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Thesis Title:
Aging in China and its Impact on Vehicle Design

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Citation:
This thesis contributes to the growth of design knowledge in China, where vehicle design for the local, older user is in its initial developmental stages. Experimental studies revealed that users’ needs are reflected through various ‘meanings’ that they attach to vehicles – meanings that give a tangible expression to their experiences. This study identified six older-user need categories: safety, utility, comfort, identity, emotion and spirituality. The interrelationships among these categories are seen as an interactive, rather than as a hierarchical structure. Chinese cultural values, which are generated from the local context and users’ social practice, play a dynamic role in shaping the travel needs of older vehicle users. These needs will vary, and are related to particular technological, social, and cultural contexts. This suggests a basic framework for the new design process which might assist in the design of new vehicles to fulfil the needs of future, aging Chinese generations.