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A study on elderly's going out activities and environment facilities

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the going out activities conducted by senior residents during their daily lives and how the built environment especially in the high densely settlement of the city center support these activities. The observations were conducted in one high-densely populated neighborhood in Yogyakarta City Center and personal interviews were carried out to 48 elderly who lives in the neighborhood. This study finally clarified that the going out activity of the elderly is basically divided into four types based on the motivation: economy, health, recreation and social. Economic motivation-based activity was learned as the most frequent going out and it employed the shortest distance of travelling range. The spots within a walkable distance inside the neighborhood were relied on by the elderly therefore the sufficient facilities inside the neighborhood should be provided appropriately. As the elderly stayed for long time in the commune as well involved personally in the community, the development or growth of the living environment constitutes the social and physical challenges among themselves.

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1. Introduction

The urban settlement in city center suffers from increase of population density significantly. As the city center's settlement has been existed along the continuum of time and has a long history of human occupation, its situation yields a high possibility of the presence of senior residents. In Yogyakarta City Indonesia, some areas in the city center have been known as areas with population with aging structure which the population of senior resident is

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reaching more than 7% of the area's total population. In the other words, these areas' populations are included in old-structured population. The existence of the senior residents in these areas actually gives special life-timed energy to the society and its settlement. However, along the decline of the elderly's motoric capability due to growth of their age, the life needs of this group become more specific rather than other younger age groups. Concerning the elderly activities, going out is one of activities which are still conducted by the elderly. With various reasons, many senior citizens carry out going out activities incidentally or regularly. The neighborhood environment may be a source of aesthetic enjoyment, physical security, sensory variety, basic resources, help in emergencies, social interaction, interesting things to do, a feeling of territorial pride, and many other satisfiers of human needs¹. Going out activities can be considered as mediation for having a social interaction for the elderly. Older people commonly mentioned that having ability to go out is important to them, both in physical or mentally aspects, since the going out activities provide opportunities for them to have social interaction as well physical exercise². Other issue related to the activity of going out by the elderly is the role of built environment around the elderly in supporting those activities. Previous researchers identified that neighborhood environmental support becomes very important in promoting walking among elderly³. A development of transportation facility that suitable for elderly mobility's needs gives significant impacts to establish an ideal neighbourhood's settlement for aging^{4,5}. Distance is the significant measurement of space in the daily life of the senior residents, moreover in the relation to the accessibility to social contacts, services and shops⁶.

Concerning this through the current study, it will be fruitful to understand the transaction between senior residents and their neighborhood. Moreover, as the city center's growth also comes along with the increase of city crime and insecurity, the inquiry of 'does the living environment growth in the high densely settlement also cover the elderly limitation?' arise. This inquiry becomes the crucial problem and then becomes the basic question of this study. For this inquiry, this study aims to identify the elderly requirements on living environment to support their going out activities along the city growth that commonly considered as neglecting the elderly limited physical capability.

2. Aim of the Study

This study aims to identify going out activities carried out by the senior residents of the city center and to examine how the built environment of their neighborhood supports these activities.

3. Description of the Study Area

The focus of this study is the settlement area in the city centre with high densely population in which the senior residents' population is more than 7%. Based on this consideration, this study observed one neighbourhood in the Yogyakarta City centre. This neighbourhood is located in Ngampilan Urban Village at Ngampilan Sub District, a sub district that has a highest density in the city. This population density in this urban village is 24.053,33 person/sq.km, while the elderly population reach 7.01% of the total population. In the selected neighbourhood (called as Rukun Warga 7/ RW7), the elderly population is 12.1% of the total population.

The RW7 neighbourhood is located in the edge of the sub district, directly connected to street connecting to the next sub district at the east. RW 7 area is 17,453 sq. meters in size and among this amount there is 7,602 sq. meters for open space including street and squares. The total area for building covering the land is 9,851 sq. meters. The resident population is 727 persons and among this number 88 persons are elderly. At the north side close to the neighbourhood boundary, there is a traditional market (called as *Pasar Senen* or Senen Market) occupying the long-narrow alley from east to west (see Fig 1 right). Besides market, there are also several groceries and stores in the neighbourhood that providing the residents the daily consumptions goods. This neighbourhood has several small alleys over the area, covered by hard materials such as pavement and cement. Some small houses of residents without front yard exist along these small alleys while some other houses have garden or yard separated from the alleys by permanent fences. Besides small alleys, this neighbourhood has such kind of main alley from the north to the south edge of the neighbourhood. Along this main alley, some neighbourhood's public places and services are built and set. They are public toilet and bath, community hall, neighbourhood organization office, and neighbourhood open space.

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