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“EN-GAWA SERVICE” Concept for Long-Term Care Service Institution, Tainan YMCA

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Abstract

In the face of the changes in the structure of the elderly and low birth rate, the continuous expansion of social security expenses, and the constant update of the burden ratio of long-term care services, new service models are needed in the future to meet the demands of extended life in the community. If the long-term care service institution implements a communication space called “EN-GAWA in Japanese” concept that connects with the community regularly and provides various informal care services to promote cross-generational communication in the community, community residents can have more networks and support.

Keywords: long-term care service; EN-GAWA service (“Neighborhood” in Japanese); Inter-generational interaction

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1.0 Introduction

This research focuses on the long-term care system which provides community services in light of the aging population trend, particularly in countries such as Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, Italy, and Germany, where the proportion of the elderly population is estimated to be around 40% in 2050. Additionally, France, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States are expected to reach 30%. Furthermore, the World Health Organization has emphasized the need for aging-friendly cities. This research presents a model idea for providing continuous care in a super-aged society.

The long-term care strategy in Taiwan also focuses on the community level, but the funding resources are limited. Therefore, long-term care service institutions can play a role in providing informal care services that promote inter-generational communication, such as joint classes and activities between children and older people and community gatherings. This can help create informal networks of support for elderly residents.

This study examines the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) in Tainan City, Taiwan, as an example of a long-term care service institution that has integrated informal services, such as a community center with a café. The study aims to identify the advantages of this approach and inspire consideration for space planning and design in long-term care institutions.

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2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Advantages of Community Centers and Services

The impact of space on the quality of service in community centers and long-term care institutions has been studied in Japanese literature. The interaction space in long-term care centers for community residents is called "Edge-side service=Engawa-Services," which promotes suitable living activities for the elderly with "moderate communication," "social role," "guardianship," "imagination of aging," "regular activation," "healthy diet and knowledge" (Lee & Ellithorpe, 1982; Mishima et al., 2010; Katayama et al., 2012).

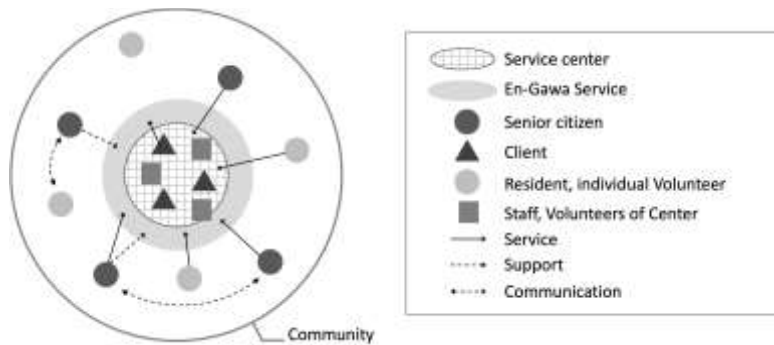


Fig. 1 En-Gawa in Japanese (Katayama etc., 2012)

Furthermore, suppose the institutional space has an edge-side service, with the participation of residents of different generations, the elderly, individual volunteers, and others. In that case, the space and the service of the long-term care center will be revitalized, and the relationships and connections of various residents in the community will also be promoted. Activities such as parent-child rooms and flea markets can be held in the same place at different times, not only the daycare and food service. This can be seen in Fig. 1, which shows the En-Gawa in Japanese (Katayama et al., 2012; Woo, A., Joh, K., & Yu, C., 2023).

Enssle et al. (2020) have reminded us that urban green spaces can contribute to building social networks, especially for the elderly, and provide spaces for communication and activity. The city is a comprehensive social-ecological system, and it can contribute to social networks to improve social justice through urban planning and design. The integration of community care services, mutual aid, and cooperation in the community will also be promoted, and residents can better understand their well-being. Therefore, the design of community centers and services should consider the cross-generational design ideal and multi-functional spaces to meet the mutual needs of all the residents in the super-aging society in the future. (Yi Sun & Ye Yuan, 2023)

2.2 The Spatial Issues of Long-term Care Institutions in the Community

The planning and design of the inner space in long-term care service institutions vary in different countries. For example, Japan's living unit is usually smaller than in other countries, and the needs for care and human power are relatively higher. However, "space for daily activities" plays a vital role in providing different situations and atmospheres, allowing users to have options with the creation of multi-functional places (Ice, 2002; Yi Sun & Ye Yuan, 2023).

In summary, long-term care institutions need to plan out places that can make connections and integration with the community to meet the mutual needs of all residents in the super-aging society in the future while also achieving high-quality space and service standards.

3.0 Methodology

This study aims to investigate the development model of long-term care facilities or NPO organizations for super-aged society in the future and to explore the benefits of setting up EN-GAWA service and spaces in a long-term care facility that are conducive to interaction and communication with the community. This study was conducted at Tainan YMCA, and the research methods and objects are described below.

3.1 Research Methods:

The research methods consisted of three periods: participant observation, a questionnaire survey, and individual interviews. In the first period, the researcher observed the Y café service and space from 2019 to mid-June 2020. The first author, the deputy chief executive officer of Tainan YMCA, indirectly participated in planning and designing the space environment for the actual operation. Supervisors assisted in the questionnaire survey, which was conducted for ten days in early June 2020. The main items of the survey included basic information about the learners of the elderly course, their activities and spaces to participate in, and the original benefits of EN-GAWA service concepts in Japan, etc. In the third period, individual interviews were conducted with some participants who had completed the questionnaires on May 6 and 13, 2020, to confirm the EN-GAWA service and space environment for personal feelings. The interviews included eight participants: students, employees, café users, and passers-by.

3.2 Research Objectives:

The research objects were the integration service center of Tainan YMCA in the East District, Tainan, which is open from 8:30-18:00 from Monday to Saturday. One hundred questionnaires were conducted, including 92 students, four volunteers, and four community residents, with 74 valid questionnaires. In addition, the researcher also took part in daily observations and conducted individual interviews with seven participants, including the elderly, people with disabilities, drivers, employees, supervisors, etc.

3.3 Research Objective Space:

The main service of the objective long-term care center is for senior citizens, such as health promotion courses. In addition, they also provide outreach services for the community, such as home visiting and caring on the phone. However, the other center space is designed for informal communication and interaction, such as a café, urban farm, and so on. The interests have been raised as cross-age communication, youth-elderly co-creation, workshops, forums, etc.

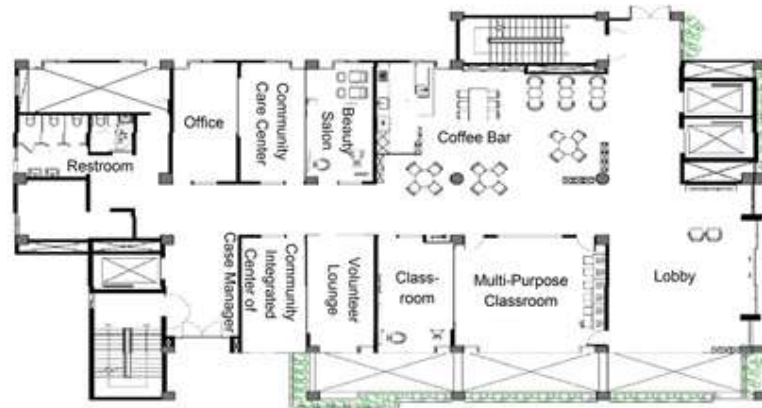


Fig. 2: Tainan Y Café and long-term care institution floor plan



Fig. 3: Y Café and the interaction space

4.0 Findings

For further implemental results, the research has conducted a questionnaire survey of the participants for their reflection on space use.

This study examined the benefits of participating in activities at the YMCA coffee shop, focusing on the following demographic factors: gender, age, education level, economic status, quality of life, residential area, housing conditions, travel time, transportation mode, frequency of going out, the purpose of going out, involvement in volunteer work outside of the YMCA, the experience of coming to the coffee shop, frequency of visits per week, duration of each visit, willingness to schedule social activities with fellow YMCA members outside of the coffee shop, the purpose of coffee shop usage, the longest duration of space usage, overall sense of spatial freedom, most frequently participated activities, and subjective community interaction benefits.

4.1 Basic findings

This report contains two parts. The first part presents the results of a survey, which found that nearly 75% of users are female, nearly 90% are aged 65 and above, 96% have an above-average economic status, over half perceive themselves as healthy, and 98.6% feel a sense of stability in their lives. The service needs of users who live alone, live with elderly relatives, perceive themselves as economically disadvantaged or physically unhealthy, live with foreign workers, or are male require attention.

The second part analyzes the use of community communication spaces. The most commonly used space is the senior vitality classroom, which is primarily used for leisure or classes. Users mainly use scooters as their mode of transportation and go out every day. Additionally, many users participate in volunteer activities outside of the YMCA. The coffee communication space is mainly used as a leisure space after class or for participating in senior courses, as well as for personal time or purchasing snacks and beverages.

4.2 Analysis of Community Communication Spaces

The study examined the usage of communication spaces by surveying respondents based on their usage purpose, most commonly used spaces, and overall sense of ease of use.

4.2.1 Purpose of Using Coffee Communication Spaces

From the analysis of the purpose of using coffee communication spaces, respondents used the space for various purposes, such as personal, group, and purchase needs. The usage of space for elderly courses was 22.8%; waiting for space was 24.1%; free space after elderly courses was 32.9%; personal time space was 9.5%; space for buying snacks and drinks was 8.9%; and other purposes accounted for 1.8%.

4.2.2 Community Communication Spaces Used More Than Long-Term Care Service Areas

Overall, the most used space by respondents was community communication spaces rather than long-term care service areas. Respondents used elderly classrooms, coffee community communication areas, bars, vegetable gardens, and youth-senior co-creation spaces, which accounted for 81.6%.

Community communication spaces promote various interactions, such as serving 5.5% of respondents for coffee community communication services, interacting with children for 1.8%, interacting with the elderly for 11.9%, interacting with persons with disabilities for 1.8%, interacting with teenagers for 0.9%, and interacting with the public for 4.6%. These interactions involved learning courses, volunteer services, and community care services.

4.2.3 Sense of Ease of Use of Space

About 82.4% of respondents had a sense of ease of use of space, with 39.2% feeling very good and 43.2% feeling good. Regardless of the free time after courses, course usage time, waiting time, or purchasing drinks and snacks, respondents had a good sense of ease of use of the overall space. This was due to the diversity of staff and volunteers at the YMCA, such as long-term care-related professional staff at community-integrated service centers, marketing and management staff at coffee bars, and elderly course staff. Through the inadvertent presentation of service space usage by different professionals, anyone can easily and comfortably use the space, whether they are ordering food or drinks, attending classes, or accompanying others. Community residents use long-term care spaces more than communication spaces, which leads to a higher sense of ease of use and identification with the space.

In summary, as mentioned by Chen et al. (2018) regarding cross-generational community communication spaces, the "sense of place" is crucial - a space where one can exist freely, even if they are not socially popular. This is because of (a) the diversity of staff, (b) the ease of accessibility for anyone, and (c) the space design that encourages anyone to freely enter and use it.

5.0 Discussion

The following are the key points of this study, discussing and summarizing in terms of 3 dimensions: the space, people and services, and the opening frequency.

5.1 Function of the edge-side space

A. The long-term care center, designed with the edge-side space, can play as a multi-functional communication center, which facilitates community integration and a sense of comfort for cross-age interaction. For example, an interviewer said that she liked to stay in the café where everyone could participate in the space in their own way and feel free.

B. The diversity and integration of formal and informal care services can be complemented in the edge-side space. In this research, the café has not only provided an informal service "coffee shop" but a formal service "information center." The "staff" of the café sometimes served by the employees or the volunteers. Therefore, the roles of the participants in the edge-side space are multi-functional and diverse.

C. The edge-side space can be a multi-functional and interactive one for different generations. Because of the diversity of the services provided, different neighborhood users come to the center. Therefore, different users can meet in the same space at the same time for interaction and communication.

D. In this case, the café is designed as the edge-side space and plays as multi-functional among all the formal and informal services. As known, diet is the easiest way to make a friendship, not only for a different country but for different generations. Furthermore, accompanied with other professional and functional spaces, such as the courses for the elderly, even promote the multi-functional role. E. The edge-side space is crucial for creating a cozy environment. With the different generational participants and different functional services, people can always find their own "corner" and feel free in the environment.

5.2 People and services in the edge-side space

A. Setting up *edge-side* services leads to the promotion of integration between users and residents. Through courses learning, voluntary services, or community care service, people who are customers, residents, employees, or volunteers can have regular interaction and communication with each other in the edge-side space. For example, an interviewer who has participated in the courses. Sometimes, she will pick up her children from school to the center to communicate with others and her kids can also have a relaxing time.

B. Informal care services can sometimes substitute for formal care services. For example, an elderly with mild dementia can serve as a volunteer for courses instead of being sent to the long-term care center. Somehow, another mildly disabled person who joins the courses can also have the information to apply for home services from other units but attends YMCA community courses at the same time.

C. Edge-side service will be recognized by all users. Caregivers who have been approved by the public sector can receive informal care services in the edge-side space, such as having a coffee and having a relax. On the contrary, through edge-side services, formal care services can also be referred to those in need in the community because there are some different long-term care services, and some professional courses are held during the edge-side service opening.

5.3 Settings of Edge-side Space and Services keeps The Regularity of The Elderly Going Out

With the regular setting of edge-side services and spaces, the elders in the community can interact and communicate regularly with others and even with the different generations. However, sometimes, the edge-side service is occupied by the participants of the courses, the residents might have no seat. In order to facilitate the usage of the community residents, it is recommended to open by appointment without time limitation. Therefore, a long-term care user and his/her family can have regular meals reunion and friend-making with their classmates and volunteers.

5.4 Other Extended Discussions

With the technologies in urban design and neighbor regeneration (Narvaez et al., 2021) & (Marzouki et al., 2021), even during the covid-19 pandemic, the usage of communication technology can even increase city-and-citizen resilience (Herrera-Limones, 2021), the social communication media has influenced more and more by the aging and declining birthrate. Although it may be much freer to get the connection and the communication opportunity without space-and-time limitations, people can make friends with each other indeed in a real environment .

6.0 Conclusion and Limitation

6.1 Key Features and Issues of YMCA Edge-side Services

The research conclusions are as follows:

It is recommended to reserve a blank space in the planning stage. It is a good idea to set the cafe as a flexible space that can be closed and opened, where you can attend classes, conduct business meetings, allow customers to order meals and drinks normally, negotiate long-term care plans, or hold events. We cannot ask for facing super-aged national policy to set the necessary space for long-term care and then extend it to a multi-use cafe. However, there are still positive suggestions that each NPO or PO can be established independently to develop the model needed by the aging society in the future.

6.1.1 In terms of people and services:

To meet the needs or special requirements of community residents, formal and informal care services complement both and facilitate more integration and development are shown as well.

6.1.2 In terms of space:

It is found that long-term care centers with edge-side services help users and providers to have their own identification. And the sense of comfort in community communication space is necessary. The possibility of diverse communication can be brought out by setting up an edge-side space, such as a café.

6.1.3 Regarding the frequency of communication:

It is recommended to provide edge-side space and services as a regular informal service frequency, which can be once a day, a week, or a month. With the service, the center can facilitate the community network by regularly connecting living activities with the community.

Compared with edge-side services in Japan, the benefits of YMCA are extremely high. The features of the YMCA in Tainan are that the service is provided six days a week, which is higher than Japan's weekly or monthly opening hours and times. Relatively showing, larger space makes it more likely to serve, and with the higher population density and more resources, Tainan City furthers the cause of edge-side services extremely. However, it is proposed to keep paying attention to the various needs of community residents, and the

mission of building a community network is also required. Then, the issue of social welfare and a sense of community will be developed well and truly from the integration of care services and the promotion of mutual assistance.

6.2 Reminders of edge-side Services to The Planners of long-term Care-police

A. It is suggested to discuss further the ideal of service quality and marginal space between service users and the community with interactional communication. It should not be limited to the standards set by policy-examining institutions.

B. It is recommended that long-term care centers need spontaneously set up edge-side spaces and services, which can contribute to the development of informal care resources and responds accordingly to the reflection of super-aging society needs. In this way, each institution with an edge-side space becomes a service location that is easy for the residents to take part in and connect within the community.

C. It is advised to pay attention to the research and development of marginal services in the future to encourage the participation of non-governmental organizations such as complex institutions for the child- and-elderly, stores in the community, clinics, or other legal persons. Thus, there are opportunities for inter-generational communication and interaction and to extend the possibility of various informal care services by creating community centers. (Katayama et al., 2014)

6.3 Limitation

This research is to remind long-term care institutions or NPO organizations not to limit themselves to the scope of services in the community or city. Therefore, this time first chose to open relatively long-term care space and services, which is the fixed point of a long-term care plan management center, café, and healthy elderly classroom combined planning and design, as the research field. There is still a gap in the actual implementation of long-term care service units, such as the actual operation of daycare centers or nursing homes. It is hoped that through experimental promotion and discussion, it will become a possible basis for the full implementation of Tainan YMCA in the next stage or more.

Acknowledgment

Thanks to the employee crew of the Y café in Tainan YMCA, and the participants and their families in the edge-side service. Furthermore, out of the record and project documents, this research might have solid data and discussion of space design and the organization of the service.

Paper Contribution to Related Field of Study

This research focused on the long-term care system, especially for the institutions which provide community services. Following the trend of aging, a lot of NGOs have started providing long-term care services. However, the professional dimension has been emphasized more than the community dimension, which not only makes the elderly far away from the community but makes them isolated from the service of the community. Therefore, this research implemented an alternative consideration for the NGOs to fulfill the idea of an aging-friendly society.

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