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Design for Care

How the “Good Old Days” can Empower Senior Residents to Achieve Better Services in an Aged-Care Institution

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Design for Care: How the “Good Old Days” can Empower Senior Residents to Achieve Better Services in an Aged-Care Institution

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Abstract: This article addresses the issue of care for the residents of the BoAi aged-care institution in China. It focuses on experience (service) design and institutional aged-care from the perspective of design practice and design research. Design often starts from the current experience of the user. In this article an understanding of senior care includes considerations for the senior residents' experiences of the “good old days,” such as previous lifestyle, tradition, and filial piety in Asia. This means that elements of good memories and experiences of the past were transferred into the new service concepts that the project developed. Through the study at the BoAi home, current service experiences at the institution were investigated. For designers and design researchers working to increase senior care and service experiences, it is important to understand and distinguish between individual experiences. For the seniors it was meaningful to revert to their prior experiences. Therefore, the study of BoAi was approached through design ethnography. The article also suggests how care service experiences can be understood and classified in aged-care institutions. The aim of this article is to investigate how designers translate the prior experiences of seniors into action to affect intentional change for the promotion of better service experiences in aged-care.

Keywords: Prior Experience, Aged-care, Service Design, Co-design

Introduction

This article addresses the issue of care for the ageing at an institution called BoAi home, which is located in the rural area of Lüyou Road No. 120, Zhuhai, in the south of China. The home was established in 2010, and in 2017 it hosted approximately 120 senior residents with an average age of seventy-one. The residents occupy 1,500 square meters that includes sixty-eight individual and shared rooms. Occupation depends on the residents' financial situation. This article aims to implement changes from the perspective of designing with the senior residents from BoAi, as well as six young design students and a design researcher, to achieve better services for the BoAi community. The project continued over a period of three weeks, between September 10th and 25th, 2017.

According to key findings from the World Population Prospectus, the number of older people over sixty years of age is expected to rise from 962 million globally in 2017 to 2.1 billion in 2050 (United Nations 2017). In the case of China, the number of elderly people is expected to reach 400 million, equivalent to the total population of fifteen European Union countries, by 2030 (Sun et al. 2015). Consequentially, the demand for services in elderly care is rapidly becoming a significant challenge. A diversity of senior residencies and concepts for aged-care have emerged over the years, such as the old-age home (Gelfand 1968), elder village (Von Mering and Gordon 1993), ageing in place (Previll 2012), but studies of experiences and services that are based on the concept of the “good old days” (Havlena and Holak 1991), are currently lacking.

Design for social change offers an avenue for exploring the concept of the “good old days” in aged care. Even so, studies on design still favor tangible products with temporal experiences of the present situation, and new understanding of intangible experiences that are based on concepts

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related to the “good old days” is lacking. For instance, certain products for elderly populations are designed for physical functioning, but less consideration is given to personal experiences or stories from the past of the elderly. Design for social change may gain new insights from referring to the behavior of past civilizations (Nelson and Stolterman 2012); thus, in the case of senior residents, new insights may be gained from “good old days” experiences.

The concept of service design focuses on experience-centric services (Zomerdijsk and Voss 2010), that consider experience holistically and as central to a design process. Therefore, the experience of past and present needs to be considered as a continuum rather than two poles, to follow Shedroff’s advice for designers not to “regularly do themselves (and their intended audience) a disservice by not addressing the full spectrum of experience when designing solutions” (Shedroff 2014, 163).

This article, with a focus on care for senior citizens, explores how to transfer the “good old days” experiences of seniors into current service experiences at institutions, as well as to gain new knowledge on how to deal with the notion of nostalgia in care services. In short, this project considers a complementary relationship between “was” and “is” experiences. This study asks: “Why are ‘good old days’ experiences important to the senior residents of BoAi?”; “What are the ‘good old days’ experiences that are lacking at BoAi?”; and “What is the gap for new services in BoAi, keeping in mind how the current situation can be changed to meet the expectations of the seniors?”

The article first reviews the literature that examines the “good old days,” the culture of filial piety, and service design. Secondly, the research strategy, methods, tools, and ethical issues are considered. The third part of this article introduces the design and research project at the BoAi aged-care institution. It is followed by the findings that deliver new insights into various experiences in aged-care, such as participated experience, pleasant experience, and profound experience, followed by the conclusion of the article.

Theoretical Background

Before entering into a discussion of design for seniors, the terms “good old days” and culture of filial piety will be defined, alongside service and co-design. These themes will shape the understanding of the connections between seniors and the implications of past experiences and service design for aged care.

The “Good Old Days”

Social change should strategize a return to the “good old days” (Havlena and Holak 1991). This term is used when referring to good memories of usually better times experienced (by someone) in the past. The reminiscence of past events, comparisons to past experiences and a longing to return to “home” are referred to as nostalgia, which was first described by Johannes Hofer in 1688 (Havlena and Holak 1991). Both terms—“good old days” and nostalgia—emphasize the significance of past experiences during an earlier period in an individual’s life, yet these terms also draw on biased or selective recall of past experiences (Havlena and Holak 1991). Davis distinguished three orders of nostalgia that relate to the “good old days,” namely simple nostalgia, which is associated with the belief that “life used to be better in the past”; reflexive nostalgia, when individuals question or analyze the past rather than reminiscing with added sentiment; and interpreted nostalgia, when individuals thoroughly and systematically analyze their nostalgic experiences (Davis 1979).

The Culture of Filial Piety Related to Food

The culture of filial piety (孝, pronounced as “Xiao” in Chinese, “hyo” in Korean, 親孝行 “oyakōkō” in Japanese) is one of the traditional virtues in Asian cultures. This virtue is deeply rooted in Confucian morality, which is understood as “respect and care for parents and the aged” (Sung 1995, 240). It involves several elements, such as language, thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and hints. This tradition plays a significant role in the family and social care of Chinese societies. It serves as a standard by which attitudes and behaviors toward the elderly are judged (Sung 1990).

Cultural norms and behaviors around food typically embody this virtue that navigates the interpersonal relationships between senior and junior Chinese individuals. This partially reflects the traditional Asian cultural virtue of showing respect for senior citizens (Ma 2015). Each physical gesture that forms a part of serving food can potentially be transmitted into expressing (in)appropriate respect. For instance, chopsticks laid on the top of a bowl illustrates respectful behavior, whereas chopsticks inserted upright or directly into a rice bowl may indicate a curse. While food provides nutritional value for physical health, the service of food to others potentially nurtures connections and a sense of appreciation between people in terms of subjective wellbeing (Ma 2015).

Design, Service Design, and Co-design

Crouch and Pearce (2012) position design as both a social and material practice, but the discipline of design has shifted from design styling to design processes and systems. Design has also evolved from the design of products to that of services and experiences to focus on human needs in areas such user design (UX), social, cooperation, experience, and democracy design. These areas all focus on the human or user for promoting a better living of life. In this article, the concept of design thinking is adopted from the field of design as a method for applying a designer’s sensibility to problem solving as the nature of design is essentially transformative (Crouch and Pearce 2012). Design emphasizes observation, collaboration, fast learning, visualization of ideas, rapid concept prototyping, and concurrent process analysis (Lockwood 2009).

Service design is an avenue for innovating or improving services with the aim to be useful, usable, desirable, efficient, and effective for individuals, groups, and organizations (Stickdorn and Schneider 2011). Miettinen explains that service design is “about finding out and learning about the customer’s latent and conscious needs” (Miettinen 2009, 62). Co-design was originally referred to as design participation after a Design Research Society (DRS) Conference of 1971 (Yin 2008). Various roles for designers have been identified when co-designing. As co-designers, facilitative, generative, and developmental roles are important for putting users and communities at the heart of design (Yin 2008). Co-design, by definition, includes all the stakeholders who are involved in the design process, from users and researchers to those who will implement the design (Szebeko and Tan 2010).

Research Strategy, Methods, and Tools

The project of the BoAi home seeks to generate an understanding through learning from the experiences of the senior residents and their cultural practices. Spradley acknowledges ethnography as a “culture-studying culture” and ethnographers seek to learn from the people they observe, for example their acts, words and artefacts (Spradley 1979, 9). In this project, design ethnography was employed as the research strategy. Van Dijk claims that the aim of design ethnography is to understand the future users of a design, for example a newly developed service, which is possible by using the ethnographic principles of learning from cultures and people (Van Dijk 2010). Design ethnography is an in-depth and structured process that can generate

understanding about the everyday lives and experiences of the people that a design is meant for (Van Dijk 2010). The motivation for selecting design ethnography was to understand and interpret “every day lived experience” of the participants and to enable the design team to identify with the residents of BoAi and to build empathic understandings of their practices and routines, and what they care about (Neuman 2000, 70).

A mixed approach was used, which included qualitative and quantitative methods (Leavy 2017). The 120 quantitative questionnaires were based on five questions around the themes of leisure activities, sport assistance, food offering, health or medical care, and other preferences. The aim of the questionnaires was to gain an understanding of the current services that are offered at BoAi, and which services the residents are interested in and to see improved in the future. Based on the participants’ reading ability and level of education, the researcher took on the responsibility to assist the senior residents to understand and fill in the questionnaires.

The qualitative methods included participant observation, and semi-structured and unstructured interviews. The participant observations were conducted in two individual parts. For the first part, the researcher attended dinner in a visitor’s capacity to conduct outsider observation. For the second part, the researcher volunteered at BoAi to provide assistant services for the food service providers, thus conducting insider observation. The semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face by an interviewer team that consisted of three participants—two design students and one resident of BoAi. The team members were encouraged to pose questions, thus contributing to open dialogue. Semi-structured questions were available for use, but most interviews were unstructured. One student member of the team was responsible for documentation and note taking, while the other ensured the flow of the dialogue by posing questions when needed. The senior member of the team was included to ensure engagement, flow of conversation, and the creation of empathy with the elderly interviewees.

Prototyping is as an established service design tool (Ronnti et al. 2013), usually an early sample, model, or release of a product built to test a concept or process. It is something that is replicated with the intention to learn from (Blackwell and Manar 2015); it is a tool that assists to gain pre-understanding of a final solution. A prototype is also a step between the formalization and evaluation of an idea (Soares and Rebelo 2012). In the case of BoAi, the prototyping model included artefacts such as tableware, a dining space and environment, as well as the perceivable services that were delivered during serving food and eating. Evaluation and user feedback were documented through notetaking: a) the frequency of the personal interaction between the food service providers and service recipients, b) the perceived pleasure that the senior participants experienced, such as laughter and interaction among each other, c) the use of respectful gestures, body language and actions, and d) the time spent for eating and dining events. In addition, field notes, sound recordings, and photos were taken by using cameras and mobile phones as tools for documenting the design ethnography processes and stages.

Ethics and Risks

This project was concerned with the BoAi aged-care facility and experiences of its residents that relate to, and perhaps constitute, values of the “good old days.” The senior residents, designers, service providers, and BoAi staff all worked collaboratively to contribute to the understanding of the needs of the residents and to improve selected services at the institution. Ethical considerations for the elderly were discussed and permissions received from the BoAi management before the commencement of the project, as the researcher acknowledged that change and the uprooting of elderly people may add to the complexities of their institutionalized lives.

Ricoeur points out the ethical intention of “aiming at the ‘good life’ with and for others, in just institutions” (Ricoeur 1992, 194). Although the ethical aims of creating “just” institutions and practices within them, institutions may destroy human value and meaning through the reduction of personal processes, rituals, or choices. This results in objectification, which

characterizes the positive externalization of individuals (Taylor 2014) into their artefacts, actions, words, and institutions. However, the objectification of values in institutions may also be experienced as positive when they are rethought (Ricoeur 1992; Taylor 2014). Thus, not having the inhabitants of institutions living through oversimplified experiences, but rather offering them value through experiences, offers steps towards achieving “just” institutions that offer valuable services. Institutional life may be experienced as positive once the attention to details are provided, such as how the inhabitants would value dining experiences, for example. The aim for institutional aged-care would be for senior residents to receive respect as a “whole” person (Doi, Kuwahara, and Morimoto 2015).

“Design for care” is a concept that is used to investigate the role of design in healthcare (Jones 2013, iv). Tony Fry writes about the different meanings of care, such as “provision of care” and “making with care,” which are forms of “care as practice” (Fry 2010, 207–08). When considering “care as performative,” it may be understood as “the well-being of all things” and “care for life in general,” which are ideas underpinned by ethical considerations (Fry 2010, 207). Jones calls for designers to embrace empathic care of the whole person (Jones 2013). He also explains that designers may have to manage “design care” between the two extremes of “individualized creative approaches” and demands for meeting project management and design execution targets (Jones 2013, 15). Thus, in reality designers are regularly confronted with considerations for the ethics of care. These were the ethical considerations of the researcher-designer: through care, for care. During the duration of the project at BoAi, which included developing quality services and experiences for the inhabitants, services were carefully considered for developing future services with care.

This project adhered to the basic ethical guidelines for research, which include safeguarding the rights and sensitivities of research participants through developing emphatic relationships and trust (Spradley 1979). Before entering the field research, the research objectives were clearly communicated to the BoAi administration and participants (Spradley 1979). Additionally, participants were not exploited, their privacy was protected, and forthcoming reports and academic publications will be shared with them (Spradley 1979). Photo shooting was allowed, but no video recording, out of privacy concerns for the individuals, their families and the organization.

The risks involved in this project are that relatives in nursing homes may be stigmatized due to the strong cultural norms that constitute family ties, intergenerational bonds, and the importance of familial care (Zhan et al. 2005, 2006). The intervention might also challenge some people’s understanding of the “good old days” experiences and culture of filial piety. The stakeholders in the workshop had to be aware of the educational and cultural histories of the elderly residents due to their past entanglements with the communist era in China. As a result, many senior citizens are not sure whether the “good old days” is a desired concept for ageing as it would re-establish feudalistic superstitions that followed the Cultural Revolution in China.

The Study of the Senior Residents and Care Services at BoAi Home

Based on design thinking, the study and project at BoAi resulted into a five-step iterative process: understanding the context, defining the problems, analyzing and building up the possibility, prototyping the design model, and testing the results (Figure 1). This process shows how the principles of ethnography, to learn from the participants and their contexts, were integrated with design, specifically service design and co-design, to result into a transformative process. The principles of ethnography are deeply embedded in the first three steps of the process, namely learning from the participants to understand the context and embrace open dialogue with participants to define the problem and analyze new possibilities. Service design elements are illustrated by the five-step iterative process that embraces strong elements of context analysis, exploring new possibilities, prototyping, and testing. The co-design elements are illustrated by the larger circles in the diagram, showing the interaction between the value that

has been added by the designer and the value that has been invested, and will be received, by the user in this collaborative process.

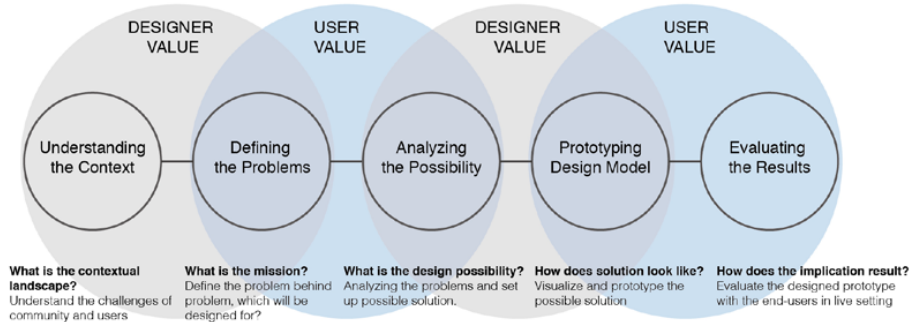


Figure 1: The Research Process of BoAi Project, China.
Source: Shaohua 2018

Step 1: Understanding the Context at BoAi

In order to understand the context and the key service interactions, 120 questionnaires were used to learn more about the senior residents of BoAi’s concerns about current services and their ideas about possible future services. It was important, especially at this step, to invest in open dialogue and document the forthcoming needs and interests of the residents. The needs for future services were captured via questionnaires and documented accordingly. The main categories for future service needs are leisure activities, sport assistance, food offering, health or medical care, and other options.

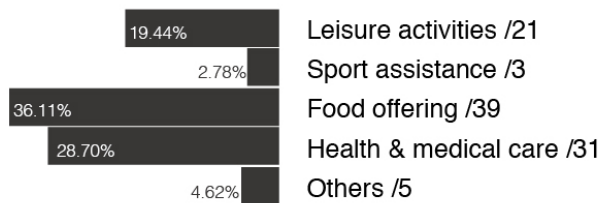


Figure 2: The Result of the Questionnaire Survey at BoAi Indicating the Interest that the Senior Residents Expressed in Particular Services
Source: Shaohua 2018

Although 120 questionnaires were used, only 108 were valid and used in the analysis. Most of the questionnaires were completed with the assistance of interviewers due to the reading and writing ability of the ageing residents. The results in Figure 2 demonstrate that food offering (36.11%) was the most needed service next to health and medical care (28.70%). However, health and medical care is strongly connected with the physical condition, health situations and medical insurance of the residents, and less on their caregivers. The most important finding is that health and medical care was not directly related to the inhabitants’ “good old days” experiences.

In comparison, food offering services had strong links with the participants’ familial and social experiences. Some previous studies have indicated that food not only provides nourishment but also a sense of routine and socialization (Harrison et al. 2013). Because of this reason, food offering was selected to be the focus of the workshop as it also strongly represented the key interactions and communication between BoAi’s service providers and service recipients. Ma (2015) points out that the culture of food partially reflects traditional oriental virtue, thus offering meaningful value to seniors especially in China and other Asian countries.

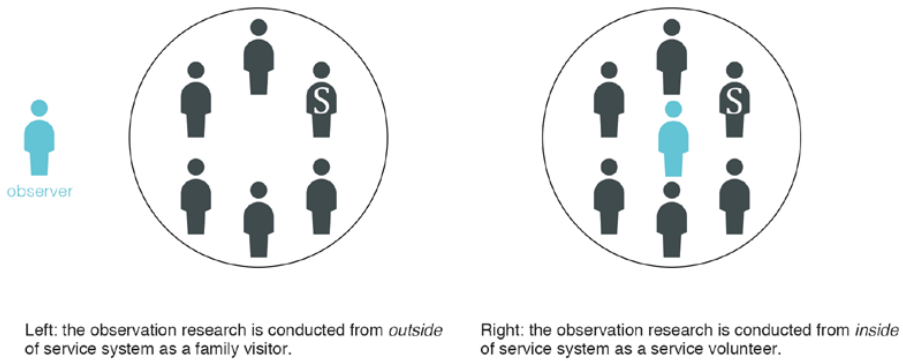


Figure 3: The Observation Research through Outsider and Insider Observation at the Boai Home.
 In This Figure, the Capital Letter S Indicates the Service Provider
 Source: Shaohua 2018

The observations were conducted at lunchtime between 11:30 and 12:30, and at dinnertime between 17:30 and 18:30. These are also the times when the BoAi home experiences peaks in service delivery and interaction between service providers and recipients. This provided the most suitable opportunity to the researcher to learn from the residents (or participants) and how they understood their everyday lived experiences (Neuman 2000; Crouch and Pearce 2012). In addition, the researcher learned about how the participants’ lives were constructed around these services and the meanings they attached to them (Sarantakos 1993; Crouch and Pearce 2012).

The observations were designed in two individual parts. During one, the researcher visited the home as a family visitor, which offered him the opportunity for outsider observation. During the next part, the researcher participated as a volunteer in assisting services at BoAi. As a volunteer, the researcher worked in collaboration with the main service providers, especially in food provision, for deeper learning experiences through insider observations (Figure 3).

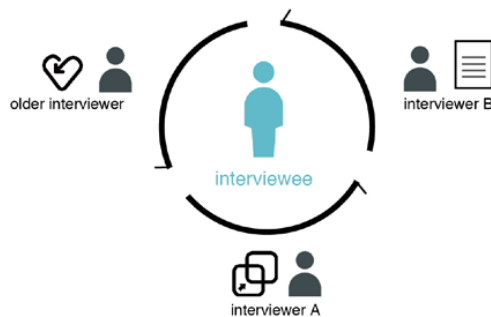


Figure 4: Illustration of the Interview Method and Strategy of the Research Team
 Source: Shaohua 2018

The interview team included one senior interviewer, or senior resident of BoAi, with the objective to create empathy with the interviewees. The idea was that the inclusion of an elderly person would bridge the generational gap between the elderly and design students. The interviewer, depicted as person A in Figure 4, was responsible for guiding the semi-structured and unstructured interviews. Person B took care of documenting the interview through research instruments such as notetaking, voice recording, and photographing.

Based on the theme of food offering, twenty-one seniors were chosen to participate in the interviews because of their diverse identities. Some of the seniors identified as farmers, businessmen, teachers, or government officials from distinct regions. Some also identified with different religions, such as Buddhism, Taoism, and Communism. The interviews were semi-structured and conducted face-to-face, focusing on topics such as daily routines, and then turning to the cooking and offering of food and respecting the culture of food. The aim of the interviews was to explore the participants' past (family or socially) and current (at BoAi) experiences of food offering. What became clear during the interviews was that most of the senior residents shared common understandings about the "good old days" experiences and/or the culture of filial piety.

In the interview process (Figure 4), the senior interviewer was responsible for engaging in open dialogue and bridging themes and discussions, thereby creating empathy with the senior interviewee. Two students were participating, the one negotiating the semi-structured interview questions while the other documented the interview for further analysis. The senior interviewees discussed their experiences at the BoAi home with the knowledge that the information would be treated confidentially and for developing better services at this home. In conclusion, Step 1 drew on strong ethnographic principles to understand the context at BoAi.

Step 2: Defining the Problems

Through the participant observations and interviews conducted in Step 1, three areas for further development have been identified:

Inappropriate dining environment: The BoAi home predominantly provided homes, such as family apartments, that were shared among three to five senior residents. Unfortunately, these apartments did not allow the sharing of dining spaces or dining tables. Instead, the senior residents were seated separately in different locations, using different-sized tables or end tables with a sofa.

Lack of community atmosphere: BoAi had a restricted time schedule for serving food. During dinnertimes the service providers and elderly residents rarely engaged in interpersonal communication or conversation, verbally or non-verbally. The service providers had strict time limitations for delivering the food, while the senior residents were occupied by television time during meals and the service providers dined alone after the seniors have dined.

Absence of "good old days" experiences: The dining services and activities did not represent many values, aesthetics, or experiences of the "good old days" or the culture of filial piety. For example, the senior residents were used to enjoying porcelain bowls and wooden chopsticks, which adds meaning to the seniors. Instead, they were served food from metal bowls and cutlery. The service providers did not perform much respect in terms of body gestures due to time pressure.



Figure 5: Before the Intervention, Illustrating Separated Seating (Left); the Basic Setting of Food Preparation in Metal Bowls (Right)

Source: Shaohua 2018

Step 3: Analyzing the Problems

In terms of the food serving and dining traditions, seated dinners demonstrate respect and honor in accordance with age and social standing in the Chinese dining etiquette. The most distinguished seating position faces the entrance or is in the center of the table facing east, depending on whether seated at a round or square table (Zhou 2017). Additionally, there are forms of expressions, communication, or interactions that carry strong symbolisms, signs or gestures that are used in Chinese or Asian societies. In the case of toasting, for instance, it is a common convention that contact is made with the rim of a glass below the rim of another's to represent admiration and respect if that person is older than oneself (Mack 2019). This etiquette offers opportunity for the senior to enjoy the social atmosphere. The process of serving and being served is also important, but the observations showed that the seniors at BoAi are basically being served in passive fashion, while they were able and willing, it showed, to be involved in serving each other. In co-design the involvement of users in building on their activities and participation, is well-developed (Holmlid 2009). The problems identified were the fashion in which the residents were served, the objects that were used to serve and eat dinners, the physical layout of furniture and objects in the homes, and the ability of the residents to be involved in food serving, for example by serving one another or being involved in some aspects of delivering the service.

Step 4: Building and Prototyping a New Service

The problems identified in Step 1 at BoAi home could be overcome once all stakeholders agreed to work together to make positive changes. Co-design refers to the “creativity of designers and people not trained in design to work together in the design development process” (Sanders and Stappers 2008, 6). To formulate and build a new prototype service, the following specifications were determined:

Kind of prototype: The new prototype that was suggested was the development of a new service for food offering.

Place/Space: One shared apartment was selected for developing a new service prototype at BoAi home in Zhuhai, China.

Active participants: Five senior residents, one service provider, a researcher, and two design students participated in developing the new service.

Passive participants: The passive members were two family members and one observing manager.

The time duration: Approximately two hours were allowed for performing the new service, but flexibility was allowed.

The intention: The food offering service intended to eliminate the disconnection and marginalization that the senior residents experienced at the time in comparison to their previous traditional lifestyles.

The service designers (researcher-designer and students) cooperatively re-designed the food offering space. The dining table was rearranged into a longer rectangle in the center of the living room to avoid excluded and disconnected dining corners in the space. The inhabitants of the apartment were encouraged to participate and comment on the suggestions and changes of the space, thus bringing their understanding and prior experiences to the activity and gaining ownership of the changes. The eldest member was seated facing the entrance in a position of honor, while the service provider was seated in the opposite position with their back to the entrance. This indicated a host position. The eldest resident was seated first, with the remaining seniors seated according to their age and the “host” seated last.

All metal tableware was replaced with porcelain plates, bowls, teapots, and cups, as well as wooden chopsticks to suit a more traditional Chinese food serving culture. Metal tableware is inextricably linked with institutional life, such as hospitals and prisons, whereas metal spoons are linked to Western food serving traditions. The chopsticks and spoon holders were prepared hygienically, while their aesthetics were in accordance with traditional Chinese culture. The atmosphere in the food serving space immediately changed at the first testing round and all seniors were observed to have a happier demeanor.



Figure 6: After the Intervention a Harmonious Atmosphere was Shared (Left), with a More Traditional Tableware Setting (Right).

Source: Shaohua 2018

The service provider attentively performed the role of hosting all seniors. All physical interactions were conducted by using both hands and proper gestures during serving, thus expressing care and respect to the elderly. The service design team did not attend to specific details of food serving for this event, because a strong culture for interpersonal communication was already embedded in each Chinese senior citizen. In other words, they understood the cultural expectations as well as the service design team, thus everyone participated in guidance with cultural expectations, immersing themselves in the sharing of local cultural norms. Laughter and physical communication demonstrably increased during the dining events. The service providers partook in the preparation of the meal from the beginning such as chopstick preparation through to the end when all dishes were cleared. Verbal and physical communication and interaction increased throughout the process of the study. Notably, at the end of the event all seniors helped the carers to clean the table.

Step 5: Evaluation

Throughout the evaluation of the food offering service prototype, the dining space and atmosphere became more familial, while verbal and non-verbal communication between service recipients and service providers were documented. The frequency of laughter increased from

seldom to over twenty-five times in total during one observation. The amount of physical communication, such as gestures and interactions, also increased from minimal to sixteen times during the same observation that was a lunch food offering session. The duration of dining was extended from thirty minutes to ninety minutes as the residents were lingering, communicating and interacting with one another. The positive impact was a result of the environmental changes in the space and the traditional food serving artefacts that were used, but also due to the new layout of the room that prevented residents from sitting separated and alone in the corner of the room by themselves. The changes in behavior was carefully documented in field diaries, captured through photographs (Figure 6) and analyzed.

Individual participation increased noticeably, and most significantly, individual seniors received food offering services as “whole” persons that were in touch with their culture, memories, and current realities at the same time (Doi, Kuwahara, and Morimoto 2015). The service providers also experienced recognition for their work, thus their services were perceived more valuable by the senior residents. One family member began to change her prejudices towards the BoAi home after taking part in the prototyping phase.

Findings

The service design that was conducted at BoAi brought positive changes. The relationships between the senior residents and service providers were re-evaluated, next to previous and new experiences. The senior residents clearly differentiated between what they had, what could be, and what is expected to be at care institutions (Figure 3).

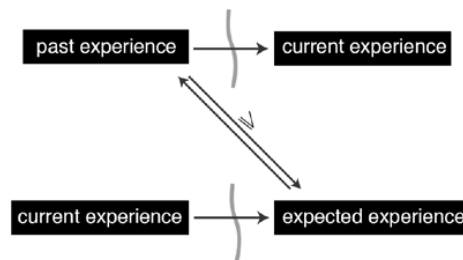


Figure 7: The Tension between Past, Current and Expected Experiences Explained
Source: Shaohua 2018

Past experiences involve the “good old days,” but these were not part of the service offerings that were performed at BoAi before the intervention. This was well-illustrated by the new service prototype that was developed around new seating orders and tableware use. The culture of filial piety, respecting senior people, was not considered in previous services at BoAi, but the prototype and testing phase clearly indicated how successful cultural norms may be in service provision. Past experiences of the senior residents and the stories they shared about them assisted the service design team to compare and improve current and future situations. One specific scenario that was recorded during the BoAi workshop was a senior resident with hemiplegia who spent almost two minutes picking up a piece of rice at the end of dinner workshop, saying “I would rather spend more minutes extending this moment, as long as possible, because I enjoy that it feels like being at home.”

The second finding is that the “good old days” experiences of users could be effectively transferred and implemented by design ethnography interventions. The potential to sensitively impact on the seniors’ experiences in current service systems is vast. Thus, “design for care” deserves deeper investigation, with the aim to develop, implement and sustain better services in the future.

Considerations for Future Service Development in Aged-Care Institutions

In this article the meaning of the past experiences of the residents and the active role service design can play in aged-care was investigated. This asks for a discussion of how service designers can implement these experiences in practice. Therefore, three levels of experiences were identified based on the service design experiences that were delivered at BoAi. Three kinds of experiences were identified, including participated experience, pleasant experience, and profound experience.

Participated Experience

In the study of BoAi the senior residents (service recipients) were not encouraged to participate in the process of food offering or serving, which reduced the opportunity for them to practice experiences around “good old days” and the culture of filial piety. The senior residents were willing to participate in food offering as it allowed them to be involved, having a daily task by contributing to services and the relationships around food offering that can be regarded as traditional. The idea of serving someone allowed the senior residents to practice their past experiences of embracing culture as they are getting older. This participated experience is necessary for seniors as some studies have shown that higher levels of social interaction and social capital can have a higher payoff for elderly people (Suttie 2014). These social interactions partially indicate the importance of participated experience. Another study indicates that good experiences can be aligned with “do-it-yourself” as a means of self-fulfillment (Jensen 2014). This also points toward the new design focus that turned towards the experiential and away from the material (Hassenzahl 2011).

Pleasant Experience

While participation and familiar feelings were created around the functionality of cultural artefacts that instilled memories of the “good old days,” usability also needs to pave the road for pleasure, which means designers have to apply hedonistic psychology (Jordan 2000; Hassenzahl 2003). In the case of BoAi, the dining space, seating order, and tableware were intentionally changed so that the senior residents could enjoy past times. The design intervention provides evidence that designers should consider, and take account of, pleasant experience in the design of services. Pleasant experiences refer to the service relationships that can potentially achieve happiness or hedonic self-involvement. Desmet and Hassenzahl (2012) posit that design needs to go from solving problems to exploring possibilities, thus ultimately designing for a good and pleasurable life. This means that design should include all life experiences, including aged-care, with the purpose of making every day experiences more meaningful (Jensen 2014).

Profound Experience

The term “profound experience” is borrowed from Jensen (2014). It refers to higher levels of meaning making that, in particular moments, better relate to spiritual states, spiritual sense-making, or idealism. This experience, which designers cannot design, is connected to life philosophy. One example is the spirituality that some individuals may draw from a Japanese tea ceremony, as it involves participation in the etiquette of the culture, enjoyment of the aroma of the tea, and full immersion into the process of tea making and serving. This may also be referred to as “being in the moment” (called *ichi-go ichi-e* in Japanese). The service design workshop that was hosted at BoAi was collaboratively conducted with the senior residents who were able to fully immerse themselves in the enjoyment of familiar surroundings, culturally informed environments that considered notions of filial piety. For the residents of BoAi, time seemed to be running fast with a result that they were longing for the “good old days.” These

experiences constituted profound moments when the residents did not perceive themselves to be situated outside of the provided services of food offering any longer.

Conclusion

Through this study, the value of the “good old days” (Havlena and Holak 1991) and the culture of filial piety for the senior residents were explored and their significance examined in aged-care services. How the “good old days” (Havlena and Holak 1991) experiences for senior residents at BoAi have been transferred into current service experiences was demonstrated through the rethinking and introduction of appropriate cultural values and symbolisms into dining spaces, tableware, and physical gestures that express respect.

Through the project at BoAi home, new knowledge was developed on how to deal with the “good old days” experiences in aged-care services. This new understanding is valuable to service designers who work in the field of aged-care. The study’s findings were theorized and presented through the categorization of aged-care experiences into three levels; participant experience, pleasant experience, and profound experience.

The findings also illustrated that all stakeholders should adopt a holistic view of aged-care residents, those living at home or who are institutionalized, as “whole” individuals. Dichotomies of “was” and “is” should be avoided to build new futures of becoming in which ongoing and reiterative service development plays a dominant role in aged-care. As illustrated in the BoAi home, senior residents seek out experiences that are whole. In a current social climate of growing needs and concerns for the care of ageing populations, service design promotes the understanding of the whole picture. This holistic understanding of a given scenario is based on the whole being greater than the sum of its parts (Tanaka, Kay, and Grinnell 2010; Nelson and Stolterman 2012).

This study also addresses the synergy between service design and an ethnographic approach. Design ethnography is firmly rooted in design processes that seek, and work towards, change (Van Dijk 2010). By offering reference materials about people’s everyday lives, their practices, motivations, expectations, and concerns, an empathic conversation between future service users and service designers can be modelled and achieved. Design ethnography also offers a shared focus and dialogue (Van Dijk 2010), thus including individuals and groups from different backgrounds and disciplines. Further, this study illustrated that design ethnography is, due to its focus on learning in the local context, able to involve all stakeholders to rethink and communicate concepts, guidelines, strategies, and scenarios. Because service design is a wide field that encompasses many disciplines, the many stakeholders do not always share a common language. Therefore, the ability of design ethnography to learn from needs in local contexts, thus grasp and “translate” new ideas and solutions to problems into understandable dialogue, brings potential success to service design processes.

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