

# Emotional Support, Religious Beliefs, and Choice of Aging Style

Yuanyang Wu<sup>1\*</sup>, Conghui Ma<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Hubei 430074, China

<sup>2</sup>Zhongnan University of Economics and Law, Hubei 430073, China

\*Corresponding author

## ABSTRACT

Emotional support for older people has been changing from a bonded to a bondless society, and from living together for generations to nuclearised and empty-nesting families. Religious beliefs, as an external pathway of emotional support, may influence the choice of retirement mode through emotional filling. In view of this, this paper examines the impact of emotional support on older adults' choice of retirement mode based on CLASS2018 data. Children's emotional support significantly contributes to older people's choice of family old-age care, while older people with social emotional support prefer social old-age care. Further mechanism analyses found that children's emotional support significantly promotes family old-age care by decreasing the probability of religious belief and increasing the frequency of religious activity participation, while social emotional support significantly promotes social old-age care by increasing the probability of religious belief and suppressing the frequency of religious activity participation. When considering care burden, care burden reduces older adults' choice of family old-age care, promotes choice of social old-age care, and weakens the role of emotional support within the family. Heterogeneity analyses show that non-solo older adults who are rural and have the only property tend to favour family old-ageing when considering emotional support from their children; when considering sense-of-social-support, there is only a difference in the mode of residence. Finally, the paper draws policy implications from four perspectives: regaining the role of family emotional contact in old age, consolidating interpersonal social ties, religious involvement in old age services, and focusing on the social integration of those living alone and those with live-in care needs in old age.

**Keywords:** Emotional Support; Old Age; Religious Beliefs

## How to Cite

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