

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESIDENTIAL SATISFACTION AND THE ELDERLY'S ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING (ADL)

Yeun Sook Lee and Kyung Eun Lee, Yonsei University
Sun Mi Lee, Kwangju Women's University

As a result of the demographic transition from high to low fertility and mortality, the Korean population aged 65 and older grew faster than other age groups, and it is estimated that it will grow even faster into the 21st century. The annual rate of the Korean population aged 65 and older increased from 2.9% in the 1960s to 5.0% in the 1990s, and it is expected that it will increase to 13.1% by the year 2020. With an increased number of elderly in Korea and the rapid changes in traditional values associated with the care of elderly people, the Korean elderly have experienced fast changes in family structure and social norms in recent decades. Due to these rapid changes, including the growing number of Korean elderly-couples, issues related to the welfare policy for the aged have been given serious consideration in recent years (Hwang et al., 1993).

Health and illness affect an elderly individual's performance of basic daily tasks. If appropriate design guidelines are available to respond to the physical, behavioral, and perceptual needs of the elderly, they would contribute to the elderly's well-being and mental health (Carp & Carp, 1984; Han, 1992; Park, 1994). In order to identify the elderly's behavioral needs, Katz (1983) investigated the elderly's activities of daily living (ADL) and developed scales for estimating ADL. With the limited applications of Katz's ADL scales, Lawton and Broady (1969) developed IADL (Instrumental Activities of Daily Living) scales to estimate the level of instrumental independence activities.

Because of their physical limitations, the cost of housing is more important for the elderly than for other age groups. Satisfactory housing is an important contributor to the general well-being of elderly people. Although a substantial variety of studies related to the elderly's residential environment (Kim, 1987) and determinants affecting ADL (Hwang, 1993) has been documented, only a limited number have focused on the study of the relationship between residential environment satisfaction and the elderly's ADL. The purpose of this study was to identify the relationship between the elderly's ADL and their satisfaction with the residential environment.

This research used relevant data from a larger multidisciplinary project. For the larger project, face-to-face interviews with a probability random sample of 1,200 nationwide elderly people over age 60 were conducted during May and June, 1997. The interviews focused on sociodemographic and economic characteristics; health status; housing characteristics; general and sub-dimensional satisfaction with the

residential environment; and general and sub-dimensional ADL of elderly people. Sub-dimensions of satisfaction were convenience, hygiene, and safety of both the external and internal residential environment. The measuring instrument of ADL is simpler than but similar in content to the ones developed by previous researchers. Sub-dimensions of ADL were grooming, walking around, and routine home care and management activities. Among them only residential satisfaction and ADL content were used for this study. The data were analyzed by frequencies, percentages, and correlations using the SAS package.

The results of the study were:

1. About 88% of the respondents were taking part in grooming activities independently, without others' help. About 66% were able to walk around both inside and outside by themselves, and about 73% could take care of household management activities independently.
2. Seventy-two percent of the respondents were satisfied with the convenience aspect of their environment, 77% with the hygiene aspect, 81% with the safety aspect.
3. The relationship between residential satisfaction and elderly's ADL level was found significant. The domains of convenience and safeness of the residential environment were significantly related with all sub-dimensions of ADL, such as grooming, walking around, and routine home care and management. The domain of hygiene of the residential environment, however, was significant only with the grooming sub-dimension of ADL. These significant relationships indicated that ADL became a determinant of residential satisfaction, which has hardly been true until recently in Korea. Therefore, this study indicates the necessity to prepare planned housing to accommodate the needs of the fragile elderly.

Traditionally in Korea, even up to now, family support of the elderly has been considered the natural and ideal way. This seems to cause no impact on ADL vis-a-vis residential satisfaction, even though ADL has developed as a significant variable in advanced countries. Since the current trend showed a big change, this research suggests that ADL emerged as a significant determinant of residential satisfaction, but is not as strong as originally thought.

References

Carp, F.M., & Carp, A. (1984). A complementary/congruence model of well-being or mental health for the community elderly. In Altman, I. et al. (1984). *Elderly People and the Environment*. New York, NY: Plenum Press.

Hwang, Y.C., Lee, S.K., Yeh, M.H., Chun, B.Y., & Jeung, J.W. (1993).

Instrumental Activities of Daily Living and its related factors in the rural elderly. *Journal of the Korea Gerontological Society*, 13(2), 84-97.

Katz, S. (1983). Active life expectancy. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 309, 1218-1224.

Kim, J.I. (1986). Older adults in social educational activities and their life satisfaction. *Journal of the Korea Gerontological Society*, 6, 139-164.

Lawton, M.P. & Broady, E.M.(1969). Assessment of older people self-maintaining and instrumental activities of daily living. *The Gerontologist*, 9, 179-186.

Lee, Y.S. & Han, J.I. (1993). *Interior Design Guidelines for the Elderly Housing Environment*. Seoul: KyungChunSa.(Written in Korean).

Park, J. A. (1994). *A Study on the Environmental Affordance for the Elderly-only Household*. M.A.Thesis. Yonsei University (Written in Korean).