

IMPACT OF THE DWELLING FUNCTIONALITY ON THE HOME ATTACHMENT¹

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Abstract

In terms of increasing social mobility, migration processes and weakening of territorial and socio-cultural identity, it is important to study place (home) attachment. Based on the environmental psychology researches of place attachment phenomenology (Scannell & Gifford, 2010) and home environment preferences (Coolen, 2011) we define home attachment as close emotional and cognitive bonds with one's home environment and functional satisfaction with its content leading to the individual desire to maintain closeness with home. The aim of the study was to examine how home attachment is interconnected with the ideal (desired) and actual home environment's multilevel functionality. Our tools were: developed by authors Functionality of Home Environment Questionnaire, The Personal Relevance of Home Environment and Home Attachment Scale. In total, 13 variables were investigated. Participants were 346 adults ($M_{age}=26,6$, $SD=10,5$; 138 males, 208 females), living in Moscow. There has been found that: home attachment is strongly predicted by the real image of home, while the ideal image has little effect on home attachment. The relationship between home attachment and home environment's functionality is gender-specific: women's are more sensitive to the affordances of real home environment than men, whereas ideal home has a stronger impact on men's home attachment; men's and women's home attachments are predicted by the different functional characteristics. People with low level of home attachment are more sensitive to the factors of personal relevance.

Keywords: ecological psychology, home attachment, home environment, questionnaire, functionality.

1. Introduction

The relationship between humans and their living environment is an important, but insufficiently explored research subject in social psychology, human geography, migration policies and environmental psychology. Obviously, home is the primary ontological human space. Plenty of examples from the international literature, art and cinema have shown that home environment is a multifactor resource for maintaining well-being, identity, self-efficacy, social belonging and rootedness, carrying functional, semantic and emotional value.

2. Objectives

Based on the classical and contemporary researches of the environmental and personality psychology, the analysis of studied subject is conducted from three levels: 1) *affordances-level*, where affordances are the objective opportunities and functions of the environment permitting different activities (Coolen, 2011); 2) *environmental friendliness-level*. The congruity/discrepancy between the environmental content and the personal needs satisfaction shows the level of personal friendliness of this environment. Friendly environment is characterized by satisfying human needs, stimulating and compensating inhabitants' development, encouraging personal growth and sense of self-usefulness in people. 3) *place attachment-level*. Place attachment is defined as a deep emotional bond with a local community, culture, or natural factors and perceived significance of the particular place as a meaningful one, providing comfort and satisfying the person's needs (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). In the current study, these key constructs are considered in relation to home environment.

3. Design

The aim of our study was to explore the relations between home attachment and functionality of real and ideal home environment. In our study the ratio of functionality of real and ideal modality of

¹ Supported by Russian Science Foundation, project № 14-18-02163.

home environment is an indicator of environmental friendliness: the greater the discrepancy between these variables is, the less home environment can meet the personal needs and the less friendly it is. We have formulated the following research hypotheses. 1) Home attachment is positively associated with functionality and friendliness of home environment. 2) The relations between home attachment and home environment's functions are gender-specific. 3) People with low level of home attachment are more sensitive to the home environment's affordances and friendliness compared with strongly attached people. Participants were 346 respondents ($M_{age}=26,6$; 208 females, 138 males), living in Moscow in their own apartments.

4. Methods

To achieve the research aims, we have developed three questionnaires. The first is "Home Attachment Questionnaire" consists of 14 direct questions (e.g., "I identify strongly with my home") assessed with 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire has a single-factor structure and it reflects the overall level of home attachment (Reznichenko et al., 2015).

To measure the friendliness of home environment, we have developed a tool set consisting of two scales ('Functionality of Home Environment Questionnaire' (FHEQ) and 'The Personal Relevance of Home Environment Questionnaire' (PRHEQ)). These questionnaires included constructs associating with a specific need or affordance of home environment (Nartova-Bochaver et al., 2015a).

The FHEQ consists of 55 statements with the Likert scale for each item from 1 to 7, it finds the individual's relationship to the ideal home environment and has the following scales: 1) *Usability* includes the description of everyday functions without which home becomes inconvenient. 2) *Development* describes the home environment properties stimulating personal development 3) *Stability* reveals providing psychological and physical stability. 4) *Security* reflects needs for self-presentation, presentation of resident's status and power. The PRHEQ contains 54 constructs (e.g. needs for privacy, for storage, etc.). Each construct is given by two statements; there are 108 items in total. This questionnaire is designed to explore views about the real model of home environment. The questionnaire includes 7 scales. 1) *Home environment management* describes the possibility of controlling home. 2) *Resource* includes constructs associated with home supporting. 3) *Self-presentation* is associated with the inhabitants' possibility to personalize their own space. 4) *Ergonomics* is associated with the views on the home environment usability. 5) *Home alienation* concerns with the reasons of home estrangement. 6) *Flexibility scale* determines the ability of home environment to be dynamic and to respond to the variable resident's needs. 7) *Historicity scale* reflects the home links with personal, family, and general past.

5. Results

Prior correlation analysis has shown that home attachment is strongly associated with Personal Relevance of the home environment (8 relations, $p < .001$) and has a weak relationship with Functionality of ideal home environment (3 relations, $p < .01$; 2 relations, $p < .05$). Regression analysis has confirmed that home attachment is strongly predicted ($p < 0.001$) by PRHE-factors, especially by Resource and Ergonomics. As can be seen in Table 1, the Functionality characteristics of ideal (desired) home environment have less significant contribution to home attachment, while Pragmatism of ideal home does not affect home attachment at all. The ratio of PRHE and FHEQ and Home alienation are anti-predictors ($p < 0.001$) of home attachment.

Table 1. The Multiple Regression Analysis Results: PRHE and FHE-factors as Predictors of Home Attachment

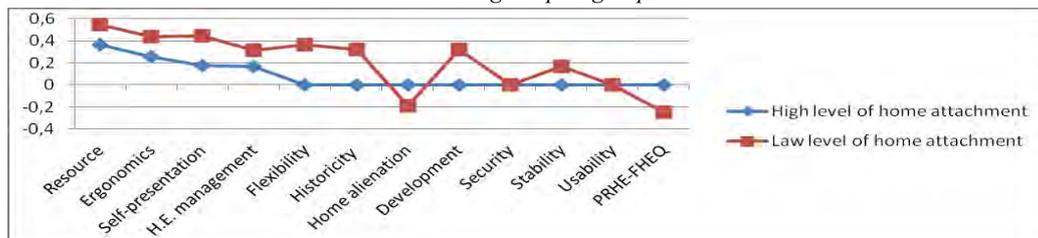
Questionnaire	Functions-predictors of home attachment	Beta (β)
PRHE (representation of the real home)	Resource	.692***
	Ergonomics	.573***
	Self-presentation	.495***
	Home environment management	.489***
	Flexibility	.392***
	Historicity	.339***
	Home alienation	-.240***
FHEQ (representation of the ideal home)	Development	.278***
	Security	.117*
	Stability	.139**
	Usability	-
PRHE/FHEQ discrepancy	Home unfriendliness	-.438***

Note: *** – $p < .001$, ** – $p < .01$ * – $p < .05$.

A gender comparison of home attachment, personal relevance and functionality of home environment's variables was conducted. Regression analyses reflect the gender specificity of home attachment's predictors: Home environment management ($\beta = .542$, $p < .001$) is more important factor in maintaining home attachment for women than for men, while for men self-presentation ($\beta = .533$, $p < .001$) makes a greater contribution to home attachment. Home Alienation is a significant predictor of home attachment in females ($\beta = -.364$, $p < .001$), while in males such an effect hasn't been detected. Among the functional characteristics of the ideal home only Security is statistically significant predictor ($\beta = -.153$, $p < .05$) in the female group. For men's home attachment significant predictors are Stability ($\beta = -.231$, $p < .01$) and Usability ($\beta = -.171$, $p < .05$). In general, women are more sensitive to the affordances of real home environment than men are, while desired functionality of ideal home has a stronger impact on men's home attachment.

We were also interested in how the attachment level is associated with the functional characteristics of home environment. For this purpose, the sample was dimidiated according to home attachment level ($Me = 3.71$) into the groups with relatively low and high level of home attachment (LLha-group and HLha-group). Correlation analysis reveals the differences of relationship between home environment functionality and home attachment in two contrasting groups (See Figure 1). In the LLha-group the current level of attachment is closely related to the all factors of PRHE ($p < .001$), especially with Resource ($r_s = .548$); lack of home attachment also positively correlated with the desired functions of ideal home environment, such as Development ($r_s = .319$, $p < .001$) and Stability ($r_s = .168$, $p < .05$).

Figure 1. Summary of Correlation analysis (Spearman's RCC): the interrelations between home attachment and functional characteristics (PRHE of real home representation and FHE-factors of ideal home representation) in two contrasting samples groups



People from the HLha-group are much less sensitive to functionality of dwelling: strong attachment interrelates with four functions of real home environment (Resource ($r_s = .364$, $p < .001$), Ergonomics ($r_s = .255$, $p < .01$), Self-presentation ($r_s = .364$) and Home environment management ($r_s = .169$), with $p < .05$), while the desired functionality does not affect the actual level of attachment.

6. Discussion

Our study has shown that home attachment depends on the functional potential of current living space and that unfriendly environment (the discordance between the affordances of actual and desired environments) adversely influences the level of home attachment. Dwelling resources and ergonomics are particularly important to maintaining home attachment. These functions are closely associated with facilitation of daily activities and with providing rest. Gender specificity is following: women are more sensitive than men to functionality of their dwelling, especially to household management capacity. This reflects the fact that the householder status is more typical for women: they are more likely to engage in housework and spend more time on home maintenance than men. Perhaps, low attached people most often try to improve their home environment and to make the certain affordances of the environment fit with desired functionality. So, they respond to any changes and are more reflective of functional characteristics of their dwellings. While strongly attached people have a less nuanced assessment of their living environment due to suitability to their needs.

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