

Posters

A STUDY ON THE KOREAN ELDERLY'S NEED FOR PLANNED HOUSING

Sook Young Lee, Dongguk University
Yeun Sook Lee, Yonsei University

Over the last several decades, fertility and mortality have declined and life expectancy has been prolonged considerably in Korea. In recent years, the Korean population 65 and older has grown faster than other age groups (4.7% in 1990, 5.9% in 1995, 7.1% projected in 2000 and 14.3% in 2022) and average life expectancy has increased from 69.0 years in 1985 to 73.5 years in 1995 (*Cho-Sun Daily Newspaper*, 1997. 4. 23, 1997. 7. 2.; Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, 1991). By the simple fact of demographic change, the population of elderly has become and will continue to be a major preoccupation of housing research. (Cherry & Cherry, 1974)

Elderly housing is especially important because as people age, the residential environment becomes the primary domain for those who are fragile and withdrawn from society. Therefore, housing designed specifically for the elderly can provide activities to help facilitate the development of new roles and norms (Carp, 1963).

Recently in Korea, institutions, private construction companies, and researchers have begun to be concerned about the housing needs and preferences of the elderly, and they have suggested a direction for future development. Most previous research had focused on the opinion and preference of middle-aged people because they are potential consumers of planned housing (Choi, 1992; Jun & Kang, 1995; Kho & Yoon, 1995; Lee et al., 1997a, 1977b, 1996; Oh, 1992; Park, 1990; Song et al., 1955). But the prospective residents of elderly housing being planned and constructed are from the present elderly population. Because of difficulty collecting data from the elderly, there have been no nationwide interview data dealing with this topic. It is important therefore to discover the needs and preferences of the elderly for planned housing.

The major purposes of this study were to evaluate the need for planned housing for elderly Koreans and to identify the relationship between the background characteristics of the elderly and their needs for such housing. The data were collected through interviews and structured questionnaires. The study involved a nationwide sample of 1,200 elderly people over the age of 60 selected by probability, proportionate to size sampling, cluster, and random sampling methods. Sociodemographic and economic characteristics, health condition, their relationship with adult-children, and the need for planned housing were surveyed. The data were analyzed with frequency, percentage, χ^2 -test, stepwise regression, ANOVA, ANOCOVA, and logit model using the SAS package.

The major findings of this research were as follows :

1) It was revealed that 66% of the subjects recognized the need for planned elderly housing in our society. The relationship between background characteristics and social needs for such housing had a weak significance. The elderly who were more educated and lived in larger houses tended to take the social need for planned housing more into account.

2) Slightly less than half of the subjects (44%) were willing to live in planned housing. Considering the elderly's physical and psychological conditions, this result suggests a view of the potential substantial market for development of elderly housing. The relationship between the background characteristics and the need for planned housing had a weak significance. However, the elderly, who were more educated, had unfavorable relationships with adult-children, and had lived in their current residence for a shorter time, tended to be more willing to move into planned housing.

3) With respect to the elderly's service alternative preferences, 73% of the subjects preferred to use various community services if necessary, while continuously residing in their current dwelling. Only 27% of the subjects preferred to use various services offered by planned housing. The relationship between background characteristics and need tended to have a weak significance. However, the elderly who had lived in their current dwelling for a shorter time, who had been sales/service workers, and who were living with a low-income family preferred to use services available in planned housing.

4) 59% of the subjects preferred to reside in their current housing type, and the rest preferred planned housing, especially the family-live-in type. The elderly who lived with a low-income family, who had lived in the current residence for a short time, who had been sales/service workers, or who were rural residents preferred to live in planned housing.

5) 76% of the subjects preferred to live with an adult son upon experiencing poor health and/or the loss of a spouse. Even without this condition, the elderly who lived with a high-income family, who were widowers or widows, who were currently living with their adult children, and who lived in an individual house, were more likely to prefer to live with their adult sons. In the worst-case scenario, the elderly who had a favorable relationship with adult children, who were currently living with adult children, and who were living in an individual house, preferred to live with their adult sons.

The findings of this study indicate that the elderly housing market is at its maturing stage in our society. A market-segmentation concept is, however, too early to implement. Besides developing planned elderly housing, community-services need to

be developed for the elderly living in conventional housing communities. The results of this study reflect the current developmental trends of advanced countries and also confirm the value of the three generational family apartment community as a Korean cultural elderly housing model. Ideally, the elderly housing culture would be family-oriented.

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