

## Impression Comparison of Dining Scenes at Elderly Residential Facilities in Korea and Japan

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**Purpose:** The focus of this study is the dining hall and a detailed analysis of individual activity there. This analysis provides basic knowledge for improving the QOL of elderly residents. The reason for focusing on “dining” is because this is a basic daily event directly related to quality of life. Video footage of dining scenes at elderly facilities is used as material for an impression evaluation by third party viewers. These impressions are then used to consider what it takes to have a vibrant dining—living—environment. **Methods:** Using footage of three residential facilities, this study examines “location impressions” of dining scenes. The first step is to record the activity of elderly residents. In the second stage, we edit the footage into three time periods (before, during, and after dining), show the clips to third party viewers (in this case, 50 university students), and analyze their “location impressions.” The three elderly residential facilities in this study are in Korea (A and P) and in Japan (O). Thirty to 50 residents meet at a specified time in the dining hall to eat together. **Results:** (1) The dining scene at facility P receives the most favorable impression and obtains the highest score in “Looks traditional.” Though further research is required, this suggests that factors such as “Looks traditional” and “Looks intimate” contribute to a favorable impression. (2) The physical capacity of a facility does is not necessarily consistent with the environmental evaluation it receives. (3) Facility A probably receives an unfavorable impression for the after-dinner period because of a strong tendency for residents to leave their seats as soon as they are finished eating. This conspicuous after-dinner activity may influence the impression. **Implications:** In this study we ask Japanese university students to give their impressions of activity at three elderly facilities, two in Korea and one in Japan. The results show definite differences in evaluation, even when viewing an overseas facility. This clearly suggests that for an impression evaluation, the difference between facilities is more important than the difference between countries. The analysis results also lead us to conclude that the scale of a facility and whether the style is traditional strongly influence the impression produced.

**Research background and purpose:** When planning an elderly residential facility, it is important to consider how to guarantee the quality of life of the principle residents who may no longer be capable of actively designing their own daily routine. From early on, research on the elderly has been concerned with architectural planning to improve the quality of life. For example, Wiseman and Cohen (1991) point out the possibility of better QOL in a facility through architectural design that takes account of activity scenes specific to elderly patients suffering from dementia. Cohen (1999) also points out the possibility of better QOL through environmental design that respects the cultural background of residents. The focus of this study is the dining hall and a detailed analysis of individual activity there. This analysis provides basic knowledge for improving the QOL of elderly residents. **Method:** Using footage of three residential facilities, this study examines “location impressions” of dining scenes. The first step is to record the activity of elderly residents. In the second stage, we edit the footage into three time periods (before, during, and after dining), show the clips to third party viewers (50 university students), and analyze their “location impressions.” Viewers may look at the clips more than one time. The three elderly residential facilities in this study are in Korea (A and P) and in Japan (O). The dining style in each facility is similar: Thirty to 50 residents meet at a specified time in the dining hall to eat together. **Results:** • • • An analysis of the “stay duration” enables a better understanding of how residents use the dining hall. At facilities O and P, there is a long waiting time before the meal. In particular, facility O has a large standard deviation with a wide variation in the stay duration of individual residents. So it may be said that P is generally more active than O. At all three facilities, the stay duration is much shorter after dining than before. • 2• We also compare the total “location impressions” score of times (before, during, and after dining). One-way analysis shows that the average score between each facility for all evaluation items (10 items) has a significant variance ( $p < 0.05$ ). For example, facility A (“Looks traditional” and “Looks calm”) and facility O (“Looks fun” and “Looks bustling”) have a low average score. Facility P, on the other hand, has a high score (“Looks too familiar”)

and receives a better evaluation (“Looks fun”) than the other facilities. Facility P adopts a traditional Korean/Japanese style of sitting on the floor for dining, which may account for the comparatively high evaluation (“Looks intimate” and “Looks traditional”).

- 3• We conduct a one-way analysis on each item to discover which ones have a significant variance between time period averages. From an analysis of nine items for facility A, one item for facility O, and four items for P, the results show that there is a large difference in ambience between time periods (before, during, and after dining).
- 4• The dining area at facility P conveys a distinctive impression. For example, it receives the highest score for “Looks fun” and markedly lower scores for “Looks clean,” “Looks orderly,” and “Looks roomy” compared to facilities A and O. Further thoughts:
  - • • The dining scene at facility P receives the most favorable impression and obtains the highest score in “Looks traditional.” Though further research is required, this suggests that factors such as “Looks traditional” and “Looks intimate” contribute to a favorable impression.
  - • • Looking at facility P, the physical capacity of a facility does is not necessarily consistent with the environmental evaluation it receives. In other words, a spacious and clean environment does not automatically produce a positive impression.
  - 3• In this study we ask Japanese university students to give their impressions of activity at three elderly facilities, two in Korea and one in Japan. The results show definite differences in evaluation, even when viewing an overseas facility. This clearly suggests that for an impression evaluation, the difference between facilities is more important than the difference between countries. The analysis results also lead us to conclude that the scale of a facility and whether the style is traditional strongly influence the impression produced.

References: 1) Cohen, U. & Weisman, G. D. *Holding on to Home: Designing Environments for People with Dementia*. The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1991 2) Cohen, U. and Moor, K. D. *Integrating Cultural Heritage into Assisted Living Environments*. In Schwarz, B. and Brent, R. (Eds.) *Aging, Autonomy and Architecture: advances in Assisted Living/ Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999*