

FUTURE RESEARCH

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Manipulating the unit's edge to create a spatial zone for residents to use has been shown from this study to have many positive attributes. Several of the findings from this study follow widely accepted environment-behavior theoretical findings in the housing literature. Clearly, use of the home's edge is a pattern that is being recreated successfully in the retirement setting in these two communities. This exploratory study was only able to identify key patterns. Further research needs to be conducted to provide additional information and to fill in some of the gaps in our understanding.

Future Research in Apartment Settings

- More comparative research needs to be conducted in settings with more and less personalization to determine to what extent having varying degrees of personalization impacts socialization and perceptions of these living environments.
- More information needs to be gathered on a number of external influences on personalization. For example, does the fear of items being stolen limit the items placed outside? Moreover, how do administrative policies, building regulations and licensing agencies promote or restrict the nature of what is displayed?
- More information needs to be gathered on intra and intercommunity variation in residents' as well as visitors' perceptions of the displays. For instance, do residents who are heavily emotionally invested in the community feel differently about these personalized display areas than others? Was the data from this study generally representative of how retirement community residents perceive and utilize this architectural feature?

Future Research in Assisted Living Settings

- More comparative information is needed for assisted living settings on the use of these edges; such as who assists with the selection/placement of items and how frequently do these displays change?
- Does the size of the assisted living unit influence the placement of items outside for storage and display? For example, is there less need to personalize if there is more private space inside the unit? How do older people in these settings make difficult decisions about the downsizing of their possessions? Also, how do they personalize their interior and exterior space with the remaining items?
- Do residents form social networks within assisted living, or do they maintain stronger connections throughout the retirement community? What role does the unit's edge play in socialization in assisted living?
- Does the creation of a display help to orient residents and encourage wayfinding in assisted living? Are there other possible therapeutic benefits associated with this architectural feature?

- More information also needs to be gathered on the external influences on personalization in assisted living settings. For example, does the fear of items being stolen or borrowed limit the items placed outside? Do assisted living residents typically receive their newspaper or packages at their dwelling's door and have less use for a package shelf?

Moreover, what restrictions do administrative policies, building regulations and licensing agencies place on personalization in these settings? What is the nature of assisted living residents' roles in community governance and how does this affect their abilities to personalize their spaces?