

# A Review of Research Trends on the Elderly Housing in Korea: In Reference to the Comparison of Research Trends Among Korea, Japan and the U.S.A.

## 한국의 노인주거연구의 경향

- 한국과 일본, 미국의 연구 경향 비교를 중심으로 -

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### 요 약

본 연구의 목적은 한국에서 장래에 이루어질 노인주거연구의 주제를 예측할 수 있도록 일본, 미국, 한국의 노인주거연구의 경향의 차이를 파악하고 비교하기 위한 것이다. 본 연구는 세나라에서 1940년대부터 1990년대 현재까지 발표된 노인주거연구에 대한 학술지와 논문을 분석함으로써 이루어졌다. 세 나라에서 전체 772편의 논문을 수집하여 이를 발표된 연도와 주제에 따라 분류하였다. 본 연구는 일본과 미국의 연구 경향의 특징을 별도로 발표한 후속 연구이다.

일본에서는 1950년대에 노인주거에 대한 연구가 시작되어 80년대 후반에 절정을 이루었으며, 그 이후로 서서히 관심이 줄어들고 있는 추세이다. 일본에서의 주요 주제는 노인홈과 노인시설내의 주생활조사, 3대 동거 주택, 유료노인홈과 노인시설의 소비자 문제등이다. 미국의 경우, 노인주거의 연구는 일본보다 빠른 1940년대에 시작되어 70년대와 80년대에 걸쳐서 다른 때보다 더 많은 연구가

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발표되었다. 주요주제는 1970년대부터 80년대에는 노인주거와 노인시설에 집중되어 있었으나 80년대 이후에 노인주거의 연구방법과 노인주택정책방향으로 관심이 바뀌고 있다. 한국에서의 노인주거에 대한 연구는 세나라 중에서 가장 늦은, 1970년대 후반부터 시작되어 80년대 후반 이래로 그 관심이 점점 증가하고 있다. 한국에서 가장 관심이 있는 연구대상의 하나는 일본과 마찬가지로 기혼자녀와 노부모와의 동거주택에 대한 주제이다.

이상 세나라의 연구주제에서의 차이점은, 한국과 일본에서는 모두 노인주거와 연구방법 분야에는 비교적 관심이 적은 반면에, 미국에서는 3대동거주택에 대한 관심이 적은 것이다. 일본과 미국 두나라에 비하여 한국에서는 노인주거 연구에 있어서 아직까지 다양한 주제를 발견하기가 어려운데 그 이유는 한국에서는 노인주거에 대한 구체적인 개발이 아직까지 이루어지지 않아서 노인주거에 대한 경험도 많지 않기 때문이라고 생각된다. 앞으로 한국에서도 노인주거가 개발된다면 그 후에는 보다 다양한 연구주제가 나타날 것이라고 기대된다. 예를 들면 노인거주시설의 질적인 비교, 특수한 형태의 노인주거에 대한 요구, 노인주거내의 주생활조사나 평가, 노인을 위한 설비의 디자인 등에 관한 연구들을 생각해 볼 수 있다.

## I Introduction

In recent years life expectancies at birth in Korea are age of 67.4 for males and 75.4 for females in 1990 (1990, Korean National Statistics Bureau) representing quite younger than Japanese situation of 76.1 and 82.1(1991, Japanese Bureau of the Census), and also the U.S.A. situation of 72.0 and 78.8(1991, U.S. Bureau of the Census). Likewise, the proportion of the elderly over 60 or more occupies 7.5% in Korea whereas 17.2% in Japan, and 10.9% in the U.S.A. in 1990 which is comparatively lower than the two countries. In these respect, Korea could be considered still a "youthful" country, but it is expected to grow rapidly to 21.1% in 2025 which seems almost similar to the Japanese case(29.9% in 2025) and the U.S.A. case (25.5% in 2025) according to a reliable statistics(Choongang Daily Economics, 1994). Owing to this demographic

characteristic and Korean traditional norm of Confucianism which the elderly are supposed to be respected and caring by family living together with their married children, Korean government has not made a great effort to develop the social welfare program or living arrangement for the elderly until recent years in fact. For example, despite that there is a growing demand for home care facilities for the elderly, there is no program to assist home care system for the older people. Thus, as of 1994, there are 89 homes for the elderly and 51 nursing homes<sup>5)</sup>. Most homes for the elderly and nursing homes

5. Choi, Sung-Jae.(1995) *Aging and Social Policy in Korea*, Paper presented at the International Conference on "Aging in East and West: Demographic Trends, Sociocultural Contexts, and Policy Implications" Organized by Institute of Social Development and Policy Research at Seoul National University on Sep. 21-22.

run by government and non-profit institutions accept only the elderly without children to take care of them and in the extremely poor economic condition. Under the Korean traditional norm, living arrangement for the elderly is not given much consideration because the most ideal way of caring old parents is to live together with, and support them in terms of emotion and finance<sup>6)</sup>. The responsibility to care of old parents is on children rather than government.

Because of these societal background, the research on the elderly housing, also, has been given less consideration until 1960s and it is only after the latter year of the 1970s when the study of the elderly housing has launched in Korea. Since 1970s Korea has been industrialized very fast, and it has resulted a lot of new phenomenons influencing change of norms, values and family life. As some examples, life expectancy is prolonging every year: a great deal of migration move to the urban area to find more job-opportunities and frail elderly people in the agricultural area are left, so that nuclear family among the younger generation is increasing rapidly: frequent housing mobility in the urban area occurs for jobs in the

industrialized society: growth of G.N.P. promotes better living standard. High education enables more frequent contacts with Western culture based individualism rather than collectivism or familism: a rise of women's participation in the labour market results lack of caregivers for the elderly in the family. These representative changes practically have made more difficult to live together with old parents and married children any longer. Now Korean society begins to realize living arrangement for the elderly as one of the important issues as well as other industrialized countries.

In order to meet diverse needs resulted from changing society and to predict desirable research subjects on the elderly housing in Korea in the near future, it is considered essential to review studies carried out in the foreign countries which experienced similar situations earlier than Korea. Living arrangement for the elderly, however, has developed differently in the concern and way of solution from country to country, since every country has its own unique societal background in norms, welfare system, culture, and history.

Therefore, in this research studies on the elderly housing published in Japan and the U.S.A. as well as in Korea from 1940s to 1990s have been collected and classified into the main subjects and periods to compare the differences among the three countries. Studies analysed in this research are totally

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6. Yoon, Gene.(1995) *Understanding aging in Korea*. Paper presented for the International Conference on "Aging in East and West: Demographic Trends, Sociocultural Contexts and Policy Implications" Organized by Institute of Social Development and Policy Research at Seoul National University on Sep. 21-22.

772 pieces<sup>7)</sup>.

First of all, in this report only Korean research trends on the housing for the elderly will be discussed definitely, since the former two reports<sup>8)</sup> concerning to Japanese and U.S.A. researches have

7. The representative materials used for this report are as follows.

Japan: Journal of Japanese Architectural Association(1961-1994)  
Journal of Japanese Home Economics Association(1949-1994)  
Home Economics Journal of Nara Women's University(1956-1994)  
Journal of Osaka Municipal University (1955-1991)  
Books List of the Tokyo Social Welfare Center(1993)  
Books List of the Development Center for Longevity(1991-1992)

the U.S: Housing and Society (1974-1993)  
Journal of Gerontology (1946-1994)  
Journal of Housing for the Elderly (1983-1992)  
The Gerontologist(1961-1994)

Korea: Dissertations for master's and doctoral degree published by universities (1970-1994)  
Journal of Korean Home Economics Association(1962-1994)  
Journal of Korean Architectural Association(1955-1994)  
Korean Housing Research Journal (1990-1994)  
Journal of Korean Gerontology (1983-1994)  
Journal of Korean Housing Study (1993)

8. Shin, K.J. Kwak, I.S. Cho, J.S. and Choi, J.S.(1994) Comparison about the Study of the Elderly Housing in Korea, U.S.A. and Japan(1), *Korean Housing Research Journal* 5(1) pp.1-8

Cho, J.S. Kwak, I.S. Shin, K.J. Choi, J.S.(1995) The Research Trends in the housing for the Elderly in the U.S.A. *Journal of Korean Architectural Association* 11(10) pp.13-18

been already published separately. Next, comparison among the three countries will be discussed as a conclusion of these series of report.

Through this review, it would be possible for us to understand main issues and change of research trends reflecting people's interest in the housing for the elderly. This study is, hopefully, expected to help and play a role for Korean scholars involved in the elderly housing area to find out the desirable subjects afterwards.

## II Classification into Main Subjects of Korean Researchs of the Elderly Housing

The main subjects of the research of elderly housing can be classified into six areas: dwelling facilities for the elderly, intergenerational coresidence, elderly housing in general, home environment for the elderly, leisure facilities for the elderly, and others(table 1).

Table 1 shows that there are three main subjects areas which occupy comparatively higher proportion than others among the six, such as "dwelling facilities" (25.5%), "elderly housing in general" (22.6%), and "coresidence"(19.6%), in contrast the research areas such as "home environment for the elderly" (11.3%) and "leisure facilities for the elderly"(4.2%) present comparatively lower proportion. It is noteworthy that definite research subjects about "planning and design of the elderly housing"(26

<Table 1> Classification into main subjects of Korean researches of the elderly housing

Main subjects		Periods	Amounts of the research	Total
Dwelling* facilities	Full-paid elderly housing	1984-1994	16	
	Free elderly housing	1976-1984	24	
	Nursing home	1981-1992	3	43(25.6%)
Coresidence	Intergenerational coresidence	1984-1992	24	
	Preference to coresidence	1976-1992	9	33(19.6%)
Elderly housing in general	Planning and Design of the elderly housing	1982-1994	26	
	Foreign elderly housing	1984-1993	12	38(22.6%)
Home environment for the elderly		1979-1994	19	19(11.3%)
Leisure facilities for the elderly		1988-1993	7	7( 4.2%)
Others		1973-1994	28	28(16.7%)
Total		1973-1994	168	168(100%)

\* In Korea, pension program for all the elderly is not prepared yet thus, basically cost of the dwelling facilities for the elderly is supposed to be paid by the elderly themselves or their family except the free elderly housing which is run by government and non-profit organization for the homeless or extremely poor elderly without offsprings.

pieces). "the free elderly housing"(24 pieces) and "the intergenerational coresidence"(24 pieces) occupy higher proportion than others.

It is the fact that laypeople have a negative viewpoint on the free elderly housing in the research area of "dwelling facilities", as it has been run by government, non-profit public institutions and religious institutions only for the homeless elderly and the extremely poor elderly without any offspring to take care of them. In spite of that, the reason why there are quite a lot of studies about the free elderly housing seems because it is the only familiar dwelling facility for the elderly that Korean people can understand and find easily

around their circumstances. Contents of the study on the free elderly housing contain needs of the inhabitants, survey on the quality of facilities and equipments in the dwelling, and satisfaction of the inhabitants on the dwelling. On the other hand, despite that the full-paid elderly housing and nursing home are introduced recently in Korea and they are just on the beginning stage now, research on these dwellings are paid attention since the first full-paid elderly housing has newly opened in Korea in 1990s.

Subjects of planning and design of the elderly housing(26 pieces) and introduction of foreign elderly housing(12 pieces) in the research area of "the

elderly housing in general" appeal as important issues. The former seems that researchers try to find out laypeople's preference to the elderly housing, as people have less information about the elderly housing, and the latter looks like that researchers consider it significant to introduce diverse foreign examples of the elderly housing to laypeople and investigate the research subject of the elderly housing in Korea.

Intergenerational coresidence in the research area of "the coresidence" showing high interest, seems to have close relationship with the norm and tradition of caring of the elderly in the Oriental society, especially in Japan and Korea where are consisted of extended family system as a basic societal background. In Korea this is also influenced by the governmental efforts to pay attention to the three-generation sharing house through the way of conferences, public discussions, design competition and construction of model coresidence during the former decade of 1980s in order to solve the housing shortage and welfare issues for the elderly. About this subject, a great deal of researches have been carried out, for example, diverse survey on the preferences to the elderly housing by different age groups containing the middle-aged who are the main caregivers for the elderly financially and emotionally in Korea, and the younger who are the grandchildren of the elderly and are supposed to live together with their grandparents, as well as the elderly themselves. There are another researches on the development of sharing house plans to meet housing

needs of the three-generation family, and post-occupancy evaluation of the model coresidence, etc.

The research area of home environment for the elderly(11.3%) and the leisure facilities for the elderly(4.2%) include needs for home environment belonging to coresidence, day-center, and full-paid elderly housing. Legislation for planning of the elderly home environment and satisfaction for the leisure facilities, also, are covered in this area.

Since preference to coresidence with elderly parents is considered as one of the important affective factors on decision-making for the elderly housing, it has been included in the research subject. Though there are a lot of issues on the elderly dealt in the field of family studies, they are excluded in this study, considering that they have no direct relation to the elderly housing.

In sum, subjects on the elderly housing in Korea are quite limited owing to its short history of development, only about 10 years, and in fact it is hardly easy to find concrete examples of elderly housing around their surroundings. Therefore, the contents of the research are restricted to only beginning stage rather than to deeper aspects. It is, however, prospective that more diverse and intensive issues on the elderly housing could be selected after gaining experiences about many kinds of elderly housing in Korea.

### III Classification into Period of Korean Researches on the Elderly Housing

Concerns about the elderly housing in

Korea begin to reveal since 1970s for the first time, so proportion of the researches published during this period is only 4.2%. It indicates that Korean society starts to be awoken on the concern about the elderly slowly dealing with more like general issues about the elderly, for instance, consciousness on the elderly problems, lives of the elderly (Kwon, 1973; Hyun, 1976; Lee et al 1979), preference to coresidence with old parents(Yoo,1976) etc. rather than serious and definite subjects. With these studies there are some more studies concerning about the free elderly housing that has been the only elderly dwelling facility in 1970s(Kim and Lee, 1976; Lim and Choi,1979).

Table 2 shows the research trends changed through the periods in Korea.

Becoming 1980s, studies on the elderly housing increase a lot and 47.1% of the whole research are published in this period. In the former of the decade (1980-1984), more diverse subjects begin to appear such as the changing trend of caring of the elderly, weakness of the elderly's identity in the family (Kwak,1983), survey on the daily lives of elderly people who are living in their

own homes(Park,1983), and surveys on the elderly who are living in the free elderly housing(Lim et al,1983; Nam, 1983; Kum et al,1983; Cho et al,1983), etc., thus it is noticed that most of the subjects except the "home environment for the elderly" have started since then.

In the latter of the 1980s(1985-1989), amounts of the studies rise more than in the former of the decade and popular themes are about the coresidence(Cho, 1984; Lee,1985; Park, 1985; Yoon,1986; The Ministry of Construction and Korean Housing Corporation, 1987; Lee, 1987; Shin,1989) and the series of introduction of foreign elderly housings(Seo and Park, 1984, 1985, 1986,1987; Choi,1989). The former is the housing type specially planned to meet the needs of the three-generation family which is thought as one of the typical and traditional family system in Korea, and the latter is the introduction of examples of the elderly housing already developed in the foreign countries that have experienced elderly issues earlier than Korea. Therefore, it might be considered that Korean researches of the elderly housing face to the stage of propaganda in the latter

<Table 2> Classification into periods of Korean Researches on the Elderly Housing

Periods	Total amounts of the research	Amounts of the research by subjects				
		Dwelling facilities	Coresidence	Elderly housing in general	Home environment	Leisure facilities Others
1970s	7(4.2%)	1(0.6%)	1(0.6%)		1(0.6%)	4(2.4%)
1980s(80-84)	30(17.9%)	13(7.7%)	4(2.4%)	6(3.6%)		7(4.2%)
(85-89)	49(29.2%)	9(5.4%)	17(10.1%)	6(3.6%)	7(4.2%)	6(3.6%)
1990s	82(48.8%)	20(11.9%)	11(6.5%)	26(15.5%)	11(6.5%)	11(6.5%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>168(100%)</b>	<b>43(25.6%)</b>	<b>33(19.6%)</b>	<b>38(22.6%)</b>	<b>19(11.3%)</b>	<b>28(16.7%)</b>

of the 1980s.

During 1990s, studies keep increasing as same as 1980s, thus 48.8% of the whole researches are published in this period. Thinking of that these are published during the half of the decade only and they are quite a lot of amounts, it is not so difficult to imagine that there would be much more studies also in the latter of the decade.

Many studies about the area of "dwelling facilities"(11.9%) and "elderly housing in general"(15.5%) are introduced in 1990s, for example, legislation of the inhabitants and facilities in the full-paid elderly housing(Shin,1993), survey on the foreign elderly who are living in the different dwelling facilities, mainly in Japan and the U.S.A.(Kwon,1992; Sung,1992; Choi and Kim,1993; Kim, 1993). On the other hand, the research on the intergenerational coresidence which has started in the former of the 1980s and increased continuously during the latter of the decade, also, keeps growing even in 1990s. In this area many kinds of theme appear dealt with different age groups who are supposed to live together in the same house (Choi,1990,1992; Lee,1991).

The new subject areas on "the home environment for the elderly"(Choi, 1991; Kim,1992) and "the leisure facilities for the elderly"(Kim and Kim,1993) begin to be introduced as though they are just on the starting point. It means that the need for various researches of the elderly housing rise.

#### IV. Comparison to the Research Trends in Japan and the U.S.A.

Firstly, comparing Korean studies on

the elderly housing to Japanese ones (Shin et al,1994), it is remarkable that there are various subject areas of the elderly housing in Japan such as "dwelling facilities for the elderly" (23.2%), "elderly housing in general" (17.7%), "housing life of the elderly" (15.2%) "intergenerational coresidence" (12.8%), and further "ergonomics in the elderly housing" or "design of equipments for the elderly" which are very seldom found in Korea. This indicates that Japanese society seems to get on the right tract in solving the elderly issues now, since they have faced to the aging society much earlier than Korea and have paid attention to it. Accordingly, background for the diverse studies on the elderly housing is ready enough.

Observing the period of the research, it has been already started since 1950s and shows difference of 20 years from Korea. In Japan, between 1970s and 1980s it has presented the highest interest in the study of elderly housing, and is rather fading in 1990s. It might be thought as the stage of decrease in the study of the elderly housing in Japan. It, also, noteworthy that the trend of the study on the elderly housing turns to the consumer's issues on the elderly housing and study on elderly people's housing life with their family.

Secondly, comparing Korean studies to ones in the U.S.A. which has started since 1940s(Cho et al,1995), it reveals the highest concern to the subject on the residence and facilities specially designed for the elderly(40.5%), and followings are the elderly in the independent living arrangement (30.9%), and other issues related to the homes for the aged(20%). Among them, subjects

as followings are appealing intensively: age-concentrated congregate housing: retirement community: sheltered care facilities, long-term care facilities: satisfaction and preference to the elderly housing: housing selection: housing relocation and mobility of the elderly. Besides, a few studies on the elderly housing policy and methodology of the study on the elderly housing are proceeding. These subjects are considered quite different from ones both in Japan and Korea. One of the main reason of it could be interpreted because they have completely different norm and value of family system and caring of the elderly in the U.S.A. from Japan and Korea.

Analysing it by periods, it shows the most researches are carried out in 1980s (42.5%) following 1970s(25.7%), thus 68.2% of the whole researches are published in these periods. Even though research on the elderly housing has launched in 1940s for the first time in the U.S.A., it shows that only 2.5% of the whole studies have been accomplished until 1950s and 10% in 1960s. It presents continuous growth in the amounts of the studies afterward. In the earlier part of the period, subjects on the elderly in the independent living arrangement, and other issues related to the elderly housing have been dealt with mainly, while subjects on the diverse living arrangements for the elderly have studied in the periods of 1960s-1970s and more various themes are shown after 1980s.

## V. Conclusion

This study aims to predict the direction

of research on the elderly housing in Korea in the future through reviewing research trends of Japan and the U.S.A.

In Japan, they have faced to the elderly issues and study on it have already started 20years earlier than Korea. The concern to the elderly housing is rather fading in 1990s, and consumer issues on the elderly housing is considered as an important subject these days. While, in the U.S.A., study on the elderly housing has launched 10 years earlier than Japan and wide areas of research are dealt with still on the contrary to the Japanese situation.

The research subjects as well as methodology of the elderly housing are quite limited in Korea, owing to that they have begun to think about the elderly issues only since 1970s, most lately among the three countries. Thus the contents of the research seem more like superficial than intense, for example, simple introductions of foreign elderly housings or preference to the elderly housing. But it is significant that there are a lot of studies about the intergenerational coresidence in Korea especially. It is considered because there is a unique norm in Korea that both elderly people and children are still ashamed of living in the dwelling facilities for the elderly.

Considering about the main subjects, some differences are found among the three countries. While there are quite a lot of studies on the intergenerational coresidence both in Japan and Korea, it is hardly found in the U.S.A.. This reflects different norms between the Oriental and Western society. On the contrary, elderly housing policy and

methodology of the study on the elderly housing which exist in the U.S.A. are not so often both in Japan and Korea yet.

However, it is expected that Korean societal norm and value of taking care of the elderly will be changed in the near future according to the rapid change in the societal and family structure like other industrialized countries. Eventually these societal changes would affect the change of norms of the old generation as well as the younger generation. Furthermore there would rise needs for new living arrangements for the aged which are different from the traditional ways soon. To prepare of this changes, development of diverse elderly housing would be essential even in Korea to meet people's need both the older and the younger.

Reviewing the research trends in Japan and the U.S.A. and predicting the direction of research in Korea in the future, it is expected to have variations in the subjects as many as the two countries. The researches are suggested to be carried out as followings: quality and satisfaction of elderly people who are living in different types of dwelling, comparison of satisfaction of the elderly concerning to the housing and environment in different facilities, quality of housing life of the elderly, elderly housing policy, etc. These researches, hopefully, are prospective to contribute the development and propaganda of elderly housing fitted to Korean situation.

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