Minichiello, 2005b). Murrock and Higgins (2009) also state that 'music produces the psychological response of altered mood leading to improved health outcomes' (p. 2252).

The TOPU singing class also recognized that catharsis is important to older people and music has the power to change or enhance mood. Several participants specifically mentioned that older people need emotional relaxation. Music was considered a good way to do this. Members of both of groups agreed that singing gives them intellectual pleasure, and helps them to change mood. However, some participants believed that listening to music can also resonate with their mood. Murrock and Higgins (2009) pointed out that elements of music such as the melody, pitch and harmony are shown to elicit a wide range of emotional responses in the listener. Through music, the participants were made aware of the development of their emotions and were able to explore these to greater depth. Listening to music has been found to be a significant

leisure activity to develop mental health and social functioning in community-dwelling older people (Ball, Corr, Knight & Lowis, 2007).

- **Overcome loneliness and isolation**

Many researchers found that music activities help older people to form relationships with others and facilitate friendships by providing people with opportunities to share their life experiences with others (Coffman, 2002; Southcott, 2009; Hays & Minichiello, 2005a). For the KCSCC singing group, membership is far more than just singing for members. The weekly meeting becomes a social gathering as much as a rehearsal. A sense of community motivates members of KCSCC group to remain the rehearsals. Many participants highlighted that forming relationships with others was a strong motivation for them to join the group. The researcher found that the potential problems of social isolation amongst older Chinese-Australian people such as the participants are compounded by age and language.

Most of the interviewees of the KCSCC had lived in other countries for many years before migrating to Australia, either as a refugee or to join their family. The participants of the KCSCC singing group stated that because of their language problem the big challenge for Chinese-Australian older people is finding a social life and making new friends in Australia. Language is a recognized challenge for older people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, who often suffer from social isolation (Warburton, Bartlett & Rao, 2009). The

Chinese-Australian participants understand that because of the language difficulties they easily feel isolated. Warburton, Bartlett and Rao (2009) state that older migrants prefer to be with those who come from a similar cultural background. The members of the KCSCC singing group have come together because they all speak Mandarin Chinese although they came from different countries before arriving in Australia. In the interviews, most of the participants cannot speak English or only do so with a low English proficiency level. All members offered that membership of the singing group provided more than the music activities. Overcoming loneliness was a strong motivation for most of the participants to join the organization.

Music has been found to develop social skills through meeting and interacting with others with similar interests (Blacking, 1995). Singing activity was also seen to have an equalizing effect that can reduce loneliness and isolation in the TOPU singing class. Hays (2005) points out that music can help people to develop new social networks during times of transition in life such as retirement. The organization becomes particularly important during retirement for the TOPU members. Different to the KCSCC singing group, participants of the TOPU singing class came principally for the social aspect, although others placed greater value on the singing with like-minded people. The singing teacher Yang highlighted that, for the members, 'coming together as a group engendered positive and transformative experiences'. Six participants highlighted that being in a singing class with shared understandings assists members overcome feelings of loneliness and isolation. Attending singing

class gave them ‘a strong sense of satisfaction’ as they enjoyed ‘making new friends through joining the singing group’. The interests and determination of each individual to keep learning and be healthy while facing all the challenges of later life, positively influences other classmates and the atmosphere in the TOPU classroom. Several participants of the TOPU singing class stated that singing with like-minded people was the biggest reason for them to join. The members of the TOPU singing class believed that socializing and singing are of equal importance.

- **Nostalgia**

Southcott (2009) states that music can provide powerful associations with older people’s memory and forge connections to past experiences. The researcher found that the Chinese-Australian participants have a strong sense of nostalgia. Ties to the past were a common focus for group discussions and repertoire selection. All participants stated that listening to or singing the old songs make them recall events and experiences in their life along with the associated emotions. In the KCSCC singing group interviews, the members use old Chinese songs to share nostalgia. According to the researcher’s observation, the members of the KCSCC spend lots of time remembering the past during the rehearsal, and the songs that were sung by the members always became a conversation topic. This confluence of music and nostalgia was considered far more effective than just singing. Warburton, Bartlett and Rao (2009) point out that older people from CALD backgrounds differ from the others both in language spoken and in cultural heritage. In the interviews, participants have

come to Australia from Mainland China, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Laos, and the USA. Most of participants in the interviews have limited English language skills. However, singing in the group connects the members to their Chinese heritage through the performance of songs in their original language. All shared some nostalgia for their place of birth and for their life journey. Participants understood that they have similar life experiences, and that everybody has had difficult times in their lives. So the weekly rehearsal provides them with the opportunity to share nostalgia, and the repertoire connects them to their Chinese heritage.

Physical well-being

Physical improvement was not a major focus of the participants in either group in this study. However, they felt that singing can improve respiratory function, body flexibility, and makes it possible to forget pains and illnesses. Many participants felt that music was the key to feeling in good health, regardless of their personal medical condition. Many participants spoke about being more physically relaxed when they were engaged with music activities. Cohen *et al.* (2006) identified that singing activity has health benefits for older people. The KCSCC singing group believed that singing and dancing in a group can also enhance physical well-being. In the KCSCC singing group, five of the participants also joined the dancing group. The participants of the KCSCC group stated that singing is good for emotional well-being and dancing is good for physical well-being. Dance music can enhance quality of life in older dancers by maintaining their involvement in the dancing world besides providing

opportunities for emotional expression (Hays & Minichiello, 2005b; 2005c). Paulson and Willig (2011) in their study of getting involved in dance and music for community-dwelling older people, found that older dancers themselves positioned dancing as beneficial for psychological and physical health.

In both groups' interviews, the participants recognized that singing improves their physical well-being, which can be mostly understood as related to their attitude to illness. By engaging in singing activities, participants were distracted from their medical conditions and felt uplifted physically. Both groups of interviewees thought that singing gave them 'no time to think about illnesses'. Four participants of the TOPU singing class specifically identified singing activity as good for maintaining their lung function. They believed that singing can help them control their breath and that deep breathing helps them a lot. Many researchers highlighted that as creative and social activities, music has a range of physical health benefits (Carr, 2006; Greaves & Farbus, 2006; Hays, 2005).

Mental well-being

Mental well-being was identified by both sets of interviewees. They agreed that singing can develop their mental well-being and specifically identified that singing assists in maintaining and renewing their cognitive abilities. This is considered under the headings Maintaining memory and Learning new things.

- **Maintaining memory**

Both groups' members agreed that singing can help them maintain their memory, although they adopted different methods to approach this aim. The KCSCC group performs their extensive repertoire from memory. The members believed that singing old songs is good for maintaining memory. Others in the group agreed that memory can be improved. Different to the KCSCC singing group, the participants of TOPU state that they like to listen to or sing some old songs, but learning some new songs can develop their memory. The other singing teacher Zhang of TOPU encourages the members to memorize the repertoire they learn. The members stated that remembering a new song is a big challenge for them. Some interviewees of the two groups mentioned that it was easy to forget a new song which they had just learnt and that they needed a long time to commit a new song to memory. But they all consider singing to be a good way to practice their memory. Compared to younger learners, older people need more time and effort to learn new things (Boulton-Lewis, Buys & Lovie-Kitchin, 2006).

- **Learning**

The attitudes to learning were quite different between the two groups. Possibly this is a reflection of the nature of the organizing institutions. The KCSCC is part of the Kingston Chinese community group which was formed to combat social isolation whereas TOPU is an educational institution for older people. The researcher was surprised that there was divided opinion between the members of KCSCC about

learning. The possible reason is that the participants' attitudes to learning depended on their levels of education. The participants who have a low educational level did not identify learning as particularly important. There were two main reasons for them to join in the group, either to find a social life or because they have language difficulties. Several members who have a high level of education have an interest in leaning. They recognized that they are living in a multicultural country, and want to explore multicultural music.

As an educational institution, TOPU aims to provide a challenge for older people to try something new or to increase their technical skills. Formosa (2010) defined a similar organization, the University of the Third Age, as 'socio-cultural centers where older persons acquire new knowledge of significant issues, or validate the knowledge which they already possess, in an agreeable milieu and in accordance with easy and acceptable methods' (p. 1). Learning is offered as a significant reason for older people to undertake music engagement (Wristen, 2006). The teacher-directed programs have an educational and informational content delivery focus in TOPU. The members of TOPU appreciate the opportunity to continue learning, and value a variety of learning experiences. They recognized the learning benefits enhance the quality of life. And the educational approaches encourage them to meet life's challenges. It seemed that all members of TOPU enjoy the singing class. Some of the members stated that take the regular lesson to motivate themselves to practice and improve their skill. Further it appears that the members wanted to meet the expectations of a teacher. Just a very few

participants expressed no interest in learning new things, and that learning was not the reason for them joining the singing class. These few are only in the singing class for its social aspects.

Supporting their participation in their social singing group, the members of KCSCC are motivated to undertake research into their repertoire to meet the needs of their audiences or themselves. The founding member HS of KCSCC stated that at the very beginning the members sang songs by memory. But the problem is they could not remember the words very clearly, and sometimes the members argued about that during rehearsal. HS realized that doing some research could help. Searching for new songs to add to their repertoire has now become a habit for the members. Many members of KCSCC locate the songs they want to rehearse in a library or through the internet. However, the interviewees of the TOPU singing class did not mention anything about doing such research. Possibly because of the educational nature of music classes, where members have a regular lesson every week, the songs they learn are chosen by their singing teacher.

Practicing music is important for older learners in TOPU as it gives meaning in terms of providing something purposeful that contributes to the structure of their lives (Taylor, 2010). According to the interviews of the TOPU singing class, most of the participants mentioned that they were motivated to practice, although they practiced for different reasons that include pleasure, relaxation, re-invigoration, and as a

fundamental part of their life. Compared to the TOPU singing class, practicing is not important for the members of the KCSCC singing group. The participants stated that they barely practice at home; some of them mentioned that they might hum occasionally a song to themselves, but never thought about practicing.

Cultural identity

There is a basic difference between the two groups who are the focus of this study, one group is Chinese in Australia, and the other group is Chinese in China. All the participants in both groups were born in China but the members of TOPU have remained in the country of their birth whereas the members of KCSCC have moved to other countries. In China, the members of TOPU share the same language and culture, so language is not an issue for them. In contrast, members of the KCSCC group have different understandings of cultural identity. Two issues emerged through the interviews, firstly, Chinese language offers a sense of personal identity for the members of the KCSCC group. Chinese people constitute the largest non-English speaking community in Australia (Khoo, 2003).

The KCSCC interviewees have a low English level. These Chinese-Australian older people have not been taught the English language and this results in problems of communication. The goal of the community is to connect the Chinese-Australian older people in the area with other Mandarin Chinese speakers. Mandarin and Cantonese are the main languages used in KCSCC. Although most of them

communicate with Mandarin, many members prefer speaking Cantonese in the community. Most of the interviewees pointed out that language is a problem even within the community. Understandably, the language differences influence the music selection. It seems that members of the KCSCC have different opinions about the language they prefer to sing. Secondly, the members of KCSCC group prefer sharing culture with others. Chinese-Australians have been strongly immersed in Chinese culture (Mak & Chan, 1995). As mentioned in previously, the members of KCSCC came from different countries before they migrated to Australia, and they have different backgrounds. But they share the same cultural heritage. Singing in KCSCC connects the members to their Chinese heritage by the performance of songs in their original language. The participants believe that singing songs in their original language can maintain their cultural heritage and offer opportunities to share with others, particularly other Chinese-Australian groups. This occurs in different community performances as will be discussed below. Forman (2012) highlights that music constitutes an ‘important and complex factor in the negotiation of elders’ identities in varied contexts as well as being important in their articulation of value and knowledge and their expression of cultural capital’ (p. 248).

Choosing music

The selection of music repertoire is a common focus of both groups’ discussions. Patriotic and Russian songs influence the TOPU singing class preferences a lot. Similarly, most of the KCSCC singing group members prefer singing or listening

Chinese old songs between 1930s and 1960s, although a few participants point out that they like Western music. Choosing music acknowledges the origins and cultural background of members in the KCSCC group. Both groups' participants wanted to share their traditional cultures *via* performances. These issues will be discussed under the headings: Chinese songs, Russian songs, Western music, and Celebrating culture.

- **Chinese songs**

Barz (2006) agrees that distinctive musical repertoires often serve as distinctive musical badges for a particular community, and musical performance is a significant tool to bind communities together. Bowles (1991) found that older people are influenced by their prior experiences and early music learning experiences do affect later music preferences and activity choices. In the present study the researcher found that both groups prefer to choose Chinese songs to sing or rehearse. Two possible reasons can be concluded, first of all, both two groups' members were born in China between the 1940s and 1950s, and they share the same history. All groups' members agreed they were influenced by Chinese old songs a lot, and these songs play a significant role in their lives. Secondly, all participants were young at the time of the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949; they listened to and sang these old Chinese songs in their early childhood, therefore these old Chinese songs hold important memories, and cultural value in their later lives.

All members of the two groups believed that the Chinese songs, especially revolutionary songs between the 1930s and 1940s, are a 'reflection of their age and life experience'. Harrison and Ryan's (2010) detailed analysis of cross-sectional survey data on the life-course trajectory of musical taste, notes how people's taste in music commonly increases from youth to middle age declining from middle age onwards into later life. Ho (2003) stated that between the 1930s and 1940s, the Chinese Ministry of Education issued music syllabuses for primary and secondary education, published Chinese and English versions of the 'Collections of Anti-War Songs', and trained pupils to sing these songs. Coulangeon and Lemel's (2007) found that as one ages, one's musical tastes generally become more homologous. Very few members who did not grow up in mainland China mentioned that have no interest in these old Chinese songs or patriotic songs.

The opinions about singing new patriotic songs were quite different between the two groups. In mainland China, music materials attempt to incorporate a strong sense of kinship, love for motherland or homeland, and the desire to pursue social stability and individual values in music education (Ho, 2010). China's music education reflects the shifting emphases of different socio-political climates during the last few decades (Law & Ho, 2007). Obviously, Chinese revolutionary songs and patriotic songs influence the TOPU singing class preferences. The members of TOPU are interested in many new patriotic songs written after the 1990s. In contrast, the members of the KCSCC were not influenced by new patriotic songs. Most of them stated that they

were not familiar with Chinese songs after the 1980s. This is probably because they left China to migrate to various countries when they were young. For this reason newer songs are unknown to them. They explained that they have no interest in these revolutionary songs or patriotic songs. They prefer to listen to or sing popular songs from Hong Kong and Taiwan released during the 1980s and 1990s.

- **Russian songs**

Since the Chinese Communist Party came to power, music and the other arts were influenced by Eastern European models (Ho & Law, 2004). The members of both groups state that they were influenced by Russian music because they learnt Russian songs at elementary schools. The members of the KCSCC agreed that Chinese-Australian older people have had the same experience. They had learnt Russian when they were young and as a result were very influenced by Russian music. Several of them mentioned that they learnt Russian instead of English as a second language when they were in primary and secondary school. The TOPU singing class is greatly influenced by Russian music too. The members recalled that learning Russian songs was an expected part of education for young people when they were young. The singing teacher Zhang confirmed the significance of Russian songs among older Chinese people, and most of his class enjoyed learning or singing Russian songs. However, both groups stated that they sang these Russian songs' melodies using Chinese words.

- **Western music**

When asked about Western music, four of the KCSCC singing group's participants stated that they were influenced by Western music and like listening to it but this did not translate into a desire to perform it. They explained that because of the language barrier and the cultural difference, although they like to listen to some English songs, they do not want to sing them. However, participants who have only been in Western countries for a short time do not think that they have 'been influenced by Western music'. In the group interviews they admitted that they would be prepared to try Western songs, the difficulties being unfamiliarity with the English language and the new melodies. Li and Southcott (2012) found that Australian-Chinese older people prefer Chinese music, however, they like Western music to varying degrees reflecting their changing understanding of self as Chinese-Australian.

The interviewees of the TOPU singing class were also asked what they thought about Western music. The singing teachers explained that during the 1920s and 1930s many melodies were from Western countries and those young students in the 1920s and 1930s used the Western system of music notation. So now many older people in China can sing some old songs with well-know Western melodies that came from Europe and Japan, sung with Chinese lyrics. The two singing teachers stated that they hope that the members can experience different styles of music. The members also stated that they prefer listening to peaceful, slow, easy songs. Some participants mentioned that they have an interest in Western music and want to try it. Moreover,

both groups stated that they preferred to listen to slow, peaceful music 'wherever they come from'. Flower and Murphy (2001) found that older people enjoy popular music from their early adult years and dislike loud, noisy music. It may be that the different overall purposes of the two groups underlies this dissimilarity. The KCSCC come together for shared socializing and singing, whereas TOPU do this and also expect to learn.

Shared interests

Both groups' members shared interests and activities. And both groups' participants were in close contact with their family members. The KCSCC singing group performed in Chinese festivals, singing Chinese songs for members of KCSCC and other similar community groups. The TOPU singing class performed a lot for the community and sometimes with other organizations. These issues will be discussed under the headings Family influences and Performances.

• Family influences

The family is the most important unit in Chinese society. This tradition is attributed to Confucian doctrine that the family was the principal group to which a person belonged (Mak & Chan, 1995). All participants of the two groups agreed that family support and influence are important. And most of them were in close contact with their children, some residing with them. The remainder of the comments related to the next generations. Some of them mentioned that the next generations influenced them

a lot, although there appears to be some tension between the musical tastes of the generations in the KCSCC interviews. It appears that family influences for TOPU are stronger than the KCSCC singing group, for example, members of the KCSCC group described not feeling comfortable singing at home, and most of them stated that they never sing to family members. In contrast, the participants of the TOPU singing class have positive memories of sharing their music with a spouse or with their next generations. Different from the KCSCC singing group, most of participants stated that their partner supports them a lot and that they sing to their family members frequently. They stated that singing activity is part of their family's life. Several participants also mentioned that they received support from the next generation. Again this difference may be ascribed to the different cultural contexts in which the two groups reside. The TOPU members live within their home culture but the KCSCC members have been transplanted to a new culture where they may not yet have acclimatized as much as their children and grandchildren.

- **Performing and celebrating culture**

Shared music preferences create and intensify social bonds (Boer *et al.*, 2011; Lonsdale & North, 2009). Jenkins (2004) also agreed that music is a powerful mechanism with communities that affirms identity where music making and culture is celebrated. Performance is a necessary part in both groups' program, although the attitudes to performance are quite different between the two groups. KCSCC uses performances to maintain their cultural heritage. Warburton and McLaughlin (2007)

state that the important role played by older people who come from CALD backgrounds is to maintain and promote their culture. Appreciation of culture is deemed important in KCSCC. Singing can connect the Australian-Chinese to their Chinese heritage by the performance of songs in their original language (Li & Southcott, 2012). The participants of KCSCC believe that performance of songs in their original language in Chinese festivals can maintain their cultural heritage and offer opportunities to share with others, particularly other Chinese Australian groups. Particularly in the KCSCC group, cultural heritage was established during Chinese-Australian participants' childhood and adolescence. Music preferences are part of cultural values and heritage. Members getting together are likely to be exposed to similar music and to then share values through the common socialization experience. Music offers important social information that individuals share early on in their interactions (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2007). Compared the KCSCC, the participants of the TOPU singing class believed that the performances offer opportunities to share common interests with others. Music provides an essential source for the development of human social interactions (Cross, 2001). Individuals who like similar music show higher social attraction toward each other (Lonsdale & North, 2009; Selfhout *et al.*, 2009). The members of TOPU take the performances as life experiences as they remain embedded in their culture. Each member has a different story about performances. Responses and experiences from these performances enrich the members' later life.

Both groups highlight that they share the Chinese culture through performances. Performances in different Chinese festivals are significant activities in the KCSCC singing group. The Chinese-Australian participants emphasize traditional Chinese festivals. The members choose different but appropriate songs and believe that these songs can keep the spirit of the different festivals. The participants believed that these performances for Chinese festivals let them know there are still some ties with their 'culture heritage and their old lifestyle'. Being Chinese in China probably reduces the need to celebrate Chinese culture a lot. The members of the TOPU group also consider Chinese festivals an important part of their culture and singing in these events connects them to Chinese heritage. However, the members pointed out that they celebrated a lot of modern Chinese festivals, such as Army Day and National Day. Understandably, Chinese participants are influenced by patriotism and nationalism. Law and Ho (2011) argue that the contemporary Chinese governments promotes social harmony in music education as a means of state governance to consolidate their political leadership and maintain social stability.

In conclusion, both groups' members have come together because they all like music. All of them found that music engagement can help them develop emotional, physical and mental well-being. All participants take the singing activity as part of their solution to social isolation and have found friendship. Participants of both groups also state that family supporting play is an important role in their lives. For the KCSCC singing group, participants have come to Australia from Mainland China, Vietnam,

Hong Kong, Malaysia, Laos, and the United States. 'Chinese' is not a homogeneous term for the KCSCC members. Compared to the TOPU group, the KCSCC group illustrates the issues of cultural identity. The participants in both groups were born in China and shared the same linguistic and cultural heritage. All participants asserted that they are influenced by old Chinese songs a lot as a reflection of their age and life experience.

The opinions about singing new patriotic songs were quite different between the two groups. Understandably, the Chinese-Australian participants were not influenced by the new patriotic songs that have been written since they left China. Both groups shared Chinese culture through performances, it is recognized that culture identity is more important for Chinese-Australian participants than the Chinese participants. Overall, there are two major differences that underpin the musical engagement of the groups selected for this study. KCSCC is a linguistic and cultural group. Music engagement for the members of KCSCC maintains their cultural heritage and offers them opportunities to share their social life. However, as an educational and social institution, TOPU aims to provide opportunities for older people to accept new knowledge and learn new skills. Therefore, learning purpose and social life are equally important for the members of TOPU.

Conclusion

This chapter compared the data from the Chinese-Australian group and the Chinese group to explore similarities and differences. Based on the discussions of the two groups' data in the preceding chapters, six themes were reconsidered in this chapter: Emotional Well-being, Physical Well-being, Mental Well-being, Cultural identity, Choosing Music, and Shared Interest. Each of these themes has been analyzed under subheadings: Emotional Well-being including Enjoyment, Sense of confidence, Sense of purpose, Catharsis, Overcoming loneliness and isolation, and Nostalgia. Physical Well-being included Attitude to illness and Maintaining health. Mental Well-being included Maintaining memory, Learning new things, Doing research and Meaningful practice. Choosing Music covered Chinese songs, Russian songs, and Western music. Shared interests contained Family support and Celebrating culture. The next chapter will return to the original contentions, and research questions and summarize the finding of this study.

Chapter 11

Conclusion

This final chapter will reiterate the original issues raised in this study, the research contentions, and the significance of this study. The major themes identified in this study will be summarized, followed by recommendations for future studies relevant to the research area.

Issues and research contentions

Currently, there are few studies that have been carried out that investigate the effects of music engagement on older people especially on Chinese-Australian and Chinese older people. The motivation for the inception of this study was based upon the researcher's working experiences and interest in music engagement for older people active in their community. It appeared that, for older people, music keep them busy, focused and generally more youthful (Bunt, 1996; Maranto, 1993).

In order to better understand the affects of music participation for older people, several questions were asked in this study: How do older people engage with music in community? Does musical engagement assist in the development of older people's physical and mental health? What similarities and differences arise between music engagements by older people from different cultures? What are the support mechanisms for successful music engagement by Chinese-Australian and Chinese

older people? The researcher wondered if this was the case amongst both Chinese-Australians and Chinese older people. For this reason case studies were undertaken with two representative groups. However, to contextualize this study it was first necessary to explain: (1) the background of Chinese-Australians and the Chinese community of Australia and (2) A limited sample of Community music in Australia and in mainland China. Further there was an exploration of Chinese society, education and music in China as all participants lived in China before migration. These contextualizing explanations have provided supporting information for the exploration of the issues and concerns regarding music engagement, music learning and cultural influences among the two limited samples of Chinese-Australian and Chinese older people. This research has compared the data of two groups of older people who are either Chinese-Australian or Chinese in China to share their understandings about music engagement.

Investigation and analysis of the different organizations chosen presented the music engagement for old people in different ways. In this study two older people's organizations were selected, one in Australia, and the other in China: Kingston Chinese Senior Citizens Club (KCSCC) in Victoria, Australia and Tangshan Older People's University (TOPU) in Hebei Province, China. The KCSCC is a community-based organization which provides traditional social activities to elderly Chinese-Australian people. However, TOPU is a government-based organization which provides a wide range of lifelong learning opportunities in its long-standing

continuing education system for older Chinese people to learn, participate, and perform in a range of activities. In both institutions the researcher interviewed both stakeholders and members of the organizations. The Australian Chinese group was the only music group of solely older Chinese people located in suburban Melbourne after a careful search of public websites. In China, the Chinese organization was selected because of the researcher's familiarity with the town and her awareness of the effective and successful programs run by TOPU for older people. The research contentions became (1) active music engagement can enhance the quality of life of older people and (2) music engagement offers particular benefits for maintaining and sharing cultural identity.

This study aimed exploring life-worlds of participants and investigated the affects of music engagement on older people. The qualitative research approach was undertaken because it allows an investigation to retain the participants' understandings and experiences of music engagement. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) stated that the aim and function of qualitative research is to understand the meaning of human action by describing the inherent or essential characteristics of social objects or human experience. Phenomenology was the most suitable means of investigation to help the researcher to understand what are the affects of music engagement on the participants. Johnson and Christensen (2004) supported that phenomenology is a form of qualitative research in which the researcher attempts to understand how one or more individuals experience a phenomenon. Through the perspectives of participants, the

researcher undertook phenomenological examination enacted as description and reflection upon the phenomenon. Further there was an exploration of the impact of cultural identity on music engagement amongst Chinese-Australian and Chinese older people. Four data collection strategies, semi-structured interviews, observations, documents and artifacts, and a researcher journal, were employed in this phenomenological case study at two different older people's organizations with the aim of exploring the affects of music engagement on older people and culture identities between Chinese-Australian older people and Chinese older people.

From the analysis of the data three major themes were identified. The first theme concerns positive engagement in community singing groups by older Chinese-Australians and older Chinese. The narratives of both Chinese-Australian older people and Chinese older people about the meaning of music engagement to them showed that active participation impacts on older people's quality of life. The second theme identifies that older people use music in many different ways and that music for them can be a way of maintaining cognitive and emotional health. The third theme offers an exploration of the participants' understanding of the cultural significance of their music engagement. For the Chinese-Australians, making music was mainly about preserving and sharing their culture. For the Chinese in China, music engagement was similarly about sharing culture but also about learning new skills and understandings. All three themes were given particular emphasis in the discussions throughout this thesis. In addition, the three themes supported the

contentions of this study and have been recognized as essential components of the music engagement in the two selected interview groups.

Concluding statement

Music impacts on people's lives both directly and indirectly and is part of life. Music provides opportunities for older people to maintain well-being (Hays & Minichiello, 2005a; Koopman, 2007). Performing arts engagement by older people is positively related to enhanced well-being, encompassing both individual and community (Li & Southcott, 2012; Southcott & Joseph, 2010). The Chinese community is the most diverse immigrant group in Australia. For example, many Chinese born Australian residents come from a wide range of geographical and cultural communities. A number of difficulties experienced by Chinese-Australian older people have been identified, such as the experience of cultural difference, and isolation caused by language. These understandings were investigated in this qualitative case study that explored the affects of music engagement on Chinese-Australian older people and Chinese older people, and utilized observations of the two selected older people organizations in Australia and in China. The themes of the study were discussed through interrelated issues, such as the emotional well-being, physical well-being, mental well-being, choosing music, and shared interest; each of these themes has been analyzed under subheadings.

- **Emotional Well-being**

Emotional well-being is one of the main reasons for older people taking part in music activities. Music offers a broad range of personal benefits for older people by participating in varied music activities. The researcher's previous understanding in this area was consolidated by the results of the qualitative data collection, affirming that music engagement offers emotional well-being for older people. Six specific aspects arose in this theme. Firstly, the results show that enjoyment is the strongest attraction for both Chinese-Australian older people and Chinese older people who choose to engage in singing activities. This was confirmed by Wristen (2006) who found that the love of music is an important reason for the older participants to take up piano learning. However, the data in this study indicated that enjoyment is more important for Chinese-Australian older people because of their low English level and their strong sense of cultural identity. Secondly, music activity can help older people to develop self-confidence. Coffman (2002) pointed out that one of three reasons for participating in music experiences is satisfied personal self-confidence. In this study, both Chinese-Australian older people and Chinese older people used singing activities for developing their own sense of confidence. The nature of the organizing institutions of the selected two groups was different, the KCSCC group was formed to combat social isolation whereas TOPU is an educational institution for older people, the importance of self-confidence was the same.

The third significant finding in the theme of emotional well-being is the sense of purpose that music engagement can provide. By helping others, older people gain a sense of purpose. This is in line with Southcott (2009) who stated that in community music activities, older people feel that they are useful. Fourthly, in terms of emotional expression, it appears that listening to music or singing can play an important role in older people's lives. Some participants considered listening to music a good way to provide cathartic opportunities for the expression of emotions; other older people stated that singing gives them pleasure, and helps them to change their mood. It is reasonable to suggest that however older people organize their music activity, music is a good way to explore their emotions. Fifthly, singing activities had provided important opportunities for socializing, and overcoming loneliness and isolation for both Chinese-Australian older people and Chinese older people in China. This is supported by researchers who have found that music has an exceptional capacity to foster socialization and develop social cohesion (Carr, 2006; Coffman & Adamek, 1999; Southcott, 2009; Veblen, 2004).

The results of the data collection in this current study show that because of social isolation amongst older Chinese-Australian people, membership of the group is far more important than just singing among Chinese-Australian older people. Singing rehearsals are considered to be a way of meeting and are a social gathering. Finally, the results of the data affirm that Chinese-Australian older people have a strong sense of nostalgia. Singing activity connects Chinese-Australian older people to their

Chinese heritage. Through the performance of songs in the original language, Chinese-Australian older people shared some nostalgia for their place of birth and for their life journey. This shows the significant role played by active music making for the older people from Cultural and Linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds in maintaining and promoting their heritage culture.

- **Physical well-being**

Many researchers stated that music engagement has health benefits for older people (Carr, 2006; Cohen *et al.*, 2006; Greaves & Farbus, 2006; Hays, 2005). Through the discussion of these two selected organizations for older people, there is an indication that music engagement may enhance the physical well-being of the elderly although physical improvement was not a major focus of the participants in either group in this study. If anything, the most marked change was to the participants' attitude to health. The participants recognized that singing improves their physical well-being, especially on maintaining lung function and controlling breath. However, the findings indicated that singing activities can help older people to be distracted from their medical conditions and feel uplifted physically. This is supported by Cohen *et al.* (2006) who stated that singing has potential health benefits for older people. The data in this current study also show that the participants not only understood that singing activity related to their attitude to illness, but they also considered that dancing enhances physical well-being. Getting involved in music engagement is the key for older people to maintaining good health. In conclusion, the health benefits of musical

engagement extend across the lifespan (Cohen, Bailey & Nilsson, 2002), with research confirming physical developmental outcomes in older people.

- **Mental well-being**

Mental well-being is the other important aspect which was identified by the researcher. As well as developing older people's emotional well-being, singing assists in maintaining and renewing the cognitive abilities. In this study this is considered under two topics: the maintaining memory and learning new things. Firstly, the qualitative results of the data have identified the specific issue that singing activity is a good way for both groups of older people to maintain memory, although they adopted different methods to approach this aim. Whether performing the repertoire from memory or learning new songs, the participants advocated that memory can be 'practiced' and that singing can make the brain function. Secondly, learning is best understood as a process of development and maintenance of quality of life across the life span. And the educational approaches in the Chinese group in China encourage older people to meet life's challenges. However, through the discussion of the two groups' data, the attitudes to learning were different between Chinese-Australian older people and Chinese older people. As has been mentioned throughout this thesis in the previous chapters, the nature of the two organizing institutions was different. The aim of the KCSCC community group was to combat social isolation and to offer a space for Chinese-Australian older people either to find a social life or overcome their isolation due to their language problems. TOPU is an educational institution for

the elderly that aims to provide education for older people with an enduring resource in achieving successful ageing. Through the data discussion, Chinese older people at TOPU show stronger learning attitude than the Chinese-Australian older people. This is demonstrated as the Chinese people interviewed have all committed to learning music at TOPU.

- **Cultural identity**

The qualitative case study has identified that predictably there is a difference between Chinese-Australian older people and Chinese older people concerning their cultural identity. Chinese older participants shared the same language and culture. As they already live in a large Chinese culture, Chinese older people did not show an overt sense of cultural identity. However, compared to Chinese older people, Chinese-Australian participants have moved to other countries although all of them were born in China. As presented in the previous chapter, Chinese-Australians have been strongly immersed in Chinese culture especially elderly Chinese immigrants who retain many of the traditional Chinese values. Two issues were raised through the data collection, the most important issue is language challenge. In Australia, most of the participants have a low English level. English proficiency was an issue for Chinese-Australian older people particularly older Chinese from mainland China. Using their Chinese language offers Chinese-Australian older people a sense of culture identity. And the Chinese community activities connect the Chinese-Australian older people in maintaining and promoting their cultural heritage.

Secondly, the findings also indicated that Chinese-Australian elderly people prefer sharing culture with others who have the same cultural background. Singing activity enables Chinese-Australian older people to share their Chinese heritage with others, especially other Chinese-Australian community groups. That was supported by Brown and Volgsten (2006) who stated that music is of vital importance to cultural and social functions. The selection of music repertoire in the Chinese-Australian older people group and the Chinese older people group will be considered below.

- **Choosing music**

The selection of music repertoire is a common focus of the study. Patriotic and Russian songs influence Chinese-Australian older people and Chinese older people a lot. Chinese songs are the most commonly used in both Chinese-Australian older people and Chinese older people. Music associated with older people's memories of past experiences and their early music learning experiences affect later music activity choices (Bowles, 1991; Li & Southcott, 2012; Southcott, 2009). Chinese-Australian older people and Chinese older people were born in China and share some of the same history. In addition, all participants described similar music education experiences when they were young, and the songs learnt in their youth play an important role in their later lives. Through singing Chinese old songs, both groups of older people vividly recalled their life experience. However, the findings showed that Chinese older people retain a strong sense of patriotism. Therefore, Chinese revolutionary songs and patriotic songs influence Chinese older people's preferences,

and they continue to be interested in some new patriotic songs composed after the 1990s. In contrast, the Chinese-Australian older people in this study have migrated to Australia later in life. They listen to or sing popular songs from Hong Kong and Taiwan from the 1980s and 1990s and these replace new patriotic songs from China written after the 1980s.

As presented in chapter 7, when the Chinese Communist Party came to power in 1949, Chinese society and its education system including music education were influenced by an Eastern European model (Chen & Reid, 2002). That was confirmed by the data collection which showed that most of the participants who were born in the 1930s and 1950s learnt Russian songs at elementary schools in China. Some of them learnt Russian instead of English as a second language when they were in primary and secondary school. Learning Russian songs was an expected part of education for these participants when they were young. In this regard, the influence of the music experiences in the participants' early years, both Chinese-Australian older people and Chinese older people has meant that they have an enthusiasm for Russian songs.

As mentioned in chapter 7, Western music was already in use in the school system in China between 1911 and 1949 (Lau, 2008). The data collected confirmed that Chinese-Australian older people and Chinese older people were influenced by many Western countries' melodies during the 1920s and 1930s. As has been demonstrated in the data, older people prefer to listen to slow, peaceful music 'wherever they come

from'. Both groups' participants have an interest in Western music and would be prepared to try Western songs. However, because of the different purposes of the two groups and the participants' attitudes about the singing activity, Chinese-Australian older people use Western music to reflect their understanding of self as Chinese-Australian (Li & Southcott, 2012). However, because of the language barrier and the cultural differences, this did not translate into a desire to perform it. Whereas Chinese older people expect to learn, they have interest in Western music for learning purpose.

- **Shared interests**

Music has the potential to bring family closer together (Duay & Bryan, 2006). Family support and influence are important for both Chinese-Australian older people and Chinese older people. The results indicated that both groups of participants were in close contact with their children although some tensions were evident between the musical preferences of younger generations and the Chinese-Australian participants. Ascribed to the different cultural contexts in which the two groups reside, family influences for the Chinese participants are stronger than the Chinese-Australian participants, although Chinese-Australian older people were in closer contact with their children who were resident in Australia. In addition, Chinese older people have more positive memories of sharing their music with a spouse or with their next generations than Chinese-Australian participants. As mentioned in chapter 10, there are cultural differences between different generations in Chinese-Australian families.

Younger Chinese-Australians have acclimatized to a new culture and adopted many of its practices, whereas it is often more difficult for Chinese-Australian older people who have only recently migrated from China or elsewhere to accept a new culture.

The second issue raised under the theme of shared interests is performing and celebrating culture. In this study, performing is a necessary activity in both groups' programs. The study identified that both Chinese-Australian older people and Chinese older people prefer to share their traditional cultures *via* performances. For Chinese-Australian participants, performances were a good way to maintain the cultural heritage. Performance of songs in the original language offered opportunities to Chinese-Australian older people to connect with other older CALD people who have a similar cultural background to them. Chinese participants experienced social interaction through the performances that offer opportunities to share common interests with others. The data collected indicated that both groups of participants use the performances to share their Chinese culture. Compared to the Chinese participants, the Chinese-Australian group members emphasise traditional Chinese festivals. However, they are influenced by nationalism and their prior education in patriotism. In China, Chinese participants celebrated modern Chinese festivals a lot, and the performances show a strong sense of patriotism.

Recommendations for future practice

Older adult music engagement will remain very important. The themes that were identified from the data support the positive benefits of ongoing engagement with

music. Despite the limitations of this qualitative study, the researcher's findings clearly suggest that music engagement is an important determinant of health in older people. It appears that music engagement impacts on older people's quality of life. Active music participation offers a means by which older people can find a way of maintaining physical and mental health. This study also found that compared to Chinese older people, the CALD Chinese-Australian older people are at a disadvantage in mainstream contemporary Australian society and singing activity constitutes a significant factor in Chinese-Australian older people's expression of their identities and cultural capital.

This study highlights opportunities for future research in several areas. The findings demonstrate the need for a further study that involves more representatives of the general older population. Such research could build on the data of the current study. A quantitative survey instrument could be developed to explore categories of music engagement and how music is used in various ways in the lives of older people to sustain well-being and health. Secondly, further research also needs to address the cultural effects of music in older people's lives and not only focus on Chinese-Australian older people and Chinese older people. Australia is a multicultural society and there is a need to have a better understanding of how music might be used in different cultures and different communities. Thirdly, it is important to seek a better understanding of the genres or types of music that is most significant for older people and what role this plays in their preferences and engagement. This could also benefit

therapists working with older people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds in care facilities. This study has focused on the positive contribution of singing activity, but future studies are required to describe the extent and frequency of music engagements in older people's lives and to explore the variations by gender, social class or educational background. Finally, this research has compared the data of two older people's institutions, one is a community organization in Australia and the other is an educational institution in China. The data suggest that both type of institutions increased in importance and relevance as people live healthy lives and live longer. More research about musical participation and learning for older adults in Australian educational institutions and Chinese social community organizations is now required that may have particular significance at government policy level in terms of addressing the health and well-being of Australia's ageing population and the Chinese ageing population.

Appendix A

Ethics approval letter



Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Research Office

Human Ethics Certificate of Approval

Date: 24 May 2011
Project Number: CF11/1320 – 2011000721
Title: Older Chinese and Chinese-Australian community music engagement
Chief Investigator: Dr Jane Southcott
Approved: From: 24 May 2011 To: 24 May 2016

Terms of approval

1. The Chief investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained, if relevant, and a copy forwarded to MUHREC before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation. Failure to provide permission letters to MUHREC before data collection commences is in breach of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.
2. Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
3. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by MUHREC.
4. You should notify MUHREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must contain your project number.
6. **Amendments to the approved project (including changes in personnel):** Requires the submission of a Request for Amendment form to MUHREC and must not begin without written approval from MUHREC. Substantial variations may require a new application.
7. **Future correspondence:** Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence.
8. **Annual reports:** Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. This is determined by the date of your letter of approval.
9. **Final report:** A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. MUHREC should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
10. **Monitoring:** Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by MUHREC at any time.
11. **Retention and storage of data:** The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben Canny".

Professor Ben Canny
Chair, MUHREC

cc: Miss Monica Siuong Li

Postal – Monash University, Vic 3800, Australia
Building 3E, Room 111, Clayton Campus, Wellington Road, Clayton
Telephone +61 3 9905 5490 Facsimile +61 3 9905 3631
Email muhrec@monash.edu www.monash.edu/research/ethics/human/index/html
ABN 12 377 614 012 CRICOS Provider #00008C

Appendix B

Semi-structure interview questions for the organizer of music community

Name: _____ The role in the organization: _____

1. How long time you have done this job?
2. How many community members in this community?
3. How did the members know the community?
4. What is the goal of this community?
5. How many staff in the community?
6. Are there some similar communities around here? (If yes, have the community work together with the other communities?)
7. Does this community is supported by the other departments (such as local government)?
8. This community organizes different activities for community members, are the music activities popular among them?
9. How many times does the community arrange the music community activity each week?
10. How does this community organize the music programs (several lessons for different level learners, one big workshop or rehearsal)? Why?
11. Does the community arrange some performance opportunities for community members?
12. Do the members enjoy taking part in these performances?
13. How does the community choose the material for community members (By

teacher/conductor, organizer or members)?

14. What type of music does the music community use often? (such as Chinese music, Western music or European music)?
15. Do you think these music activities bring the benefits to the members' quality of life (physical, emotional and mental)?
16. What is the significance of running the music community?
17. What the biggest challenge for arrange the music community?

Music community in Australia

18. Do you think the Western culture influence the community music activities, and how?
19. Did the members play the Western music a lot?
20. Do you think the culture is the problem when running the music community (can you tell me a story about it)?

Appendix C

Semi-structure interview questions for Chinese-Australian music community older people

Name:

Gender:

Age:

1. How many years you have been in Australia?
2. When did you join this community organization?
3. How did you find out about this music group?
4. Did you learn music before?
5. How many times do you attend the community activity every week?
6. Why did you choose this music activity?
7. What do you do in this group? (Run the group or play?)
8. Do you have a teacher/conductor in this group? (Who? Where from?)
9. Does the group perform for other people? (Can you tell me a story about it?)
10. What is the biggest challenge for you to learn the music?
11. How do you learn the music in the community (demonstrate or be involved the rehearsal)?
12. How does this community organize the music programs (several lessons for different level learners, one big workshop or rehearsal)?
13. Do you practice at your home (practice by yourself or with your friends)?
14. Do you play your music to your family members? And what did they say?
15. Do you use any other material during the rehearsal such as audio/video?
16. There may be some different music communities in this area, have you perform

the music with the other communities? (If yes, do you think the other communities are familiar with your community?)

17. What type of music do you use/play in this group? (Such as what the place or country this music comes from)? And do you like it (them)?
18. How do you choose the material(s) (by the community members or the other people)?
19. Can you tell me some songs' or music name you sing or played before?
20. Do you think the Western culture influence your community music activities, and how?
21. Are there some differences between Western musical culture and Chinese musical culture?
22. Did you play the Western music a lot? (If the songs from other cultures, do you use original language or Chinese)?
23. If you have chance to choose the music which you play, do you want to play the other cultural background music or Chinese style music?
24. What the difficult when you learn the other cultural background music? Do you think language is a barrier to learning music?
25. What is the significance of music learning (music skills, personal growth, enjoyment etc.)?
26. Do you think this music activity influence your quality of life (physical, emotional and mental)?
27. Are there some negative features of this music activity?

Appendix D

Semi-structure interview questions for Chinese music community older people

Name:

Gender:

Age:

1. When did you join this community organization?
2. How did you find out about this music group?
3. Did you learn music before?
4. How many times do you attend the community activity every week?
5. Why did you choose this music activity?
6. What do you do in this group? (run the group or play?)
7. Do you have a teacher/conductor in this group? (Who? Where from?)
8. Does the group perform for other people? (Can you tell me a story about it?)
9. What the biggest challenge for you to learn the music?
10. How do you learn the music in the community (demonstrate or be involved the rehearsal)?
11. How does this community organize the music programs (several lessons for different level learners, one big workshop or rehearsal)?
12. Do you practice it at your home (practice by yourself or with your friends)?
13. Do you play your music to your family members? And what did they say?
14. Do you use any other material during the rehearsal such as audio/video?
15. There may be some different music communities in this area, have you perform the music with the other communities? (If yes, do you think the other communities are familiar with your community?)

16. What type of music do you use/play in this group? (Such as what the place or country this music comes from)? And do you like it (them)?
17. How do you choose the material(s) (by the community members or the other people)?
18. Can you tell me some songs' or music name you played before?
19. Which period of Chinese songs you choose a lot (for example)? Do you like these songs?
20. If you have chance to choose the material(s) which you play, do you want to play the other cultural background music or Chinese style music?
21. Did you play the Western music a lot? (If the songs from other cultures, do you use original language or Chinese)?
22. What the difficult when you learn the other cultural background music?
23. What is the significance of learning music (music skills, personal growth, enjoyment etc)?
24. Do you think this music activity brings the benefits for your life (physical, emotional and mental)?
25. Are there some negative features of this music activity?

Appendix E

Consent letter for Kingston Chinese Senior Citizens Club

Kingston Chinese Senior Citizens Club

Permission Letter for Older Chinese and Chinese-Australian community music engagement

17/06/2011

Dr Jane South and Monica Sicong Li
Building 6, Clayton Campus
Faculty of Education
MONASH UNIVERSITY VIC 3800

Dear Dr Southcott and Ms Li

Thank you for your request to recruit participants from **Kingston Chinese Senior Citizens Club** for the above-named research.

I have read and understood the Explanatory Statement regarding the research **CF11/1320 - 2011000721** and hereby give permission for this research to be conducted.


Anna Wang
Organizer

Appendix F

Consent letter for Tangshan Older People University

Tangshan Older People University

Permission Letter for Older Chinese and Chinese-Australian community music engagement

11/02/2012

Dr Jane South and Monica Sicong Li
Building 6, Clayton Campus
Faculty of Education
MONASH UNIVERSITY VIC 3800

Dear **Dr Southcott and Ms Li**

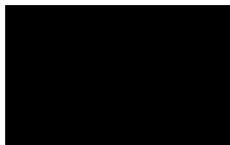
Thank you for your request to recruit participants from **Tangshan Older People University** for the above-named research.

I have read and understood the Explanatory Statement regarding the research **CF11/1320 – 2011000721** and hereby give permission for this research to be conducted.

Yours Sincerely,

Cun Li

Organizer



Appendix G

The Song of Older People University

2011.9.29

1 = 下 半
深情豪迈地

老年大学之歌

赵 杰 词
杨荣娟 曲

(1 5 3 1 3 | 5 - | 1 5 3 1 3 | 6 - | 6 7 6 3 | 5 4 | 3 2 | 1 5 5 5 | 5 5 6 7 |)

5 - | 3 - | 2 1 2 | 5 - | 6 4 | 5 2 | 3 - | 3 - | 3 - |

有 过 奋 斗， 有 过 理 想 有
再 进 校 园， 再 到 课 堂 再
关 注 未 来， 关 注 开 创 关

6 - | 5 4 3 | 2 6 | ? ? | 5 2 3 | 1 - | 1 - | 6 6 |

过 奉 献 有 过 辉 煌。 有 过
做 桃 李 再 绽 芬 芳。 再 进
注 发 展 关 注 小 康。 关 注

1 7 6 | 2 2 1 7 | 6 0 | 2 2 | 1 2 3 | 5 5 4 2 | 3 0 | 3 6 |

奋 斗， 有 过 理 想 有 过 奉 献 有 过 辉 煌。 今 天
校 园， 再 到 课 堂 再 做 桃 李 再 绽 芬 芳。
未 来， 关 注 开 创 关 注 发 展。 关 注 小 康。

1 7 6 | 5 6 5 4 | 3 2 | 7 7 6 | 5 5 4 | 3 3 2 3 | 1 5 | 3 - |

有 缘 相 聚 一 起 我 们 欢 乐 我 们 歌 唱 啊

3 3 2 3 | 1 6 | 0 6 | 4 - | 4 4 5 2 | 3 - | 3 - | 3 6 | 1 7 6 |

啦 啦 啦 啦 啦 啊 啦 啦 啦 我 们 欢 乐

1 1 7 1 | 6 4 | 0 4 | 2 - | 2 2 3 7 | 1 - | 1 - |

5 6 5 4 | 3 2 | 0 7 6 | 5 5 | 4 - | 3 3 2 3 | 1 - | 5 5 | 6 - |

我 们 歌 唱 歌 唱 时 代 歌 唱 夕 阳 歌 唱 夕

7 - | 7 - | i - | i - | i - | i (5 5 5 | i 0 ||

阳

2011.9.29

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