

A Study on the Territory of Leisure Behavior for the Elderly in Senior Apartment

--By the Case of Kang Ning Yuan Senior Apartment in Tainan City,
Taiwan--

Szu-Yu, Tzeng*

** National Yunlin University of Science & Technology, Department of Architecture
and Interior Design, 123 Univ. Road, Section 3, Touliu, Yunlin, Taiwan 640, R.O.C.*

tzengsy@yuntech.edu.tw

Abstract: The framework of this study is formed by four dimensions, which are the background and characteristics of the elderly, leisure spaces and equipments in the facility, the location of the facility and the management policy of senior apartment.

There are four purposes in this study:

- 1) To get the places and contents of leisure activities in senior apartment.
- 2) To analyze the characteristics of different territory of leisure behaviors .
- 3) To find the factors which influences the territory of leisure behavior for the elderly.
- 4) To find the differences on the territory of leisure behavior for the elderly in different physical condition.

As the result of this research we find:(1)The patterns of territory of leisure behavior for the elderly in senior apartment could be categorized into four types: “room-base type”, “floor-base type”, “facility-base type” and “community-base type”; (2) ADL level is the main factor that influence on territory of leisure behavior for the elderly in senior apartment; (3) The private room for the elderly should be designed in the concept of “Home Unit”, and with clear distinction between private and semi-private space; (4) The public space and semi-public space should cover the leisure needs from “independent” level to “dependent” level, and the furniture and decoration should be created the home-like atmosphere; (5) The business sector holding some basic leisure activities or services periodically relates truly with the effects to enlarge the territories of leisure behaviors for the elderly, but should notice to avoiding the “over supply” problem; (6) No matter where the senior apartment is located, to ensure a safety passage for the elderly to access the leisure resources in ambient environment is very important.

Key words : elderly, leisure behavior, activities territory, senior apartment

1. Introduction

In view of the older population growing up at full pelt in Taiwan, and for quickly promoting educational and economic capability, the demands of senior apartment increase every year. The senior apartment will become a new type of care institutions for the elderly in the future. The related studies show that mostly by the effect of leisure participation, although they have set up leisure facilities in senior apartments, yet the life satisfactory of the elderly still lower than those live in home. So how to build a well recreational environment for the elderly in senior apartments is an important topic.

Nowadays the leisure topic for the elderly has been discussed mostly in sociology, and discovering that as age gets older the participated scope of leisure activities gets smaller, and being limited to gossip or some kinds of static leisure activities. In order to understand the realistic demand and current status in leisure environments for the elderly in senior apartments, and get some guidelines for designing senior apartments in the future, we occurred this study by the view of territory of leisure behavior, to confer the factors and realistic condition that limit the activities territory for the elderly.

The framework of this study is formed by four dimensions, which are the background and character of the elderly, leisure space and equipment in the facility, the location of the facility and the management policy of senior apartment (Fig.1).

There are four purposes in this study:

- 1) To get the places and contents of leisure behaviors for the elderly.
- 2) To analyze the characteristics of different territory of leisure behaviors.
- 3) To find the factors which influence the territory of leisure behaviors for the elderly.
- 4) To find the differences in the territory of leisure behaviors between the elderly in different physical condition.

2. The Background of the Elderly in Taiwan

The population of Taiwan was over 22.5 million in 2001, the elderly percentage are 9%. The life expectancy at birth was 72.63 years of male and 78.3 years of the female in 2000, almost lengthened twenty in past two decades. (1) The elderly at the age of 65 and over has increased seven times in forty years, from 187,000 in 1950 to 1,562,000 in 1994, and estimated to be about 3,454,000 in 2021 and 5,173,000 by 2036. (Executive Yuan 1995) It shows a dramatic change of age structure in Taiwan, from the percentage of 4.3% of the total population in 1980 to 8.8% in

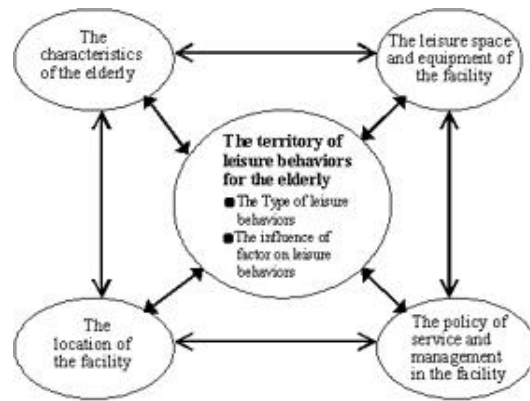


Fig. 1 The Structure of Research

2000, and to 20.5% by 2036. In other words, there are 5 elderly dependents (above the age of 65) per 100 persons who were under the working in 1969, to 8 elderly dependents in 2002, and will be 33 by 2036.

3. Research Methods

3.1 The Outline of the Facility

We chose the Kang Ning Yuan Senior Apartment in Tainan City as study object in southern area of Taiwan (**Fig.2**). For the Kang Ning Yuan Senior Apartment, the only one senior apartment that was located in downtown of Tainan City and combined with an elderly school is opened for the elderly who live in neighborhood.

The Kang Ning Yuan Senior Apartment is running by Tainan City Private Tainan Charitable Home and has been established since 2000, the area of floor is 3,330 m², the service object is limited to independent and elderly over sixty years old. There are seven floors in this building, the public spaces mainly are located in the ground floor, second floor and third floor. Service Counter and Lobby are in the ground floor, one Cafeteria with Karaoke Bar, Multi-Purpose Room for meeting, and Cinema is located in the second floor. The Elderly School, Recreation Room, Gym Room and Health Care Center are located in the third floor. From the fourth to seventh floors are living spaces for senior apartment, totally there are eighty living units, including twenty-four single rooms, forty-eight twin rooms and eight special rooms (1LDK). There are some semi-public spaces in each living floor, for example visiting area, mini-kitchen, washing room and balcony (**Table 1**).

3.2 The Characteristics of the Elderly (Table 2)

There are forty elderly who have lived in Kang Ning Yuan Senior Apartment until May 2001, the majority are seventy to eighty years old, mostly in education levels of primary school and over junior college, and lost spouse in marriage. Finally, we have twenty-eight elderly for focused interview. About physical condition ability of their ADL (Activities of Daily Living) in the Barthel Index, there are sixteen in independent level (ADL=100), nine in light dependent level (ADL=80~99) and three in middle dependent level. (ADL=50~79)

3.3 The Investigation Contents and Methods

We occurred focused interview from May to June 2001, by approaching of half structural questionnaire. The visiting contents are: (1) the age, education level, province, physical condition ability, before habitation etc.; (2) the leisure behaviors and occurring places in daily, weekly and monthly; (3) the factors that influence the territory of leisure behavior. After gathering these data, we categorized the territory of leisure behavior of the interviewee, and then used KJ method to analyze the data.

Table 1 The Types of Space in the Senior Apartment

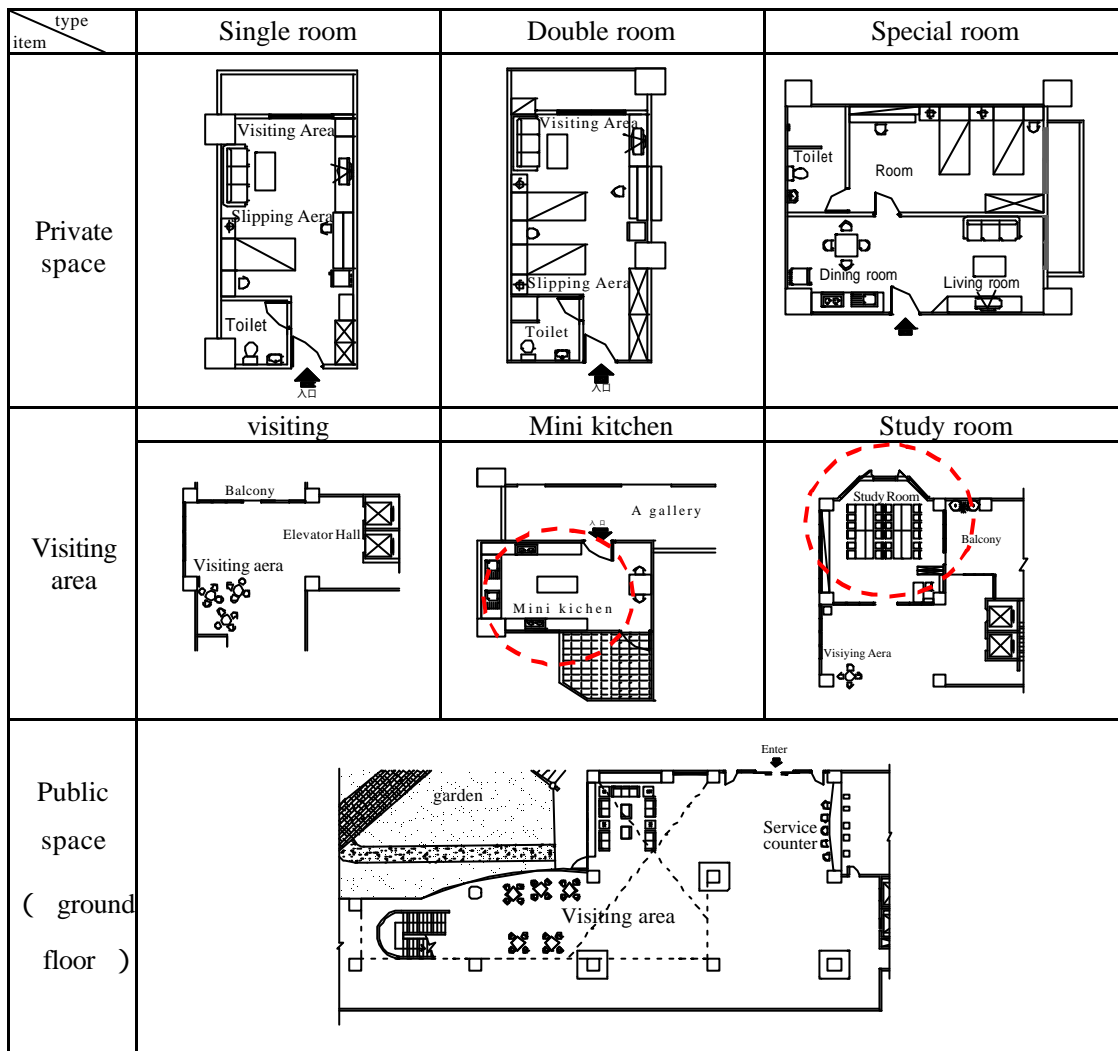


Table 2 The Characteristics of The Elderly

Item	All habitants			interviewee		
	male	female	Total	male	female	Total
Age	Below 60	0	1	1	0	0
	61 ~65	2	0	2	1	1
	66 ~70	1	4	5	1	4
	71 ~75	4	3	7	2	5
	76 ~80	4	11	15	3	8
	over 80	4	6	10	4	6
Total	15	25	40	11	17	28
education	college	4	4	8	4	7
	Senior high school	6	1	7	5	6
	Junior high school	1	6	7	1	5
	primary school	3	10	13	1	8
	No education	0	4	4	0	3
	Total	14	25	40	11	17
marriage	Widower or widow	2	18	20	1	15
	divorce	7	2	9	7	7
	Single	1	0	1	0	0
	man and wife to live together	5	5	10	3	6
	Total	15	25	40	11	17
Activity of Daily Living (ADL)	ADL = 100	--	8	8	16	
	ADL80~99	--	2	7	9	
	ADL50~79	--	1	2	3	
	ADL<50	--	0	0	0	
	Total	--	11	17	28	

4. Results

4.1 The Places and Contents of Leisure Activities for the Elderly

(1) The leisure activities occurred in the private space

The private space is the room belonging to the elderly. In character that the leisure activities occurred in the private room are personal and static activities, including listening music/radio, watching TV/VCD, reading newspaper, or chatting with friends. Reading the Buddhism and writing calligraphy are special activities, and watching TV is the most popular activity. There are some elderly doing exercise in the balcony.

(2) The leisure activities occurred in the semi-public space

Semi-public spaces including the corridor, visiting area, mini-kitchen, and balcony of which set in each living floor and a reading room set in the fourth floor. There are some elderly chatting, playing cards and chess in the visiting area, taking a walk along the corridor. But an interesting phenomenon is that a male elderly is writing calligraphy in mini-kitchen.

(3) The leisure activities occurred in the public space

The public spaces including Lounge and Courtyard in the ground floor, Cafeteria with Karaoke Bar, Multi-Purpose Room for meeting and cinema in the second floor, the Elderly School, Recreation Room and Health Care Center in the third floor.

There are only three interviewees that ever take part in the lesson of the Elderly School. Some elderly like to chat with nurses at the Health Care Center every day, and some usually playing billiards and being feet massaged, playing mah-jongg in Recreation Room. In order to promote the leisure quality of the elderly, the business sector holds free cinema in Multi-Purpose Room and singing contest at the Cafeteria, and hold afternoon tea party at art courtyard which outside the ground floor every week.

(4) The leisure activities occurred out of the facility

Since Kang Ning Yuan Senior Apartment is located in downtown, it's easily accessible to train, bus or other traffic transportation easily, and very convenient to go to church, shopping mall, temples and visiting relatives.

There are some elderly go to park for participating in dancing or doing exercise, taking a walk nearby, going shopping in traditional market in neighborhood in the morning every day. Some elderly go to church and temple, or go shopping during weekends. There is one elderly walking to the station and by train to another city for visiting friends.

4.2 The type and characteristics of territory of leisure behaviors (Table 3)

After analyzing the data of the twenty-eight elderly in senior apartment, we categorized the territory of leisure behaviors daily into four types, "room-base type", "floor-base type", "facility-base type" and "community-base type."

(1) Room-base type

There are four elderly in this type, most of their leisure behaviors are limited in their own

room daily, but three of the four elderly extend their territory of leisure behaviors to the facility or community weekly or monthly. The characteristics are introvert and their physical in senile condition or ADL in independent level but don't like to interact with other people. For example, Y16 has eye disease (cataract) , and Y17 with limb soreness.

(2) Floor-base type

Except in meal time going to cafeteria, their leisure behaviors are limited in their private room, living floor or corridors daily. There are only two elderly belonging to this type, one is ADL in light dependent level, another is in middle dependent level. For example, Y10 has to use walker for movement, though her leisure activities are occurred in living floor daily, going to the cinema in the third floor weekly and driving with her daughter once monthly.

(3) Facility-base type

The majority of elderly belong to this type, there are thirteen elderly, their leisure behaviors are limited in public space inside the senior apartment daily. Their ADL range from independent level to light and middle dependent level but most of elderly are senile and need to use cane, walker, wheelchair for movement. There are same tendency that the elderly extend their territory of leisure behaviors outside community weekly and monthly. For example, X4 with arthritis hard to moving, his territory of leisure behaviors is almost in the reading room and is limited in the facility daily. But he goes to recreation room play games with friends weekly, or go shopping in the traditional market nearby.

(4) Community-base type

There are nine elderly in this type, their leisure behaviors could extend to community or nearby daily. The characteristics are all ADL in independent level, like to take exercise, and familiar to the environment of neighborhood. We can find the same tendency that the elderly extend their territory of leisure behaviors outside community weekly and monthly. For example, X3 writes calligraphy in private room and does exercise in the park daily, playing mah-jongg in recreation room weekly, and goes back to Taipei to dining with his friends once monthly.

4.3 The factors which influence the territory of leisure behaviors

We used KJ method to analyze the plus and minus factors which influence the territory of leisure behaviors by four dimensions: characteristics of the elderly, leisure spaces and equipments in the facility, the management policy of senior apartment, and the location of the facility.

(1) characteristics of the elderly

Familiar to the neighborhood, with religious belief and friends outside the facility are plus factors to let the elderly go out for leisure activities. Conversely, with introvert characteristic, afraid of dangers, body handicapped in visual or movement, without same interests in company friends and unfamiliar to environment etc. are minus factors for the elderly to enlarge the territory of leisure behaviors.

And ADL is the key factor that influences the territory of leisure behaviors, the more healthy of the elderly, the territory of leisure behaviors is wider, and the senile ones are likely to be limited in the facility.

(2) leisure spaces and equipments in the facility

Public space like visiting area, mini-kitchen and Health Care Center are located in near living floors, in good maintenance condition and with air-conditioned in public space, which are plus factors for the elderly to leave their private room and use these spaces. Especially, the Health Care Center with counseling function creates the chances for the elderly to interact with each other and the staff.

But lacking privacy and without reception space in private room, the furniture at the visiting area in each living floor is lacking the home-like atmosphere, without public Buddhist, and the area is too small and the floor in courtyard is ragged, without barrier-free equipments, which are minus factors to hinder the elderly to go out to use these spaces.

(3) the management policy of senior apartment

The business sector frequently holds leisure activities like movie or shopping, well management of the leisure equipments, and adequately opening the public spaces in the facility to the elderly who live in neighborhood are plus factors.

The limitation of time to use the reading room, the lessons in the Elderly School being too difficulty for the elderly and needing to pay extra money, are minus factors.

(4) the location of the facility

The traffic near the senior apartment is too busy and too dangerous to pass by is a minus factor to hamper elderly to go out for leisure activities. For the senior apartment, located in downtown with various leisure resources, and with train station, park, traditional market nearby are plus factors for the elderly to go out to visit friends or go shopping.

4.4 ADL and the Territory of Leisure Behaviors

The territory of leisure behaviors is a comprehensive result of the characteristics of the elderly, the physical condition, leisure equipments of the facility, leisure policy of the runner and the location of the senior apartment etc.. We try to categorize the territory of twenty-eight elderly into four types, “room type”, “floor type”, “facility type” and “community type”, to find the changes in the territory of leisure behavior daily, weekly and monthly.

In **Fig. 2**, we found that ADL is a critical factor that influences the territory of leisure behaviors for the elderly. Most cases in area are ADL in light dependent (ADL=80~99) and middle dependent (ADL=50~79) elderly, and their territory of leisure behaviors are limited in the senior apartment. Y8, Y12 and X5 are some special cases, though their ADL is independent, their territory of leisure behaviors are limited in the facility, too.

In other way, in area it is the group that their territory of leisure behaviors could be extended to the community, and the majority of the cases are ADL in independent, though Y16 and X4 are ADL in light dependent, their territory of leisure behaviors are limited in senior apartment daily, for the facility located in downtown and there is a traditional market nearby, their territory of leisure behaviors could be extended to the community weekly.

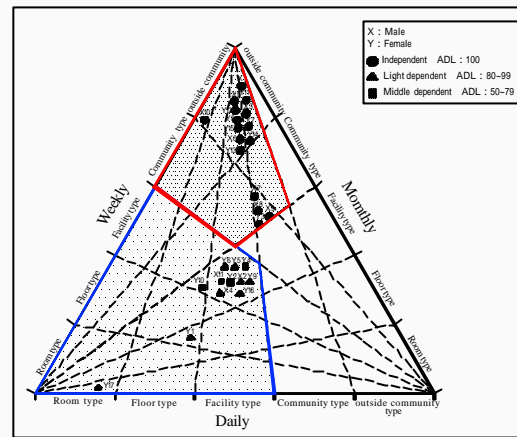


Fig. 2 ADL and the Territory Leisure Behavior

5. Discussions

By analyzing the result of twenty-eight elderly in Kang Ning Yuan Senior Apartment, we found the territory of leisure behaviors of the elderly living in senior apartment is an integration result by the characteristics of the elderly, the leisure spaces and equipments in the facility, the management policy of senior apartment, and the location of the facility etc.. For how to enlarge the territory of leisure behaviors for the elderly, we have some issues for discussion as follows:

(1) the issues in private and semi-private space

The private room in Ning Yuan Senior Apartment is with visiting area and wider than the others, but it's not easy to be distinguished private space and semi-space, and there is also the problem of lacking privacy.

In this senior apartment, the private and semi-private space is the private room belonging to the elderly himself. Not only the private room should meet the basic leisure function(watching TV, listening radio, etc.) , but also it should meet the requirements of receiving guests or gossiping with friends, meeting the needs of social. So the private room should be designed in the concept of "Home", not just in "Room". And it should be with easily distinct identification between private and semi-private space in planning and design.

(2) the issues in public and semi-public space

In this case study, we found the senile elderly are more dependent on the leisure resources inside the facility than the healthy ones, and the senile elderly need the religious belief, they don't care the place is bigger or smaller.

Though the ADL limitation in senior apartment is "independent" level, as living longer the elderly become senile gradually. If the planning and design in public and semi-public space (lobby, lounge, courtyard etc.) just consider the needs of the healthy ones, that isn't enough, it should cover the demands from "independent" level to "dependent" level, and in barrier free design. And the furniture and decoration should be created the home-like atmosphere as possible.

(3) the issues in management policy

In this senior apartment, the business sector holds some basic leisure activities or services periodically (Karaoke, cinema, shopping etc.) is really with the effects to encourage the elderly to take part in and enlarge the territory of leisure behaviors, especially for the senile elderly.

But it should be noticed the problem between “supply” and “need”, if in over-service condition, it will decrease the motivation of the elderly, and the elderly become passive. And as the business sector supplies more leisure service, the living cost is higher in senior apartment.

(4) the issues in ambient environment

Some researches suggest that senior apartment should be located in normal community, should meet the needs of going hospital, shopping and visiting friends. It's not wise to set same leisure equipments as the ones in community. However, it should let the elderly to use the resources in the community, and be able to communicate with the elderly living in community.

By this case study, we found there are many merits as the senior apartment being located in downtown, it's easier for the elderly to access many leisure resources and transportation system, especially for the “independent” elderly. But for the senile elderly, the busy traffic in ambient environment is a dangerous factor to hinder them to go out for leisure activities. We suggest that no matter where the senior apartment was been located, to ensure a safety passage for the elderly to access the leisure resources in ambient environment is very important.

6. Conclusions

As the result of this research we have these conclusions as follow:

- (1) The patterns of territory of leisure behavior for the elderly in senior apartment could be categorized into four types: “room-base type”, “floor-base type”, “facility-base type” and “community-base type”.
- (2) ADL level is the main factor that influences on territory of leisure behavior for the elderly in senior apartments.
- (3) The private room for the elderly should be designed in the concept of “Home unit”, and with clear distinction between private and semi-private space.
- (4) The public space and semi-public space should cover the leisure needs from “independent” level to “dependent” level, and the furniture and decoration should be created the home-like atmosphere.
- (5) The business sector holding some basic leisure activities or services periodically relates truly with the effects to enlarge the territory of leisure behaviors of the elderly, but should notice to avoiding the “over supply” problem;
- (6) No matter where the senior apartment is located, to ensure a safety passage for the elderly to access the leisure resources in ambient environment is very important.

Notes

1. The life expectancy of man was 53.10 years old and 57.32 years old of female in 1951.

References

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