

NEEDS FOR SHARED COMMUNITY SPACES AMONG APARTMENT HOUSING RESIDENTS IN KWANGJU CITY

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In the last few decades, the development of multi-family housing in Korea has increased dramatically, because of limited land availability and a growing demand for urban housing. Unfortunately, developers have concerned themselves only with the quantity of apartments offered, rather than with the quality of the shared housing community. As a result, residents have been deprived of meaningful social spaces that would promote interaction and foster a sense of community.

A collective housing policy requiring the design of shared community spaces would solve some of these quality-of-life problems in Korean apartment complexes. Shared community space helps establish and enhance relationships among residents, as well as providing opportunities for service delivery (Lee, 1994).

Although research has been carried out on shared community space in Korea, little attention has been paid to the association between shared community space needs and the socio-demographic characteristics of the residents, especially in more remote cities such as Kwangju, in the southwestern corner of the Korean peninsula.

The purpose of this research is to identify residents' needs for shared community spaces and to explore the relationships between these needs and demographic factors such as age of female residents, family life-cycle stage, employment status of female residents, occupation of the primary income provider, total household income, amount of floor space, and tenure type.

The target population of this study was female residents living in apartment units of over 20 pyong (711.6 ft²) in the Kwangju area.

Questionnaires were self-administered to 278 female residents from four residential areas, through their children at kindergarten, primary school, high school, and college during the month of August, 1997. Statistical data were compiled to determine frequencies and percentage distributions, and were subjected to Chi-square analysis.

The majority of apartment housing residents strongly desired shared community spaces, especially spaces for leisure activities and physical exercise. Most residents also wanted to utilize the basements of their complexes for storage space and sports-related facilities. Further interest was shown for shared community spaces that would be

run by the residents themselves, such as vegetable gardens, indoor playgrounds for children, senior citizens' activity rooms, walking paths, study rooms, and lounges.

Needs were correlated with demographic characteristics in several ways. Female residents under 45 years were more likely to express needs for storage spaces for bicycles, and multi-purpose rooms for meetings and family events.

Families with a child attending primary school or younger were more likely to prefer indoor playgrounds for children than families with one child in high school or older. Families with a child attending high school or older more often indicated preferences for interior gardens than those with children in primary school or younger, or families in the launching stage. Families in the launching stage of the family life cycle expressed more needs for study rooms than those with children in primary school and high school.

Female residents with jobs were more likely to desire spaces for bicycles, indoor swimming pools, multi-purpose rooms for meetings and family events, interior gardens, and fitness centers for aerobics, than full-time female residents were.

The income earners in professional and administrative/managerial occupations tended to want more common storage space than those in clerical occupations. Professionals were more likely to desire gardens than women doing administrative/managerial or sales work.

Renters desired common laundry facilities, and common game rooms more often than owners.

Those living with less than 50 pyong (1779 ft²) were more likely to want spaces for bicycles than those with 50 pyong (1779 ft²) and over.

These findings imply the need for diverse rather than uniform plans. If apartment housing is to be designed to develop shared community spaces, spaces for leisure activities and physical exercise should be given general priority. However, shared community spaces should be tailored to meet the special needs of targeted user groups, which vary according to demographic characteristics such as the age and employment status of female residents, family life-cycle stage, occupation of the primary income provider, amount of floor space, and tenure type.

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